

SNAKE EYES

screenplay by

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INT CASINO FLOOR - UNDERWATER NIGHT

Wavering, uneven light bends up from below as we drift through a murky underwater space. There are some objects floating in the water up ahead of us, so we drift closer to check them out. They're casino chips, four or five of them twisting in the current. One side of a black chip says "\$100."

A man's VOICE comes over, soft, tired.

RICK (v.o.)  
I keep having the same dream. I'm underwater. Just floating along, up above the floor of the Aerodrome Casino.

The \$100 chip rotates on the current, showing us its flip side, the smiling face of a man in a suit and tie -- GILBERT POWELL.

RICK (v.o.)  
'Scuse me, that's Gilbert Powell's Aerodrome Hotel and Casino. Wouldn't want to get that wrong.

A spinning roulette wheel floats past, the ball drifting lazily above it.

RICK (v.o.)  
Everything in the place has been cut loose, it's all just drifting around on the current. But nobody seems to mind.

A whole blackjack table floats past. The PLAYERS are hunched on their chairs as the DEALER deals the cards, which float softly out in front of him.

RICK (v.o.)  
Mind? They don't even notice. They're all too busy puttin' their money out on the collection plate. Pulling the arms on them slot machines like they're workin' in a factory.

An OVERWEIGHT WOMAN at a slot machine drifts past, upside down. The money falls out of her purse and pockets, but she doesn't care, just keeps pulling the arm on the machine.

A craps table floats past. A man's body is sprawled out on the felt and PARAMEDICS stand over him, administering CPR. The PLAYERS don't seem to mind, they keep right on playing as the medics do their job.

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Drifting closer, we see there's a pair of dice where his eyeballs should be, two big white dots staring at us from the middle of their blood red faces.

RICK (v.o.)  
Snake eyes. House wins. Just my  
luck, I can't even dream a winner.

The debris thickens, the wreckage of an underwater casino. A hundred dollar bill floats past, close enough for us to see Ben Franklin's face is smeared with a thick red bloody swath. A hand (our hand) reaches out for it, but a swirl of current sucks the bill away, out of our grasp.

RICK (v.o.)  
I float over toward one of those big  
mirrors they got in there. All  
mirrors, that place. No clocks, not  
one more door than the law says they  
gotta have, but mirrors everywhere.  
There's eyes behind those mirrors  
too. More snake eyes.

We float over toward a large, mirrored wall. The debris starts to drift out of the way and we see the shape of a man, approaching the mirror. The man is us.

RICK (v.o.)  
I drift closer to the mirror, and I  
get a look at myself --

The last of the debris clears, giving us a clear view of RICK SANTORO, mid-forties, and that's where they'll stop counting, because he's dead. From the looks of him, he might have been beaten to death, his face is swollen and bruised, he has a split lip and a black eye, which stares sightlessly at the mirror.

RICK (v.o.)  
That's when I wake up.

A TEST PATTERN

suddenly fills the screen, accompanied by a high-pitched TONE. After several seconds, the tone cuts out and a MAN'S VOICE replaces it.

VOICE (o.s.)  
Hey, what the hell, anybody feel like  
doing their job today?

The test pattern winks --

EXT . BOARDWALK (ON VIDEO MONITOR) NIGHT

-- and is replaced by a video image of a heavy storm. It's night, and bright TV lights illuminate the rain, which falls at an angle in the stiff wind.

An attractive TV reporter (ANTHEA), a black woman around thirty, stands on Atlantic City's boardwalk in a yellow slicker and rain hat, clutching a microphone. She SHOUTS into the camera, loud, over the storm.

ANTHEA

I can't do the fucking wraparound from the studio? I gotta stand here in a fucking hurricane and be a weather bimbo?

The Man's Voice replies, chatter on a headset.

VOICE (o.s.)

They want you to call it a tropical storm, Anthea, not a hurricane.

ANTHEA

But it is a hurricane.

VOICE (o.s.)

It's a holiday weekend, just call it a tropical storm, for Christ's sakes.

ANTHEA

I love this town. They even spin the weather.

VOICE (o.s.)

You're on in five, four, three, two --

Anthea's face suddenly lights up, smiling into the camera.

VOICE (o.s.)

Go.

ANTHEA

Well, you'd never know it now, Jan, as the first taste of tropical storm Jezebel lashes Atlantic City, but earlier today the boardwalk was the site of a major military test as Powell Aeronautics held a public demonstration of its long awaited ground-to-air missile defense system, the Powell AirGuard. With a two and a half billion dollar contract on the line, Defense Secretary Charles Kirkland was front row center.

The image switches to tape shot earlier in the day, when the weather was merely threatening.

EXT BOARDWALK (ON VIDEO MONITOR) DAY

CHARLES KIRKLAND, sixtyish, the United States Secretary of Defense, sits in the front row of a grandstand that has been erected on the boardwalk, facing the ocean. MEN and WOMEN IN SUITS, dignitaries and business types of all kinds, crowd the bleachers around Kirkland.

Towering, tacky, brass and glass casinos loom behind them, lining the once-elegant boardwalk. Directly behind the grandstand is a garish, aviation-themed nightmare of a place called "Gilbert Powell's Aerodrome Hotel & Casino." The building itself evokes the image of a rocket ship.

ANTHEA (v.o.)

In a characteristic bit of showmanship, Gilbert Powell himself drove the mobile launching unit right up onto the sand at the foot of the boardwalk.

The tape cuts to a shot of GILBERT POWELL, the dynamic fifty year old whose face was on the casino chip, as he ROARS up onto the sand behind the wheel of an ATV of some sort. On the back of the ATV is the AirGuard missile, a sleek, six foot projectile, one of four in the launcher's rotating barrel.

Powell climbs off and goes into the stands. He greets Kirkland chummily. Everybody's all smiles, if forced ones.

ANTHEA (v.o.)

The AirGuard is expected to replace the popular but aging Patriot missile, which came to prominence during the Gulf War. Concern over the test, which had been postponed three times, was running particularly high here in South New Jersey, where Powell Aeronautics employs some seventeen thousand area residents. Failure to win Department of Defense approval today might have meant cancellation of the government's massive order and widespread layoffs.

OUT AT SEA,

SAILORS FIRE a launcher, which sends a dummy missile streaking into the air over the ocean, leaving a fat vapor trail in its wake.

ON THE GRANDSTAND,

Kirkland looks concerned as the missile rises up into the air in the distance.

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Powell on the other hand, is delighted, watching eagerly as it makes its way into the stratosphere. It actually seems to be getting larger, closer, and on the tape Kirkland says something angrily to Powell. It's fleeting, and the TV camera barely catches a glimpse of it.

ANTHEA (v.o.)

But all fears were put to rest 4.8 seconds after the launch of the "dummy" missile. The AirGuard's tracking system sighted its target immediately --

On the beach, the AirGuard's launcher, manned by two SOLDIERS, HUMS and swivels smartly.

ANTHEA (v.o.)

-- calibrated the angle of ascent, and fired a single missile from its mobile launcher --

With a slick PHOOM, the AirGuard missile streaks into the sky. The Spectators lean forward anxiously, some watching through binoculars, as the AirGuard's vapor trail closes in on the first missile.

Both missiles disappear into the cloud cover, and a second later, a brilliant, multi-colored flash lights up the sky, followed by a sharp CRACK and ROAR that roll out over the boardwalk.

ANTHEA (v.o.)

-- vaporizing its target.

THE TAPE CUTS AGAIN,

as Kirkland, Powell, and the rest of the onlookers leave the grandstand, amid much excitement and congratulations. Anthea is there, shoving a microphone in their faces.

ANTHEA

Does today's success mean the AirGuard contract will finally win government approval?

KIRKLAND

Well, this was certainly a very exciting day for all of us. What we saw was -- quite remarkable.

Powell steps in, taking over the spotlight.

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POWELL

What we saw was one precise shot in the sky by the Powell AirGuard, but more importantly, it was an enormous shot in the arm for all of New Jersey.

Another REPORTER asks a question.

REPORTER

Wasn't it dangerous to test the missile in such a public forum?

POWELL

Not in the slightest. This is a deterrent weapon, and we wanted any potential aggressors around the globe to know all about it. The AirGuard system works. And the United States military has it.

EXT BOARDWALK (ON VIDEO MONITOR) NIGHT

Poor ANTHEA is still standing in the middle of the storm, finishing her wraparound through chattering teeth.

ANTHEA

So they're breathing easy over at Powell Aeronautics tonight, and in a lot of South Jersey union halls, as the final obstacle to formal approval of the government contract seems to have been removed. And Gilbert Powell continues to almost single-handedly revitalize the area's economy. Jan?

Pulling back from the monitor, we realize now that we've been watching it --

INT AERODROME ARENA NIGHT

-- on a mobile cart with two video monitors. While Anthea answers a few wrap-up questions from the Anchorwoman on the cart's "program" monitor, a Sports Reporter in a tuxedo (LOU LOGAN) appears on its "preview" monitor, messing with his hair, waiting for his turn.

Logan is standing in front of a camera ringside in the Aerodrome Arena, jammed with 14,000 BOXING FANS waiting for a fight to start. Bad ROCK AND ROLL plays on the P.A. system while the crowd waits for the main event.

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LOGAN

What do I got, like thirty, forty seconds? Where's Janeane, my hair's a mess over here.

A guy pushes into frame next to Logan, putting an arm around him and grinning broadly, staring at his own image on the TV monitor.

RICK

Hey, look at this, I always wanted to be on TV.

RICK SANTORO looks and sounds a lot better than he did in his dream. He's alive, anyway, and healthy, his face clean and unmarked.

LOGAN

Ricky, for Christ's sake, I'm on in like thirty seconds, will ya?

The REMOTE PRODUCER calls out grumpily from behind the cart.

PRODUCER

Twenty.

Rick turns his head from side to side, checking himself out in the monitor.

RICK

I think people would vote for this face, don't you?

PRODUCER

Lou, could you ask your friend to please step the fuck out?

RICK

That's the only thing you need to get elected these days, your big fat smile all over the tube.

He smiles into the lens, practicing different greetings.

RICK (cont'd)

Hello. Hello. Hi there.

LOGAN

You down on the fight yet?

RICK

Shit, I forgot! You seen Jimmy George?

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LOGAN

Yeah, in the tunnel ten minutes ago.  
Lay fifty for me.

RICK

On who?

LOGAN

On who. On the bag of meat, on who.  
Tyler.

RICK

The whole fifty?

LOGAN

Fuck you, a hundred.

He digs in his pocket and gives Rick a hundred dollar bill.

PRODUCER

And five ... four ... three ...

Rick musses Logan's hair beyond repair, then beats it out of there. The light on the camera flares and Logan is on, trying to straighten his hair.

LOGAN

Jan, I am ringside in the main arena of Gilbert Powell's Aerodrome Hotel & Casino, where the Secretary of Defense is expected to join some fourteen thousand fight fans who have braved the hur-

(catches himself)

-- tropical storm outside to see IBF heavyweight champ Lincoln Tyler take on challenger Jose Pacifico Ruiz in a fifteen round --

His words fade into the distance as Rick turns a corner and comes into --

INT TUNNEL NIGHT

-- the tunnel that leads to the boxers' dressing rooms. He bulls his way through the SECURITY MEN and calls out to someone stepping out of one of the training rooms.

RICK

Hey, Jimmy George, wait up a second!

JIMMY GEORGE, thirty-five with health habits that won't get him past forty, sees Rick and rolls his eyes. Rick catches up, just as Jimmy is closing the training room door behind him.

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Through it, Rick catches a brief glimpse of heavyweight boxer LINCOLN TYLER himself, shadow boxing like a maniac. Rick reaches out and stops the door from closing.

RICK (cont'd)  
Hey, that's Tyler!

Tyler's LAWYER, a tired-looking guy around forty, appears in the doorway.

LAWYER  
What are you lookin' at? Go buy a ticket.

He SLAMS the door. Rick turns to Jimmy George, excited.

RICK  
The Fury From Jersey, standin' right in front of me! Were you talkin' to him?

JIMMY GEORGE  
Do I ask what you do at work?

RICK  
(impressed)  
No shit, the man bets on his own fight. Now that's confidence.

JIMMY GEORGE  
What do you want, Rick?

RICK  
What's up your ass?

JIMMY GEORGE  
I'm having a bad day. What do you want?

RICK  
Five large on Tyler.

JIMMY GEORGE  
You got it with you? Let me see it.

RICK  
What are you, a bank now? I gotta put up front for the privilege of betting on a lousy fight? Fuck this, I might as well go bet in the casino.

JIMMY GEORGE  
Go ahead, I don't need the aggravation.

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RICK

Aw, come on, have I ever stiffed you one time? Name one time.

JIMMY GEORGE

No, you just take forever to pay, that's what you do. Five grand. I'll see that a year from next Christmas. Where you gonna get five grand?

RICK

The guy's five to one to win, I can't make any money if I lay less than that!

JIMMY GEORGE

I missed the part where this is my problem.

Down the hall, Rick sees the door to Tyler's training room open again. A SHIFTY-LOOKING GUY steps out, then pauses in the doorway, leaning back into the room.

Rick recognizes the Shifty Guy.

RICK

(to Jimmy George)

Don't move. I'll be back in two minutes.

He hurries down the corridor, where the Shifty Guy (CYRUS) is still in the doorway, saying something to those inside.

CYRUS

The best for the best, right Lincoln!?

Cyrus closes the door and turns around, right into Rick.

RICK

Hiya, Cyrus!

Cyrus doesn't say a word, just turns and takes off, running further into the tunnel and disappearing around a corner to the right. Rick pursues him.

IN ANOTHER CORRIDOR,

Cyrus races on ahead, looking for a way out, and takes a sharp left. A few moments later, Rick follows, calling out, almost bored.

