

A LITTLE ASIAN GIRL

Maybe twelve years old, waits on a subway platform. Sounds of trains echo all around, but none are seen, like the phantom growling of far away dragons. Florescent lights cast a greenish glow. Only a few commuters in the station. She is alone and afraid.

MOVEMENT from behind her, and the Little Girl turns panicked, only to see

A HOMELESS MAN, worn jacket, torn jeans, stumble on the bench he is sitting on. He straightens himself up for a moment. Then bows his head, looking down at his feet.

The Little Girl moves away, standing further down the platform. TITLE READS:

SAFE

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. BACK ROOM OFFICE - DUSK

THE LITTLE GIRL is shoved to the floor; a bad thing to see happen to a child. TITLE READS:

Brooklyn, NY - One Hour Earlier

A HAND reaches down, picks the girl up by the scruff of her neck like she's a stray kitten, and carries her toward

EMILE DOCHESKI, hard bitten Russian Mafia kingpin who worked his way up the ranks body by broken body, most of them rendered so by his own bare hands.

EMILE DOCHESKI
You're lying to me.

WIDE ON THE ROOM:

The bedraggled girl is being held aloft by CHEMYAKIN, a powerful killer; there are a half dozen more Russians spread around the room. Whatever sympathy they have for a terrified little girl is overmastered by their fear of their boss.

The girl, whose name is MEI, speaks in accented English:

MEI
I'm not. I don't know what you're talking about. I don't know what you want from me. I swear I don't.

EMILE DOCHESKI

I have three children. The first thing you learn as a father is to know when your children are lying to you. You are lying to me... and if you don't stop, I'm going to use some of those tortures your people are so famous for on your little body until you tell me what I want to know.

(beat)

My patience is at an end. For the last time. Tell me the numbers.

INT. SCHOOLROOM - SHANGHAI - DAY

A CLASS FILLED with TEENAGED GIRLS; Mei, at ten by far the youngest, is standing by a blackboard covered with equations, speaking confidently in Mandarin:

MEI

< -Two hundred and four, thirty five times. Try it the other way, it adds up to three hundred and fifty. I mean no disrespect, Mr. Sook, but your calculations are wrong.>

MR. SOOK, the teacher, looks at Mei with a tormented expression. TITLE READS:

Shanghai - One Year Earlier

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - SCHOOL - LATER

Mei sits in front of the PRINCIPAL, who taps the desk with his pen.

PRINCIPAL

<We are going to have move you to another school, Mei.>

MEI

<But all my friends are here, and->

PRINCIPAL

<Mei. You are too advanced. A genius. You have to go to a special school, where your talents can be nurtured. You'll make new friends, I promise.>

EXT. STREETS - SHANGHAI - AFTERNOON

Mei walks along the sidewalk with several companions— KAKE, FENG, and JIAN— all carrying schoolbooks.

MEI

<But I don't even like numbers.>

KAKE

<Sure you do. Everyone knows that. You do the math, and we'll do the writing. We'll write to you every week at your school in Beijing.>

MEI

<You promise?>

FENG

<Of course. Think we want to miss out on having a famous friend?>

Mei brightens— when there is a SCREECHING SOUND from behind her, and before any of the kids know what's happening a CAR DOOR is flung open, and

A MAN'S HANDS reach out and grab MEI around the mouth and drag her into the car, slamming the door shut behind her; the CAR SQUEALS AWAY, leaving behind her stunned friends. THE SOUND OF SCREAMING BEGINS ON THE SOUNDTRACK, and we CUT TO:

INT. SPORTS ARENA - NIGHT

A SCREAMING AUDIENCE howling and BOOING -- THE CAMERA BOOMS DOWN into a MIXED MARTIAL ARTS CAGE to find

A FIGHTER'S NAKED BACK as he says his prayer to the stanchion in his corner. Then turns into a CLOSE-UP: this is

LUKE WRIGHT; hardened features, sad eyes that have seen things no one should see. Things he puts out of his mind as he raises his fists, starting forward at the sound of the BELL, and:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

A FURIOUS WOMAN flails away at LUKE, screaming at him at the top of her lungs:

FURIOUS WOMAN

How dare you come here? You have no right! No right! You should be in jail... in jail...

LUKE

I'm sorry ma'am... I'm so sorry.

Luke allows her to beat and tear at his face, his neck, until she is dragged away by family and staff. We see there is a COMATOSE MAN lying prostrate on a hospital bed in the b.g., attached to an IV.

HOLD ON LUKE— his eyes filled with anger and self-loathing.

LUKE

I'm sorry.

INT. CASINO - LATER

DOLLY BEHIND LUKE as he walks purposefully through the cacophonous interior of a run down casino off the main drag.
TITLE READS:

Atlantic City - New Jersey

As Luke turns the corner and heads into a corridor leading toward the back of the casino, and

INT. OFFICE - CASINO - CONTINUOUS

Right into an office where JULIUS BORKOW— an old-school fight arranger— is sitting behind a desk, flanked by several of his bookies and BODYGUARDS. He barely has time to look up before

Luke has grabbed him by the collar and pulled him up over the desk, pounding him into the floor:

LUKE

*You piece of garbage. That kid
should never have been in that cage
with me. He should never have been
in there, you son of a bitch...*

JULIUS'S GUARDS finally manage to pull Luke off their boss, who stands up shakily, wiping the blood from his broken nose:

JULIUS BORKOW

Idiot. You were supposed to go down
in the second round— Do you know
how much money you cost me?

LUKE

Go down? I didn't have *time* to go
down.

(MORE)

LUKE (cont'd)

I came at him like I was in slow motion and he still didn't get his guard up. Where did you find him, the goddamn playground?

JULIUS BORKOW

Youtube, you asshole. Kid was an internet sensation, and you put him in a coma. Which frankly, I do not give a shit about. But you— you cost me a million dollars. Which is nothing, compared to what you cost the Russians. Which they won't forgive me for, since I'm the schmuck that set the whole thing up.

(pauses)

Unless I deliver your head, along with a down payment. You know how they are.

Then suddenly Luke has somehow turned around the arm of the bodyguard holding him. He goes at the guy with a head-butt, and just as it connects we CUT TO:

INT. WAREHOUSE OFFICES - SHANGHAI - AFTERNOON

The door swings open, and MEI is dragged in by THREE TRIAD KILLERS, led by the most fearsome, named YAO CHANG; and is brought before

HAN JIAO— a hard eyed triad warlord. A YOUNG GIRL— BAI YU— only a few years older than Mei, stands behind him.

HAN JIAO

<You are Mei.>

(Mei nods)

<You recognize my niece, Bai Yu?>

MEI

<She's in my class at school.>

HAN JIAO

<She says your mind can count and calculate like a computer. We spoke to your teacher, Mr. Sook, and he said the same thing. Which interests me, because computers are bothersome, and leave trails that are easy to follow. They also say that once you learn something you never forget it. Is this so?>

Mei is trembling, terrified. She shakes her head.

HAN JIAO

<Then we will go to your home and
kill your mother for making such a
stupid girl. Would you like that?>

Mei shakes her head even more vigorously. Tears in her eyes.

HAN JIAO

<So they are telling the truth.>

(Mei nods)

<Good. Then we will watch over
your mother and make sure she is
well taken care of. And you will
go with your new guardian, Chang
Yao, far over the ocean, where our
enemies like to make trouble for us
by following trails left by foolish
computers. Once you are there...>

(smiles)

<You will count for us.>

EXT. STREETS - ATLANTIC CITY - DAY

LUKE drives through the heavy traffic, foot heavy on the
accelerator; dials a number on his cell phone. Gets a
MESSAGE:

WOMAN'S VOICE (MESSAGE)

*Hi, this is Annette. You know what
to do. BEEP.*

LUKE

Call me when you get this, Annie.
I mean right away. If you're out,
don't go home. If I'm scaring you,
that's good. Call me.

Luke presses his phone off, increases his speed, and

INT. HOUSE - ATLANTIC CITY SUBURBS - MOMENTS LATER

Luke opens the door and cautiously enters the living room;
calls out:

LUKE

Annie?

He hurries to the bedroom, then stops in the doorway. He's
seen whatever happened inside the room. He can't take
another step. Then he turns and walks back into the living
room. Sits down on the floor with his legs crossed.

A second later SEVERAL MEN come out of the room Luke was looking into; FIVE OF THEM IN ALL, guns in hand; led by young VASSILY DOCHESKI, son of the Russian Mafia warlord we saw in the earlier scene. CHEMYAKIN, the big bruiser we saw in the earlier scene holding Mei, is there amongst the killers.

VASSILY

That's it? I heard you were some kind of tough guy. No fighting? Just sit on the floor like a dog who wants to die?

Luke doesn't answer. Just stares numbly into space.

CHEMYAKIN

Sorry it had to be so messy. The boy is still learning. And I'm not doctor, but I think she was eating for two. We're like Charlie Manson family, no?

Some of the other Russians force smiles. Grim even for them.

VASSILY

My father wanted to send someone else, but I'm, how do you say, making my bones—

LUKE

You make your bones by killing someone who can hurt you back.
(hard)
Get it over with.

VASSILY

Over? For you? It's not going to be so easy. You cost my father money. Lots of money. And he doesn't like to lose money. He hates losing money more than he likes making it, which is weird, but you know, that's way I'm in analysis.

Vassily walks to the couch, sits down across from the devastated Luke.

VASSILY

We looked into your records. Not much to find. Worked for the city in garbage collection. Sanitation. Good benefits— but no glamor, eh?

(MORE)

VASSILY (cont'd)

(grins)

Father and mother dead. No brothers or sisters, which is too bad, because I would have liked to kill them too. But you loved your wife. We know that. So here's the deal. You're free to go. Live the life we allow you. But we will have eyes on you. Not always, but when you least expect it, we will be there. Anyone you try to make friends with, or even talk to other than, you know, to order a hot dog or something, will go the same way as your wife. Because of you.

(then)

Of course you can always end it. Jump off a bridge, throw yourself in front of a train. Damn your eternal soul to hell, if you believe in that kind of bullshit. Personally I don't, so I would go for it, if I were you. But I'm not you, thank God. So do what you want.

Vassily gestures to his men, and they move toward the door.

VASSILY

If you are still here tomorrow, we kill the landlady... what's her name--? Mrs. Tobolovski. Nice lady.

The Russians leave the house; except for Chemyakin, who lingers in the doorway:

CHEMYAKIN

Clean up the mess, garbage man.

Then he exits as well, slamming the door shut, and

INT. OFFICE - CHINATOWN - NIGHT

A PASSPORT with MEI'S PHOTOGRAPH on it is slammed down on a table, along with a sheaf of legalization documents. TILT UP TO SEE

YAO CHANG, looking at whoever is across the table from him with cold, detached eyes. TITLE READS:

Chinatown - New York City - Three weeks later

AMERICAN VOICE (O.C.)

-All right Chang. She's your daughter, and she's an American citizen.

REVERSE ON NYPD CAPTAIN DONALD WOLF: clad in a casual suit, he has eyes that match the hardness of the hardest criminal.

CAPTAIN WOLF (CONT'D)

-But I had to pull strings. Ain't gonna ask what the deal is with her, either. Your business. I'm just gonna tell you that pulling strings is hard work and hard work don't come free.

YAO CHANG

Your price, Captain Wolf?

CAPTAIN WOLF

Chinatown Precinct take goes up twenty percent. Harlem's clean, but we'll keep 'em off your back if you steer clear of uptown. Bronx 121st and Brooklyn divisions go up ten. Monthly.

YAO CHANG

That's a steep price for a passport and some papers for a little girl.

CAPTAIN WOLF

Things are tough all over. We ain't upped our ask for two years. It was gonna happen. Girl's being thrown in for free.

Yao Chang studies the Captain for a moment, then:

YAO CHANG

Chinatown gets upped ten percent. Bronx and Brooklyn will settle for the current rate and the fact that we won't start shooting cops and their families in the street like dogs at the first sign of pressure.
(then)

Things are tough all over.

INT. AMTRAK TRAIN CAR - DAY

Luke stands in the middle of the crowded car, his eyes numb, a KNAPSACK thrown over his shoulder. A TEENAGER leans over:

TEENAGER

Hey man, didn't I see you fight
mixed, over in--?

LUKE

No.

RACK FOCUS over the Teenager's shoulder: someone who could be
a RUSSIAN THUG is sitting behind him, reading a magazine.

TEENAGER

Are you sure? Cause I follow the
circuit, and--

Luke turns away, moving to the other side of the train car,
and we make a hard cut to:

EXT. STREET - GRAND CENTRAL STATION - DUSK

CLOSE ON LUKE walking in the midst of the incredible rush
hour crowd; directionless, one lost soul among many, and

THE CAMERA BOOMS UP, HIGHER AND HIGHER until Luke is lost
amidst the crush of humanity -- THEN WE ZOOM BACK DOWN at
breakneck speed, and come to a hard STOP ON:

EXT. STREET - CHINATOWN - DAY

-MEI, walking between YAO CHANG and another TRIAD GANGSTER,
moving through the crowded sidewalk. TITLE READS:

One Year Later

More like ten years when it comes to the loss of innocence in
Mei's eyes. She looks at the windows in the buildings they
pass and recites in Chinese:

MEI

<Wei Lu-- Twenty six thousand this
week, twenty six last week.>

(next building)

<Cheng Sao-- Forty two last week,
forty two and three quarters this
week. There's a seven percent
increase in earnings every month.>

(next building)

<The casino. It brought in eight
hundred thousand last week. And
eight hundred thousand this week.>

YAO CHANG

(in English)

Exactly eight hundred thousand?

MEI

It's... almost eight hundred.

YAO CHANG

I'm not asking you if it's almost eight hundred. I want the exact number.

MEI

Seven hundred eighty five thousand, three hundred and seventy dollars.

YAO CHANG

And the week before?

Mei looks crestfallen, the responsibility too much for her.

MEI

It's losing money. But only—

INT. UNDERGROUND CASINO - CHINATOWN - LATER

A MIDDLE AGED ASIAN MAN— HSU LI— undergoes a vicious beating by several TRIAD THUGS.

THE CHINESE CASINO EMPLOYEES are lined up on one side of the main space, watching in horror, most of them averting their eyes, as

HSU LI is beaten across the floor, past SLOT MACHINES, past PAI-GOW TABLES, past ROULETTE WHEELS -- glimpses of an operation one would never expect to see in the heart of the city.

Mei is there too, trying to turn away, but Yao Chang keeps his hand under chin, forcing her to watch. After a moment he lets her go, and

—Yao Chang steps over to the beaten, prostrate man. Suddenly takes out a gun and shoots him; then turns to the horrified casino workers:

YAO CHANG

<You'll have new floor boss tonight. If the tally comes up short again, he won't be the only one who suffers.>

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - LATER

Yao Chang is slurping his noodles, alongside several of his men. Mei is with them, unable to eat a bite. Yao Chang shoots her a sideways look and speaks in English:

YAO CHANG

What?

MEI

Why?

YAO CHANG

Because he was hurting business.
And business is a serious matter.

MEI

I understand business. But why
beat him, if you were going to kill
him anyway?

YAO CHANG

(in Chinese)

<If you're asking me that, it means
you still don't understand
business. Now shut up and eat.>

INT. SOUP KITCHEN - BOWERY - NIGHT

LUKE stands on line for the hot meal being served to a que of
HOMELESS MEN; he looks gaunt and hollowed out, eyes weary and
dull.

20

AT THE TABLES

20

Luke sits off to the side, avoiding all interaction— as many
of the others do— eating his meal in silence.

INT. HOMELESS SHELTER - DOWNTOWN - NIGHT

IN THE SHOWER: Luke washes himself in the grimy facility;
keeping an eye on the other HOMELESS MEN in the bathroom.

22

AT THE SINK: Luke washes his clothes, using soap and water ~~to~~
work out the dirt.

23

IN THE MAIN ROOM:

23

A huge, open space filled with cots, like a bomb shelter
during WW II. Homeless men are crawling into their makeshift
beds, arranging their insane bric a brac with compulsive
specificity.

LUKE sits at the edge of his cot; he takes off his SNEAKERS,
puts them under his cot... then realizes a fragile looking
YOUNG HOMELESS MAN is looking at him.

YOUNG HOMELESS MAN

Nice kicks.

LUKE

They better be here in the morning too, or you'll be wearing them on your ears, 'cause I'll chew your feet off at the goddamned ankles.

The Young Man studies Luke for a moment, then takes off what's left of his own ragged shoes, soles worn completely off. His feet are a bloody, blistered mess.

YOUNG HOMELESS MAN

I could really use some new shoes, man... I'll do anything you want, know what I mean? Whatever gets you through the night. I just can't take another day of—

LUKE

Shut up. Just shut up and take them. I still got my old pair. You go get those feet looked at by a doctor. Gangrene's setting in.

YOUNG HOMELESS MAN

I will. Thank you man. Jesus loves you, brother. Jesus loves you.

The Young Man takes Luke's sneakers and crawls off to a cot several feet away, where he proceeds to put them on his own feet before getting into bed; as the ANNOUNCEMENT COMES:

SHELTER SECURITY (ON SPEAKERS)

Lights out. Everyone find your bed. Lights out.