RICK

Cy-rus! You're goin' the stupid way!

He rounds the corner, after Cyrus --

AT THE DOOR TO THE CONSTRUCTION AREA,

-- and finds him at a dead end. The corridor ends in a locked doorway that is guarded by a METRO COP who is already harassing Cyrus.

COP

Where do you think you're going?

CYRUS

Ah, fuck.

COP

(to Rick)

You hold it right there too, you piece of shit.

Rick pulls a leather billfold from his pocket, flips it open, and flashes --

RICK

Northfield.

-- a badge? This guy is a cop?

RICK (cont'd)

He's mine, let us through there, we need a little privacy.

COP

Oh, shit, sorry, sir. Here you go.

The Cop turns and uses a key card to open the door. The lock CLICKS and Rick shoves Cyrus through.

INT CONSTRUCTION AREA NIGHT

Beyond the door, there is a massive underground construction area. Rick shoves Cyrus past some barricades and into a wide open space filled with earth movers and other heavy equipment. The place is completely deserted. A sign for the construction company announces the "Atlantic City Tunnel Project."

CYRUS

(to Rick)

What?! What WHAT DO YOU WANT?!

RICK

What do you think?

CYRUS

No!

RICK

(imitating him)

Yes!

(CONTINUED)

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CYRUS  
Fuck you, it isn't fair!

RICK  
Call a cop.

He shoves Cyrus against a bulldozer and starts going through the pockets of his jacket. Cyrus twitches, almost involuntarily, when Rick gets to one pocket, and knocks Rick's hand away.

Rick puts a finger in Cyrus's face, in warning.

Cyrus knocks that away too.

That's a mistake. Rick slaps Cyrus twice across the face. Cyrus shoves him and Rick shoves back, sending him CRUNCHING into the machine. He follows it up with a knee into Cyrus's balls.

Cyrus HOWLS in pain and slithers to the ground.

RICK  
You got the wrong attitude about all this, Cyrus.

He reaches down and TEARS Cyrus's jacket off him.

RICK (cont'd)  
See, when we have these little visits, I allow you --

He turns the jacket upside down and shakes it. GLASS VIALS tumble out, CLINKING on the cement floor of the tunnel.

RICK (cont'd)  
I permit you --

Something held together by a rubber band falls out of the jacket pocket and lands on the pavement with a promising THUD. Rick's eyes light up.

RICK (cont'd)  
I give you the opportunity --

He picks up the wad and looks at it. It's a roll of hundreds, maybe three grand total.

RICK (cont'd)  
-- to pay for the extra police work that you create. Now, doesn't it feel nice to contribute something to society for a change?

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He STOMPS on the glass vials one by one, SHATTERING them. Cyrus rolls painfully into a sitting position, still holding his balls, and looks up at Rick.

CYRUS

That badge don't mean shit. What makes you think you're any better than me?

RICK

Friends, Cyrus. Who doesn't like Ricky Santoro?

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR,

Rick steps back through the door, counting the money. The Metro Cop (CHESLER) on the other side is still there, sheepish now. He follows Rick as he heads back toward the fighters' tunnel.

CHESLER

Detective, you know, when I called you a piece of shit before --

Rick makes a half-assed attempt to hide the money, staying a step or two ahead of Chesler, still counting.

RICK

Don't worry about it.

CHESLER

No, it's just, I didn't recognize you. I'm Chesler, Leo Chesler. I bought your beat, remember?

Rick, still counting the money, gives a cursory glance over his shoulder and feigns recognition.

RICK

Oh, yeah, sure. How's it goin'?

CHESLER

You straighten it out with that scumbag back there? Want me to take care of anything for you?

RICK

Nah, he's all right. Paid his debt to society.

CHESLER

Hey, next time you got somethin' goin' just let me know, all right?

(MORE)

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Tyler ignores him and moves on, toward the arena. In Tyler's wake, part two of his entourage follows behind him. Rick falls into step with them. Why not? They step out of the tunnel and into --

INT ARENA NIGHT

-- the arena. Strobes strobe, clouds of smoke puff into the air and are drilled by lasers that flash and burn over the crowd. Rick grins, enjoying the fanfare enormously as he parades down the cattle chute toward the ring with the rest of the Entourage.

A CHIRPING sound comes from the pocket of his suitcoat. Rick rolls his eyes and pulls out a cellular phone.

RICK

Hello? Hey, hi babe. I can't talk right now, let me call you back in an hour or two. So let him go to sleep, I'll talk to him in the morning. No. The fight. I can't.

He holds the phone out to the ROARING crowd and BLARING music.

RICK (cont'd)

That's why. Just tell him I love him and I'll, no, Angela, don't --  
(changes tone, a child on the other end now)

Hi, Mikey. I know. I know she is. I know. I know. It does suck. Because it's a free country. No. No. You know why, so don't ask me again or I'll cut your head off and put it in the freezer for a week, okay? I love you too. No, don't put her back on...

They're approaching the ring, and now the noise is really deafening.

RICK (cont'd)

(too late, she's back)  
Hi. I don't know, late. Yeah, sure, if they're open. With cheese? I don't care. I don't care. Cheese it is. Bye.

He hangs up the phone and shoves it in his pocket.

The crowd erupts in CHEERS and APPLAUSE as Tyler climbs into the ring. The RING ANNOUNCER speaks up over the P.A.

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RING ANNOUNCER

Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to the Aerodrome Hotel & Casino on the boardwalk in Atlantic City, New Jersey! Tonight, Mr. Gilbert Powell presents world championship boxing, twelve rounds for the International Boxing Federation heavyweight belt. This bout is presented with the approval of --

As he goes on listing all the accreditations, endorsements, and promoters, Rick shows his ticket to an USHER and makes his way to row three, ringside. Two large SECURITY MEN, guys in suits with earpieces, put a hand on his chest. Rick glances past them and sees CHARLES KIRKLAND, the Secretary of Defense, second from the aisle. A VOICE calls from behind Rick.

VOICE (o.s.)

It's okay, he's with me.

Rick turns and sees KEVIN DUNNE, handsome, clean cut, same age as Rick but not quite so many miles on him.

RICK

There he is! That's the man! Officers, THAT'S THE MAN whose life I want!

Dunne throws his arms around Rick, who hugs back.

DUNNE

Where the hell have you been, I thought you were gonna miss it.

RICK

No rest for the wicked. Look at you, local boy makes God damn good.  
(nodding toward Kirkland)  
That him?

DUNNE

You want to meet him?

RICK

Nah, later, after. You on duty?

DUNNE

Oh yeah. We've had a lot of threats lately. First couple months with a new guy the nuts always come out of the woodwork. And with a published schedule, you can't take any chances. Come on, I gotta make one more circuit.

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He starts around the ring. Rick follows, as the Announcer continues on.

RING ANNOUNCER

Ladies and Gentlemen, please join me in welcoming Mr. Gilbert Powell's very special guest tonight. Himself a silver medalist in the biathlon at the 1960 Olympic Games and now the distinguished Secretary of Defense of the United States of America, Mr. Charles Kirkland.

As the crowd applauds politely, Kirkland stands, smiling uncomfortably, and waves from his seat. Dunne, walking around the ring with Rick, shakes his head, exasperated.

DUNNE

Great idea. Put a flashing light on your head while you're at it.

As they walk, Dunne inspects sightlines, exits, his eyes don't miss anything. He checks in with an AGENT posted at one corner of the ring.

DUNNE (cont'd)

You're front desk?

AGENT

Yes, sir.

DUNNE

All right, hand off to west exit and take the main doors. I'm in direct with Top Guy.

AGENT

Yes, sir.

As the Agent turns and makes his way up the stairs, Dunne pulls something from his pocket and holds it so Rick can see it. It looks like a small Game Boy, a hand-held video screen with eight blips moving around a map.

DUNNE

Check this out. It's a locator. Every agent wears one of these roach clips --

He pulls back the lapel of his suit, showing a metallic clip that clings to the fabric.

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DUNNE (cont'd)

-- and we can download the floorplans of any building we're in. See that blip? It's the guy I just sent to the doors.

He points to the Agent who just left, who is walking up an aisle. On the little screen, a blip moves steadily down a clear space in the middle of a floor plan. Rick is blown away.

RICK

Look at you, James Bond, I'm so impressed I can't believe it. I can picture us, like yesterday, workin' summers on the beach, carrying the oars back across the hot sand --

DUNNE

No, me I can picture carrying the oars across the sand, you were usually under the boardwalk with some girl.

RICK

Yeah, that sounds about right.

DUNNE

How's Angela?

RICK

Fantastic. Fat. I love her.

DUNNE

How's -- what's her name, Boopsie?

RICK

Monique. Skinny. Mean. Expensive. I love her.

Dunne laughs and shakes his head. The Ring Announcer introduces the first fighter, RUIZ, the challenger.

RING ANNOUNCER

Fighting out of the blue corner, wearing the white trunks with black trim and weighing in at two hundred twelve and one quarter pounds, from Mexico City, Mexico --

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DUNNE

(to Rick)  
You got two kids, a house in Margate,  
a girlfriend in an apartment -- my  
goodness, that cop's salary goes far  
these days, doesn't it?

RICK

I save coupons. What are you, my  
conscience?

DUNNE

You could use one. Angela have any  
idea about Monique?

RICK

There's a good idea. Why don't you  
tell her? Everybody's happy, trust  
me.

DUNNE

Angela's not happy, she's just  
uninformed. Fair's fair, if she knew  
the rules she could play the game  
too.

RICK

If Angela knew the rules, there would  
be no game. Rule number one is  
Angela can't know all the rules.

DUNNE

It's gonna end bad, Ricky.

RICK

Hey, look who's talking. The  
original hard-on.

DUNNE

Why do you think I'm divorced?  
Frozen fucking salisbury steak in  
front of the TV, that's where it'll  
get you.

Rick and Dunne have now circled back around to their seats.  
As they move into the aisle, Dunne notices a woman in the  
aisle seat across from them. She's stunning, a flawless body,  
skimpy dress, flowing red hair -- a real LOOKER. She makes  
brief eye contact with him.

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## RING ANNOUNCER

Fighting out of the red corner, wearing the solid black trunks, weighing in at two hundred eighteen and one quarter pounds, originally from right here in Atlantic City, with a professional record of twenty-six victories, seventeen by knockout, with only two losses, recognized by Ring Magazine and the International Boxing Federation as the heavyweight champion of the world, the Duke of Destruction, the Fury From Jersey, Atlantic City's favorite son -- Lin-coln Tyyyyyy-ler!

Rick and Dunne settle into their seats, directly behind the Secretary. Rick notices a large magenta ring on Dunne's right hand that matches his own.

## RICK

Hey, lookit that, you still wear the class ring. You can take the boy out of Atlantic City...

## DUNNE

You're wasting yourself here. You know that.

## RICK

Here we go again.

## DUNNE

I mean it, you come down to Washington for three days, I can get you some serious interviews --

## RICK

You can't help yourself, can you?

In the ring, the fight instructions are over, the handlers have cleared the ring, and both boxers stand bouncing in their corners, waiting for the bell.

## DUNNE

Defense Protective Service pays about double what you make in the first year. And that's clean money, Ricky.

Dunne catches something out of the corner of his eye, on his left and he furrows his brow. Rick follows his gaze. Across the aisle, the Looker is staring at him again.

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Dunne breaks the eye contact and continues talking, back to Rick.

DUNNE (cont'd)

I'm the head of security for the Defense Secretary of the United States of America. That is real juice. That's a career, not a shitty job. What's wrong with wanting to share a little of my success with my oldest friend in the world?

RICK

Kevin, I got this whole town wired. I kick around in about six square blocks, everybody knows me. Some day if I manage to get my face on TV a few times maybe I'll run for mayor like my dad, but that's about as far as I'm gonna go. I like it here. I know how everything works.

Dunne reaches over and flicks the badge hanging from Rick's belt.

DUNNE

You're better than just a tin star, Kiddo.

DING! The fight begins.

In the background, Lincoln Tyler, the champ, makes a quick sign of the cross over himself and comes out of his corner.

Tyler is very impressive, built like a rock, light on his feet. Ruiz is bigger but softer, sluggish. Tyler bobs and jabs, Ruiz covers and swings for the bleachers.

Rick watches the fight intently, cheering along with the rest of the crowd, but Dunne doesn't seem that interested. His restless eyes wander over the faces in the crowd, the entrances and exits, the balconies.

He notices something to his left. From the expression on his face, he doesn't like it. He leans over to Rick.

DUNNE

I need to go check something.

Rick, eyes on the fight, doesn't answer. Dunne gets up and leaves.

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CONTINUED: 7

As Rick watches, the fight isn't going well for Ruiz. Tyler, with seemingly little effort, lands two or three quick jabs that send the challenger reeling. The crowd CHEERS.

Rick turns to say something to Dunne, but sees only the empty seat. He turns and looks up the aisle, just in time to see Dunne walking next to the Looker, her long red hair the last thing Rick sees before the two of them disappear into the darkness at the mouth of the tunnel.

A moment later, an ANXIOUS WOMAN, late twenties, dressed in white, steps out of the tunnel and into the light. She looks around furtively, but unlike 14,000 other people in the arena, the one place she does not look is the ring. Whatever is on her mind is not the fight.

She glances down, toward where Rick is sitting, and sees the back of Secretary Kirkland's head. She makes her way quickly down the steps.

She reaches the Secretary's row and says something to the BODYGUARD seated to his left, on the aisle. Her words are lost under the noise of the crowd, which is now BOOING loudly, as Tyler has just been head-butted, opening up a cut over one eye.

The Bodyguard turns and says something to the Secretary, who nods. The Bodyguard gets up and the Anxious Woman sits down in his place. The Secretary says something cursory to her and she starts talking. She seems -- well, anxious.

Something happens in the ring that stirs the crowd, there are a lot of CHEERS for Tyler now. Rick didn't catch it, he's torn between watching the fight and trying to eavesdrop on the conversation in front of him. The Anxious Woman is leaning over, explaining something to the Secretary with great urgency. Her lips move quickly and the Secretary seems fascinated.

Rick can't quite hear what they're saying, so he gives up and turns back to the fight. Across the ring, a Drunk leaps to his feet and SCREAMS at the top of his lungs.

DRUNK  
HERE COMES THE PAIN, BABY, HERE  
COMES THE PAIN!

Just for a second, Tyler loses his concentration. Ruiz sees the moment and lets loose a monster right, which catches the champ in the side of the head.

Tyler staggers back, and sideways, into the far corner.

Now this is newsworthy. The crowd SHOUTS and leaps to its feet, Rick among them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: 8

RICK  
UP UP UP, YOUR GUARD UP YOU IDIOT!

But the Secretary and the Anxious Woman, deep in conversation, barely seem to notice. They remain seated. The Woman seems quite heated, SHOUTING her words to the Secretary now, right in his face.

ANXIOUS WOMAN  
-- you're the one who's going to be  
sorry!

Rick caught that, and he glances down at them for a moment, wondering if she is threatening the Secretary.

In the ring, Tyler BANGS against the turnbuckle, his guard still down. Ruiz thunders across the ring, swinging wildly. He misses with a left but rips a hellacious right uppercut right at Tyler's jaw.

The champ bounces off the ropes and falls forward, stiff as a redwood. He THUDS into the canvas.

The Crowd SHRIEKS, the noise deafening, as the champion goes down. This is enough to draw the interest of the Secretary and the Anxious Woman, they leap to their feet, she grabs Kirkland's arm --

-- and two RIFLE SHOTS ring out.

The first shot tears over the right shoulder of the Anxious Woman, slicing open her shirt and sending a stream of blood into the air before it SPLINTERS into the back of a seat two rows further on.

But the second shot is on its mark. The Secretary's head snaps forward, then recoils back, spattering blood and brain matter onto Rick's jacket and shirt.

The Anxious Woman staggers back, collapsing into the aisle. As she does, her hair seems to shift on her head, and we realize she is wearing a wig.

The twenty or thirty nearby FANS who know what happened SHOUT and instinctively lunge away from the Secretary, knocking over those around them.

Rick's own instincts are different, though, and he leaps forward, onto the now-vacant seat next to the Secretary, pulling his own gun out of his jacket, looking around for the source of the gunshot. He looks toward the ring, and from up on the seat, he has an unobstructed view.

He sees Lincoln Tyler leap to his feet, agile and seemingly unaffected by the punch.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: 9

Rick notices Tyler's quick rebound and for just a second he and the fighter lock eyes. Tyler, realizing Rick is staring at him, staggers a little, possibly affected by that punch after all.

But Rick doesn't have time to think about it. The reality of what has happened is only a few seconds away from striking the rest of the crowd.

Rick turns and sees the Anxious Woman as she gets to her feet, still alone in the aisle for maybe another second and a half. He sees the wig, half hanging off her head.

RICK

ARE YOU HIT?!

The Anxious Woman, a red stain spreading on her shoulder, says nothing, just tears the wig the rest of the way off, turns, and takes off up the aisle. But she stops abruptly, staring at something up in the mouth of the tunnel.

Another GUNSHOT rings out from up there, audible, but not visible from our point of view.

Any doubts the rest of the fight fans had about what was going on vanish with this second shot, which ECHOES across the arena.

People SCREAM and flood the aisles, panic rippling across the sea of fans and they convulse toward the exits.

The Anxious Woman races away, up the steps.

Rick leaps into the aisle to follow her, but it closes up like the Red Sea, panicked fans flooding into it, filling it.

He can only watch her disappear into the crowd.

But at the top of the aisle he sees Kevin Dunne, wild-eyed, standing over the body of THE ASSASSIN, a dead man in a tattered army jacket who clutches a hunting rifle in one lifeless hand, lying face down at the mouth of the tunnel.

Dunne holds his own smoking service revolver in one hand as BLUE-SHIRTED SECURITY GUARDS pour around him, drawing weapons.

DUNNE

(flashing ID)

DEFENSE PROTECTIVE SERVICE, DEFENSE  
PROTECTIVE SERVICE!

RICK

KEVIN! KEVIN! HE'S DOWN, THE MAN  
IS DOWN!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: 10

Dunne hears Rick's voice and turns, seeing the fallen body of the Secretary.

DUNNE

Oh, Christ no.

He barrels forward, through the mass of fans, knocking them over and out of his way as he runs down the stairs. He reaches the bottom and falls to his hands and knees, cradling the perhaps mortally wounded Secretary.

DUNNE (cont'd)

Please no God no no no no no...

RICK

That woman, in white, she was right next to him, did you see her?!

DUNNE

Oh God oh my God ...

RICK

She had to run right past you, where'd she go?!

DUNNE

Oh Jesus...

Rick grabs one of the blue-shirted casino security men who are swarming on to the scene.

RICK

You're casino security?!

SECURITY GUARD

Yeah. What the -- oh my God!

RICK

(flashing a badge)  
Northfield, Major Crimes. Can you seal off the arena?

SECURITY GUARD

Holy shit, he's dead, isn't he?!

RICK

GET ON YOUR FUCKING AIR RIGHT NOW AND SEAL OFF THIS ARENA, DO YOU UNDERSTAND?!

He rips the Guard's walkie talkie from his belt and shoves it up toward his mouth. As the Security Guard overcomes his horror and starts to give an order into the walkie-talkie, Rick turns to another Guard who's racing up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: 11

RICK (cont'd)  
CALL A PARAMEDIC!

The Guard grabs his walkie-talkie as Rick bends down over the body of the Secretary. Dunne looks up at him, face white.

CUT TO:

INT ARENA EXITS NIGHT

Five bright blue exit doors SLAM shut, one after the other, as blue-shirted SECURITY GUARDS seal off the arena exits.

The tide of frightened FIGHT FANS hits the doors a few seconds later, but the Guards are there to hold them back.

ELSEWHERE,

heavy metal gates RATTLE into place, blocking the mouth of a tunnel.

AT THE MAIN DOORS,

UNIFORMED COPS work with more SECURITY GUARDS, pulling a heavy chain across another passageway. Behind the chain, a thick glass door slides shut with a mechanical HUM.

More PATRONS swarm up to the Cops and Security Guards at the door, wanting to be let out. The Anxious Woman (whose name is JULIA COSTELLO) is among those looking to get out. She rounds a corner, clutching one hand over her wounded shoulder, a fruitless attempt to conceal the red blood stain that darkens her blouse.

She's starting to stagger a little bit, the initial shock of the wound wearing off and the pain setting in. She sees the line of Security Guards and she pulls up, stopping short of the closed doors. She couldn't be more visible, more exposed, dressed in white, crimson blood stain creeping down from her shoulder.

She's breathing heavily, just short of all-out panic; she has no idea what to do. Guilty or innocent, it's hard to tell, but she's sure got something to hide.

And she can't get out. She turns, to lose herself in the crowd again. A BLUE SHIRTED SECURITY GUARD bumps into her, hard. Reflexively, he grabs her arms and pushes her back.

SECURITY GUARD  
Hey, careful, where do --

JULIA  
Let go of me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He's forced her arms away from her body and now sees the blood stain.

SECURITY GUARD  
Are you okay?!

Her eyes drop from his face to the logo on the front pocket of his shirt -- "POWELL AERODROME SECURITY."

JULIA  
I said let go of me!

She tears herself free of him and takes off, into the crowd, fighting her way upstream. The Guard shouts after her.

SECURITY GUARD  
HEY! COME BACK HERE!

But she escapes.

CUT TO:

EXT BOARDWALK NIGHT

Outside the casino, rain and wind from the coming storm pound the boardwalk. A casino rapid response team moves into place at the exits, TWO DOZEN MORE SECURITY GUARDS on foot, on bikes, and in jeeps.

CUT TO:

INT ARENA FLOOR NIGHT

Only three and a half minutes have elapsed since the shooting(s) took place, but the now-trapped FIGHT FANS are already a problem. Mostly male, many drunk, they're a belligerent bunch, and any available UNIFORMED OFFICERS and SECURITY GUARDS are occupied with convincing them all to sit down and shut up.

FOUR PARAMEDICS come racing into the arena, headed toward the Secretary's body, led by a tall, distraught, commanding man in a suit. The Man stops in front of a knot of people and we see that it's GILBERT POWELL, head of Powell Everything.

POWELL  
GET THE HELL OUT OF THE WAY!

The crowd scatters as Powell barrels down toward the Secretary's body, clearing a hole for the Paramedics.

A TV NEWS CREW races in behind Powell and floods him with light as he dives into the fray, helping the Paramedics load the body onto the stretcher.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AT THE MOUTH OF THE TUNNEL,

RICK and DUNNE watch, impressed. Powell, now smeared with the fallen Secretary's blood, grabs the front end of the stretcher himself and leads the way back up the stairs and into the next tunnel over, SCREAMING orders as he goes.

POWELL  
TELL THEM TO DRIVE THE AMBULANCE  
RIGHT THROUGH THE MAIN ENTRANCE AND  
INTO THE --

But he's gone, his words echoing down the tunnel, the news crew racing after him.

Dunne is still so panicked he's nearly hyperventilating.

DUNNE  
He's going to die, Rick, ten to one  
the man is gonna die. Jesus Christ,  
I'm supposed to protect him and I let  
him get killed --

RICK  
Pull it together.

DUNNE  
I was out of position, I opened up a  
sight line --

RICK  
Pull it together, Kevin.

DUNNE  
I stepped right out of the way and  
gave the son of a bitch a clear shot  
at him --

Rick grabs him by the arm and pulls him abruptly into the tunnel.

IN THE TUNNEL,

in the semi-darkness, they speak in urgent whispers.

RICK  
Yes, this is a real fuckin' tragedy,  
but since the man's brains are drying  
on my suit, I don't think he really  
cares at the moment. You, however,  
have one hell of a problem if you  
don't shut up and change your story  
in about six seconds flat. You are a  
hero, Kevin, do you understand what  
I'm saying?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DUNNE  
What?

RICK  
You saw a suspicious character and you went to check it out, right?

DUNNE  
Yeah.

RICK  
But by the time you got there he'd already fired, so you took him out. That is what happened, isn't it?

DUNNE  
Yeah.

RICK  
And that is your slug in his head?

DUNNE  
Yeah. It's mine. I... I went up to the --

RICK  
Don't tell me, just get it straight in your own head, that's all that counts. Cops have these moments, Kevin, they happen, and this one is happening to you. What you say and do **RIGHT THIS MINUTE** is gonna change the rest of your life. I'm sorry your guy went down, but play past it. Go to confession if you have to later, but do not fuck yourself up now! Okay?

From across the arena, HALF A DOZEN MORE COPS, reinforcements, come thundering into the place, SHOUTING to people to get out of their way. They're moving fast, they'll be upon Rick and Dunne in less than a minute.

DUNNE  
Who are they?

RICK  
State cops. From the D.G.E. They're going to try to take charge. But we're not going to let that happen.

DUNNE  
Why not?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: 2

RICK

Because this is our thing. You and I are gonna be in charge of this, together. Your story will hold because we say it does. Understand?

Dunne is reeling. He puts a hand to his head, thinking as hard as he can, but under the circumstances, it's not easy.

DUNNE

How long does it take the feds to get to a crime scene around here?

RICK

An hour, at least. They gotta come from Trenton. Hour and a half, with the storm. If we fight these guys off for ninety minutes, we're initial contact when the Feds get here, and they write from our report. It's gonna be our faces on TV. You got it?

The approaching Cops are almost on them.

RICK (cont'd)

You got it?!

DUNNE

Jesus, my whole life, I never... I'm not ready for this, I can't --

RICK

I can. If there's one thing I know how to do, it's cover my ass.

Dunne looks at him, finally focusing.

DUNNE

It's not a matter of getting my story straight, Rick. What you said... That is what happened.

RICK

Yeah. Okay.

The Cops race up the steps, and Rick and Dunne step back out into the arena to meet them.

IN THE ARENA,

they surround the corpse of the Assassin. GORDON FRITZKER, fiftyish, a plainclothes cop who seems in charge of these new arrivals, announces his presence to everyone in particular.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PRITZKER

Gordon Pritzker, Division of Gaming Enforcement. What the --

RICK

Two men down, this one's dead. The other is Secretary Kirkland, he took a head shot, the paramedics just took him out.

PRITZKER

Who are you?

RICK

Detective Rick Santoro, Northfield Major Crimes.

PRITZKER

(to Dunne)  
You?

DUNNE

Kevin Dunne, head of the Defense Protective Service.

RICK

(jumping in)  
He took out the shooter.

PRITZKER

All right, I'll take over now.

RICK

You're not taking over shit. This isn't my blood, it's the Secretary's, I was sitting right behind him. I'm a homicide detective and a material witness, this is mine about six different ways.

PRITZKER

A.C. cops got no business in the casino, this is strictly D.G.E. and state police, you know that.

RICK

We're not on the fucking casino floor, Gordo, this arena is Atlantic City, New Jersey, and that belongs to Northfield. You want to help? Go tell your men to shut down those TV  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: 2

RICK (cont'd)  
cameras, unless you want the  
Secretary of Defense's wife and kids  
to get a close-up look at his  
cerebral cortex when they sit down to  
watch the nine o'clock news.

Pritzker hesitates before responding, and that hesitation  
means the argument is over. Rick turns to three UNIFORMED  
COPS.

RICK (cont'd)  
You guys are metro?

They nod.

RICK (cont'd)  
(to the First Cop)  
Make this whole area a crime scene,  
fifty foot perimeter, nobody  
passes.