Luke pulls a HIDDEN FLASK from his jacket pocket, takes a swig, before screwing the cap back on and lying back on his cot, closing his eyes, trying to sink into oblivion, as the shelter lights dim to blackness; and

INT. MEI'S ROOM - APARTMENT - CHINATOWN - NIGHT

IN THE DARKNESS we see MEI'S EYES FLY OPEN as she realizes someone else is in the room with her; she almost screams, but a HAND closes over her mouth, and she sees that it is

LING— A BEAUTIFUL YOUNG CHINESE WOMAN— who shushes her, then indicates over her shoulder, where

IN THE NEXT ROOM: YAO CHANG is visible, asleep in front of the TV set.

LING

<Mei. I have sad news. I heard them talking. Your mother is dead.>

Tears instantly fill Mei's eyes. She can hardly believe it.

LING

<It was an accident. They weren't going to tell you, so you would think she was still alive. But I'm telling you, so you can pray for her soul to find its way to heaven. Please don't say anything. If they know I told you, they'll->

MEI

<I won't say a thing. Thank you.>

Ling rises and sneaks back out of Mei's room, and we

HOLD ON MEI

Face wet with tears, she squeezes her eyes shut, her lips beginning to move in a whispered prayer...

INT. HOMELESS SHELTER - DOWNTOWN - MORNING

Luke, still in his cot, light bathing his bloodshot eyes, grimaces at the sound of tramping feet, babbling voices; the shelter clearing out its residents for the day:

SHELTER SECURITY (ON SPEAKERS)

Everyone up. Shelter needs to be clear by nine. Bed reservations for tonight start at three thirty.

Luke pulls himself upright, wincing from a pounding headache. He looks over and sees

THE YOUNG HOMELESS MAN is still in his cot, eyes open, not moving -- HIS BARE FEET are sticking out from under his blanket, sneakers gone.

Luke lurches over, pulls the blanket down-- the Young Man has a WOUND in the side of his neck. He's dead.

Luke looks spins around, nearly throwing up from the violence of his own movement... tries to see who might have done this among the hundreds of homeless men gathering their things, heading for the exits...

Luke drops to the floor, HIS POV scanning all the feet moving around -- But it's impossible to make anything out, so

Luke rises again, then sits down next to the dead Young Man. Passes his hand over his eyes.

26

HIGH ANGLE OF THE SHELTER

26

As Luke sits beside the body, not moving. TIME DISSOLVE: all the homeless men disappear, to be replaced by a half dozen SECURITY GUARDS gathered around the cot shared by Luke and the dead body.

SECURITY GUARD #1

You want to tell us what happened?

CLOSE ON LUKE: we never see the guards, just his tormented face.

LUKE

They killed him. For his sneakers.

My sneakers. I gave them to him.

(looks up)

You guys are a hell of a crack security squad, you know that?

SECURITY GUARD #2 (O.C.)

You were right here. You could have said something...

HAND HOLDS UP LUKE'S JACKET in the f.g., takes out the HIDDEN FLASK.

SECURITY GUARD #2 (O.C.)

-But you were too busy sleeping off this contraband, right? You come into this shelter again, I'll run your ass back out into the street.

EXT. AIRPORT - MORNING

A SHANGHAI AIRLINES JET roars overheard -- TOUCHES DOWN on the TARMAC, and

INT. INTERNATIONAL TERMINAL - MOMENTS LATER

HAN JIAO, the Triad Warlord from Shanghai, flanked by SEVERAL BODYGUARDS, exits into the waiting area, where he is met by YAO CHANG and a host of other TRIAD SOLDIERS. As they walk to the exit, we HEAR ON THE SOUNDTRACK:

HAN JIAO (V.O.)

<Look at this number.>

INT. OFFICE - CHINATOWN - LATER

MEI is sitting across from Han Jiao and Yao Chang. Her feet dangle above the floor. The Triad boss pushes a piece of paper across the desk to Mei, who picks it up and looks at it:

THE PAPER is covered by A TREMENDOUS AMOUNT OF HANDWRITTEN NUMBERS, from top to bottom.

Mei's eyes scan it for a second, then she looks back up at Han Jiao.

HAN JIAO

<I want you to take this to your room, and I want you to memorize it. Then-->

MEI

<I've memorized it.>

The old boss studies the little girl for a moment.

HAN JIAO

<This an extremely important number. For your mother's sake, answer me carefully. Are you sure you have memorized it?>

Mei's eyes flinch at the mention of her mother, but she keeps it together, and answers:

MEI

<I can repeat it for you, but it would be long and boring.>

HAN JIAO

(smiles)

<Look at that. Here hardly for a year, and already she has American attitude.>

YAO CHANG

<If she says she remembers it, she remembers it. I can vouch for that.>

Han Jiao removes a lighter and sets the paper on fire, before dropping it into an ashtray and letting it burn.

EXT. STREETS - LOWER EAST SIDE - DAY

Luke moves through the crowded avenue, avoiding pedestrians, when— BOOM— a WILD EYED MAN walking in the other direction bumps into him; shoves him, and goes on, shouting over his shoulder:

WILD EYED MAN
Watch where you're going, man! You
can get your asked kicked for that,
homes...

INT. KOREAN DELI - LATER

Luke steps up the counter, next in line, and puts down a COFFEE AND SOME DONUTS. The KOREAN GROCER tallies it up:

KOREAN GROCER
Four dollars fifty five cents.

Luke reaches into his pocket, fishes around. Can't find anything. Tries again, but still comes up empty, and:

KOREAN GROCER
You got no money, get out of line.

LUKE
I have money, I just—

QUICK FLASH: THE WILD-EYED MAN bumping into Luke on the street; HAND GOING INTO LUKE'S POCKET, and

BACK TO LUKE: He closes his eyes, unable to believe his terrible luck. He actually starts to LAUGH. He laughs until he's holding his sides, everyone in the store backing away from him; then from behind him:

VOICE (O.C.)
This guy giving you trouble?

A PLAIN-CLOTHES COP moves in, getting into Luke's space.

KOREAN GROCER
He's crazy, officer. Get him out
of here, okay?

EXT. KOREAN DELI - CONTINUOUS

The cop— name of MEARS— leads Luke out of the deli, holding him roughly by the shoulder:

MEARS
 Alright, buddy. You want to laugh,
 do it out where—

Then the cop stops. His eyes narrow with recognition. And:

MEARS
 Jesus Christ.

INT. UNMARKED CAR - A MOMENT LATER

ANOTHER COP in the driver's seat, named LASKY, looks back as MEARS shoves Luke into the back and slams the door shut.

MEARS
 Look what the cat dragged in.

Lasky studies Luke for a moment, then:

LASKY
 Unbelievable. Look at him.

MEARS
 Look? How about the smell?
 (then)
 Call the guys.

Lasky starts the car, reaching for his cell phone, and

EXT. CHINATOWN STREET - DAY

Mei is led toward a BLACK SEDAN, surrounded by TRIAD GUARDS. There are THREE OTHER CARS beside it, for what will amount to a kind of motorcade. Yao Chang is there with Mei, although the elder boss is not. We hear, IN V.O. HIS VOICE:

HAN JIAO (V.O.)
*<-- When you arrive, you will meet
 a man who will have another number
 on another sheet of paper. You will
 memorize that number as well...>*

INT. LIMOUSINE - CONTINUOUS

Mei is squeezed in, almost comically, between Triad Guards, as the V.O. CONTINUES:

HAN JIAO (V.O.)
*<-- Then Yao Chang will take you to
 a second location, where your final
 instructions will be given to you.>*

Yao Chang looks back at Mei, gives her a forced smile:

YAO CHANG

You're learning fast, Mei. If you do this job well, you have a bright future in business with Uncle Han.

Mei doesn't know what else to do, so she smiles back, when—
SCREECH— **BAM!**

THE LIMO is suddenly slammed into by AN SUV from the side; everyone inside shaken up, and by the time they get their bearings— BLAM! BLAM!

GUNSHOTS rip through the windows, killing the GUARDS next to Mei instantly -- MORE GUNSHOTS take out the driver, and Mei looks out to see

SEVERAL RUSSIAN MAFIA KILLERS approaching the car, then

YAO CHANG

I'm sorry. They can't have you.

Mei finds herself looking down the barrel of Yao Chang's gun, but A BULLET SHATTERS the GLASS NEAR HIS FACE, momentarily blinding him, and

Mei's instincts kick in— she turns the car door handle, pushes the door open and dives out of the car, staying low, but

36 A BIG RUSSIAN GRABS HER off the sidewalk, swings her around, and throws her into the back of the SUV, as

YAO CHANG recovers quickly enough to put his car into reverse, PLOWING THROUGH several of the Russian killers, and

THE THREE REMAINING TRIAD CARS disgorge their SOLDIERS, all of whom begin FIRING as the RUSSIANS, dropping several of them, but it's too late, because

THE SUV CARRYING MEI

Has reversed and cut across the street, just as the FLOW OF TRAFFIC starts up; people racing by, braking, creating CHAOS in fear of the gun battle erupting all around them; and

EXT. WATERFRONT ALLEY - DAY

POW!— A FIST SLAMS into Luke's face, and he goes tumbling backwards, right into the arms of

A PLAIN-CLOTHES COP, who spins him around, knees him in the gut, and leaves him panting on the pavement. WIDER SHOWS:

LUKE IS SURROUNDED BY SEVEN DETECTIVES, all hard-bitten and utterly unsympathetic. Detective Mears steps over as Luke drags himself back up to his feet:

MEARS

So. How's your day been, Luke?

LUKE

Started lousy, but it's looking up.

MEARS

(grins)

Luke Wright. The Big Apple's best kept secret. You always could take a shot pretty good. But you know what your real talent is? You're a uniter. I mean, who'd a thought us and the Russkies would ever be on the same page about anything?

Another cop— REDDICK— KICKS Luke in the thigh, and he goes down to one knee, grimacing from the pain.

REDDICK

When we heard what Docheski did to you, I had to laugh. I mean, we felt bad for Annie and all, but them's the breaks. She knew who she was with.

LASKY

When word come up from the streets you were around we couldn't believe our ears. Why would you come back here, instead of splitting for some far away place? Like the moon.

LUKE

I missed home.

Lasky KICKS Luke behind the other leg, dropping him to both knees.

LASKY

This city isn't home to you. Not any more. Not after what you did.

A PUNCH from another cop— BENOIT— doubles Luke over.

BENOIT

We were kings, you son of a bitch. Now we're a bunch of goddamn serfs.

A KICK puts Luke on the ground. He drags himself back up to his knees.

LASKY

When you come back, we figured you want to die, but don't have the balls to do yourself just yet. Got a pool going, when you're gonna end it, and how— Bus? Train? Bridge? Junk—?

Lasky slaps Luke across the face— once, twice— then whispers:

LASKY

—I got my money on suicide by cop.

Lasky takes out his .45 holds it out to Luke.

LASKY

Come on. Take it. Take a shot. Last thing you'll ever do, but you'll go happy. Come on.

The detectives surrounding them have their hands ready to go for their guns. Luke wipes the blood from his nose, which just serves to spread it across his face, and slowly stands.

LUKE

Actually, my real talent is costing other people money. You ought to know that, Lasky. You're gonna lose that bet. Unless you want to shoot me in the back—

Luke turns away, pushing past the nearest detectives.

LUKE

—Wouldn't be your first time.

Lasky turns his gun around, points it at Luke's back. Then holsters it.

LASKY

Why don't you just end it? What are you waiting for— more people around you to die?

WIDE ON THE WATERFRONT ALLEY as Luke limps away from the circle of cops, LASKY'S VOICE CALLING after him:

LASKY

—What are you waiting for?

INT. BACK ROOM OFFICE - DUSK

CLOSE ON MEI'S TERRIFIED FACE, as a heavily accented MAN'S VOICE GROWLS:

EMILE DOCHESKI (O.C.)
My patience is at an end. For the
last time... Tell me the numbers.

WIDE ON THE OFFICE:

We are back at the scene from the beginning of the movie;
Mei is being held up by the huge Russian Killer— CHEMYAKIN—
in front of Emile Docheski, the Russian Mafia kingpin.

Mei is terrified, shaking, tears flowing from her eyes. But she says nothing.

Emile Docheski studies the little girl for a moment, then gestures to Chemyakin, who sets her back on her feet:

EMILE DOCHESKI
You are a brave girl. And clever.
But do you know how we knew exactly
where you were going to be, and
when?

MEI
Someone told you.

EMILE DOCHESKI
That's right. But can you guess
who?

Docheski leaves the question in the air for a moment, then turns to

HIS SON VASSILY; the first time we've seen him in this scene.

EMILE DOCHESKI
(in Russian)
<Let the bitch in.>

Vassily nods at one of the guards, who opens a side door, and

LING— the beautiful Asian woman who told Mei about her mother's death, steps into the room.

EMILE DOCHESKI
Your friend. The one who told you
what the scum who took you from
your home would not. She works for
us, with a smile. Ling?

Ling approaches Mei, kneels in front of her:

LING
(in Chinese)
<Mei. I tell these men what they
want to know, and they pay me more
money than I've ever seen. Do the
same, and they will help you too.>

Mei looks at Ling for a moment, then:

MEI
<You are a stupid woman.>

VASSILY
In English.

MEI
<You don't understand business.
You gave them what they want, now
they're going to kill you.>

Ling blinks... the words stinging her... awakening her.

VASSILY
I said talk in English.
(then; to Ling)
Well?

LING
I... she won't tell me any—

PHUT! Ling is BLOWN out of the FRAME. Mei looks straight ahead, traumatized, but not surprised. Vassily turns his SILENCED GUN on Mei:

VASSILY
My father is a patient man. I'm
not. Tell him what he wants to
know or I'll—

A HARD KNOCK COMES from the front door of the office; every head turns, as a VOICE COMES FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR:

VOICE (O.S.)
This is the NYPD. Open the door.

VASSILY
What the hell—?

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

A DOZEN COPS CLAD IN BODY ARMOR, armed to the teeth, crouch at the ready; the LEAD COP SHOUTS:

LEAD COP
We got reports of a disturbance.
Open the door or we come in
blasting.

INT. BACK ROOM OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The Russians are all sweating, weapons at the ready:

VASSILY
Bullshit, blue. You come in here
you go out feet first, swear on my
mother.

THEN A SOUND draws his attention — and every head in the room turns to see that

MEI IS GONE. A CLICK, and they spin around to see

THE BACK ROOM DOOR— where Ling came from— SWINGING SHUT, and:

EMILE DOCHESKI
(hisses)
Bring her back here.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE THE RUSSIAN'S BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

HALF A DOZEN POLICE CARS are blocking the street; the officer in charge, SGT. MACKELVANE, listens to his ear-piece, then speaks into his CELL PHONE:

SGT. MACKELVANE (INTO PHONE)
They're not cooperating. What's
the order?

INT. POLICE OFFICE - DOWNTOWN MANHATTAN - CONTINUOUS

CAPTAIN DONALD WOLF, alone in his office, feet up on his desk, answers his CELL PHONE:

CAPTAIN WOLF (INTO PHONE)
Hold your horses. I'll get back to
you.
(switches to the other
line)
Alright. We got them pinned. You
know what I want.

INT. OFFICE - CHINATOWN - CONTINUOUS

YAO CHANG, watched by his furious boss, HAN JIAO, snarls into the phone:

YAO CHANG (INTO PHONE)
We have a deal. Get the girl.
Alive, if you can, dead if you
can't.

CAPTAIN WOLF (ON PHONE)
*We go in, Brooklyn take goes up ten
percent. That's the new deal.*
(then, before YAO can
answer)
Hold on, I got an incoming call.

INT. POLICE OFFICE - DOWNTOWN MANHATTAN - CONTINUOUS

Captain Wolf leans back, answers the other line, like a trader doing business:

CAPTAIN WOLF (INTO PHONE)
What's up, Emile?

INT. BACK ROOM OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Emile Docheski bite back on his urge to shout, speaks evenly:

EMILE DOCHESKI
Back your men off, Wolf. Whatever
the Chinese are offering you, I'll
up it by five percent.

Emile Docheski looks into the room, face tight— like—
"Where's the girl?" and

46 IN THE BACK ROOM: The door is kicked open by CHEMYAKIN, 46
followed by another THUG, and they step into

47 AN EMPTY ROOM. Chemyakin immediately runs to the closed 47
bathroom door, turns the handle— but it's been locked.

INT. POLICE OFFICE - DOWNTOWN MANHATTAN - CONTINUOUS

Captain Wolf swivels in his chair, switching to the other line:

CAPTAIN WOLF (INTO PHONE)
Sorry, Yao. Russians are offering
to up Brooklyn's take by seven
percent, Bronx the same.

(MORE)

CAPTAIN WOLF (INTO PHONE) (cont'd)

I talked to my guys, and they're willing to go to war for this. You'll be stuck between us and the Russians, like Hitler fighting on two fronts. So think hard before you fly off the handle.

YAO CHANG (ON PHONE)

Ten percent, both precincts, final offer.

INT. BATHROOM - BACK ROOM OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The door is kicked open, and Chemyakin bursts in; only to see

THE NARROW BATHROOM WINDOW is OPEN: He runs over, looks out, and sees

50 MEI'S LITTLE FORM hopping down off the drainpipe she climbed down, three storeys down, then she disappears into the back alley behind the building, and

INT. POLICE OFFICE - DOWNTOWN MANHATTAN - CONTINUOUS

Captain Wolf thinks for a moment, his mind turning over the possibilities; then:

CAPTAIN WOLF (INTO PHONE)

Hey, Mack. Both these bastards are willing pay a stiff price for this little chink girl. Whatever she's got, I want it.