PRITZKER  
Are you the one that told 'em to seal  
the doors? You can't hold 14,000  
people.

RICK  
Yes I did and yes we can, those are  
14,000 eyewitnesses, I can detain 'em  
for as long as it takes to get every  
address and phone number and take  
their picture, now that I think about  
it.

(to a Second Cop)  
You. Find as many officers as you  
can and start looking for a caucasian  
woman in her late twenties, dressed  
in white. She's wounded, bloodstain  
right around here. She was next to  
Kirkland when the shots were fired,  
she was wearing a wig and it sounded  
like she was threatening him. She  
may have fingered him for the  
shooter.

DUNNE  
I'll find her, Rick. You need every  
uniform you can get here.

He turns to the Blue-Shirted security men, who number around a  
dozen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: 3

DUNNE (cont'd)

Half a dozen of you guys, come with me.

Dunne takes off, down the tunnel, followed by the Blue Shirts. Rick turns to a Third Cop, who's still awaiting an assignment. He recognizes him as CHESLER, the cop he met in the tunnel.

RICK

You. Chesler. Where's the control room for the pay-per-view cameras?

CHESLER

There's a booth they put together under the seats on the other side.

RICK

Show me. And find me a clean shirt, I can't stand the stink of blood on me.

Chesler heads off, across the arena, and Rick follows him. LOU LOGAN, the TV sportscaster Rick talked to before, falls into step beside him.

LOGAN

Hey, Ricky --

RICK

No time, Lou.

LOGAN

Don't shut off the cameras, not all of 'em. You know what kinda break this is for us? I gotta have pictures.

RICK

You can't show this, look at the mess on the floor. The guy's got a family, have a heart for Christ's sake.

LOGAN

C'mon, I won't shoot the spaghetti. Lemme hook up, if I go live at eleven with this, I can't tell you what it would mean to me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: 4

RICK  
You make me sick, Lou.

LOGAN  
(lowers his voice)  
I can have two grand, cash, in an hour and a half.

RICK  
You're a disgusting human being.

LOGAN  
Five grand. In an hour.

RICK  
(why didn't you say so?)  
Hook up in the balcony, and don't be obvious about it.

LOGAN  
You are the king.

RICK  
Hey. Here's your hundred back.

He digs in his pocket and gives Logan back a hundred dollar bill.

RICK (cont'd)  
All bets are off, huh?

He continues down, following Chesler, holding up a hand with five fingers extended.

RICK (cont'd)  
One hour, Lou.

Logan looks down at the hundred dollar bill. It's smeared with blood, the one Rick took from Cyrus, the drug dealer.

CUT TO:

INT PAY-PER-VIEW BOOTH NIGHT

The pay-per-view booth is crammed with monitors, control panels, and half a dozen TECHNICIANS. Large windows look out on the arena, the ring only about a hundred feet away. The monitors show a myriad of views of the entire arena, including one that shows the whole place from the very top of the ceiling, a hundred feet above. The PPV DIRECTOR sits in front of a large switching console, looking up at RICK.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PPV DIRECTOR

The Secretary of Defense gets his head blown off and you want to look at the fight?

RICK

The punch that took Tyler out. As close in as you can get.

PPV DIRECTOR

Whatever you say. Comin' up on the big screen.

He points to the main monitor, where videotape is rewinding, images of the fight blurring forward to the moment before Tyler was hammered back into his corner.

This close in, we get a much better view of the fight. Ruiz lands a good punch to the side of Tyler's head, and the champ staggers back against the turnbuckle. Ruiz charges in, swinging. He misses with a left, but unleashes that furious right uppercut. Tyler takes it, his head snaps back, and he goes down.

RICK

Lemme see it in slow motion.

The director hits buttons and the image stops, crawls back, and then inches forward. Rick leans close to the monitor and stares as Ruiz' gloved right hand rises up slowly, frame by frame, approaching Tyler's chin --

-- and missing. It's close, but there is definitely air in there. Tyler's head snaps back anyway and he starts his long fall to the canvas.

PPV DIRECTOR

I'll be damned.

RICK

Airball.

CUT TO:

INT ARENA LOBBY NIGHT

As the crowds continue to press for the blocked exits, a souvenir booth stands momentarily untended. JULIA COSTELLO, her face whitening from fear and blood loss, scoops up a handful of tee shirts, clutching one over her bloodstained shoulder.

She keeps moving, snatching a souvenir jacket from the rack and hurrying along, clinging to the wall, an animal afraid of the open.

INT LADIES' ROOM NIGHT

In a stall in the ladies' room, VOICES and HURRYING FOOTSTEPS can be heard both out in the bathroom and in the corridor beyond. JULIA peels off her bloodstained blouse, revealing a deep gash on her shoulder where the bullet tore through the surface tissue. She swoons, nearly passing out from the pain. Her knees go out and she falls, managing to grab a hold of a handicap rail before she hits the tile.

She pulls herself to a sitting position on the toilet. She's scared, and her fear makes her look even younger, a kid injured for the first time.

JULIA  
You're not going to die. You're not going to die.

She folds one of the tee shirts and lays it carefully over the wound, wincing, tears running down her cheeks. She slips her arms into the jacket and zips it up, covering the makeshift bandage. It'll have to do for now.

She pulls herself to her feet.

INT ARENA LOBBY NIGHT

Trembling, Julia walks unsteadily past several SECURITY GUARDS and joins the mob pressed up to the single exit that's open. At the front of the line, two more GUARDS are slowly taking names, addresses --

-- and flashing photographs of the fight fans as they leave.

Julia turns away, panicked. Definitely can't go out that way. She hurries away, down another corridor.

INT CORRIDOR NIGHT

Julia is momentarily alone in this smaller corridor. While FANS and SECURITY PERSONNEL scurry past the mouth, she spots a door marked "EMPLOYEES ONLY."

She opens it and ducks inside.

INT STAIRWELL NIGHT

The open door casts light on a stairwell that leads down, into the bowels of the arena. Julia starts down it. The door closes behind her with a heavy metal THUD, leaving her in near-total darkness, only a thin ribbon of light coming from under the door. Wherever the light switch was, it's too late to find it now.

JULIA  
Damn it, no, the light, where's -- please --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She continues down, her feet SCRAPING as she feels her way down the cement stairs. Finally, she reaches the bottom, and a hard steel door. She feels along its edge, finds the knob, and turns it. She pushes it open and peers out.

The door opens into the long tunnel that leads to the fighters' dressing rooms. Almost the second she has the door open, THREE BLUE SHIRTS march past.

She winces but does not close the door, fearful of attracting their attention with the movement.

Two more figures march past, and these we recognize. It's RICK, hurrying down the tunnel with OFFICER CHESLER.

INT TUNNEL NIGHT

RICK and CHESLER march to the door of Lincoln Tyler's dressing room, which is guarded by two BODYGUARDS. Rick is buttoning up a not-that-clean shirt Chesler found for him.

Reaching the door, Rick gives the Bodyguards a cursory glance, then reaches for the doorknob. One of the Bodyguards reaches at the same time, his hand falling on Rick's, stopping it.

BODYGUARD

Mr. Tyler is not in the mood to speak to anyone at this time.

RICK

See where your hand is? That's a felony.

The Bodyguard removes his hand.

INT TYLER'S TRAINING ROOM NIGHT

There's a training table in the center of the room and a small wooden table off to one side with two chairs at it. LINCOLN TYLER, the perhaps-former (God knows how they'll figure this one out) heavyweight champion of the world, sits on one side of the table, facing RICK, who sits down on the other.

Tyler is not in a good mood, still covered in sweat, a robe draped over his shoulders, a cut open over one eye. Behind Tyler are two more BODYGUARDS and his Lawyer (MICKEY ALTER), who we saw briefly in the doorway of the dressing room earlier. Tyler and Rick size each other up for a moment. Rick notices a large hole in the wall next to him, two feet across, crumpled dry wall all around it.

RICK

How ya doin', Lincoln? Good to see you again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tyler squints at him.

TYLER

I know you?

RICK

Rick Santoro.  
(shows class ring)  
Neptune High. A fellow Sea Devil.  
Class of '74?

TYLER

Oh. That was before me.

RICK

Yeah, but I was always around, you must have seen me plenty. My hair was long then, but whose wasn't...

TYLER

I don't remember you, okay?

RICK

Lincoln, you're hurting my feelings. And after I dropped three grand on you.

MICKEY

I think it would be appropriate for you to address him as "Mr. Tyler."

RICK

I'll call him Don Corleone if he wants, he's still a bad pony.

(to Tyler)

I don't have to tell you, right? I saw Jimmy George, the bookie, coming out of here before the fight. How much you lose? Or did you win? Know what I mean?

MICKEY

It wasn't his night, that's all.

RICK

I'll say.

TYLER

The guy fought very furiously.

RICK

You've never been knocked out your whole career.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: 2

RICK (cont'd)  
I mean ever, since your first  
Golden Gloves in, what, 1980? I've  
seen all your fights, I'd know.

Tyler gestures to the cut over his eye.

TYLER  
He head-butted me. You ever get  
cracked in the head by two hundred  
fifty pounds with a skull on top of  
it?

RICK  
Nope.

TYLER  
It scrutinizes with your brain.  
Makes you can't think. I can't  
remember anything after that.

RICK  
Excuse me, Lincoln, will you drink  
some water or something? You're  
lying so much your mouth dried up on  
you.

MICKEY  
Let me remind you who you're talking  
to, Detective. Lincoln Tyler is a  
significant public figure, a pillar  
of the community. I suggest you  
maintain a commensurate level of  
respect.

TYLER  
The guy. The Secretary. He's dead,  
isn't he?

MICKEY  
If you have a question, Lincoln, let  
me ask it for you.

TYLER  
(hotly)  
I just want to know if the guy is  
dead.

RICK  
I don't know, but the smart money  
sure ain't on him. You know who you  
reminded me of out there? Sonny  
Liston in '65. Remember?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: 3

RICK (cont'd)

They said hey, Sonny, don't take any chances, Ali almost killed you the first time, take the payday, first punch, you go down. But Liston didn't even wait for the punch. Tripped on his own feet. That's you. Flop. Splat.

MICKEY

Detective, either you arrest him or I'm going to ask you to leave.

RICK

What would I arrest him for?  
(to Tyler)  
What would I arrest you for? Getting up too quick?

TYLER

What?

RICK

(imitating him)  
"What?" Come on, I saw you, and you saw me. You wanted it to look like a knockout, but when you heard the gunshots, you were on your feet in half a second. Not your fault, totally understandable reaction, but it kinda ruined the performance, don't you think?

TYLER

The guy knocked me out.

RICK

I looked at the fight tape, Lincoln. It was a phantom punch. A little bad Hollywood acting by you. And a split second later, an assassin fires. That's some coincidence, isn't it?

There is a long pause while Tyler stares at him. Anger is obviously on his face, but guilt is bleeding out around the edges.

TYLER

Everybody get out.

LATER,

the door CLICKS shut, leaving Rick and Tyler alone in the room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TYLER

That fat spic is a girl, you understand me? He fights like a five year old, he got no snap in his punches, throws with his arms, no shoulder muscles, no nothing.

RICK

You threw the fight.

TYLER

If I say yes, can I make some kinda deal with you?

RICK

You don't need a deal. I don't give a shit, you pay me back my three grand and I forgive you. But what'd you do it for? You can't need the money, you gotta be worth millions of dollars.

TYLER

They said I was never gonna fight again if I didn't help 'em. But they didn't tell me somebody was gonna die.

RICK

Who was it?

TYLER

You listen to me, this is important, I didn't know they were gonna kill anybody.

RICK

What did they have on you?

Tyler just stares. This isn't easy.

RICK (cont'd)

Whether you knew what you were involved with or not, a guy is dead, Lincoln. You don't need that on your conscience forever. Get rid of it. Tell me what happened.

TYLER

You got a cigarette?

Rick shakes one out of a pack. Tyler takes it and puts it in his mouth. Rick pulls out a Zippo, CLINKS open the cap --

CUT TO:

INT TYLER'S DRESSING ROOM NIGHT

-- and a tongue of flame leaps out of another lighter, also held in Tyler's dressing room, earlier that night.

This lighter goes to the bottom of a stainless steel platform that surrounds a small meshed area. On the mesh is a chunk of methcathinone, it sizzles and smokes as it's heated.

LINCOLN TYLER is dressed for the fight, his face still clean and unmarked. His mouth hovers over the cookout, he sucks the smoke into his lungs and holds it there. CYRUS, the drug dealer Rick beat up earlier, is holding the lighter.

CYRUS

Manna from heaven, you're Moses,  
baby, you got it, you got it --

Two of Tyler's BODYGUARDS shield him from the rest of the room, which is crowded with HANGERS-ON. MICKEY ALTER peers between the Bodyguards. He drops his voice to an urgent whisper, darting a glance around the room.

MICKEY

Jesus Christ, Lincoln, are you  
crazy, you gotta do that now?!

TYLER

Just a little baby hit don't hurt,  
they already come took my blood.

MICKEY

You're fucking suicidal, do you know  
that?! You want to die, just tell  
me, I'll do it. I'd be happy to  
do it.

TYLER

(closes his eyes, letting  
the drug take effect)  
Shut up and pay the man, Mickey.

MICKEY

It's a freak show around you, a  
fucking freak show, that's what it  
is. I quit this time, I swear to  
God, I did not go to law school for  
this.

CYRUS

Uh -- I believe the man said  
something about cash?

MICKEY

(disgusted)  
How much?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CYRUS

Five grand.

TYLER

(not that out of it)  
Three.

CYRUS

Yeah, right, three, sorry.

The drugs start to kick in. Tyler hops around, shadow-boxing, working up a sweat. The GIRLS and other members of the ENTOURAGE cheer him on.

Mickey crosses the room to his briefcase, unlocks and opens it, shaking his head, CURSING under his breath. It's a nightmare looking after this guy.

He pulls a wad of cash from an inside pocket of the briefcase and starts counting out three thousand.

As he's counting, he sees JIMMY GEORGE, the bookie Rick met earlier, edging nervously into his field of vision from over by the doorway.

MICKEY

What do you want?

JIMMY GEORGE

If I could just -- for a second -- I have a quick question, if I can just get a moment of your --

MICKEY

I'm standing right here, Jimmy, all you have to do is talk.

JIMMY GEORGE

It's just, I've been getting a lot of bets, very large bets, against Lincoln, that is, and I was just wondering --

MICKEY

You were wondering what?

Mickey finishes counting out three thousand in hundreds. Nervous, he twists it into a tight roll.

JIMMY GEORGE

Nothing, nothing, I just -- the rumor is, you know, what people are saying --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: 2

MICKEY

Is what?

JIMMY GEORGE

There are some who think, maybe, you know -- that Lincoln sort of, you know, decided this ain't his night.

MICKEY

"This ain't his night."

JIMMY GEORGE

Not me, of course, I -- I --

MICKEY

You actually have the nerve to come into this room before a fight to tell us there's a lot of action against him? And then to have the gall to accuse him of -- what is the matter with you?

JIMMY GEORGE

It's just, Mr. Alter, you and me, we go back, and I thought if something was going down, you'd tell me -- you know, protect me, just a little bit --

Behind them, Tyler goes into a furious spasm of shadow-boxing.

MICKEY

I have never been so offended in my life. Come here, Jimmy, I want you to tell Lincoln what you just said to me. Come on. Come over here. Hey, Lincoln, Jimmy's got something to say to you!

Jimmy George twists away, opening the door behind him.

JIMMY GEORGE

Forget it, forget I said anything.

He darts away out the door. From outside, we hear RICK'S VOICE, calling to him.

RICK (o.s.)

Hey, Jimmy George, wait up a second!

Jimmy George hesitates in the doorway and RICK appears, getting a glimpse of Tyler as he shadow-boxes.

RICK (cont'd)

Hey, that's Tyler!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: 3

Mickey rolls his eyes and goes to the open door.

MICKEY

(to Rick)  
What are you lookin' at? Go buy a ticket.

And he SLAMS the door, leaving Rick and Jimmy George outside. Mickey walks over to Tyler, who's still slicing the air with punches.

MICKEY (cont'd)

(low voice)  
You are never going to get away with this.

TYLER

We, Mickey. It's always "we." You told me that, remember?

MICKEY

No, man, not this time. You're the one that fucking got yourself into this. I told you you can't live like you do, you make yourself vulnerable. Everybody wants a piece of you. Well, they got all of you now.

Tyler, who has been getting more and more upset, goes into a furious volley of air punches. One of them hits the wall, CRUNCHING a two foot hole in the drywall next to the table he'll sit at later.

Mickey turns to Cyrus, who is flirting with one of the Girls. Mickey holds up the roll of cash and SNAPS a rubber band around it. Cyrus reaches for it. Mickey pulls it back.

MICKEY (cont'd)

Don't ever come into a training room again, Cyrus. You can go to his house, you can meet him in the car, but I don't ever want to see your face at another fight. You got it?

CYRUS

Hey man, I give Lincoln nothin' but my absolute best shit. Shit so good I don't think it's even bad for you, it's just like vitamins or somethin'.

MICKEY

That's a real relief, Cyrus, thanks for your diagnosis.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: 4

Mickey gives him the cash and Cyrus puts the roll in the pocket of his jacket, the same pocket Rick will soon find it in.

CYRUS  
 Nothin' but the best.  
 (opens the door, turns  
 back)  
 The best for the best, right  
 Lincoln?!

He turns to go outside and bumps into Rick, who's standing right there.

RICK  
 Hiya, Cyrus!

SLAM! The door closes behind him.

INT TRAINING ROOM LATER

RICK and TYLER are alone in the room again as Lincoln tells his story.

RICK  
 Somebody found out you had a drug  
 problem and threatened to go public  
 with it.

TYLER  
 They woulda ruined my career, man.  
 The press already hates me, if I  
 step on a spider it's all over the  
 sports page.

INT TUNNEL NIGHT

The tunnel that leads to the dressing rooms is jammed with people again. Tyler's door opens and PEOPLE start to spill out. It's the entry into the arena again, only this time from TYLER's point of view. Tyler steps out, surrounded by his ENTOURAGE. RICK SHOUTS to him, waving his class ring.

RICK  
 Hey, Tyler, all right, Neptune High!  
 Check it out, right here!

But Tyler's mind is on the fight now. He starts down the cattle chute, leaving Rick still shouting behind him.

TYLER (v.o.)  
 They said if I drop just this one, I  
 can still fight my way back. I got  
 two or three years left in me.  
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TYLER (v.o.) (cont'd)  
 But if that other shit gets out, I'm over. I didn't have a choice. So I took some action too, made a few bets the other way. Shit, I'm the one gettin' hurt, I might as well get paid for it.

They emerge from the tunnel and into the arena.

INT ARENA NIGHT

The place is darkened, the CROWD a frenzy, the laser lights shooting around as TYLER makes his way to the ring, STATE COPS in front of and behind him, entourage strung out on both sides.

TYLER (v.o.)  
 They didn't say what round they wanted it in, they were gonna get a signal to me during the fight.

Tyler nears ringside.

TYLER (v.o.)  
 There was a guy in the front row, acting drunk, he was supposed to give me the signal. They said he'd let me know who he was before the fight started.

A DRUNK, the one who shouted just before Tyler went down, lunges forward in his seat, getting his face right up in Tyler's as he goes past, SHOUTING at him.

DRUNK  
 You're goin' down, Tyler, you suck, man, you don't got it no more, you goin' down!

TYLER (v.o.)  
 They told me what he was gonna say, the words to listen for. That was how I was gonna know him, then he was gonna say the same words again when I had to go down. I ain't never gonna forget those words.

Tyler, approaching the ring, can't take his eyes from the Drunk, who still berates him.

The Drunk leans over and SHOUTS between yellowing teeth, right into Tyler's face. As the Drunk's mouth moves, it's TYLER'S VOICE that speaks the words:

TYLER (v.o.)  
 "Here comes the pain."



INT TRAINING ROOM NIGHT

RICK  
Did you get a good look at him? The drunk?

TYLER  
Yeah, I got a look at him. Was all I could do not to take him out. One punch. Push that hearing aid right through the side of his fucking skull.

RICK  
He wore a hearing aid?

TYLER  
Yeah. Anyway, the fight started.

INT RING NIGHT

In the ring, TYLER comes out swinging, charging after RUIZ.

TYLER (v.o.)  
I come out hard enough, make it look good, but not too good.

Tyler lands a soft right hand on the side of Ruiz' head and the challenger goes down. Tyler looks surprised, even a little panicked.

TYLER (o.s.)  
I almost shit when he went down. Barely even tapped him. Damn near took that maricon out by accident.

But Ruiz gets to his feet and the fight continues. Ruiz lunges and slips, he inadvertantly butts Tyler in the head, opening up the cut just over Tyler's eye. Tyler staggers back, disoriented.

TYLER (o.s.)  
He did head butt me, I wasn't lyin' about that. It was like the man was doin' everything he could to screw it up. Right after that, I got the signal. Quicker'n I thought, only two minutes into the fight. Maybe they were gettin' nervous.

The Drunk stands up and shouts.

DRUNK  
HERE COMES THE PAIN, BABY, HERE COMES THE PAIN!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tyler glances over and drops his guard, just barely, but enough for Ruiz to land a punch.

TYLER (v.o.)

I wasn't supposed to go down right away, they were real clear about that. I had to take a punch, fall back into a corner, then let him charge in and knock me out. Had to take a few seconds.

Tyler falls back against the turnbuckle, Ruiz charges in after him, and the crowd leaps up, SCREAMING.

INT TRAINING ROOM NIGHT

Rick's putting it together.

RICK

They wanted everybody up, on their feet. Distracted. So they'd get a clear shot.

Tyler exhales a cloud of smoke.

TYLER

What I didn't count on is that faggot, that stupid, short-armed son of a bitch. Ruiz. He didn't swing through the punch.

INT RING NIGHT

With Tyler cornered, Ruiz hauls off with his hard right uppercut. Tyler snaps his head back, just infinitesimally, but it's enough to make Ruiz miss.

TYLER (v.o.)

I was too far into the act, in my head, you know, so I started to fall. By the time I realized he didn't connect, I was already down.

Tyler hits the canvas with a heavy THUD.

The Crowd SCREAMS, shocked, and the first GUNSHOT rings out. Some of the screams turn to shrieks of fear. Tyler, unhurt, immediately leaps to his feet and looks around.

He sees the Secretary, fallen back, shot in the head, blood everywhere. He sees RICK up, on top of the seat, gun out, SHOUTING at JULIA, who lies injured in the aisle.

Shock and terror spread across Tyler's face.

INT        TRAINING ROOM        NIGHT

Tyler is leaning forward, his posture an attitude of begging with Rick.

TYLER

I swear in front of God, I didn't know they was gonna kill nobody. I thought they was just after the money. And whose money, anyway? Coupla bookies? A fucking casino or two? Shit, it ain't even hardly wrong to rip off a casino, is it? You think God looks out for them? After what they done to this town? I know it was bad here before, but they made it like a atom bomb went off. Back in '78, when they started building, if they wanted a piece of land and couldn't buy somebody outta their house, they'd just burn 'em out. Two hundred fires in six months, all of 'em in the middle of the night, in a town with only forty thousand people? They're doin' the same thing with that tunnel they're building. Wipin' out whole neighborhoods so people can take the highway straight into casino hell. Who are these motherfuckers? It ain't wrong to rip off the devil, is it?

(pause)

Nobody was supposed to die. She never said nothin' about that.

Rick pauses a moment, as Tyler is now hunched over, his eyes buried in his hands.

RICK

"She?"

TYLER

You hear that storm out there? I hope it blows this whole fuckin' town away.

RICK

Who's "she?"

TYLER

The one come to me in the first place. Told me I was goin' down. Maybe they sent a woman cause they knew I woulda ripped the head off any man who said what she said to me. I never met nobody else. Just her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RICK  
You get a name?

TYLER  
(sarcastic)  
Yeah, name, address, serial number,  
she gave me some pictures of herself  
too, you want to see 'em?

RICK  
Do you remember anything unusual  
about her?

TYLER  
I don't know. Her hair, maybe.

RICK  
What about it?

TYLER  
It was red. Like on fire.

CUT TO:

INT PAY-PER-VIEW TRAILER NIGHT

Back in the pay-per-view trailer, the TV monitors show the angry crowd of SPECTATORS still milling around, hoping to get out. More METRO COPS have poured in, as have BLUE SHIRTS, who seem to be taking over the place.

CLOSE ON a video monitor, where we watch a replay of the fight, which has just started. In the background, behind Tyler's corner, we can partially see the LOOKER, seated across the aisle from DUNNE. Tyler, in the ring in the foreground, moves to one side, giving us an unobstructed view of her.

RICK (o.s.)  
Stop. Right there.

The image freezes, just as the Looker is getting up, out of her seat, headed for the aisle. Rick jabs his finger at the screen, pointing at the image of the Looker. He turns to LINCOLN TYLER, who's standing next to him, dressed in street clothes now.

TYLER  
Yeah. That's her.

Rick stares at the frozen image for a second. As the Looker gets up, Kevin Dunne is staring at her, making direct eye contact. Rick, also seen on the tape, is intent on the fight.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RICK

(curious)

Roll it forward from here.

The PAY-PER-VIEW DIRECTOR, still at his console, advances the tape. Rick watches as the Looker rises from her seat, staring meaningfully at Dunne. She starts up the stairs, headed toward the tunnel. Dunne watches her go. A moment later, he leans over, says something to Rick, and then gets up himself, following her up the stairs.

Halfway up, she waits for him. He gets close and she pulls him in, whispering in his ear and slipping an arm around him before they continue on and disappear into the darkness of the tunnel.

Rick just stares, thinking. The Director interrupts.

PPV DIRECTOR

What are you looking for now?

RICK

Huh? Nothing.

(to Tyler)

Where was the drunk? The guy who shouted?

TYLER

Other side of the ring. Over in there.

RICK

(to the Director)

Do you have a camera that covered the crowd on that side?

PPV DIRECTOR

Not really. God's eye view would have it, though.

RICK

What's that?

PPV DIRECTOR

My idea, this morning. We mounted a camera up in the center of the ceiling, for overhead stuff. Kept it running the whole fight.

He calls up a tape that shows a high overhead view of the entire arena. Tyler points to the screen.

TYLER

Right in here someplace.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: 2

The Director hits a few buttons and the image zooms down, toward the ring, then to the left side of it. It's now an overhead shot of the Drunk, who is three rows back.

TYLER (cont'd)  
There! That guy. Slow down.

PPV DIRECTOR  
This is just before the gunshots.

The image zooms in even further and slows down. Rick bends close to the screen, peering at the image. He reaches out, surprised by something. There is indeed what looks like a hearing aid in the Drunk's ear. Rick puts his finger on the screen and traces a line, running from the hearing aid down, into the Drunk's shirt.

As Rick watches, the Drunk raises one hand to his lips and seems to speak into his shirt sleeve.

Rick's eyes widen.

RICK  
(to himself)  
That's a radio.

CUT TO:

INT DOWNSTAIRS CORRIDOR NIGHT

Downstairs, the tunnel that runs past the training rooms is nearly empty again. JULIA COSTELLO steps out of the stairwell she's been hiding in, looks both ways, and heads deeper into the tunnel, away from the entrance to the arena.

She reaches a corner and turns left.