EXT. STREET - OUTSIDE THE RUSSIAN'S BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Sgt. Mackelvane, listening to Captain Wolf in his ear piece, answers:

SGT. MACKELVANE (INTO PHONE)

So what's our play?

CAPTAIN WOLF (ON PHONE)

I get the Russians to drop their guard, and you go in. Get her alive. If she catches a bullet, take out every last one of those Bolshevik scumbags.

INT. BACK ROOM OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Emile Docheski listens to Captain Wolf's voice come in over his PHONE:

CAPTAIN WOLF (ON PHONE)
*All right, Emile. Your offer's
 good, but only because I like you
 better. I'm gonna call the guys
 off.*

Emile takes that in, then:

EMILE DOCHESKI (INTO PHONE)
*Bullshit. You are a greedy
 bastard, Wolf. You got the scent
 of something good, and now you want
 it for yourself. But before you
 send your men in here with guns
 blazing, I should tell you— she's
 gone.*

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS - DUSK

Mei moves low behind a row of garbage cans... MORE POLICE
 CARS are coming her way, so she ducks into another alley, as
 we HEAR ON THE SOUNDTRACK:

CAPTAIN WOLF (V.O.)
What the hell do you mean, gone?

INT. POLICE OFFICE - DOWNTOWN MANHATTAN - CONTINUOUS

Captain Wolf is now leaning forward, body tense. No longer
 feeling so relaxed, as he listens to Docheski on his PHONE:

EMILE DOCHESKI (ON PHONE)
*I mean she escaped, and with all
 your men out there we can't follow.
 I suggest a truce, until we find
 her. Trust me, if the Chinese find
 her first, it's going to be
 something you will live to regret.*

CAPTAIN WOLF (INTO PHONE)
 What the does she have, Docheski?

EMILE DOCHESKI (ON PHONE)
Do we have a truce, Captain Wolf?

Captain Wolf's jaw tightens... thinks about it hard, then:

EXT. STREET - OUTSIDE THE RUSSIAN'S BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

THE HEAVILY ARMORED COPS come rushing out of the building,
 getting into their vehicles -- WE HEAR SGT. MACKELVANE'S
 VOICE ON THEIR RADIOS:

SGT. MACKELVANE (V.O.)
*-The girl is Chinese, eleven years
 old. Speaks Mandarin and English.
 A photo of her is being
 disseminated. You are to find her
 and bring her straight to Center
 Street...*

QUICK CUTS:

57 RUSSIAN MAFIA KILLERS GETTING INTO THEIR CARS, others moving
 into the streets on foot, eyes scanning the neighborhood:

SGT. MACKELVANE (V.O.)
*-If the bad guys get her, it's your
 asses. Move.*

INT. OFFICE - CHINATOWN - CONTINUOUS

Yao Chang looks into the cold eyes of his boss, Han Jiao.

YAO CHANG
 <The police have screwed us.>

HAN JIAO
 <Is that so?>
 (then)
 <A man who has only one way to get
 what he wants is an idiot. Still--
 if you don't find the girl before
 the police or the Russians do, your
 head will decorate the desk in my
 office back at home in Shanghai.>

WIDE SHOT OF THE ROOM-- the first in this sequence-- shows that
 the two men are surrounded by over A DOZEN TRIAD KILLERS. A
 silent beat, then:

YAO CHANG
 <Let's go to war.>

INT. SUBWAY STATION - BROOKLYN - DUSK

A TRAIN RUSHES PAST IN THE F.G. -- When it clears we see,
 across the tracks, THE FIGURE OF A MAN shuffling along the
 edge of the far platform. He stops, takes out a BOTTLE,
 takes a swig, then screws the cap back on. Then tosses the
 bottle down onto the tracks, where it shatters. A few people
 move away, minding their own business.

CLOSE ON LUKE

The blood has dried on his face. His eyes are tired, numb. He has finally had it. He closes his eyes, listens to the sounds of the trains rumbling in the tunnels beyond. Looks down at the tracks, then into the tunnel, in anticipation of the coming TRAIN.

Luke's features tighten— he's going to do it. To jump. Then he sees something, from the corner of his eye. And despite himself he turns:

MEI

Has appeared on the platform. A little Asian girl moving through the sparse crowd.

This was the opening scene of the movie. But now we see it from Luke's P.O.V., and

Luke's eyes narrow— something about the way she is moving, the look in her wide eyes. The girl is alone, and clearly terrified. But of what?

Luke's moment has been spoiled. He steps back away from edge of the platform, and stumbles awkwardly onto a bench, which

-Attracts Mei's attention. She looks at him for a moment, and

Luke's not getting involved. He bows his head, looks down at his feet.

SOUND OF AN APPROACHING TRAIN. Mei keeps moving, every bone in her body tense, then

VOICES BARKING IN RUSSIAN become audible from the STAIRWELL BEHIND LUKE

THE TRAIN PULLS into the station. Mei is practically jumping out of her skin, impatient for the doors to open, when

FIVE RUSSIAN KILLERS

Led by CHEMAKIN, move past Luke onto the subway platform. One of them talking into a CELL PHONE.

MEI is trying her best to keep out of sight, waiting impatiently for the subway doors to open, and

CLOSE ON LUKE: He can't help himself. He looks up, and his eyes open wide, as he

RECOGNIZES CHEMYAKIN— who, along with other four killers— has finally spotted Mei, just as

THE SUBWAY DOORS SLIDE OPEN, and Mei dashes inside, but

THE RUSSIANS hurry and get into the train, three or four cars behind her.

HOLD ON LUKE: Stunned. Too stunned to move. He looks into the train, and sees

MEI HURRYING toward the other end of the train— SWISH PAN TO THE RUSSIANS, as they begin moving after her, then

THE SUBWAY CAR DOORS ALL SLIDE SHUT.

SOUND OF A HEARTBEAT. LUKE STANDS UP. THE TRAIN STARTS MOVING... and

LUKE STARTS WALKING... THEN TROTting... THEN RUNNING alongside the train, which is picking up speed, and just as it looks like it's going to pass him by

Luke grabs onto the gate at the end of the LAST CAR, nearly yanking his arm out of its socket. He's dragged along painfully for several feet, about to smash into the dividing wall, then he pulls himself up and onto the tiny platform at the rear of the subway car, missing being squashed by inches, as

60

THE TRAIN PLUNGES INTO BLACKNESS, and

60

Luke tries to open the door, but it's LOCKED. He tries to smash the glass window with his fist— but it's too hard. He hits it with his elbow, cracking it— hits it again, and it breaks.

Luke reaches in and tries to open the door from the inside, but it's LOCKED THAT WAY, TOO, and

INT. COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - POLICE HEADQUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

A POLICE TECH looks at the computer display in front of him; speaks into his HEADSET:

POLICE TECH

I lost my lock on the Russkie's cell on Jay Street. Sounds like they went into the subway station, Manhattan bound.

INT. SUBWAY CAR - CONTINUOUS

Mei hurries into the next car, tears in her eyes, weaving through commuters toward the front of the train, while

THE RUSSIANS, still several cars back, push through the throng, making their way toward her; then there is a BLAST OF LIGHT and a sudden RUSH OF SOUND AS

THE TRAIN EXITS THE TUNNEL ONTO ELEVATED TRACKS, and

EXT. REAR OF TRAIN - CONTINUOUS

Luke grabs the gate tight as the train bursts out into the open air, heading for the BRIDGE that will take it into MANHATTAN, skyline looming in the distance.

But Luke isn't waiting. Not any more. He sticks a foot atop the gate, reaches up, and grabs the top of the train car. He snarls, maximum effort, and pulls himself up to the top of the car...

Luke throws himself into a forward run, keeping low, touching his hands to the roof of the car as he goes, making up for the precarious balance with a constant forward momentum... reaches the end of the car and

JUMPS TO THE NEXT CAR

Staying atop the roof for maximum speed, his heart pounding in his chest, and

64

WIDE ON THE TRAIN

64

SHOWS THE INCREDIBLE IMAGE OF LUKE RUNNING ATOP THE TRAIN CARS -- SILHOUETTED BY THE SETTING SUN, THE CORDS OF THE BRIDGE WHIPPING PAST IN THE F.G. as he gains on

THE RUSSIANS, visible through the windows below as they move inexorably forward towards the front of the train, where

INT. FIRST SUBWAY CAR - CONTINUOUS

Mei comes to a stop; there is nowhere left for her to go. Surrounded by commuters in the car. Mei can't help herself, she shouts:

MEI
Help! Help me!

Startled looks, but no one moves. THE RUSSIANS have almost reached the end of the connecting subway car, when

66

LUKE DROPS DOWN

66

From the top of the train, right in front of the FIRST RUSSIAN KILLER -- Luke head-butts the stunned man, sending him stumbling backward; the SECOND RUSSIAN comes up with a KNIFE, but

Luke catches his arm, twists it backward, breaking it, then comes up with an elbow that crushes the man's windpipe. Keeping hold of him Luke spins around and KICKS THE THIRD RUSSIAN in the groin, doubling him over. Then, holding onto his guy for leverage, spins himself around and knees the man across the head, knocking him flat to the subway floor...

COMMUTERS SCREAM and get out of the way, pressing toward the back of the subway car, as

Luke drops the guy he was holding onto. Chemyakin and the remaining killer try to regain their bearings... then Chemyakin's eyes widen:

CHEMYAKIN

You... the garbage collector?

LUKE

You got bad information. I never collected garbage—

Chemyakin draws a .45 AUTOMATIC. Luke's hand flies up, throwing the KNIFE he took from the second man, which hits Chemyakin in the neck, knocking him back into the last KILLER— and like lightning Luke snaps forward, grabs Chemyakin's gun hand, twisting it around and

BLOWS the LAST KILLER RIGHT OFF HIS FEET. Chemyakin drops to his back, gasping in pain. Luke steps over Chemyakin, points the .45 at his face:

LUKE

—I disposed of it.

BOOM! SCREAMS from the HANDFUL OF COMMUTERS still in the subway car. Luke looks at them:

LUKE

Don't lose sleep. He had it coming.

INT. FIRST SUBWAY CAR - CONTINUOUS

Mei is standing in the middle of the car, unable to believe her eyes, as

68 Luke takes the CELL PHONE from a dead Russian's pocket— the one who was speaking on it at the station— and pulls out his WALLET as well. He turns and starts walking toward the first subway car -- then pauses in the space between cars and bends over, throwing up over the side.

69 Luke straightens out, starts forward, then turns to the side again, puking a second time. And one of those extra ones, where nothing comes out. Then Luke pulls it together and walks unsteadily into the first subway car, as the train finally pulls to a stop in the station. He approaches Mei:

LUKE

Hey... you alright?

The doors open. Everyone in the car instantly blows out of there, fleeing onto the platform. Mei stands still, not answering.

LUKE

It's okay. I'm not going to—

The doors start to close, and Mei dashes out just as the doors shut behind her, trapping Luke inside the train, which starts moving again.

LUKE

Shit.

EXT. SUBWAY STATION - A MOMENT LATER

Luke appears in between the cars of the moving train, climbs over the gate, and jumps off the subway car, hitting the platform hard, going into a roll that nearly carries him back up to his feet. Nearly. He swears under his breath and looks up, to see

MEI, disappearing amidst the scattering crowd, heading into a connecting passageway, and

Luke gets to his feet, sticking the gun under his jacket, and hurries after Mei, keeping to the side of the passage... he sees SEVERAL UNIFORMED COPS moving ahead of him, and hears on their WALKIES:

VOICE OVER WALKIES

*—Once caught she is to be brought
to Captain Wolf at Center Street.
This is a code red order...*

CLOSE ON LUKE: His jaw tightens. Now he knows he's really in the middle of something.

He redoubles his step, passing by the police, just some ragged guy getting the hell out of the station along with the rest of the crowd, when

-he spots Mei hurrying up the stairs toward the street on the other side of the entrance; Luke turns and hustles up the stairs closer to him, hoping to head her off when he reaches the

EXT. STREET - DOWNTOWN - DUSK

-Filled with pedestrians, sidewalks still crowded at the tail end of rush hour. Luke looks around himself, but he's lost sight of

MEI -- Who can see Luke through the throng of pedestrians she's moving behind. She turns to continue across the street, when

A HAND CLAMPS ONTO HER ARM, and she looks up to see

DETECTIVES REDDICK and KOLFAX- two of the seven guys who gave Luke his beating earlier.

Reddick, who has hold of her arm, smiles:

REDDICK

Easy there, hon. We're the police.
Everything's alright. What's your
name, hon?

Mei is stunned, silent. Reddick turns to Kolfax:

REDDICK

This is her. You got the picture
up?

Detective Kolfax leans into the BLACK UNMARKED CAR parked at the curb; he looks at the LED DISPLAY by the dash showing the PHOTO of MEI that Captain Wolf disseminated:

KOLFAX

They all look alike to me, but
yeah, I think it's-

WHAM! The car door is slammed shut on Kolfax's leg. Kolfax screams in pain- as his arm is grabbed, and

REDDICK turns right into HIGH KICK that catches him right in the throat- he drops to the ground, letting go of Mei's arm and

LUKE smashes Kolfax's head into the door, knocking him cold, then

-Luke quickly turns and catches Mei before she can run again.

LUKE

Hey. Not so fast.

THEN MEI SCREAMS and Luke turns around just as

REDDICK manages to stop gasping and pulls out his GUN, but

LUKE steps down on his wrist, crushing it hard. Reddick grimaces, his eyes bugging in surprise as he recognizes:

REDDICK

Luke?

LUKE

Fuckin' New York City. Don't see someone for years, then you bump into them twice on the same day.

And Luke KICKS Reddick right in the head, knocking him out.

Luke turns toward Mei, who is trying to squirm away from him:

LUKE

Hey. I'm not gonna hurt you. I promise. You just have to—

-It's then that Luke sees that not everyone on the street is moving in the opposite direction from them, as they ought to be, because

A HALF DOZEN RUSSIAN MAFIA SOLDIERS

Are getting out of TWO CARS that have stopped on the other side of the street... reaching into their jackets as they approach, and

LUKE

What the hell did you do, kid?

But there is no time for conversation— Luke reaches into the pocket of the unconscious Kolfax, who is slumped over the seat of the unmarked car— finds the CAR KEYS— then dumps him onto the pavement.

Luke lifts Mei into the air and puts her in the passenger seat before sliding in next to her, just as

BAM! A BULLET SHATTERS the car window. Luke ducks, pushes Mei's head down, turns the key in the ignition, puts the car in reverse and steps on the gas... he peeks up just enough to see

THE RUSSIAN MOBSTERS right behind him— and he drives into the LEAD MAN, hurling him back into the street in a heap, then

Luke puts the car into drive and takes off— well, drives, at any rate— rush hour is not quite over— into the still heavy traffic, and

INT. UNMARKED CAR - CONTINUOUS

Luke looks at Mei, who is frozen with fear:

LUKE

Listen to me. You obviously know those men chasing you are bad men. The man those detectives were going take you to is worse. You need to tell me why they're after you.

(nothing)

Do you speak English?

Then Luke accidentally SIDESWIPEs a truck— drawing HONKS and SHOUTS:

LUKE

Damn. Haven't driven in forever.
Can hardly remember how to—

A BULLET PUNCHES THROUGH the rear window, shutting Luke up. He looks in the rearview mirror and sees

THE TWO CARS FILLED WITH RUSSIANS coming up behind him; SEVERAL OF THE MOBSTERS leaning out of the windows, FIRING.

EXT. STREETS - DOWNTOWN - CONTINUOUS

PEDESTRIANS SHOUT and run up onto the sidewalks as LUKE drives the unmarked car in the narrow space between the slow moving traffic and the sidewalk, followed closely by the RUSSIANS; and

INT. BACK ROOM OFFICE - BROOKLYN - CONTINUOUS

Emile Docheski is on the phone, only a handful of BODYGUARDS remaining with him:

EMILE DOCHESKI

<-What do you mean Chemyakin and the others disappeared?>

INT. RUSSIAN CAR - CONTINUOUS

A RUSSIAN MOBSTER shouts into his phone over the din of GUNFIRE and screeching tires:

RUSSIAN MOBSTER (INTO PHONE)
 <They never came out of the
 station. But we are after the
 girl. Someone else has taken her.>
 (listens)
 <No, not the police. He nearly
 killed a couple of cops.>
 (listens again)
 <No, not the Chinese, either. I
 don't know who the hell he is.>

INT. BACK ROOM OFFICE - BROOKLYN - CONTINUOUS

Emile Docheski barks sharply:

EMILE DOCHESKI
 <Then kill him, and take the girl
 alive. If you can't, then you kill
 her, too. No one gets her but me.>

INT. UNMARKED CAR - CONTINUOUS - DUSK

Luke grits his teeth as another SHOT punches through the window, too close to Mei's head. He curses under his breath, tears down a narrow side street, followed closely by the Russians— and is about to turn onto the next avenue, when:

MEI
 The other way.

Luke shoots Mei a look— then a double-take; so she does speak English.

MEI
Avenue B— cars go the other way!

LUKE
 Yeah. I know.

78

HE TURNS THE CAR RIGHT INTO THE WAY OF THE ONCOMING TRAFFIC, staying close to the sidewalk, cars grazing the side of the unmarked car, and Mei shouts:

MEI
Are you a crazy man?