IN ANOTHER CORRIDOR,

she walks just as fast, hurrying toward its end and turning.

A THIRD CORRIDOR

ends in a staircase that leads up, to a closed door at the top. She hurries up it.

IN THE STAIRCASE,

she reaches the top, hits the door, and pushes it open. Immediately, the darkness of the downstairs hallways is shattered by the BLINDING LIGHT and FURIOUS NOISE --

INT CASINO FLOOR NIGHT

-- of the casino floor. Julia steps out and the door closes behind her automatically. She glances around. If she thought security was tight downstairs, it's worse up here.

BLUE SHIRTS are everywhere, pacing the casino floor, clustered by the doors, where groups of GAMBLERS wait in long lines to get out. Again, cameras FLASH near the exits.

This is the wrong place to be, the belly of the beast. Julia steps back, to the door she just came out of. She reaches for a doorknob, but there is none, just a smooth metal plate.

CUT TO:

A VIDEO IMAGE,

where a REPORTER stands talking to a NATIONAL HURRICANE CENTER representative, who's gesturing to a large radar display.

N.H.C. REP

-- upgraded Jezebel to a level two, with wind speeds between 96 and 110 miles per hour. If and when a level two hurricane makes landfall, you're looking at a storm surge of up to fifteen feet. It can produce curtain failures, that's concrete walls buckling. Mobile homes will be destroyed. Floating debris will cause significant damage, and there will be flooding up to four miles inland --

REPORTER

But again, we want to stress to our viewers that there is a one hundred mile margin of error in these tropical storm warnings. They're really just estimates, precautionary measures more than anything else.

N.H.C. REP

Well, we can't force an evacuation, that's strictly a state and local responsibility, but if it were me --

IN THE STUDIO,

the sound and image are abruptly replaced by the ANCHORWOMAN, back in the studio, who cuts in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANCHORWOMAN

Excuse me, Anthony, we have to interrupt you, we are going live to the Aerodrome Arena, where we have an update on the shooting of Secretary Kirkland. We're joining a press conference that is already in progress.

AT THE ARENA,

the screen winks again, this time to an image of KEVIN DUNNE, standing on the other side of police barricades that stand in front of the main entry doors to the arena. Brilliant lights shine off his face as a DOZEN NEWS CREWS shoot through the open doorway.

DUNNE

-- can give you the identity of the assassin at this time, he is one  
(reading from a paper)  
Tarik ben Rabat, thirty-seven years old, a Palestinian who has lived in the United States for the last six years. Mr. Rabat had written a series of increasingly threatening letters to various Defense Secretaries over the years expressing his outrage over the sales of United States missile systems and other weaponry to Israel. We had been tracking his whereabouts.

REPORTERS start to shout questions.

REPORTER

How many shots were fired in total?

DUNNE

There were three shots. Two from the assassin, one of which struck the Secretary in the back of the head. He was taken to St. Vincent's Hospital, but I don't know any more about his condition than you do. My shot was the third, and it killed Mr. Rabat. That's all I can really say until the FBI joins the investigation shortly.

In the background of the videotape, we notice RICK, arriving just behind Dunne. We leave the video to join him --



INT ARENA ENTRANCE NIGHT

-- in the arena. Rick watches as a REPORTER shouts a final question at Dunne.

REPORTER  
How is your name spelled?

Dunne looks at him for a second, panic lurking just below the surface.

DUNNE  
That doesn't matter.

He turns away, ignoring the remainder of the shouted questions, headed toward Rick. But six BLUE SHIRTS divert his attention, hurrying down the corridor toward him.

DUNNE (cont'd)  
(to the Blue Shirts)  
Did you find her?

BLUE SHIRT  
No.

DUNNE  
God damn it.

BLUE SHIRT  
She might have gone into the casino. There's at least a dozen service doors from here to there, we couldn't watch all of them.

DUNNE  
Double the men you have at the casino exits.

He moves away from them, pulling Rick aside.

DUNNE (cont'd)  
Where the hell have you been? I needed you in that interview, do you know how fucking hard that was for me?

RICK  
Who ID'd the shooter?

DUNNE  
I did. We got a file an inch thick on this guy Rabat. He's a well-known nutcase.

RICK  
I gotta talk to you, Kevin.

CUT TO:

INT BALLROOM NIGHT

RICK and DUNNE are huddled together at one end of a cavernous ballroom that's just across the corridor from the arena, in the same building. Outside the room, the SOUND of the restless CROWD can be heard. Along one wall, enormous smoked glass windows are actually two way mirrors that look out onto the main casino floor below.

Although the ballroom is empty, it echoes, so they hold their voices down. Dunne looks like hell, sweating, not holding up well under the pressure.

DUNNE

So what? So what if the guy wore a radio?

RICK

It means there was somebody on the other end of the radio. Telling him what to do.

DUNNE

Who cares? Tyler threw the fight, what does it matter how they did it? I shouldn't have to tell you this, Ricky, but guys throw fights all the time, it's got nothing to do with this.

RICK

It's connected. It's all connected.

DUNNE

Oh, please. You heard what I said out there, this guy Rabat was a crazy motherfucker, we knew all about him. This may be a tragedy, but it's no conspiracy.

RICK

Tell me where you really went.

DUNNE

What?

RICK

Right after the fight started. Where were you?

DUNNE

You already know. I saw the guy and I --

RICK

Not our bullshit, Kevin, the truth.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DUNNE

Why are you doing this? Why are you chasing this like the world ends in ten minutes? Why don't you go shake down a liquor store, that's what you're good at. Oh yeah, I forgot, you're gonna get on TV and run for fucking mayor.

RICK

You done?

DUNNE

I got news for you, pal, in half an hour when the feds get here, you're Charlie Nobody and out the back door, the way you came in.

RICK

The red haired woman, the one who told Tyler to throw the fight, is the same one that sat across from you. She's on the fight tape. And you're on the tape too, following her ass up the stairs. She led you out, Kevin, to get you out of position.

(counting them off)

She's one. The shooter, he's two. Tyler is three. The Drunk who shouted the signal is four. And whoever was on the other end of the radio is five people. That is a conspiracy, and I'm chasing it because whoever was smart enough to set it up was probably smart enough to make sure that by the time the feds get here, all the loose ends are gonna be tied up, nice and tight, just like shoelaces.

Dunne just stares at him.

RICK (cont'd)

Now don't you think I should know everything?

Dunne sits, slowly, the enormity of the situation hitting him. When he speaks, he can't muster much more than a whisper.

DUNNE

You figured all this out by yourself?

RICK

Yeah.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: 2

DUNNE  
Tell anybody else?

RICK  
Not yet. Why?

DUNNE  
Because we are way, way over our heads. They're going to find a way to make us the fall guys. That's how these things work, Ricky, that's how they always work --

RICK  
Hey, fuck that shit.

DUNNE  
We are the loose ends. We're the ones who'll be tied up nice and tight, at the bottom of a lake someplace.

RICK  
Shut up. Go back to the beginning and tell me what really happened.

Dunne looks up at him, ashamed.

DUNNE  
It doesn't make me look good.

RICK  
What do I care?

CUT TO:

INT ARENA - MAIN ENTRANCE NIGHT

Earlier that night, the CROWD swarms into the fight, full of booze and anticipation. KEVIN DUNNE comes in, leading the other BODYGUARDS around SECRETARY KIRKLAND. Dunne is very full of himself, they're surrounded by WELL-WISHERS and a few NEWS CAMERAS. His VOICE comes over.

DUNNE (v.o.)  
After the missile test this afternoon, we were all in a great mood. Kirkland really wanted the AirGuard to work. He's only been in office a couple months and he wants to launch a reform movement, so a public success was exactly what he needed to get some momentum.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DUNNE (v.o.) (cont'd)  
 Even I was all worked up over it,  
 hell, I used to work for Powell.  
 Half my family still does.

They head into the arena.

INT ARENA FLOOR NIGHT

They make their way down to their seats, across the crowded arena. They turn a lot of heads.

As they take their seats, Dunne brushes up against the Looker (whose name is SERENA). She's just finding her seat across the aisle. She smiles at him, he smiles back. She looks past him, noticing the Secretary.

DUNNE (v.o.)  
 I felt great. Back in my home town.  
 Everybody looking at us, everybody  
 knew who we were.

She says something to him, smiling, flirtatious. He smiles back, says something witty. She laughs.

DUNNE (v.o.)  
 You know how this town is, they're  
 all hooked on money, connections,  
 position. Power. Well, I had it  
 all in my pocket.

He turns slightly away and puts his hands on his hips, surveying the crowd. The gesture is self-conscious, intentional, and designed to draw his jacket open slightly, giving her a view of his gun in its holster.

She notices. Dunne pretends to notice her noticing and draws his jacket closed again.

She looks up at him and smiles, and now the smile has more meaning. She takes her seat as the pre-fight introductions are read.

Dunne glances across at her. This time, she's not looking at him, and he takes advantage of the opportunity to let his eyes crawl up and down her body. It's a very nice body.

DUNNE (v.o.)  
 In my job, you get this kind of  
 opportunity all the time. In  
 training they tell you to remember  
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DUNNE (v.o.) (cont'd)  
 it's not you the woman wants, they  
 say it's the easiest and most  
 effective way they can pull you off  
 your assignment. But from the first  
 day you realize that's a lie.  
 Ninety-nine percent of the time it  
 is you. The gun. The power.  
 They're drawn to it. This is my  
 fucking problem, man, it always has  
 been, you know that, I can't keep it  
 in my pants to save my life. But I  
 never let it happen on duty. Not one  
 time.

Serena glances over, catches Dunne staring at her thighs. She  
 crosses her legs, the other way, slowly. Cooperatively. From  
 the aisle, Dunne hears a familiar VOICE.

RICK  
 C'mon, lemme through, I'm right here.

Dunne tears his eyes away and spots Rick. He jumps up,  
 smiling, happy to be distracted from the temptation.

DUNNE  
 It's alright, he's with me.

IN THE RING,

the bell DINGS. RUIZ and TYLER come out fighting.

DUNNE (o.s.)  
 This time, I let it happen.

BACK IN THE SEATS,

Serena gets to her feet and steps into the aisle. She looks  
 at Dunne and tilts her head, toward the exit, indicating for  
 him to follow.

Dunne looks at Rick, says something, and gets up, moving into  
 the aisle. He follows Serena up the steps.

AT THE MOUTH OF THE TUNNEL,

she stops and he catches up. She pulls him close and WHISPERS  
 in his ear.

SERENA  
 Come on, secret agent man, you must  
 know all the secret places. Find us  
 somewhere we can be alone.

Dunne looks back over his shoulder guiltily, then they move  
 off, into the darkness of the tunnel, past a large number  
 "26."

## IN TUNNEL 26

The fight has started and the tunnel is deserted, except for one or two STRAGGLERS hurrying to their seats with beers in their hands.

Dunne has the handheld locator receiving unit in his hand, and is looking at a blueprint of the arena. He looks up, from a specific spot on the screen to a corresponding set of double doors in the wall of the tunnel, one of which is ajar. He pushes it open.

It's an access door that leads to a storage area under the seats above. It's a vast, unlit empty space occupied only by the pillars that support the balcony.

Serena likes it. She steps inside, pulling him in after her.

INT STORAGE AREA NIGHT

As soon as they're in, she's all over him, her hands on his face, her mouth on his.

Dunne reaches for the door, to pull it shut.

SERENA

Leave it open. That's the fun.

But he starts to close it. She reaches down and grabs his crotch, pulling him closer to her.

SERENA (cont'd)

Do you want this?

DUNNE

Yeah.

SERENA

What?

DUNNE

Please.

SERENA

Then leave it open.

Dunne's getting a little tired of the crazy controlling chick routine, so he pushes her deeper into the shadows. Fine, the door has to be open, it has to be open, but at least he's moving further back.

Against a pillar, they tear at each other. Above and around them, the crowd CHEERS and SCREAMS, it THUNDERS its feet. He leans against a pillar as Serena kisses his face, his neck. She puts her hand in his jacket, caresses his gun --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

-- but he grabs her by the wrist and yanks her hand out, squeezing hard. She smiles.

SERENA

Harder.

He twists her arm around behind her, obliging. She wrestles her hand free and pulls open his shirt. She kisses his neck and chest. She lowers herself to her knees and starts to unbuckle his pants.

Dunne leans back against the pillar, can't believe his luck. As he hears his ZIPPER drop, he looks out the open door. He sees a figure out there, a figure in a tattered army jacket, walking slowly because of a stiff right leg.

It's RABAT, the assassin. Dunne furrows his brow, both in pleasure and consternation, as that image rings a bell. But he leans back and closes his eyes instead, succumbing to the present.

DUNNE (v.o.)

I didn't recognize the son of a bitch for a second. I'd seen his picture a hundred times, but I didn't put it together. It was just a second's delay, a half a moment of hesitation --

In the doorway, Rabat moves off, headed for the arena, pulling something from his trouser leg.

DUNNE (v.o.)

-- and then it clicked.

Dunne's eyes suddenly pop open. He tears himself away from Serena and hastily does up his pants as he staggers out of the storage area.

BACK IN THE TUNNEL,

Dunne runs out of the storage area just in time to see Rabat lean against a pillar for support, brace the rifle against his shoulder --

-- and FIRE into the arena.

DUNNE

NOOOO!

He races down the tunnel, pulling out his gun. Rabat, having heard his yell, whirls, trying to bring the rifle around.

But Dunne FIRES. Just once, and on the run, but the slug is on target.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

It SLAMS into Rabat's head, spins him around, and he THWAKS into the cement floor.

Dunne races up and stands over the body as fight fans SCREAM and Rabat twitches, dying, blood pooling around his head.

Dunne looks down, into the arena. He sees Rick, standing in the aisle, shouting up at him. Fans stream past him, but he can only stare down in horror at the fallen body of the Secretary.

CUT TO:

INT BALLROOM NIGHT

DUNNE, drained by the telling of the story, stands across from RICK. They're still alone in the giant ballroom, the casino visible through the huge smoked glass windows behind them.

DUNNE

If I'd stayed in position, I would have taken the bullet. Or he wouldn't have been able to fire at all. But he never would have got to Kirkland, that's for sure. Twenty years, man. I did the job right for twenty years, just one time I stepped off the path, one God damn time. How was I supposed to know the fucking walls would fall in? I'm not a hero, I'm not made of marble, I'm a human being.

(choking up)

If what I did comes out, it won't change what happened, but it will destroy me. I'm going to live with this the rest of my life, I'll never sleep at night again, that's my punishment. But don't make me flush everything because of one little lapse, one moment of weakness. Please. I'm asking you to keep this quiet. For me.

RICK

You've been getting me out of trouble since I was fourteen years old, Kevin. I owe you at least one.

Dunne embraces him, relieved.

DUNNE

Thank you. Thank you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RICK

Clean yourself up, you look guilty.

He tosses him a handkerchief. Dunne takes it and wipes his eyes and nose.

RICK (cont'd)

You don't need to worry about your job. The only thing you and I gotta think about is staying alive. As of this moment, the only ones we trust are each other. Okay?

Dunne looks up and nods, quickly.

RICK (cont'd)

Okay. There's two people we know were involved that may still be in the building somewhere. The red haired woman and the drunk, the guy who shouted the signal to Tyler. If we can find 'em and bring 'em in, we've got something. If they slip away... you're right. We're the loose ends.

DUNNE

What about the woman that was talking to the Secretary just before the gunshots?

RICK

Maybe. She got up and ran away after being shot, innocent people don't usually do that.

DUNNE

Did you hear what she said to the Secretary?

RICK

Just one bit. "You're the one who'll be sorry," something like that.

DUNNE

All right. I'm going back out there to look for her. You try to find the drunk and the red haired woman.

RICK

What the hell is that?

DUNNE

What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: 2

Rick points to the handkerchief he gave to Dunne. There are brown smears where Dunne wiped it on his face.

RICK

Makeup?

DUNNE

(embarrassed)

Oh. Yeah. You know, for the TV cameras.

He heads for the door, Rick alongside him.

DUNNE (cont'd)

Don't give me any shit, they made me put it on.

They push through the doors --

IN THE ARENA CORRIDOR

-- and come back into the arena corridor, still jammed with PEOPLE. They walk briskly.

DUNNE

You'll never find anybody just walking around the arena. Get up to the casino surveillance room, they've got cameras covering every inch of the place.

RICK

Yeah, all right, I know a guy up there.

DUNNE

Is there anybody you don't know, Ricky?

RICK

How would I know?

They reach a section where the hallway forks in two. Rick goes to the right, Dunne to the left.

We stay with Dunne. His facial expression changes, sours, as soon as he's out of Rick's line of vision. The confession must have been even more painful for him than it seemed.

He walks faster. He turns right at another corridor.

IN THAT CORRIDOR,

there's fewer people around. Dunne checks his watch. He reaches a flight of steps and takes them, down.

INT FIGHTERS' TUNNEL NIGHT

Dunne emerges in the fighters' tunnel, which is now completely empty. He keeps walking, turning right at the end.

IN THE NEXT CORRIDOR,

he approaches a door marked "NO ADMITTANCE." It's the same door Rick went through with Cyrus, the drug dealer, earlier. The Cop who was guarding it is gone now.

There is a card-key slot to the right of the door. Dunne glances over his shoulder, sees that he's alone, and takes a magnetic striped card from his pocket. He swipes it and pushes the door open.

INT CONSTRUCTION AREA NIGHT

Dunne comes out into the construction area Rick dragged Cyrus into earlier.

One end of the tunnel leads down, deep into darkness. The other end, the terminus just at the right, ends in heavy metal overhead doors. Outside, the rain can be heard PINGING and POUNDING off the doors.

There's only one light on, a bare bulb in a wire cage hanging on a stand in the middle of the cavernous work area. Dunne checks his watch and steps further in, looking around.

Off to one side, he sees a plume of cigarette smoke rising up above a stack of equipment crates.

He circles slowly around it. As he clears the crates, it affords him a view of two people, standing there nervously, waiting. They look up.

It's the DRUNK and SERENA, the red haired woman.

Dunne just stares at them for a second. They see him.

SERENA

It's about time.

Zeitz drops his cigarette on the ground, stomps it out, and pulls his jacket off a crate, slipping it on to leave.

ZEITZ

What the fuck took you so long? We should have been out of here eleven minutes ago.

DUNNE

I apologize. Not all the cogs are turning exactly as predicted.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SERENA

Well, ours did, so let's go. I don't want to be around when this place turns into a prison camp.

She starts walking toward Dunne.

DUNNE

You won't.

He pulls out his weapon, which now has a silencer screwed onto the end of the barrel.

Serena walks right into it -- attempting to pass Dunne on his right, she ends up with the barrel pressed squarely against her forehead.

SERENA

W-

PHWIP.

A red dot appears on her forehead and she crumples, dead. Dunne looks up, quickly, to Zeitz.

Still half in his jacket, Zeitz turns and takes off across the construction site, running like hell. Dunne raises the weapon again.

PHWIP. PHWIP.

Both shots hit, one in the back of Zeitz' right thigh, one in the back of his left. He goes down immediately.

Dunne strides briskly over to him and lowers the gun. Zeitz is in shock, disoriented. He grabs hold of Dunne's leg and starts trying to pull himself up it.

ZEITZ

Wait...

DUNNE

Let go of my leg.

ZEITZ

...wait...

Dunne tries to aim at the top of Zeitz' head, but at this angle he runs the risk of shooting himself.

DUNNE

Let go of my leg.

ZEITZ

I... I'm shot.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: 2

DUNNE

I know.

Dunne manages to shake Zeitz off his leg. He drops the gun barrel onto the top of his head and squeezes again. Zeitz falls, dead.

Dunne holsters the weapon and takes a radio from his belt. He changes the channel on the top of the radio and keys the mic three times, making three sharp bursts of STATIC.

A MAN'S VOICE responds, flat.

VOICE (o.s.)

Okay.

EXT CONSTRUCTION AREA NIGHT

Outside the construction area, a large PANEL TRUCK (emblazoned with the logo of a construction company) is parked at the top of a loading ramp that leads down to the large metal overhead doors.

The engine of the truck ROARS to life and the lights flick on, illuminating the heavy rain.

INT CONSTRUCTION AREA NIGHT

Dunne walks over to the controls for the big metal garage doors. He hits one of them and the metal door on the far right starts to GRIND open.

Rain immediately invades the construction area, driven so hard it falls sideways. The panel truck backs through the door and right into the construction area.

As Dunne closes the overhead door, the doors of the truck open and two MEN in construction workers' outfits get out. They open the rear doors of the truck and remove tarps, ropes, towels, etc.

They open one of the tarps and spread it out between the corpses. They lift Zeitz and place him on one side, then go to Serena and move her to the other side of the tarp.

DUNNE

Fingers and teeth.

The First Construction Worker walks back to the panel truck, opens a large metal chest, and swings the top open wide. Inside, there is an impressive array of --

-- oh, shit, power tools. He selects a circular saw, a bolt cutter, and a long-handled pliers and walks back over to the bodies. The Workers bend over the corpses, tools in hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DUNNE (cont'd)  
Like shoelaces.

The First Construction Worker turns to him.

WORKER 1  
Huh?

DUNNE  
Private joke.

The circular saw SCREAMS to life and Dunne turns away, no stomach for it.

INT TYLER'S DRESSING ROOM NIGHT

LINCOLN TYLER is alone in his dressing room, packing up a bag. A hand TAPS on the door and it swings slowly open. Tyler looks up.

KEVIN DUNNE stands in the doorway, staring at him. Tyler looks at him. Dunne says nothing for a moment.

TYLER  
What do you want?

CUT TO:

INT CASINO SURVEILLANCE ROOM NIGHT

The casino surveillance room is a smallish place that's packed, floor to ceiling, with video monitors. Three WATCHERS sit at computer consoles, a dozen screens in front of each monitoring station.

By typing in a three digit camera code on the keyboard in front of them, they can switch the image on their monitor from camera to camera.

The cameras seem to cover every nook and cranny of the hotel and casino -- the tables, the slots, lobby, washrooms, corridors, elevators. The only notable exception is the guest rooms.

WALT MCGAHN, mid-fifties, ex-cop written all over him, leads RICK into the room.

WALT  
We've got fifteen hundred cameras, eight hundred on the casino side, seven hundred twenty on the hotel side, quadruple redundancy on the gaming floor. If they're down there, we'll find 'em.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RICK  
I appreciate it, Walt.

He slides into a chair at one of the watcher consoles.

WALT  
No problem. You think one of these  
people's your shooter?

RICK  
We already got the shooter.

WALT  
Then what are you looking for?

Rick gives him a look and turns toward the screen.

RICK  
Where do we start?

Walt can take a hint. He pulls a keyboard around to face him.

WALT  
You tell me.

RICK  
Lobby?

WALT  
One eighteen.

He types in the code and a black and white image of the hotel lobby comes up. Rick pulls up a chair and stares at it.

RICK  
Can you go to the right?

WALT  
One fifty-four.

He types in that number and the image switches to another camera, covering the right side of the lobby.

RICK  
Keep moving. Let's go by section.

Walt types in another number, and the image changes to a shot just entering the casino.

RICK (cont'd)  
Keep going.

Walt types another number. Now they're into the slot machines.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: 2

No. RICK (cont'd)

But Walt stops, squinting, staring at a GUY walking down the row of slots.

WALT  
Hey, C.J., punch up three  
eighty-three. Guy in the Knicks  
shirt.

RICK  
What about him?

WALT  
Coin cup grabber.

RICK  
You know him?

WALT  
Nah. You get pretty good at reading  
body language, though.

C.J., mid-twenties, punches up the camera on his monitor.

C.J.  
I got him.

While Walt and Rick momentarily look away from the screen, the figure of a woman crosses between two of the rows of slot machines. It's JULIA COSTELLO. She stops, looking left and right, her face plainly visible to the camera for a moment. But Rick is looking at Walt.

WALT  
Somebody wants to play the slots,  
they look at the machines, trying to  
guess which one's lucky. Grabbers  
couldn't care less, they check out  
the people. They're like  
pickpockets, but sloppier. No real  
skills.

Julia turns, so her back is to the camera as they turn back to the monitor.

WALT  
(to Rick)  
Keep going?

RICK  
Keep going.

Julia walks away from the camera. Color seeps into the black and white image --

INT CASINO FLOOR NIGHT

-- and we're now down on the casino floor, right behind her. JULIA walks quickly, trying not to look aimless. Up ahead, she sees a bar area, a bad LOUNGE ACT playing in the background.

She heads for it.

IN THE BAR,

she looks around quickly. A NICE ENOUGH LOOKING GUY sits alone at the bar, nursing a drink while he watches a baseball game on TV. Must have money on it, he looks intense.

Over at a table, a YOUNG COUPLE nuzzles. The Man says something to the Woman. She nods; they get up and leave together.

Julia looks back to the Nice Enough Looking Guy, an idea forming in her head. She takes a breath, steeling herself. She walks over to him, adjusting her less-than-attractive outfit as she reaches the bar.

On TV, the batter gets a hit. A run scores from third.

JULIA

Oh, damn it.

The Nice Enough Looking Guy (NED) looks at her. She smiles and shrugs.

JULIA (cont'd)

What's the score now?

NED

Five one Mets in the eighth.

JULIA

Well, I'm dead.

NED

Take a beating?

JULIA

No thanks, I already took one.

He laughs and looks back at the screen. She looks up too. He looks back at her when he thinks she isn't looking.

He notices the jacket she's wearing, which she has unzipped enough to show off just the curve of one breast. Trying to be discreet, Ned slips his wedding ring off and into his jacket pocket.

NED

Would you like to sit down?

CUT TO:

INT SURVEILLANCE ROOM NIGHT

Images of the casino flash by, some black and white, some in color. Blackjack tables. Craps. Roulette. Men's room. Ladies' room. More blackjack. RICK sits in front of the console with WALT, bleary-eyed.

From behind him, C.J. calls out.

C.J.  
Walter, I think we've got another  
hooker in the Terminal Lounge. Punch  
up five ninety-six.

WALT  
(to Rick)  
'Scuse me a second.

Walt punches in the number while Rick sits back in the chair, rubbing his eyes. The video image on their monitor changes to a color shot of the lounge's bar area.

JULIA can be clearly seen, now sitting very close to NED, one hand on his thigh, the other hand around his neck, playing with his hair. Ned likes it. Julia leans in and whispers in his ear.

C.J.  
She just got in there five minutes  
ago and she can't take her hands off  
him.

That sounds interesting. Rick takes a look.

RICK  
Jesus Christ, that's her!

On the screen, Ned and Julia get up to leave.

WALT  
You said she had red hair.

RICK  
(jumping to his feet)  
No, not that one, somebody else.  
Where's that bar? Shit, they're  
leaving!

On the screen, Ned pulls out his wallet to pay for the drinks and puts a twenty on the bar.

WALT  
No problem. I'll stay with 'em.

RICK  
I gotta get down there, where is it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Walt takes two radios from a rack and tosses one to Rick.

WALT  
Stay on channel three.

Rick turns and runs to the door.

On Walt's monitor, Ned pockets his change, takes Julia by the hand, and they go.

INT CASINO FLOOR NIGHT

As Ned and Julia cross the casino floor, a BLUE SHIRTED SECURITY GUARD stops abruptly, spotting her from across a row of tables. He nudges the GUARD next to him, who also sees her and immediately raises a radio to his mouth.