Luke swerves hard, right before a BUS NEARLY HITS THEM -- But the FIRST RUSSIAN CAR IS NOT SO LUCKY, and

THE BUS HITS THEM HEAD ON

Sending them crashing ass over teakettle across the middle of the street, scattering SCREAMING PEDESTRIANS in every direction until it finally comes to a bone-crunching halt. Traffic on avenue B is totally screwed forever, as

79

LUKE SWERVES onto a side-street, driving in the right direction again, but

79

THE SECOND RUSSIAN CAR

Tears right up a crowded sidewalk, closing in on the unmarked car again, and

INT. UNMARKED CAR - CONTINUOUS

Luke turns to Mei, voice calm despite everything:

LUKE

If this goes on, lots of innocent people are gonna get hurt. Do you want that?

Mei shakes her head.

LUKE

Me neither. I'm going to get rid of the men chasing us. Believe me when I tell you I mean you no harm.

A look passes between the two of them. Luke turns, then pushes the car to a higher speed and takes a corner hard.

EXT. SIDE STREET - DOWNTOWN - A MOMENT LATER

THE RUSSIAN CAR comes screeching around the corner to see

THE UNMARKED CAR SWERVING SIDEWAYS in the middle of the street, screeching tires sending up a haze of grey smoke...

THE RUSSIAN CAR screeches up right in front of it, and the FOUR MOBSTERS fling open the doors, but see there is no one in the unmarked car, and

LUKE COMES OUT FROM THE SIDE -- FIRING THE GUN HE TOOK ON THE TRAIN-- He takes down the FIRST THREE MEN INSTANTLY. He is about to take down the DRIVER, who hasn't gotten his gun out yet, but Luke is out of bullets, so

LUKE THROWS HIS GUN at the Driver— but when Luke throws his gun he isn't screwing around, like in the WW II movies— when Luke throws his gun it whips through the air and smashes the Driver's head in with bone-crunching finality, dropping him on the spot.

Without missing a beat Luke scoops up the GUN out of the DRIVER'S HAND, then, the SOUND OF SIRENS GROWING CLOSER, he hurries to a DOORWAY where

MEI is crouching, pressed tight into the nook against the wall.

LUKE

You okay?

(Mei nods)

Then let's get out of here.

Luke reaches his hand out. Mei looks at him for a second, then:

MEI

I'm not five years old.

Luke takes in the little girl. She is fiercer than she looks. He nods:

LUKE

Keep up.

He turns and heads quickly up the street. Mei follows him, catching up and staying at his side -- THE CAMERA BOOMS UP AS

LUKE AND MEI

Head into the avenue beyond, blending into the crowd, SIRENS FILLING THE AIR, and we make a hard cut to:

INT. POLICE OFFICES - NIGHT

PHONES RINGING EVERYWHERE -- TELEVISIONS showing reports of the TRAFFIC STOPPAGE and carnage downtown. CAMERA MOVES through the bustle, stopping at an office door, through which

CAPTAIN WOLF

Is visible, pacing anxiously, phone pressed to his ear.

CAPTAIN WOLF

You had her, and you lost her?

EXT. STREET - DOWNTOWN - CONTINUOUS

DETECTIVE KOLFAX— face badly bruised— is on his cell, while behind him MEDICS are lifting Detective Reddick into an AMBULANCE:

KOLFAX
We didn't lose her. She was taken
by force.
(listens)
No, not the Russians. It was,
well... it was Luke Wright.

INT. CAPTAIN WOLF'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Captain Wolf stands still. Can't believe what he just heard.

CAPTAIN WOLF
Did you just say what I thought you
said?

Then a POLICE LT.— name of TEAGUE— enters the office:

LT. TEAGUE
Captain Wolf—

CAPTAIN WOLF
Not now, Teague.

LT. TEAGUE
The mayor wants you, Captain.

Captain Wolf takes a breath, then:

CAPTAIN WOLF
Put him through on two.

LT. TEAGUE
He's not on the phone. He wants
you at the mansion. Yesterday.

INT. CLOTHING STORE - NIGHT

A CREDIT CARD is swiped through a machine, and we TILT UP TO SEE a smiling SALES-GIRL, who holds the card out and says:

SALES-GIRL
Thanks, Mr. Ivanov.

REVERSE ON LUKE, now wearing a SHARP NEW SUIT. He takes the card and smiles back:

LUKE

No problem.

Luke turns, carrying a bag with his old clothes, and walks past

MEI, who is standing half-hidden behind a rack of clothing, as if she is going through the items. She turns and follows him out of the store -- Through the glass doors we see Luke toss the bag with his old clothes into a garbage can, and

INT. UPSCALE HOTEL - LATER - NIGHT

-Luke takes a ROOM CARD from the RECEPTIONIST. He's in the lobby of a large, impersonal, but expensive looking hotel. Mei nowhere in sight.

RECEPTIONIST

Room 1012. It's on the tenth floor. Elevators are to the right.

INT. HALLWAY - HOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

Luke walks past the elevators, and stops in front of the LADIES' ROOM. He knocks twice, with short double knocks. The door instantly opens, and Mei emerges. She follows Luke to the elevators, and

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR - TENTH FLOOR - A MOMENT LATER

-Luke and Mei exit the elevator and walk down the long, carpeted corridor.

MEI

You like a nice hotel.

LUKE

Never stayed in a nice hotel. But no one's gonna look for us in one.

INT. LEXUS SUV - NIGHT

CLOSE ON A GPS TRACKING SYSTEM GRID on a LAPTOP COMPUTER; a VOICE SPEAKS IN CHINESE:

CHINESE VOICE (O.C.)

<She's in the area, for sure. But there's a lot of interference. I can't get any more specific, until-- wait...>

WIDER SHOWS: YAO CHANG and SEVERAL TRIAD SOLDIERS sitting in the SUV, driving slowly through the downtown streets. The TRIAD SOLDIER working the LAP-TOP looks up at Yao:

TRIAD SOLDIER
<Got her.>

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT - LATER

Mei sits on the couch, eating PEANUTS from the mini bar, watching Luke wash his face in the bathroom sink.

LUKE
Man, would I love a real shower.

MEI
You could use one.

LUKE
I could have just let those
Russians grab you on the train.

That shuts Mei up. Luke takes another moment, letting the water run over his hands, splashes his face again, then walks into the room.

MEI
Why did you save me?

Luke hesitates, then:

LUKE
I didn't want to live any more, but
I couldn't find it in myself to end
it. Until today. Today I was
finally gonna throw in the towel.
(pauses)
Then I saw a girl who wanted to
live. And I did what I was
supposed to do. What I used to do.
(then)
I didn't save you. You saved me.

He sits down across from Mei, putting himself level with her.

LUKE
I'm paying you back. But I'm not
going to be able to help you unless
I know why everyone is after you.

Mei clams up.

LUKE

This isn't a trick. You have no reason to trust me. You're just gonna have take a gut check and do what you think is right.

(then)

My name is Luke.

Luke reaches his hand out. Mei looks at it for a moment, then takes it in her own, and they shake hands. Like grownups.

MEI

Mei.

LUKE

You have parents, Mei?

Mei takes a moment, then:

MEI

I have a father.

LUKE

What's his name?

MEI

Chang Yao.

Luke draws back at the sound of that... eyes narrowing:

LUKE

If we're talking about the same guy— from the mess you're in, I believe we are— I'm gonna call you a liar. Yao didn't have any kids last time I checked. If he made any since, they wouldn't be a day over three years old.

MEI

I'm adopted.

LUKE

He bring you over from back home?

(Mei nods)

Yao isn't the fatherly type. If he brought you all this way, it's for a reason. And from the ruckus you're causing, it's not any of the obvious ones. Why are you here, Mei?

MEI

To count.

Luke nods. Almost smiles.

LUKE

You were sent over by the old guy,
in Shanghai— what's his name?
Yao's boss. Old school. You keep
accounts. No computers, no
electronic trails. Just what you
have in your head. Right?

Mei studies Luke closely. Then:

MEI

You know Jiao Han?

LUKE

Know of him. He's never come to
the States.

Mei's eyes flinch, and:

LUKE

-You're fu— You're kidding me. He's
here?
(no answer)
Why?

MEI

He told me a number.

LUKE

A number?

MEI

A very long number. I was going
someplace where I would get another
number, and more instructions. But
the Russians came and shot
everyone. They took me to an old
Russian man, who—

LUKE

Emile. Emile Docheski.

MEI

He didn't tell me his name. He
told me that if I didn't give him
the number he would kill me. Then
the police came, and I ran away.

(MORE)

MEI (cont'd)

No you know everything. Happiness for you?

LUKE

Mei, happiness is not a word that's even passed through my mind in a very, very long time. I just want to do what's best for you, so ease up.

(then)

Do you want to go back to Han Jiao?

Mei shakes her head.

MEI

I make too much trouble. Bad business. After I do what he asks, he kills me. Good business.

Luke nods, glad that she's seen it for herself.

LUKE

So what about this number?

MEI

It's a long, boring number.

(then)

I can tell it to you.

LUKE

It wouldn't mean anything to me. But how do you know it's one number? I mean, not a bunch of separate numbers.

Mei's eyes widen a little. She stares off into space, then something clicks in her mind. She looks back at Luke:

MEI

You are a crazy man— but you are not so stupid.

LUKE

Neither are you. Han Jiao didn't send you all this way because you can count. He sent you here because you can count like a mother— really, really well. But I don't think he understands how smart you are.

(pauses)

Want to show that son of a bitch you're more than some kind of human calculator at his beck and call?

Mei hesitates— then her little features harden, and she nods.

LUKE

Is there anything interesting to
you about this number, or numbers?

ME

Maybe a few of them.

LUKE

Why are they interesting?

MEI

Because they have a three or a
seven in front of them. All the
numbers are random, but five of
them have a seven before and eight
of them have a three before. That
is too many times to be random.

LUKE

Right. It's a code. But for what?
(Mei shakes her head)
What else about those numbers?

Mei thinks about it some more, shakes her head again.

MEI

Nothing. Just they all have a
three or seven before.

LUKE

So it's the three and the seven
that are interesting. Because they
happen too many times to be random.
Because—

(Luke stops)

Because they're not numbers.

Mei shakes her head, not understanding. Luke finally smiles.

LUKE

They're words: Right. Left. Or
Left. Right. Old school.

(then)

It's the combination to a safe.

EXT. STREET - OUTSIDE THE HOTEL - NIGHT

SEVERAL CARS pull to a stop on the street across from the
hotel lobby, and a DOZEN TRIAD SOLDIERS step out onto the
sidewalk. PULL BACK TO REVEAL

YAO CHANG— looking out of the window of his SUV; he turns to the TRIAD SOLDIER on the GPS:

YAO CHANG
 <In the hotel?>
 (the soldier nods)
 <Where?>

TRIAD SOLDIER
 <That's as close as I can track.>

Yao steps out onto the sidewalk, raises his CELL PHONE to his ear:

YAO CHANG
 <What do you have for me?>

INT. POLICE CAR - CONTINUOUS

AN ASIAN PATROLMAN is driving beside his LATINO PARTNER. He talks into his CELL in CHINESE:

ASIAN PATROLMAN
 <We're looking for a man now, too, who is supposed to be with the girl. He's armed and to be considered extremely dangerous. Dispatch says he's—>

INT. RECEPTION - HOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

CLOSE ON YAO CHANG:

YAO CHANG
 -about five eleven. Brown hair. Thirties. Probably came in here less than a few hours ago.

REVERSE ON THE RECEPTIONIST, who shakes her head apologetically.

RECEPTIONIST
 Sir, we are not allowed to discuss our guests, so if you—

YAO CHANG
 So he's a guest. Did he check in?

RECEPTIONIST
 I'm sorry, sir, I—

YAO CHANG

He would have been with a Chinese girl— eleven years old. I'm her father, and I am very worried about her.

94 IN THE CORRIDORS BEHIND YAO CHANG

94

THE TRIAD SOLDIERS move into the hotel, looking through the hallways, some staying in front of the doors, and

95 BACK TO THE RECEPTIONIST'S WORRIED FACE:

95

RECEPTIONIST

I'm so sorry. If you'd like I'll call the police for you, so—

A GLOCK is in Yao's hand, pointed at the Receptionist's face:

YAO CHANG

Do that and I'll blow your brains out. Now— what room is he in?

ANGLE ON YAO AND THE RECEPTIONIST THROUGH THE DOOR BEHIND THE RECEPTION DESK -- THE HOTEL MANAGER sees what's going on, and, hardly making a sound, he reaches for a nearby SWITCH and flips it up—

INT. GUARD ROOM - CONTINUOUS

TWO UNIFORMED HOTEL GUARDS are eating take-out, not paying attention to the monitor-bank; when the RED LIGHT at the base of the deck starts blinking.

The two men turn and see what's happening at the RECEPTION DESK:

HOTEL GUARD #1

Damn. Call 911.

He gets up and grabs the GUNBELT hanging off the chair behind him.

INT. RECEPTION - HOTEL

THE RECEPTIONIST has tears glittering in her eyes, voice shaky:

RECEPTIONIST

-- I think I put him on the tenth floor. But there was no girl, I swear to—

YAO CHANG

Room.

RECEPTIONIST

I... need to check.

YAO CHANG

Then check *quick*, bitch, or—

VOICE (O.C.)

—Put your hands up.

RACK FOCUS BEHIND YAO CHANG to see SECURITY GUARD #1 -- GUN
LEVELED in his nervous hands.

YAO CHANG

You don't want any part of—

SECURITY GUARD #1

Hands up. So I can see them.

BOOM! The SECURITY GUARD is blown off his feet by

A TRIAD SOLDIER standing by the glass doors of the hotel.

SCREAMS from some terrified HOTEL GUESTS in the lobby... then

MORE DEAFENING SHOTS -- And the TRIAD SOLDIER is blown
through the doors and onto the street by

SECURITY GUARD #2, who turns his gun back on YAO CHANG, but

—IS CUT DOWN BY A BARRAGE of GUNFIRE from a number of TRIAD
SOLDIERS that are coming back into the lobby, and

THE TRIAD SOLDIER Shot by the guard falls onto the sidewalk,
the GUN IN HIS HAND GOING OFF, BULLETS shattering the glass
doors.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

LUKE snaps around. Hurries to the window— looks down and
sees the TRIAD SOLDIER sprawled out on the pavement ten
storeys below—

INT. RECEPTION - HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

YAO CHANG makes sure there's no one else shooting at him or
his men in the lobby; shouts at them:

YAO CHANG

No one leaves the hotel.

He snaps back toward the RECEPTIONIST who immediately says:

RECEPTIONIST
1012. He's in 1012.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mei is on her feet, eyes wide with fear.

MEI
I thought you said no one would
look for us here.

Luke rushes over to Mei. He frisks her from top to bottom, scaring even more, then reaches into the inside of her jacket and removes

A CELL-PHONE from its inside pocket.

LUKE
I'm so out of practice.

MEI
It's off. I turned it off, so no
one could call when I was...

LUKE
Doesn't need to be on. Han Jaio
might be old school, but Yao-

Luke pops open the back of the PHONE -- PULLS OUT A CHIP, and drops it on the floor.

LUKE
-is definitely new.

Luke rushes over to the desk where he has placed his gun and jacket- CHAMBERS THE GUN, and:

INT. RESTAURANT - 2ND FLOOR LANDING - HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

WELL-HEELED DINERS are reacting with fear to the sound of the gunshots that just erupted in the lobby below. Nervous to move, nervous to stay where they are... some of them cautiously make their way toward the front, when

TWO TRIAD SOLDIERS

Appear from the stairwell, holding AUTOMATIC PISTOLS:

TRIAD SOLDIER
Back to your seats. No one is
leaving. Sit down. Move.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Luke grabs the pen and note-pad from the desk and kneels in front of Mei.

LUKE

Did the Russians ask you *where* you were going to get the second number?

(Mei shakes her head)

That means they already knew.

Luke hands Mei the pad and pen.

LUKE

Write down those numbers we talked about. Quick.

INT. HOTEL DOORS - CONTINUOUS

QUICK CUTS OF THE FRONT AND SIDE EXITS OF THE HOTEL: TRIAD SOLDIERS throw the few PEOPLE moving toward the exits back into the hotel, block their way with their weapons leveled.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Luke watches impatiently as Mei finishes writing the numbers down.

LUKE

I'm gonna try to get you out of here. If I can't, and we get separated, don't tell them you told me anything. Lie. No matter what they say. If they try to scare you—

MEI

Try? I am so scared already.

LUKE

Yeah. Me too. Remember. Lie.

INT. ELEVATOR - HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

THREE TRIAD SOLDIERS are riding the elevator; one of them hears YAO CHANG in his EAR-PIECE:

YAO CHANG (ON PHONE)

-Go to the tenth floor. Room 1012...

INT. STAIRWELL - HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

YAO CHANG, followed by TWO TRIAD SOLDIERS, is running up the stairs full speed, shouting in his EAR-PIECE:

YAO CHANG
-try not to kill the girl. I'm on
my way.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Luke runs to the door, keeping away from the center. Gun in hand he opens the door and looks out into

108 THE HALLWAY— which is still empty— so he turns back to Mei 108

LUKE
Come on.

Mei runs over to join him, and they start out into the corridor, when they hear— **BING**— the sound of the ELEVATOR arriving at the far end, and

Luke instantly turns and KICKS in the nearest DOOR with all his might. THE DOOR gives, swings inward, and

-Luke grabs Mei and practically lifts her into the

INT. HOTEL ROOM

-Where a SLEEPING COUPLE start up from their bed in shock. Luke closes the door— leaving it open just a crack— then levels the gun in the couple's direction:

LUKE
On the floor. Now. Do not make a
sound.

The terrified couple flatten themselves on the floor, and Luke turns back to the doorway. He motions Mei back, and peers out through the slightly open door.

110 LUKE'S P.O.V. -- Just hallway. But he can HEAR THE SOUND ~~OF~~ VOICES speaking in CHINESE APPROACHING. Then THREE TRIAD SOLDIERS walk into view, and

Luke instantly throws open the door, FIRING at the men before they can get their bearings— not fair, and not meant to be— and when it's over the three Triad Soldiers are sprawled dead on the floor, and

Luke turns to Mei:

LUKE

Let's go.

Mei rushes out into the hallway, and follows Luke for only a few steps, when

THE EXIT DOOR at the far end of the corridor swings open, and

-YAO CHANG and his TWO SOLDIERS burst out into the hallway.

Luke instantly FIRES— hitting the first TRIAD SOLDIER, sending him stumbling back into the other two men— who manage to return FIRE, so

Luke grabs Mei, shielding her with his body, and runs a few more steps until they reach the STAIRWELL door nearest to them— throws open the door and disappears into

INT. STAIRWELL - HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

-where Luke grabs Mei under his arm and starts running down the stairs at full speed, as

INT. HALLWAY - TENTH FLOOR - HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Yao Chang snaps at the remaining SOLDIER:

YAO CHANG

<Follow them down that stairway.
I'm going back down to cut them off
if you don't catch them. Move.>

The TRIAD SOLDIER nods and races down the corridor toward the far exit, and

INT. STAIRWELL - HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Luke tries to pick up more speed, but it's too awkward with Mei under his arm— so he swings her around onto his back.

LUKE

Hold onto me.

Mei clings to his neck, and Luke really books down the stairs, three stairs at a time -- moving fast, but not as fast as

INT. 2ND STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

-Yao Chang, who barks into his EAR-PIECE as he runs:

YAO CHANG
*<-they're in the East Side stairs.
 Get in there before they make it
 all the way down-->*

INT. STAIRWELL - HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Luke and Mei round the fourth floor, head toward three, when

BAM!— A BULLET chips the wall near Luke's head. He instantly FIRES BACK

HITTING THE FIRST of TWO TRIAD SOLDIERS coming up the stairs, then

Luke loses his balance, and goes stumbling down the stairs, right into the 2nd SOLDIER— Mei lets go of his neck, falling to the stairs, and

Luke grabs hold of the 2nd Soldier's gun hand— the guy does the same to Luke— and they're at a stalemate, slamming each other against the walls. A GUN is fired, THE BULLET hitting much too close to Mei, so

Luke grits his teeth and, holding tightly onto the 2nd Soldier, flings the both of them backward down the stairs. They go bumping down painfully, and when they hit the next landing

Luke twists the 2nd Soldier's hand around and slams the gun into his face, knocking him cold.

EXT. STREET - OUTSIDE THE HOTEL - NIGHT

SIRENS WAILING -- POLICE CARS pull up around the front entrance to the hotel. COPS get out of the cars, weapons drawn, moving toward the doors, when

-THEY ARE MET BY A HAIL OF GUNFIRE from within, causing them to draw back to defensive positions behind their cars...

INT. LOBBY - HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

YAO CHANG is runs through the lobby toward the stairs leading to the 2nd floor landing, shouting into his EAR-PIECE:

YAO CHANG
<The cops are here. Hold them off
 until I give the word. Do not let
 them in.>

INT. STAIRWELL - HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Luke and Mei are back together, turning the corner of the 2nd floor landing and heading for the first floor, when they hear the SOUND OF CHINESE shouting from there... see the shadows of figures approaching, so

Luke turns, pulling Mei with him, and heads back up to the

INT. SECOND FLOOR - HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Luke and Mei burst out into the short space in front of them, and run the only way they can go— right into

120

THE RESTAURANT

120

Where more than A HUNDRED DINERS are cowering in their seats, watching over by the TWO TRIAD SOLDIERS, who snap around at the sight of

MEI AND LUKE -- who instantly BLASTS AWAY at them, dropping one man right away. The other gets off a few shots, sending the DINERS screaming to the floor, but

LUKE takes careful aim and blows the man off his feet. Then Luke's gun clicks— he's out of bullets— just as

THE TRIAD SOLDIER who was following Luke down the stairs, together with the TWO SOLDIERS who were waiting for him below, burst into the restaurant, and

Luke doesn't wait— he takes advantage of all the movement created by the panicking diners who are hitting the floor, crawling around and screaming, to

-Run right for the THREE TRIAD SOLDIERS, leaping over a table, grabbing a STEAK KNIFE off a plate as he goes, and before the men know what hit them—

Luke drives the knife into the first man's chest. He grabs the second man's arm, twists it, then head butts him, and lunges for the

-THIRD TRIAD SOLDIER, grabbing his gun arm— slamming it against the corner of the wall, knocking the gun loose, but

The soldier regroups, elbowing Luke hard across the face, knocking him back— and now it's Luke who is under attack— because this guy really can fight, and it's a

BATTLE ROYALE— DINERS SCREAMING— TABLES SMASHING— as Luke defends himself against the furious assault of the Triad Soldier, a hand to hand fight that is violent, real, and breathtaking in speed and brutality... then

MEI'S SCREAM cuts through the din— and Luke snaps around to see that

YAO CHANG

Has Mei in his arms; he moves her toward ANOTHER TRIAD SOLDIER, who grabs hold of her, then Yao Chang turns and levels his GLOCK at

LUKE— who instantly rushes the Triad Soldier who was kicking his ass— tackles him like a linebacker and knocks him backward right into

THE RESTAURANT WINDOW: and the two men crash right through it and

EXT. STREET - OUTSIDE THE HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Drop one floor down and crunch onto the sidewalk in a shower of shattered glass.

Luke forces himself up to his knees— sees the soldier under him is not moving. Luke looks up, sees the POLICE CARS around the corner, hears the GUNSHOTS being exchanged between then cops and the Triad Soldiers in the hotel, then he sees

SEVERAL COPS moving in his direction, and

Luke pulls himself up to his feet and takes off down the block, taking a hard turn into the alley behind the hotel.

INT. RESTAURANT - HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Yao Chang shouts at the diners cowering on the floor:

YAO CHANG
Everybody get up off the floor.
We're getting out of the hotel.

Nobody moves. YAO SHOOTS over their heads, causing a SCREAM.

YAO CHANG
Up, or I start killing you. Up.

INT. LOBBY - HOTEL - A MOMENT LATER

Nearly two hundred terrified diners hustle down the stairs into the lobby, Yao and the Triad Soldier holding Mei among them. The other soldiers holding off the cops turn and listen, as Yao shouts:

YAO CHANG
We're all going to run out of here together. Run into the street, and keep running. Anyone who doesn't dies right here. Like this:

YAO CHANG SHOOTS a man down in cold blood.

YAO CHANG
Into the street. Move.

HE FIRES ANOTHER SHOT and the CROWD SCREAMS and runs to the doors, pressing to get out of the hotel in a mad rush...

EXT. STREET - OUTSIDE THE HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

THE POLICE don't know who to shoot at or what to do as the crowd of diners pours out onto the sidewalk in a panicked frenzy, and

YAO CHANG AND THE TRIAD SOLDIER HOLDING MEI

Stay amongst the fleeing diners long enough to get past the cops— and when they are behind them they quickly climb into the SUV parked on the other side of the street, as

ANOTHER GROUP OF TRIAD SOLDIERS reach their car— but the police see them: opening fire at the car as the Triad Soldiers try to drive away...

A POLICE CAR swings out to intercept them— the Triad Soldiers try to swerve, but it's too late, and

-THEY SMASH into the front of the POLICE CAR, veering sideways and flipping over in the middle of the street.

YAO CHANG

Takes advantage of the chaos, pulls the SUV away from the curb and drives around the corner, gunning the engine and disappearing down a side-street.

EXT. STREET - DOWNTOWN - CONTINUOUS

Luke hurries down the sidewalk, shoots a look behind himself— knows the cops are coming in a second, so

-he steps into the street and runs over to the LAST CAR stopped at the light. A GREY VOLVO with a MIDDLE AGED MAN behind the wheel, window half open.

LUKE
Get out of the car.

The man starts to roll up the window, but Luke hits it with an elbow, shattering it to little pieces. He reaches in, opens the door, and throws the shocked man out, then gets into the car and REVERSES DOWN THE STREET...

Luke makes it to the avenue, swings the car around, and takes off heading downtown.

THE TRIO OF COPS

Who were chasing Luke come out of the alley, see the Middle Aged Man standing there, shouting:

MIDDLE AGED MAN
He took my car. That guy just
stole my car.

EXT. STREETS - DOWNTOWN - CONTINUOUS

Luke drives the Volvo down the avenue at top speed, then turns down another side street and drives until he reaches 6th Avenue— on which there is a steady flow of YELLOW CABS.

Luke pulls the Volvo to the curb and gets out. He tucks his shirt in, fixes his suit as he walks and extends a hand, calling for a taxi.

A CAB pulls to a stop several feet down. Luke hurries over and gets in.

INT. TAXI - CONTINUOUS

Luke looks at the driver— a MIDDLE EASTERN MAN— and says:

LUKE
Head downtown. I'll give you an
address in a minute. Thanks.

Luke sits still for a moment, as the taxi rolls out into the avenue... then he swears under his breath and PUNCHES the back of the seat, furious at himself.

TAXI DRIVER
Hey man, what the hell you doing?

LUKE

Sorry, man. Sorry about that.
Just one of those days.

TAXI DRIVER

Whatever. You keep cool back
there, or I stop, understand?

LUKE

You got it. Cool as ice. Thanks.

Luke reaches into his pocket and comes out with the CELL-PHONE we saw him take from the dead RUSSIAN'S POCKET on the subway after he first rescued Mei.

Then Luke takes out the man's wallet— looks at the ID again, to remind himself of the name— Piotor Ivanavov.

Luke looks at the display of numbers, and goes to RECENT CALLS.

A LIST OF NUMBERS and names— MOSTLY RUSSIAN— COMES UP. Luke dials the last number called from the phone. It rings one, twice— then a voice answers in RUSSIAN:

RUSSIAN VOICE (ON PHONE)

<Who's this?>

Luke holds the phone away from his face, running his thumb over the mic so the connection sounds bad— and speaks in PERFECT RUSSIAN:

LUKE

*<Who do you think? It's Piotor.
Don't you have me in your phone?>*

RUSSIAN VOICE (ON PHONE)

*<Piotor? Police reports said you
were found on the subway, with—>*

LUKE

*<Police reports were wrong. The
others got killed along with some
guy on the subway. I'm alright.>
(then, taking his shot)
<I need to talk to Vassily.>*

RUSSIAN VOICE (ON PHONE)

<What's that?>

LUKE

*<Bad connection. I need to talk to
Vassily.>*

RUSSIAN VOICE (ON PHONE)
*<Who the hell do you think you're
 talking to?>*

Luke leans back in his seat, eyes squeezed shut in gratitude—
 he can hardly believe he nailed it on the first try. He
 gathers his wits, and:

LUKE
<I have the number.>

INT. RESTAURANT - AVENUE C - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

VASSILY DOCHESKI— Emile's murderous son— is sitting at a
 table in the back of a dark restaurant, surrounded by
 RUSSIAN MAFIA GANGSTERS. He has his phone to his ear:

VASSILY
<You what?>

LUKE (ON PHONE)
*<Before... guy grabbed her, we
 got... number from her. I've
 been... ducking the cops... hours.>*

Vassily turns to one of his guys:

VASSILY
<Put this number into your phone.>
 (to Luke)
<Go ahead, give it to me.>

LUKE (ON PHONE)
*<Are.... crazy? It's on a piece...
 paper... kilometer long. Tell...
 where you are... and I'll bring it
 to you.>*

Vassily takes a beat, then:

VASSILY
<Mamischka's. Be here soon.>

INT. TAXI - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON LUKE— his eyes gleaming with purpose:

LUKE
<I'll be there.>

INT. RESTAURANT - AVENUE C - CONTINUOUS

Vassily clicks off his phone. A RUSSIAN GANGSTER turns to him:

RUSSIAN GANGSTER
<He might be bringing the cops.
Should we clear the place out?>

VASSILY
<If there are cops, even dirty
ones, we're better off in a crowd.
Still, we need better positions.>

THE GANGSTER nods— he and another guy get up and move to a table in the corner.

A THIRD GANGSTER stands and moves to the bar, leaving Vassily at the table with TWO GUARDS.

MOVE IN ON VASSILY'S HAND, releasing the SAFETY ON HIS AUTOMATIC, and

EXT. GRACIE MANSION - NIGHT

THE CAMERA MOVES in through the dark wooded lane leading up to the lavish mansion, past GUARDS at their posts outside the doors, as we hear on the SOUNDTRACK:

VOICE (V.O.)
-Luke Wright is in the city..?

INT. MEETING ROOM - GRACIE MANSION - CONTINUOUS

MAYOR DANNY TRAMELLO is glaring at CAPTAIN WOLF with something like hatred:

MAYOR TRAMELLO
-he's been in my city for almost a
year, and no one bothered to tell
me about it, because you were too
busy watching some sick Russian
mafia joke play out..?

CAPTAIN WOLF
Your honor, only the eight of us
even know who he is. And—

MAYOR TRAMELLO
What you know Luke Wright barely
rates a paragraph in a very fat
book.

Captain Wolf's CELL is BUZZING repeatedly.

MAYOR TRAMELLO

Turn that goddamn thing off, Wolf.

Captain Wolf turns off his phone. Mayor Tramello keeps his temper down, opens his liquor cabinet to make himself a drink.

MAYOR TRAMELLO

After the towers came down, when I was still deputy mayor, Washington asked us to devote an outrageous percentage of our manpower to tracking possible terrorist activity...

CAPTAIN WOLF

I know. I was there. On the street.

MAYOR TRAMELLO

And when we formed the Special Task Force to handle the criminal organizations taking advantage of the situation, you were the first of the nine men I brought on. But I knew we needed edge that no normal detectives— no matter how tough— could give us.

(pauses)

I called the Vice President's office. He was sympathetic. Said he would see what he could do.

(then)

A week later he sent Luke Wright.

Captain Wolf almost smiles:

CAPTAIN WOLF

So he ain't some organized crime specialist from Cherry Hill, huh?

MAYOR TRAMELLO

Oh, he's a specialist, alright. From Cherry Hill, too, far as I know.

(takes a pause; then)

All those wiseguys who vanished in the last eight years. You really thought that was internecine war? The coke kings found in the gutter in Harlem.

(MORE)

MAYOR TRAMELLO (cont'd)

Hanzo the Razor in Tribeca— Max Cohen and Freddy Petrovich in Brooklyn. Tommy Lau in Chinatown. Luke Wright is like a ghost. A very deadly ghost.

(slugs down his drink)

It worked like a charm, too. Then you dicks had to get greedy and screw up the whole goddamn thing.

CAPTAIN WOLF

We were building *real* cases, making real arrests, while the rest of the force was hanging out at ports sniffing around for non existent enriched uranium. Our work was *worth* something.

MAYOR TRAMELLO

Sure it was— Your taxpayer funded paychecks. Wright threatened to take the whole thing to IA. Blow it wide open. The Vice President himself had to talk him off the ledge.

CAPTAIN WOLF

So Special Task Force gets quietly disbanded, and we're all peons again, thanks to your knight in shining armor. And you get to be mayor, which, you know— whoop dee doo. But there's one thing that still don't make sense—

(then)

If Luke was so connected, why'd he end up in Jersey, fighting on the B-circuit?

MAYOR TRAMELLO

I'm not a shrink. I appealed to him to stay— you know— out of patriotism. He laughed in my face. And that was the last I heard about Luke Wright. Until now.

CAPTAIN WOLF

Pardon me if I ain't shaking in my shoes.

MAYOR TRAMELLO

You would be, if you were smarter. Get all the manpower on this we can muster.

(MORE)

MAYOR TRAMELLO (cont'd)
Once Luke Wright gets on a roll
there's only one man in this city
who can take him on, one on one—

CAPTAIN WOLF
And who might *that* badass be?

MAYOR TRAMELLO
My insurance. One thing's for
certain, Wolf— it sure as shit
isn't *you*.

A KNOCK ON THE DOOR. Then the MAYOR'S ASSISTANT— ALEX ROSEN,
steps inside:

ALEX ROSEN
I'm sorry— I know this is a closed
door. But there was just a major
gun battle at the Excelsior Hotel,
downtown. Like something out of
Chicago in the thirties.
(pauses)
Your Honor, the media is going
nuts. You're gonna have to have
make a statement.

Mayor Tramello takes that in. He waves off Alex Rosen, who
steps back outside, closing the door.

Tramello turns and fixes Captain Wolf with eyes that are even
more dangerous than his own; Wolf hesitates, then:

CAPTAIN WOLF
Han Jiao is in the city.
(no reaction)
He gave this little Chinese girl
something. Some kind of a number.
The Russians wanted it bad enough
to jack the Triad and take the
girl. I was trying to bring her
in, but Wright got in the way. I
have absolutely no idea why.

MAYOR TRAMELLO
There's not a lot you do know, is
there, Wolf? You're like a guy
flailing around in the dark, hoping
to grab hold of something. So let
me tell you what you got—

Mayor Tramello fixes Captain Wolf with eyes that are even
more dangerous than his own:

MAYOR TRAMELLO

Close down every exit out of Manhattan. Make sure neither Wright or that girl gets out, and you got commissioner. Perform well in that capacity, I might even back a run for mayor. But let them go—and you get a shovel to dig your own grave with. And that's no cute metaphor.

Captain Wolf slowly nods.

MAYOR TRAMELLO

I don't care what you have to do.
That girl does not leave this city.

INT. MAH JONG PARLOR - CHINATOWN - NIGHT

MEI is led by YAO CHANG through the crowded, noisy space, followed by several TRIAD SOLDIERS. On the SOUNDTRACK:

HAN JIAO (V.O.)

<Who was this man who killed the Russians?>

INT. OFFICE - CHINATOWN - MOMENTS LATER

Mei is standing in front of Han Jiao, flanked by Yao Chang and his soldiers:

MEI

<I don't know. He didn't tell me.>

HAN JIAO

<Did he ask about the number?>

MEI

<Everyone asked about the number.>

HAN JIAO

<And what did you tell them?>

MEI

<Nothing.>

HAN JIAO

<You're lying.>

MEI

<I would never lie to you, Uncle Han.

(MORE)

MEI (cont'd)

I didn't tell the Russians anything before the police came, and I didn't tell the man who took me anything, either.>

Han Jiao turns to Yao Chang:

HAN JIAO

<Call our men in Shanghai. Tell them to kill Mei's mother, because her daughter is a deceitful liar.>

Mei forces tears into her eyes:

MEI

<I swear, uncle Han. I pretended I didn't speak English, or understand it. He was very angry with me, and he screamed and shouted, but I didn't say anything, because I knew it would upset you. I swear on my mother.>

Han Jiao studies Mei for a moment, then he nods to Yao Chang, who takes out his phone and dials a number. He speaks in ENGLISH:

YAO CHANG

We recovered the girl. But the information might have been compromised. Should we change our time-frame?

VOICE (ON PHONE)

Impossible, now that the whole damn thing has gone supernova...

EXT. EAST SIDE STREET - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

A MAN is talking on his CELL-PHONE, back turned. BEHIND HIM are the lights and hubbub of what look like a hastily assembled outdoor PRESS CONFERENCE.

MAN (INTO PHONE)

-- If it's gonna happen, it has to happen tonight. But the meeting place needs to be changed.

YAO CHANG (ON PHONE)

Where to?

The man turns to CAMERA, revealing

ALEX ROSEN

The mayor's assistant.

ALEX ROSEN (INTO PHONE)
I'll let you know.

EXT. STREET - DOWNTOWN - NIGHT

MOVING P.O.V. IMAGES OF HOOKERS strolling the sidewalk seen through a CAR WINDOW. WE hear:

LUKE (O.C.)
I'll get off here.

A MOMENT LATER: Luke steps out of the taxi, pays the driver with cash from the Russian's wallet; then he strolls over to a COUPLE OF HOOKERS, and approaches the better dressed one.

HOOKER
Hey handsome, what's the rumpus?

LUKE
Starving. Want to get a bite?

HOOKER
Excuse me?

LUKE
Dinner, a little conversation. You know. The girlfriend experience.

HOOKER
Yeah? Dinner. Where?

INT. RESTAURANT - AVENUE C - NIGHT

Luke and the Hooker, his arm around her shoulders, enter the restaurant and step over to the HOSTESS. Luke keeps the Hooker close to him, as he says:

LUKE
Hey, how you doing? We don't have a reservation or anything.

ANGLE ON VASSILY and HIS TWO GUARDS

Looking at Luke and the Hooker through the crowd of diners. Just a well-dressed guy and his girl, talking to the hostess.

BACK TO LUKE: He casually scans the restaurant as he talks... sees VASSILY AND THE TWO GUARDS. Sees there are three other plates on the table with leftover food on them.

HOSTESS
That's fine. We have a few open
tables.

LUKE'S P.O.V. lands on the TWO GANGSTERS at the side table.
Then moves to the GANGSTER standing alone at the bar, nursing
a drink.

LUKE
You know, we might just hang at the
bar, is that cool?

HOSTESS
Of course.

Luke turns to the Hooker and speaks softly:

LUKE
I want you to give me a kiss, then
turn around and walk out of here.

HOOKEE
But I thoug—

Luke hands her several TWENTIES, and looks at her evenly:

LUKE
Act like you forgot something
outside. Only don't come back.

The Hooker gets it. She's been around long enough to know
when to shut up and go.

ANGLE FROM THE BAR: The Hooker kisses Luke on the cheek— He
says— "*See you in a minute*"— and moves toward the bar while
she exits the restaurant.

Luke steps up to the bar, standing right beside the RUSSIAN
GANGSTER. Sees the GUN in the front of his belt. Turns to
the BARTENDER:

LUKE
Can I get a white Russian, please?
And a fork.

BARTENDER
A fork?

LUKE
Yeah, one of those, there.

The Bartender hands Luke a fork. Luke turns to the
GANGSTER. Smiles. Speaks in RUSSIAN:

LUKE

<I never know what to say in these moments.>

GANGSTER

<What are you talking about? What moments?>

LUKE

<The ones before I kill somebody.>

-And the FORK is buried to the hilt under the guy's chin before he knows what hit him. Luke's other hand reaches down and snatches the .45 AUTOMATIC out of his belt.

THE BARTENDER sees this -- looks up in shock at Luke, who shows him the gun. Still holding up the dead guy with the other hand. Shakes his head slightly- Don't. The Bartender doesn't.

Luke takes a beat. He drops the Russian, letting him fall to the bar, and

THE TWO GANGSTERS at the side table instinctively stand up, which Luke was counting on, and

LUKE WHIRLS and FIRES FOUR PERFECT SHOTS, taking down the two RUSSIANS instantaneously, and

SCREAMS ERUPT. DINERS HIT THE FLOOR. VASSILY and his TWO GUARDS react, but

LUKE is already racing across the room, jumping off an empty table into the air- FIRING, and he

HITS THE GUARD on Vassily's right- then, as the SECOND GUARD manages to get his gun out- Luke lands on the front of Vassily's table, knocking it upwards into both the Guard and Vassily's faces, and

LUKE FIRES THROUGH THE TABLE, blowing away the GUARD, then slams the table into Vassily hard, knocking him back against the wall, when

BOOM! A BULLET fired from behind Luke punches into the table right near his face. Luke spins, FIRING, and

-NAILS THE BARTENDER, holding a .38, sending him crashing back into the liquor display, and

Luke reaches around the table, grabs Vassily by the arm and twists it around his back, then slams Vassily's face into the wall. Then he pushes Vassily into the rear of the restaurant and into

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

-Slamming him into a counter, knocking over plates and all kinds of cutlery, sending the KITCHEN workers scattering in every direction.

Luke reaches into Vassily's pocket, pulls out his CAR KEYS.

LUKE
(to the kitchen workers)
What kind of car does he drive, and
where is it parked?

LUKE FIRES A SHOT right over the kitchen workers' heads, and a terrified CHEF shouts:

CHEF
Grey Lexus SUV. In the alley out
back.

EXT. ALLEYWAY BEHIND RESTAURANT - A MOMENT LATER

Luke opens the door, slamming Vassily's head into it for good measure, and shoves him in the passenger seat. Then Luke climbs in, puts the key in the ignition, and starts the SUV with a ROAR OF THE ENGINE, and:

EXT. BROWNSTONE - BROOKLYN - NIGHT

CARS with BODYGUARDS are parked on the street out front. On the SOUNDTRACK we HEAR THE SOUND OF A PHONE RINGING, which continues over:

INT. BROWNSTONE - CONTINUOUS

EMILE DOCHESKI in his living room. SEVERAL BODYGUARDS in the b.g., his WIFE in the kitchen behind them. Emile looks at the number on his CELL-PHONE, then raises it to his ear:

EMILE DOCHESKI
Vassily?

LUKE (ON PHONE)
Not even close.

EMILE DOCHESKI
Who is this?

LUKE (ON PHONE)

The guy who has been killing your boys all night, Emile. The guy who has your son tied up in the seat of his Lexus under a very dark tunnel.

EMILE DOCHESKI

I ask one more time— who are you?

EXT. SHADOWS BELOW THE BROOKLYN BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Luke is standing outside the SUV: behind the window Vassily is visible, bound tightly in the passenger seat, face badly bruised.

LUKE

(into Vassily's phone)

Someone who has very little time to get what he wants—

EMILE DOCHESKI (ON PHONE)

-Do you think I give a shit what you want? You think you can blackmail me because you have Vassily? Kill him and go to hell.

LUKE

Oh, I'm going to hell, alright. But I'm not gonna kill your boy. I'm going to keep him around, like a pet. A very badly treated pet. I'm going to do things to him that will make me ashamed to look in the mirror afterward. But I will do them. And Vassily is going to tell me everything he knows about your operation. He's already told me quite a bit, and I've hardly even gotten started on him...

INT. BROWNSTONE - BROOKLYN - CONTINUOUS

Emile is wound up like a clock, keeping his temper down with all his willpower:

EMILE DOCHESKI

And then what will you do? Tell the police? You want me to laugh? What the hell do you think they're going to—?

LUKE (ON PHONE)

*Who said anything about the police?
I'm going to share the information
with your competition. The ones I
haven't already killed. I'm gonna
hold onto your boy while the
information is verified, too.
It'll be hard for him run away,
because he will have no feet. It
will be hard for him to call for
help, because he will have no
fingers. And when I'm done with
him, anything your enemies don't
finish, I will. I will kill your
wife. I will kill your daughters.
I'll take everything you have, and
I will destroy it. When I'm done,
you won't even be a memory of a
memory.*

(a pause)

But none of that has to happen.

Emile takes a long moment, finally:

EMILE DOCHESKI

What do you want?

EXT. SHADOWS BELOW THE BROOKLYN BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Luke's eyes flash. He has him.

LUKE

I want to know what's in the safe.

EMILE DOCHESKI (ON PHONE)

What safe?

LUKE

*The safe the girl gave me the
combination to. The safe whose
contents you didn't disclose to
your son, because you don't
completely trust him. That safe.
What's in it?*

EMILE DOCHESKI (ON PHONE)

Thirty million dollars.

LUKE

*Before you jacked her, the girl was
on her way to a meeting place,
where she was to get a second
number.*

(MORE)

LUKE (cont'd)
Classic combination exchange.
What's in the second safe?

EMILE DOCHESKI (ON PHONE)
*Something worth thirty million
dollars.*

LUKE
To whom?

INT. BROWNSTONE - BROOKLYN - CONTINUOUS

Emile waves off his guards, who are approaching, concerned.

EMILE DOCHESKI
No idea.

Luke thinks about it for a moment; then:

LUKE (ON PHONE)
*That's cause you're only half-
smart, Emile. But you know where
that first safe is. The one with
thirty million dollars of Triad
money in it—*

EXT. SHADOWS BELOW THE BROOKLYN BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Luke looks at the clock on the cell-phone. Keeps cool.

LUKE
-So here's the deal. You tell me
where the safe is, I take the
money, and I let your son go. You
don't come after me, I don't come
after you. Lie to me, and your
world ends. You have my word on
that.

INT. BROWNSTONE - BROOKLYN - CONTINUOUS

Emile's voice finally cracks with fury:

EMILE DOCHESKI
Idiot. I know when a man is acting
alone, and you're alone as a man
can be. Even if you do have the
combination, it would take an small
army to get near that safe. The
kind of army I have—

LUKE (ON PHONE)
*-Had. It's been getting smaller by
the minute, Emile.*

(MORE)

LUKE (ON PHONE) (cont'd)
*You don't want it to disappear
completely, tell me where to go.
Last chance, before I hang up and
go to work on your son.*

Emile gathers himself... makes his decision, and

EXT. SHADOWS BELOW THE BROOKLYN BRIDGE - A MOMENT LATER

Luke throws the SUV door open and pulls Vassily out onto the pavement, then pushes him toward the back of the car.

VASSILY
You gonna kill me, garbage man?

Luke opens the back of the SUV. Finds several mags for a .45, as well as a roll of DUCT TAPE. Luke pulls up the flooring, under which the spare tire is stored. Throws out the spare. Vassily is scared as hell.

VASSILY
I don't get it. You could have
taken us out that day, couldn't
you? But you just sat there. Let
us ruin you. Let us make you
nothing...

Luke ties Vassily's legs together with the duct tape.

LUKE
You didn't make me nothing. I was
already nothing. You just took
away the only thing I was living
for.

VASSILY
I guess finding out about that safe
gave you some new motivation, eh,
garbage man?

Luke wraps the duct tape around Vassily's mouth.

LUKE
If I were you, I wouldn't spend my
time talking. I would spend it
praying that when this is over,
that little girl is still alive.
Because if she's not, what you did
to me is gonna be like an afternoon
at the ballpark. Pray she's alive.

Luke lifts Vassily up, then shoves him into the back of the SUV, in the storage space under the flooring.

He tapes his feet to his hands behind his back, painfully, so that he can hardly move.

LUKE

Pray.

EXT. SUV - MOVING - NIGHT

CLOSE ON MEI, behind the glass window, the LIGHTS OF THE CITY playing over her wide-eyed face. For a moment she might be experiencing some kind of peace, then:

INT. SUV - CONTINUOUS

YAO CHANG, sitting beside Mei, presses the answer button on his RINGING CELL-PHONE and talks into his EAR-PIECE:

YAO CHANG

When and where?

ALEX ROSEN (ON PHONE)

*East 13th, empty lot below the
overpass. One hour from now.
Vehicles stay out on the street.*

CLICK. A beat— then Yao Chang turns to Mei:

YAO CHANG

I'm sorry I pointed a gun at you
when the Russians attacked us, Mei.
It was—

MEI

Business. I know.

YAO CHANG

It's good you understand. We're
going to get this done, and you'll
be safe with me and Uncle Han.
(slight smile)
There's no one else in the world
who cares about you. You know that,
don't you?

HOLD ON MEI

Her face neutral, she gives no answer. SOUND OF ASIAN TECHNO STARTS ON THE SOUNDTRACK, and we make a hard cut to:

EXT. DISCO - CHINATOWN - NIGHT

A CROWD OF WELL-HEELED CHINESE and their DATES enter past the BOUNCERS at the door. An older crowd than one would expect. MUSIC throbs from within. THE CAMERA BOOMS DOWN to reveal

A MAN'S BACK in the f.g., looking at the disco from across the street, and we reverse onto

LUKE WRIGHT

Leaning against the GREY SUV he has parked on the corner. APPROACHING HEADLIGHTS illuminate his face, and he turns to see

TWO UNMARKED CARS

Pulling to a stop nearby. The doors open and SIX MEN get out -- SIX OF THE SEVEN DETECTIVES who beat the hell out of Luke earlier in the day.

KOLFAX, MEARS and LASKY are there— the others are named ROYAL, CRABBE and BENOIT. Kolfax's face is still badly bruised from the beating Luke gave him. Detective Reddick is noticeably absent.

LUKE

The gang's all here. Almost.
Reddick have to call in sick?

KOLFAX

In the hospital. Broken trachea.

LUKE

I didn't know a trachea could
break. Hope they can fix it.

Kolfax starts angrily toward Luke— then another UNMARKED CAR pulls up, and

CAPTAIN WOLF steps out, interrupting the confrontation.

CAPTAIN WOLF

Been a while, Luke. Can't say I
missed you. So let's get down to
business.

LUKE

Did you bring what I asked for?

Captain Wolf holds up a BROWN PAPER BAG. Like takes it and, watched closely by the other detectives, opens it and takes out a PRISCUTTO and MOZZARELLA SANDWICH.

LUKE

Toscanni's?

CAPTAIN WOLF

Where else?

Luke takes a bite of the sandwich. Chews it. Heaven. Takes another bite.

LUKE
Goddamn. Goddamn, that's good.
(mouth full)
Been in restaurants all night...
all I got served... was lead.

Luke munches his sandwich, while the detectives around him watch with hatred and impatience. Luke holds up a finger. Just another second. He finishes the sandwich, then wipes his hands on the bag and tosses it away.

LUKE
Anyone got a light?

LASKY
Screw this. You called us here,
Captain, so we came. But I don't
have to deal with this scumbag's
smart m—

CAPTAIN WOLF
Shut up, Lasky.

Captain Wolf takes out a LIGHTER, hands it to Luke.

LUKE
Still haven't quit, huh?

Luke takes a small PIECE OF PAPER out of his pocket— sets it on fire with the lighter— holds it until it completely burnt to nothing.

MEARS
What the hell was that?

LUKE
The combination to the safe with
the thirty million dollars in it.

KOLFAX
You mother—

LUKE
-Ah ah. The only place it exists
now is in *here*.
(taps his head)
Remember that, next time your
little trigger finger gets itchy.

DETECTIVE BENOIT

Why would Han Jiao stash it right in Chinatown's busiest gambling den?

LUKE

Because of sleazbucket cops like you, Benoit, who collect off Chinatown's busiest gambling den. Where else could he surround it with dozens of armed men without attracting police attention?

The other detectives turn toward Captain Wolf:

DETECTIVE CRABBE

How do we know this son of a bitch is on the level? He's a bum. Where's he getting his information?

Luke steps to the back of the SUV, opens it, and pulls up the flooring, revealing VASSILY DOCHESKI gagged and bound.

LUKE

There's a combination exchange happening tonight, between the Triads and a second party. The Triad half of the deal is in the safe here. The Russians planned to make a grab for it, but I took them out of the game.

(lowers the floor over Vassily again)

I would have liked to take it all for myself, but there's no way I can get to it on my own. So I called on you— my old pals. Thirty million split seven ways is still a lot of money.

MEARS

And we know it's still in there?

LUKE

Han Jiao isn't going to take thirty million dollars out of the most secure location he has and start moving it around the city. My experience— he does that, he loses the confidence of the seller, the deal falls through. If they're exchanging combinations, they're doing it now.

(MORE)

LUKE (cont'd)

Let's get in there before they show up looking for their money.

The detectives turn to Captain Wolf:

MEARS

We're risking a lot, captain. You especially. Everyone knows you got a bright future.

LUKE

Promised by who— Hizzonor? What carrot is he teasing you with, Wolf? Deputy Chief? Commissioner? You think he's gonna let you off the street, knowing what you know?
(then)

You guys are even thicker than I remembered. When did something like this ever go down in the city without Tramello knowing about it?

KOLFAX

Meaning what?

LUKE

Meaning—

CAPTAIN WOLF

—Meaning his second term is gonna end, and his hold on the city goes *pffft*— just like that. He's Joe Citizen again. A lecture here and there— whoop it up at a political convention every couple of years.
(then)

Thirty million cash is a nice retirement package.

The detectives are silent— then:

DETECTIVE BENOIT

What's he giving the Chinks?

LUKE

If I knew that, I wouldn't be here with you assholes, about to get my ass shot at by a hundred Triad soldiers guarding a goddamn safe.

CAPTAIN WOLF

Bright future, huh?

LUKE

Sure. Big headlines. Hero cops
take down New York City's biggest
underground gambling operation.

(then)

-And three million bucks apiece no
one will ever hear about to make it
shine just a little bit brighter.

CAPTAIN WOLF looks at Luke— then turns and opens the trunk of
his car; takes out a FLAK-JACKET and tosses it to LUKE.
Then Captain Wolf pulls out another one and starts snapping
it on over his own shirt.

The other detectives hesitate for a last instant, then move
to their cars and start prepping for battle:

FLAK JACKETS are snapped on -- SHOTGUNS are pulled out, EXTRA
.45'S are shoved into belts and holsters. KNAPSACKS packed
with BLAST CHARGES slung over shoulders. CRABBE and BENOIT
slam CLIPS into automatic TECH 9'S.

Luke sticks a GLOCK in his waistband, a .45 in a side-
holster. Jams several clips into the pockets of his flack
jacket. Then turns to face the others:

LUKE

Remember— I've got the combination.
You want that money, watch my back.
(smiles)
But you were gonna do that anyway.

Luke pumps his shotgun. Starts walking across the street.

THE CAMERA BOOMS UP

AS THE SIX HEAVILY ARMED DETECTIVES follow Luke, striding
toward the disco in a menacing formation. Luke breaks into a
run, and

CRACK!— The butt of Luke's shotgun takes down one of the
BOUNCERS at the door— the others scatter out of the way of
the SEVEN DETECTIVES, as they charge past the SHOCKED CROWD
outside and enter

INT. DISCO - CHINATOWN - CONTINUOUS

REVELERS SCREAM and scatter as the DETECTIVES barrel into the
incredibly noisy space in a tight formation, FIRING A FEW
WARNING SHOTS over the heads of the crowd— and people race
for the doors, creating chaos in the tightly packed space,
when

BOOM! BOOM!— TWO SHOTS hit DETECTIVE MEARS in the chest—absorbed by the flak-jacket, but knocking him backward, and

CAPTAIN WOLF spins in the direction the shots were fired from, and BLASTS TWO TRIAD SOLDIERS off their feet...

—MORE GUNFIRE ERUPTS as TRIAD SOLDIERS emerge from the thinning crowd, FIRING at the detectives, but

BENOIT AND ROYAL

—on point, take them down with short bursts from their Tech 9's... these detectives know how to function like a paramilitary unit, and they do it with ruthless efficiency, as they SHOOT THEIR WAY through the disco toward

153 THE ENTRANCE TO THE STAIRWELL

153

Leading to the level below. THE DETECTIVES race down the stairs, cutting down several more GUARDS as they go, and emerge into the

INT. UNDERGROUND CASINO - CONTINUOUS

—which we saw earlier— but only sparsely populated. Now it's filled with GAMBLERS and their GIRLFRIENDS, CASINO WORKERS and more ARMED TRIAD SOLDIERS than one would care to count -- and now things really gets crazy, as

THE DETECTIVES and the TRIAD SOLDIERS engage in an explosive, wildly kinetic GUN-BATTLE -- THE DETECTIVES' AIM is deadly accurate as the move through the fleeing crowd, cutting down anyone they see with a weapon, BLOWING AWAY TRIAD SOLDIERS with cold-blooded precision...

ROULETTE TABLES ARE TURNED OVER -- CHIPS SCATTER -- CARDS FLY IN THE AIR LIKE CONFETTI -- IMPORTED SLOT MACHINES EXPLODE in BURSTS OF BRIGHTLY COLORED GLASS; and

155 THE DETECTIVES finally reach the end of the MAIN SPACE and enter the CORRIDORS of the labyrinthine underground set-up, moving into a much more dangerous area for them, as there are HIGH-ROLLER ROOMS on the sides which they can't immediately see into—

156 FIRST ROOM:

156

HIGH ROLLERS hit the floor, as BENOIT fires from behind the doorway, then ROYAL comes in, blasting the TRIAD SOLDIERS in there with his Tech 9.— but

BLAM!— BENOIT CATCHES A BULLET IN THE HEAD from a soldier in a room on the other side of the corridor.

LUKE
Five million apiece.

Then Luke turns and dives into

157 ROOM TWO: 157

Luke BLOWS AWAY THE TRIAD SOLDIER with his SHOTGUN. The other cops move to follow, but

A TRIAD SOLDIER presses a switch, and an IRON GATE SLIDES SHUT BEHIND LUKE— locking him in the room with a DOZEN TRIAD SOLDIERS -- And what follows is insane:

A WILD MIX OF GUN-FIRE AND HAND TO HAND FIGHTING -- Luke takes out the guy closest to him with his GLOCK, grabs another and uses him as a human shield, firing from over his bullet-riddled body, cutting down two more soldiers, while

158 IN THE CORRIDOR: 158

THE DETECTIVES exchange GUNFIRE with several SOLDIERS who fire at them from down the hall, TAKING DOWN DETECTIVE CRABBE before being decimated themselves, and

159 IN THE ROOM: 159

THREE BULLETS SLAM INTO LUKE'S FLAK-JACKET PROTECTED BACK, knocking forward to the floor— where he goes into a roll and comes up FIRING—

BLOWING THE SHOOTER AWAY. Luke is right near the next TWO GUYS, and he takes one down with an elbow, but then he's knocked backward by a series of blows from a GOOD FIGHTER. Luke in serious trouble, as

160 IN THE CORRIDOR: 160

DETECTIVE ROYAL BLASTS the lock of the gate with his SHOTGUN— but the BLOWBACK nearly takes off his hands, and he drops the gun, HOWLING IN AGONY... as CAPTAIN WOLF pulls open the gate, and

161 MEARS, KOLFAX AND LASKY rush into the room, BLASTING the ~~guy~~ 161 who was beating the crap out of Luke, and taking out the remaining TRIAD SOLDIERS.

162 IN THE CORRIDOR: 162

ROYAL is looking at his disfigured hands in shock, mumbling—

DETECTIVE ROYAL
... I got to get out... I got to...

BAM!— CAPTAIN WOLF SHOOTS HIM.

THE OTHERS TURN TO LOOK, just in time to see

CAPTAIN WOLF FIRING INTO THE CORRIDOR— pumping bullets into what was an already dead Triad Soldier's body. Then

163

IN THE ROOM:

163

-Captain Wolf joins the others, and they all move toward the IRON GRATING LINED CORRIDOR that leads to the next section of the underground maze.

EXT. STREET - OUTSIDE THE DISCO - CONTINUOUS

THE CROWD is scattering into the night. FOLLOW A TRIAD SOLDIER as backs away from the disco, shouting into his CELL-PHONE:

TRIAD SOLDIER

<We've been attacked. Not by the Russians. By the police, I think. But they're better than police...>

INT. OFFICE - CHINATOWN - CONTINUOUS

HAN JIAO and SEVERAL OF HIS GUARDS listen to the panicked soldier on SPEAKER-PHONE. HAN JIAO turns to his men:

HAN JIAO

<Call Yao. Tell him as soon as he gets that number, he is to take out the errand boy. We'll have to decipher the code ourselves, and quickly.>

INT. UNDERGROUND CASINO - CONTINUOUS

LUKE followed by the KOLFAX, MEARS, LASKY and CAPTAIN WOLF, races past the grated corridor toward the stairwell leading toward an even lower level...

GUNFIRE EXPLODES FROM BELOW, and

167

LUKE takes a running jump, hitting the top of the stairwell¹⁶⁷ wall with his feet, kicking off to the other side as he goes down, clearing enough space for

LASKY AND MEARS to FIRE from under him, hitting ONE OF THE SOLDIERS firing from below, and

LUKE kicks off the wall again and barrels into the SECOND SOLDIER, knocking him to the ground. Rolls off him and BLOWS HIM away with his GLOCK.

Luke gets shakily to his feet as the others join him below. They are standing in a small corridor in front of a single heavily bolted STEEL DOOR.

CAPTAIN WOLF
The Gates of Paradise.

MEARS
Locked and bolted to sinners like
us.

CAPTAIN WOLF
Let's not wait for an invitation.

DETECTIVES LASKY AND KOLFAX

Reach into their bags, come out with EXPLOSIVE CHARGES, which they affix to the spaces between the door and the wall. Then all the cops back up toward the stairwell again, putting their fingers in their ears, and

WHOOOM! - THE EXPLOSION ROCKS the corridor. DUST AND DEBRIS. Then the FIVE MEN race forward, keeping low, and run into

INT. SAFE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

THE TRIAD SOLDIERS there are mostly bloody and dazed, on their hands and knees. THE DETECTIVES take them out with ruthless finality, but—

ONE LAST SOLDIER manages to get a SHOT OFF that HITS MEARS in the neck, before the others take him out. All is silent, save for the sound of Mears gasping, holding his neck as the life slowly leaves his body. Another moment, and he's gone.

Luke and the remaining three detectives turn and look at the far wall, half of it taken up with the DOOR TO A LARGE SAFE.

Captain Wolf levels his gun at Luke. Kolfax and Lasky follow. Luke puts his .45 down on the floor.

CAPTAIN WOLF
Alright, you bastard. Get on it.

Luke looks at them evenly.

LUKE
You're kidding, right?
(then)
(MORE)

LUKE (cont'd)

Here's how it works. We all put
down our guns, and I open the safe.
You want to shoot me now, go ahead.
But make your minds up quick,
'cause the real cops will be here
soon.

A still beat. Then Captain Wolf puts his gun in his holster.

LUKE

On the floor.

Captain Wolf glares at Luke, puts his gun on the floor.
Kolfax and Lasky do the same. Luke turns and gets to work
turning the dial on the safe.

Tense seconds. All eyes on Luke. Listening for approaching
footsteps. Luke finally gets to the last number... turns it
slowly... and nothing.

KOLFAX

What's that supposed to be, you—

LUKE

Back off. I had right left
switched. It's gonna open.

Luke starts again. Turns the dial this way and that. Gets
to the last turn and—

Luke suddenly drops down to the floor reaching for his .45

The other three men instantly go for their guns, but—

LUKE IS TOO FAST -- He comes up FIRING THE .45— nails LASKY
right between the eyes, running forward as he SHOTS—

DROPPING KOLFAX with TWO HEAD-SHOTS, and

CAPTAIN WOLF comes up with his GUN, but Luke SHOTS HIM IN
THE SHOULDER, spinning him around— catches Wolf's gun hand
and turns it, forcing him to drop his weapon. CAPTAIN WOLF
SCREAMS IN PAIN, but Luke keeps hold of his arm.

LUKE

Easy. You're lucky it's still
attached to your body.

Luke pushes Captain Wolf toward the safe, presses the .45 his
head.

LUKE

Left, twenty-six.

Captain Wolf turns the dial, and— **CLACK**— there comes the satisfying sound of tumblers falling into place. Captain Wolf pulls the door open with both hands, revealing

THE INSIDE OF THE SAFE: where, as advertised, **30,000,000 DOLLARS** in bills of large denominations is sitting on the shelf. The lot of it could fit into a couple of large duffel bags. So—

Luke pulls a bag off Kolfax's body and throws it to Captain Wolf, gun leveled at his head.

LUKE

Put it all in two bags. After that, you and me are getting out of here. Do exactly as I say, and you'll walk away from this with your life.

(pauses)

It's up to you.

EXT. STREET - OUTSIDE THE DISCO - MOMENTS LATER

BLUE AND WHITE POLICE CARS are pulling up to the corner, blocking off all traffic to the block— trying to calm down freaked out DISCO PATRONS AND GAMBLERS who are shouting at them in Chinese and English...

A FEW OF THE BRAVER COPS

moving in small teams, enter the disco, guns clutched in nervous hands, and

INT. DISCO - CONTINUOUS

THE COPS can hardly believe the destruction that meets their eyes -- DEAD TRIAD SOLDIERS sprawled out on the floor— then

CAPTAIN WOLF APPEARS from the stairwell leading downstairs, LUKE CLOSE BESIDE HIM, both of them with HEAVY SATCHELS SLUNG OVER THEIR SHOULDERS.

UNIFORMED COP

Captain Wolf! What happened in here?

CAPTAIN WOLF

What do you think happened? Raid on the joint went to hell. We got dead cops— casualties everywhere...

EXT. STREET - OUTSIDE THE DISCO - CONTINUOUS

Captain Wolf and Luke burst out into the street— Captain Wolf BARKING ORDERS at the uniformed cops like he's somehow on top of the situation:

CAPTAIN WOLF

~~-Move—~~ move. You know what kind of shit is stinking up Chinatown right under your noses..? Wait 'till I talk to the goddamn *commissioner*...

UNIFORMED COP

Captain, you look like you need an ambulance—

CAPTAIN WOLF

—Yeah, we need the entire *fleet* down here. But I'm gonna drive my own busted ass to the hospital...

INT. LEXUS SUV - A MOMENT LATER

The doors swing open, Luke and Captain Wolf throw their satchels into the back: Captain Wolf gets into the driver's seat, Luke in the passenger side— gun leveled at Wolf:

LUKE

Not bad, Wolf. If you weren't such a murderous double dealing asshole, I could almost like you. Almost.
(then)
Drive.

CAPTAIN WOLF GUNS THE ENGINE, and

EXT. CHINATOWN STREET - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

—THE SUV pulls away with a screech of rubber -- leaving the chaos-filled street behind it, and we do a smash cut to:

INT. SUV - MINUTES LATER

CLOSE ON CAPTAIN WOLF AS DUCT TAPE is wrapped around his mouth by Luke, who then pulls him out of the car, and tapes his hands tightly behind his back.

LUKE

I said I wouldn't kill you. I didn't say I was gonna put you up at the Ritz.

Luke shoves Captain Wolf toward the back of the SUV, opens the rear door, and pulls up the floor, revealing the barely conscious VASSILY DOCHESKI. Luke doubles Captain Wolf over, then shoves him into the space, nose to nose with Vassily.

LUKE

Hold hands, you lovebirds.

Luke brings the floor down.

INT. GRACIE MANSION - NIGHT

MAYOR TRAMELLO'S ANXIOUS FACE is reflected in the dark glass of the window he's staring out of: in which we also see the REFLECTION OF SEVERAL AIDES in the room behind him, hear the murmur of their voices. HIS CELL-PHONE RINGS. He looks at the number, raises it to his ear:

MAYOR TRAMELLO

Captain Wolf?

LUKE (ON PHONE)

Not even close.

Mayor Tramello takes a moment, speaks softly:

MAYOR TRAMELLO

I was wondering when I was going to hear from you.

LUKE (ON PHONE)

I have your thirty million.

MAYOR TRAMELLO

What?

INT. SUV - EAST SIDE HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Luke is absolutely tearing up the highway— Captain Wolf's cell-phone in hand -- the lights of Queens on the other side of the East River flashing past in a blur.

LUKE

You heard me, you son of a bitch.
I have your money. I want to—

MAYOR TRAMELLO (ON PHONE)

*—What you want to do is calm down
so we can talk like adults and—*

LUKE

Shut it, Danny. I want to talk,
but I don't want to talk to you --
I want to talk to your boyfriend.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREETS - NIGHT

A BLACK SEDAN drives purposefully through the thinning late night traffic toward the East River. CELL-PHONE RINGS, and

INT. BLACK SEDAN - CONTINUOUS

ALEX ROSEN, the Mayor's innocuous looking "assistant"-- speaks into his EAR-PIECE:

ALEX ROSEN

This is Alex.

LUKE (ON PHONE)

*Been a while, Alex. You still
sleeping with that ugly bastard?*

ALEX ROSEN

A man's gotta do what a man's gotta do. He's better looking than Annie was, anyway. Never understood how you hooked up with a cow like that.

INT. SUV - EAST SIDE HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

Luke keeps his voice even, as he shoots up the FDR like a rocket:

LUKE

It was never about her looks for me. It was her sense of humor.

ALEX ROSEN (ON PHONE)

She's not so funny now, is she?

Luke's eyes harden:

LUKE

No, she's not. Neither am I. I have the thirty million dollars, Alex, and I had to kill a lot of people to get it. So listen up--

EXT. EMPTY LOT BELOW UNDERPASS - CONTINUOUS

Alex Rosen pulls his car to a stop outside the lot. His jaw is tight, as he listens:

LUKE (ON PHONE)

-You haven't made the combination exchange yet. I want to know what's inside the other safe.

ALEX ROSEN

Take a flying jump, Luke.

LUKE (ON PHONE)

How about I burn the thirty mil, first? Cause I don't give a damn. You got ten seconds, then you can kiss the money good-bye.

(then)

What's in the safe?

ALEX ROSEN

A disc. Names, money trails. When the Vice President sent us over, helped make Danny mayor, he didn't do it for free. In return we looked the other way while the money and assets seized from every group deemed a terrorist organization— only a handful of which actually were— was funneled into the pockets of the veep and his buddies—

INT. SUV - EAST SIDE HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

Luke steers around the cars in his way, pedal to the metal, as Alex continues:

ALEX ROSEN (ON PHONE)

-Amazing, what people let you get away with when they're afraid and want to feel protected.

LUKE

Amazing how many dirtbags there are out there waiting to take advantage of it.

ALEX ROSEN (ON PHONE)

Like you didn't?

LUKE

I never took a dirty dime.

INT. BLACK SEDAN - CONTINUOUS

Alex allows himself a slight smile:

ALEX ROSEN

I bet that helps all those souls
you sent to their maker without due
process rest a whole lot easier.
Don't preach at me. We both killed
who we were told to kill. Only-

LUKE (ON PHONE)

I quit.

ALEX ROSEN

Bully for you, Pearl Pure-heart.
But I'm getting paid for services
rendered. They figured they could
cover their tracks- but you know
how hard it is to cover tracks from
guys like us, Luke.

EXT. SUV - EAST SIDE HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

Luke a takes an exit off the highway into the Upper East
side:

LUKE

So it's about blackmail- but who
has the *time*, right? You sell the
disc to the highest bidder, then
waltz off with your boyfriend and
spend it on a villa in the Bahamas-

ALEX ROSEN (ON PHONE)

*Bali. But whatever, right? So now
you know. Now what?*

LUKE

Now you're dealing with me.

EXT. EMPTY LOT BELOW UNDERPASS - CONTINUOUS

Alex Rosen looks into the empty lot, on the far end of which:

YAO CHANG

Is waiting, little MEI beside him, flanked by SEVEN TRIAD
SOLDIERS.

ALEX ROSEN

Alright, then. I'm turning around.

LUKE (ON PHONE)

No you're not.

ALEX ROSEN
What are you talking about? You
got the money. The Chinese have
nothing I care about.

INT. SUV - UPPER EAST SIDE - CONTINUOUS

Luke speaks softly:

LUKE
No. They have something I do.

EXT. EMPTY LOT BELOW UNDERPASS - MOMENTS LATER

YAO CHANG AND HIS SOLDIERS watch as the lone figure of ALEX
ROSEN approaches them across the dark, empty space.

YAO CHANG
<Remember, once he gives Mei the
number, we take care of business.>

CLOSE ON MEI

Her eyes numb, exhausted with the events of the night.
Resigned to whatever is to follow, as

ALEX ROSEN steps up in front of YAO CHANG and his SOLDIERS.

YAO CHANG
Alright. We're here. Give the
girl the combination to your safe,
and she will give you our number.
We go to your location, you go to
ours. When we've gotten the disc,
we will explain the code, and you
get the cash.

ALEX ROSEN
That's the deal.
(to Mei)
Let's hear it.

MEI
It's a long number. You will want
to write it down.

ALEX ROSEN
Lucky I brought a pen.

Alex reaches into his jacket-pocket, removing a pen, while
-his other hand slides behind his back like a slight-of-hand
artist, and with lightning speed comes up with a BERETTA 9MM.

BAM! BAM! -- TWO TRIAD SOLDIERS go down instantly.

A THIRD SOLDIER closer to Alex gets to his gun but-- WHACK-- gets the PEN stuck in his neck before he can shoot, and

YAO CHANG comes up with his gun, but Alex easily moves out of the way, grabbing his arm and twisting it under him, then, with frightening speed and efficiency, he drops the remaining FOUR TRIAD SOLDIERS with FOUR SINGLE SHOTS. He has let go of Yao in order to do it, so

YAO CHANG comes at Alex with all the hand-to-hand skill he's got, and it's considerable. But Alex is like a precision machine. He parries Yao's best shots easily, gets under his arm, and wraps his neck in a head-lock. Alex pauses, looking at

MEI

Who is staring open-mouthed, stunned at the speed of what just occurred.

ALEX ROSEN

You might want to close your eyes.

Mei does no such thing. She's going to bear witness, no matter how painful.

ALEX ROSEN

Have it your way.

HOLD ON MEI: as we hear the CRACK of YAO CHANG'S NECK breaking. Two streams of tears spill out of Mei's eyes and run down her cheeks. But she does not change her expression, or make a sound.

Mei looks up, as ALEX'S SHADOW falls over her; his hand clamps down on her shoulder, and:

EXT. CARL SCHURTZ PARK - EAST END AVENUE - NIGHT

LUKE pulls himself up over the low, unimpressive security wall and drops into the park... runs through the shadows, easily keeping out of the view of the few SECURITY GUARDS patrolling the area around

Its quaint nineteenth century rooftop peeking above the tree-line. Luke makes his way around towards the back porch, where a series of white columns hold up the awning to the second floor.

Luke hops up onto the porch railing and grabs onto a column, using his momentum to grab onto the second floor terrace.

INT. BLACK SEDAN - NIGHT

Alex puts Mei in the passenger seat, gets into the driver's side and closes the door. Alex dials his cell-phone. Gets CAPTAIN WOLF'S ANSWERING MESSAGE. Mutters:

ALEX ROSEN
Come on, Luke.

Mei's eyes narrow as she hears the name. She looks sideways at Alex, while he tries the number again— THEN— **A BUZZ**— and ALEX LOOKS at the NEW TEXT MESSAGE ON HIS PHONE:

THE OLD PLACE. SIX AM. JUST YOU AND THE GIRL. OR THE MONEY BURNS.

Alex bites back his anger, puts the car into gear. Mei ventures hopefully:

MEI
You are a friend of Luke?

Alex studies Mei for a moment. Then, without sentiment:

ALEX ROSEN
Not as far as you're concerned.

Alex guns the engine and pulls out into the dark street.

INT. GRACIE MANSION - DOWNSTAIRS PARLOR - NIGHT

THE LARGE LCD TELEVISION is showing images of the fallout in the STREET OUTSIDE THE CHINATOWN DISCO: COPS AND MEDICS everywhere, DEAD AND INJURED being carried onto AMBULANCES.

One of the MAYOR'S AIDES offers:

MAYOR'S AIDE
Jesus. This is really getting out of hand.

MAYOR TRAMELLO
You think? Thanks for that insight.

VOICE (O.C.)
Your Honor—

TILT UP TO THE SECOND FLOOR -- A YOUNG AIDE is standing by the door to the MAYOR'S OFFICE.

YOUNG AIDE

-Alex Rosen is on your private
line. He says it's urgent.

ANGLE ON THE SECOND FLOOR:

As Mayor Tramello comes up the stairs.

MAYOR TRAMELLO

Why the hell isn't the phone
ringing downstairs? I thought I
told you to pass all calls to—

Then Tramello sees:

LUKE WRIGHT is right behind the Young Aide, who is clearly
terrified. Luke's .45 AUTOMATIC aimed right between the
Mayor's eyes.

LUKE

One peep and you die.

Luke pulls Tramello into the

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

-and shuts the door behind him.

YOUNG AIDE

I... I'm so sorry Your Honor, I...

WHAM!— An elbow to the face knocks him out cold. Luke locks
the door, keeping the gun leveled at Mayor Tramello.

LUKE

I always told you this place has
lousy security standards.

MAYOR TRAMELLO

That's 'cause no one is crazy
enough to come here and pull a
stunt like this, Luke. You got
some balls.

LUKE

Yeah. Amazing I can even walk.
(then)
The disc. And don't say "What
disc?" or I will kneecap you.

MAYOR TRAMELLO

You think I'm so stupid I'd have the Triad march up the front steps and collect it from me in my living room? It's in a safe far from here.

LUKE

I don't think you're stupid. Which is why I don't for a minute believe you'd be giving away the only copy, without keeping one for yourself—

Luke presses the gun to Tramello's throat:

LUKE

—I'm going to meet Alex. But first you are gonna give me the disc, or I will put bullets in places that won't kill you, but will make you spend the rest of your life wishing I had.

Tramello has been around long enough to see that Luke is dead serious. He turns and slowly walks to the bureau against the wall, opens the top door:

There is a SMALL SAFE behind it.

Tramello turns the lock a few times, opens the safe door. He reaches in, and comes out with a single DISC. Holds it out to Luke.

LUKE

Put it in the computer. I'd like to be sure I'm not walking out of here with a copy of ABBA's Greatest Hits.

ANGLE ON THE COMPUTER ON TRAMELLO'S DESK:

Mayor Tramello slides the disc in. Luke stands right behind him, gun in his back. The Mayor clicks on the icon, opening the disc, and

THE SCREEN fills with NAMES, NUMBERS, BANK ACCOUNTS, ETC. THE WHOLE INCRIMINATING DEAL.

LUKE

That guy was in on this? Damn.

MAYOR TRAMELLO

Alex will kill you, you know.

LUKE
Yeah. Most probably.

THEN— **WHACK!**— Luke slams the butt of his gun into the back of Mayor Tramello's head, and

CUT TO:

THE SUN RISING OVER THE EAST RIVER

Illuminating an old, rotting pier on the Brooklyn side of the river, wild and overgrown. Sunlight glittering off the glass towers of the Manhattan skyline in the b.g.

193

ANGLE ON ALEX AND MEI

193

Standing in front of the black sedan on one side of the pier. Alex is holding his gun at his side. They look up at the sound of an APPROACHING ENGINE, to see

THE GREY LEXUS SUV

Approaching... pulling to a stop a dozen yards away from them. The door opens, and

LUKE GETS OUT. His .45 AUTOMATIC already in his hands. He levels it as he approaches, taking no chances.

Alex casually raises his gun to Mei's temple, as Luke stops, twenty feet between himself and Alex.

ALEX ROSEN
Jesus, Luke. You look like hell.

LUKE
It's nothing. Just alcohol, a lousy diet, sleep deprivation and lack of sunlight. Other than that, I feel great.

Alex smiles.

ALEX ROSEN
How many bodies did we get rid of in this place?

LUKE
I didn't keep count.

ALEX ROSEN
They were all assholes, anyway.

LUKE

No more so than the men who put
them here.

ALEX ROSEN

I didn't come here to help you
unburden yourself of your guilt,
Luke. I came for the money.

Mei's eyes flash up to Alex -- then to Luke -- Behind the
banter both men are coiled like snakes, watching for the
tiniest opening.

LUKE

Let her go and I'll tell you where
it is.

Alex shakes his head.

ALEX ROSEN

Danny called. Told me about your
visit to the mansion. I have to
admit, even I didn't see that one
coming. You have the disc and the
money. You could have walked away
from this whole thing the ultimate
winner.

(then)

What is she to you?

LUKE

Life.

ALEX ROSEN

Then enjoy it while it lasts --
because she's the reason yours is
going to be a whole lot shorter.

(presses the gun into
Mei's temple)

The money, Luke.

LUKE

In the car.

ALEX ROSEN

Go get it.

LUKE

Get it yourself. You're faster
than me, Alex-- but not fast enough
to nail me if you shoot her first.

ALEX ROSEN

That happens, neither of us gets
what he wants.

A beat, then:

LUKE

It's gonna be like that?

ALEX ROSEN

It's gonna be like that.

Slowly... very slowly... Luke starts to lower his gun... as does Alex. Inch by inch... never taking their eyes off each other, until the guns are on the ground. And just as slowly, they release the triggers, then straighten back up again.

The two men move toward each other... getting closer and closer, their bodies subtly shifting into fighting stances... eyes locked on each other's elbows and knees, watching to see who will make the first move... and

-IT'S ALEX -- Snapping forward with incredible speed, but

BLAM! Both Luke and Alex spin around as

MEI- HOLDING ALEX'S GUN- FIRES ANOTHER WILD SHOT! AND
ANOTHER, AND

-ONE BULLET HITS ALEX IN THE THIGH -- sending him sprawling
to the ground, and

MEI fires TWO MORE SHOTS into the air before the kickback
knocks her back onto her ass, gun flying from her hands, and

Alex pulls himself up to his knees, but- **WHAM!**- Luke gives
him a knee across the head, sending him back to the ground.

Luke wastes no time- scoops up his .45 AUTOMATIC, and points
it at Alex's face.

A last moment of eye-contact between the two men.

LUKE

Sorry, Alex. You're too dangerous.

BOOM! Luke blows Alex away. Stands looking down for a last
moment. Then:

ANGLE ON MEI

Sitting on the ground, her hands on her ears, still ringing
from the gunshots she fired. Luke kneels beside her.

LUKE
You alright, Mei?

Mei winces, but nods.

MEI
I saw him fight before. Bad
business for you.

LUKE
The worst. He would have murdered
me. Guy was a machine.
(then)
You saved me.

MEI
We save each other.

EXT. PIER - SUV - MOMENTS LATER

THE FLOOR IS PULLED UP, revealing CAPTAIN WOLF and VASSILY
DOCHESKI, still there, bound up and barely conscious, and we
smash cut to:

OUTSIDE THE SUV: LUKE RIPS THE TAPE OFF CAPTAIN WOLF'S FACE.
Wolf blinks in the sunlight, grimacing in pain.

LUKE
I know how you feel. Been one hell
of a night.

Captain Wolf flexes his aching muscles. Sees Mei standing
behind Luke.

CAPTAIN WOLF
I don't suppose you're gonna fill
me in on what I missed.

Luke doesn't answer- indicates Vassily:

LUKE
Help me get this sack of garbage
out of the car.

Captain Wolf and Luke reach in back, lift out Vassily and
deposit him on his knees on the cracked pavement.

LUKE
Make sure he gets to his Daddy safe
and sound.

Luke takes out a WAD OF CASH and hands it to a very surprised
Captain Wolf:

LUKE
 Fifty grand, for your trouble.
 Might not seem like much— but at
 least you're gonna live to enjoy
 it.

Captain Wolf locks eyes with Luke for a moment— then:

CAPTAIN WOLF
 You want him safe and sound? After
 what he did to you?

Luke indicates Mei—

LUKE
 For her sake.

Luke kneels down beside Vassily and looks into his bloodshot eyes:

LUKE
 You tell your old man we're square.
 (then)
 We meet again... all bets are off.

INT. MAH JONG PARLOR - DAY

DOLLY BEHIND TWO TRIAD SOLDIERS, walking through the empty space with TWIN SATCHELS on their backs. They stop in front of

HAN JIAO, sitting at a table at the far end. The Triad Soldiers put down the satchels and unzip them, revealing, within:

PILES OF CASH. NEARLY EVERYTHING THAT WAS TAKEN FROM THE SAFE.

TRIAD SOLDIER
 <They left this note.>

Han Jiao takes the note, unfolds it: It is written in CHINESE, and as he reads it, WE HEAR MEI'S GIRLISH VOICE:

MEI (V.O.)
*Most revered Uncle. Here is twenty
 nine million, nine hundred and
 fifty thousand dollars. We will
 pay back the remaining fifty
 thousand, with a ten percent
 interest.*

(MORE)

MEI (V.O.) (cont'd)

But in case you are still angry, I must tell you this: I know every account of every operation you have running in Chinatown, as well as all the money routes back to Shanghai. You don't come after us, and we won't come after you. Come after us... and your world ends.
 (then, incredibly)
You have my word on that.

Han Jiao looks at the paper for a last moment, then crumples it up, rises, and heads for the door:

HAN JIAO

<Get me on a flight home tonight.
 If I never set foot in this damned city again it will be too soon.>

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE CITIBANK - AFTERNOON

Luke steps out of the bank doors, walks across the crowded sidewalk to where the SUV is parked at the curb and gets inside, where:

INT. SUV - CONTINUOUS

Mei is waiting for him, sitting in the passenger seat, munching on a donut.

MEI

Bank number five. How many more?

LUKE

That's it. Got copies of the disc in security boxes all over the city. Anything happens to us, the information gets out, and a lot of important people are going to be very sorry— so some of them have agreed to make sure we're well looked out for. Our security.
 (smiles)
 Good business for us.

MEI

What now?

LUKE

Now we get the fu— We get out of town.

MEI

Crazy man. Shoot people all night,
then worry about the words you say.

LUKE

Guy's got to draw the line
somewhere.

Luke starts the SUV's engine.

LUKE

I got info on a school for gifted
kids up in Seattle. It's a nice
drive, if you like trees and shit.

Mei looks at Luke seriously:

MEI

Are we safe?

Luke takes a moment, then speaks to her with the honesty she
deserves:

LUKE

One day at a time, Mei.

EXT. STREET - NEW YORK - CONTINUOUS

THE SUV pulls out into the street, blending in the with the
rest of the everyday city traffic, just another vehicle among
a million others.

LUKE (V.O.)

-One day at a time.

CUT TO BLACK.

SAFE