INT CASINO FLOOR NIGHT

RICK bursts out a door marked "Authorized Personnel Only" and finds himself at the edge of the vast casino floor. He raises his own radio to his mouth.

RICK  
I'm on the floor. Where is she?

INT SURVEILLANCE ROOM NIGHT

C.J. punches buttons, following Ned and Julia through the casino. Next to him, Walt has Rick on his monitor.

WALT  
(into radio)  
You're on the opposite side of the room. They're walking past the slots near the far elevators.

ON THE CASINO FLOOR,

Ned has stopped at a slot machine and is putting a coin into it.

JULIA  
What are you doing?

NED  
Hang on, I just want to play this change.

He pulls the arm. Over the top of the machine, Julia sees the two Blue Shirts who spotted her. They're closing in.

JULIA  
I want to go upstairs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The machine DING DING DINGS and Ned wins five dollars.

NED

I won!

JULIA

I want to go upstairs now. If you don't want to come, I'm sure someone else will.

She turns and walks off, quickly. Ned follows her.

NED

Hey, wait...

NEAR THE ELEVATORS,

KEVIN DUNNE bursts out a door and onto the casino floor. The two Blue Shirts are just beyond him. He hurries up to them.

DUNNE

They said you spotted her?

SECURITY GUARD

Over there. Headed toward the elevators.

DUNNE

Good job. I'll take it from here.

He walks off, headed toward Ned and Julia, who are in the distance.

OVER AT THE SLOTS,

Rick is running among the rows of slot machines, searching.

RICK

(into radio)

They're not here, Walt, they're not here!

IN THE SURVEILLANCE BOOTH,

Walt picks them up as they ring for an elevator.

WALT

Change of plans. They're at the elevators. Ten yards ahead of you and turn right.

IN AN ELEVATOR,

the doors DING open and Ned and Julia climb on. A second later --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

-- Dunne hurries up and steps inside with them.

Julia stares at him, eyes wide. She seems to recognize him, and she's afraid of him. Ned starts to reach up, for the elevator buttons, but Julia puts a hand on his arm, stopping him.

JULIA  
(to Dunne)  
What floor?

Dunne looks at her. Pause. No choice.

DUNNE  
Twenty-one.

She pushes it for him and it lights up. Julia makes no move to push a button of her own.

DUNNE (cont'd)  
Same for you?

Julia doesn't answer. Ned pulls his hand free of hers, reaches past her, and pushes thirty-five.

NED  
Thirty-five, actually.

Thanks a lot, Ned. Dunne suppresses a grin. Julia closes her eyes, defeated, and the doors start to close.

OUTSIDE THE ELEVATOR,

Rick's radio BLARES at him as he races around a corner and into the elevator bay, where there are eight elevators.

WALT (o.s.)  
(on radio)  
Last one on the left, last one,  
hurry, hurry!

Rick races toward the last elevator on his left, just as the doors are closing.

He catches a glimpse of Julia and Ned inside (Dunne is hidden from his view), but the doors close in his face and the elevator starts to rise.

He POUNDS the door in frustration.

RICK  
(into radio)  
I missed it. You got 'em in the box?

IN THE SURVEILLANCE ROOM,

Walt now has an image of Dunne, Julia, and Ned in the elevator.

WALT  
Yeah. Them and one other guy.

RICK (o.s.)  
(on radio)  
What floor are they going to?

Walt squints at the low-resolution image. The lighted buttons are just a blur, no numbers visible.

WALT  
I can't make out the buttons. It's a high one.

AT THE ELEVATOR BAY,

RICK  
Fuck. Can you pick 'em up when they get off? I gotta know what floor!

IN THE SURVEILLANCE ROOM,

WALT  
I'd have to look floor by floor. Hang on, I got an idea.

He shoves back in his chair, pulling up to the first monitor he worked. He hits the "rewind" button and the surveillance tape zips back, to when Ned and Julia were in the bar.

INT ELEVATOR NIGHT

Back in the elevator, the car stops on the twenty-first floor and the doors slide open.

Julia looks at Dunne for a moment. Dunne looks over at Ned, thinking.

NED  
(ever helpful)  
This is twenty-one.

Reluctantly, Dunne steps off, staring at Julia as the doors close in front of him.

The second they're closed, he hits the "up" button for another elevator.

BACK IN THE ELEVATOR,

Ned and Julia are alone now. Ned turns to her, wraps his arms around her, and kisses her deeply.

She's surprised and not exactly in the mood, but she fakes it as well as she can. A few moments later, the car stops and the doors open on thirty-five. Ned still kisses her. She pulls back.

JULIA

We'd better get to your room.

NED

I agree.

They step out of the elevator and start down the hall.

INT SURVEILLANCE ROOM NIGHT

The surveillance tape is back in the bar, as Ned is paying for the drinks. Walt squints as Ned holds his wallet open for a second.

WALT

Ooh, baby, right there.

He freezes the image and punches a command. The image zooms in, way in, on Ned's wallet. His driver's license is in a little picture window in one flap. The camera keeps zooming in until the name and address are legible. Walt snatches up a telephone and dials two numbers.

WALT (cont'd)

(into phone)

This is McGahn in security. We have a Ned Campbell staying in the hotel?

(pause)

What room?

IN THE ELEVATOR AREA,

the radio SQUAWKS in Rick's hand.

WALT (o.s.)

3517.

RICK

You're a genius.

He SLAPS the button for another elevator.

WALT (o.s.)

This is where I lose you, Ricky.  
Watch your back.



INT THIRTY-FIFTH FLOOR NIGHT

On the thirty-fifth floor, elevator doors open and Dunne gets off. He races out and runs to one hallway, looking both ways. Empty to the right.

But to the left, he sees the figures of Ned and Julia, just turning the corner at the far end of the lengthy hotel corridor.

He heads in that direction, striding briskly. While he walks, he tosses a look over his shoulder, to make sure he's alone. He is. He pulls his weapon from its holster and pops the clip, checking his load. Ten rounds left.

He SNICKS the clip back into the gun and holds it inside his jacket as he walks. He reaches the end of the corridor, turns in the direction they did --

-- but they're gone.

Around the corner or in one of the rooms? Dunne races all the way down the length of that corridor and looks around the corner. No luck.

He stops and thinks.

INT NED'S HOTEL ROOM - BATHROOM NIGHT

In the bathroom of Ned's hotel room, Julia has a moment alone. She's taken off the cheap jacket she picked up earlier and the tee shirt she used to bandage her wound is lying on the counter, soaked with dried blood.

The bleeding seems to have stopped. The edges of the gash are a raw pink, and a puffy blue-black swelling is slowly taking over her shoulder. But she'll live.

She notices a jar of Advil in Ned's shaving kit. She shakes four into her hand and swallows them with water from the sink. She dumps another dozen into her pants pocket for later.

In the mirror, she notices one of Ned's dress shirts hanging on the back of the door.

IN THE HOTEL ROOM,

Ned is bustling about, preparing to get laid. He's found some music on the clock radio and two small bottles of champagne in the mini-bar. Behind him, Julia steps out of the bathroom.

JULIA

I hope you don't mind, I borrowed your shirt.

NED

Not at all.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He walks up to her and slips his arms around her waist, pulling her close to him.

NED (cont'd)  
I think women look sexy in men's shirts.

He bends to kiss her again, but Julia pulls away. Only so much of this a girl can take.

JULIA  
Just -- hang on a minute.

NED  
What?

She slithers out of his arms, dropping into a sitting position on the bed.

Ned misunderstands, he starts to unbuckle his pants for her.

Julia, suddenly revolted by this guy, shoves him away.

JULIA  
Not that.

NED  
(offended)  
Well, excuse me.

JULIA  
Can't you just get out of my face for one minute?

NED  
Hey, you're the one who was practically giving me a handjob down in the bar.

JULIA  
I need a place where I can just -- wait. A little bit. And then I'll go.

NED  
"Wait a little bit?" And then you'll go? What do you think this is, a bus station?

INT CORRIDOR NIGHT

Dunne is creeping down the corridor, listening at doors. Faintly, behind him, we hear Ned's voice, muffled from the room. Dunne casts a glance but it doesn't register.

He turns the corner into another corridor.

INT NED'S ROOM NIGHT

Julia is begging with Ned, who has turned rather ugly.

JULIA

Would you keep your voice down?

NED

Are you on drugs or something? Yeah, you look like hell, I should have been able to figure that one out. Thought you were gonna get me up here and rob me, is that what you thought?

JULIA

I'm in trouble. Someone is trying to kill me --

NED

Oh Christ, now I've heard it all.

JULIA

Please, listen to me, haven't you heard anything about what happened tonight?

NED

Just get out, will ya? I happen to have a very good marriage, I don't need your kind of trouble.

JULIA

Half an hour, that's all I'm asking.

NED

I said get out.

He shoves her toward the door.

JULIA

No, wait, please --

But Ned rips the door open and shoves her out, directly into the arms of --

-- RICK. Julia starts to SCREAM, but Rick immediately covers her mouth and shoves her back into the room, closing the door behind them.

RICK

It's all right --

NED

Who the hell are you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RICK  
(to Ned)  
Take a walk, will ya?

JULIA  
No! Don't!

RICK  
I just want to talk to you.

NED  
What the fuck is going on around  
here?!

RICK  
I said --

Rick opens the door and shoves Ned out it.

RICK (cont'd)  
-- take a walk.

IN THE CORRIDOR,

the door closes, leaving Ned alone in the hallway. He turns  
and POUNDS on the door, SHOUTING.

NED  
IT'S MY FUCKING ROOM!

IN ANOTHER CORRIDOR,

Dunne hears Ned's shout. He turns and runs in that direction,  
back the way he came.

INT NED'S ROOM NIGHT

Julia is still keeping a healthy distance between herself and  
Rick. He's got his badge in one hand, showing it to her, and  
the other hand raised, palm out.

JULIA  
That could be fake.

RICK  
But it isn't.

JULIA  
You could be in on all this.

RICK  
But I'm not. Why did you get up and  
run away after you got shot?

She just looks at him, torn.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RICK (cont'd)

Look, you don't have a lot of time. That asshole is going to come back, and he's going to bring hotel security with him. You need to decide right now. Would you rather trust them? Or me?

INT CORRIDOR NIGHT

Dunne comes barreling down the hall and intercepts Ned, who's headed for the elevator, mumbling under his breath. Dunne flashes an ID.

DUNNE

Give me your room key.

IN NED'S CORRIDOR,

Dunne rounds the corner and comes to room 3517. He slips Ned's key into the door, withdraws it, and the lock CLICKS open. He draws his weapon and pushes inside. But

NED'S ROOM

is empty.

DUNNE

Shit.

CUT TO:

INT STAIRWELL NIGHT

RICK and JULIA burst through a door and into a stairwell. Julia starts down the stair, but Rick grabs her arm.

RICK

No. Up.

She's committed to trusting him, so she doesn't ask, just follows. They race up one flight, two flights -- after three, he stops her.

He checks the stairwell door on thirty-eight. It's locked. You can only get into this stairwell, not out.

RICK (cont'd)

This is good.

JULIA

We can't stop in here!

He gestures up, to the four corners of the ceiling around them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RICK

No cameras. We're all alone. And it's a firewell, the doors are locked until you get to the bottom. We're thirty-eight floors up, how many people you think are gonna take the stairs? Come on, sit down before you fall down.

He makes a good point. She sits. He sits beside her. He shakes two cigarettes out of a pack and offers her one. She takes it, her hand shaking as she puts it to her lips.

He steadies her hand and gives her a light.

JULIA

Thank you.

She takes a puff and exhales, trying to regain herself. But even this tiny kindness has affected her, and she begins to cry. She drops her head into her hands. He puts a hand on her back, a little awkwardly.

RICK

Shhh. Shhh. You're safe now.

She quiets, some.

RICK (cont'd)

Why did you get up and run away after you were shot?

She lifts her head and looks at him, wiping her eyes. She really stares at him for a moment, bores right into his eyes.

JULIA

If you had wanted to kill me --

RICK

(opens his jacket, showing his gun)  
I would have used this. And I haven't, have I?

JULIA

What do I do?

RICK

You stop crying. And tell me what you know.

CUT TO:

INT ARENA - MAIN ENTRANCE NIGHT

JULIA, her white suit clean again and wearing the wig that will fall off later, waits in the lobby of the arena before the fight starts. FANS stream through the entrance, headed into the fight. Julia checks her watch. Her eyes dart around, alert to any sign of trouble.

JULIA (v.o.)

I came to the fight tonight because I had to talk to Secretary Kirkland.

KIRKLAND, DUNNE, and two other BODYGUARDS make their entrance through the main doors. It's the same scene we saw earlier, Dunne enjoying the attention as they're ushered toward their seats. Julia watches them, anxious, but makes no attempt to approach.

JULIA (v.o.)

I'd been sending him anonymous messages for weeks, trying to get him to meet with me. I was afraid to call him on the phone or send a letter. The last few days I've had the feeling I was being followed. He finally responded to an e-mail, saying he'd be here tonight and he'd give me five minutes.

As they head into the arena, Julia stands there, frozen. Dunne glances in her direction, but he gives no overt sign of recognition.

JULIA (v.o.)

I waited until the fight started.

INT TUNNEL NIGHT

As the crowd ROARS at the beginning of the fight, JULIA makes her way tentatively down the tunnel, toward the brightly-lit arena at the other end. Only a few late FANS hurry past her, carrying cups of beer they're careful not to spill.

As she nears the other end, she sees Dunne and SERENA, the Looker, leaving together. Their behavior is very different in this point of view, there's no physical contact, they move quickly, professionally. They walk into the tunnel and push through the double doors that lead into the darkened storage area under the bleachers.

Julia continues toward the end of the tunnel, which takes her past the storage area. Just as the second of the double doors swings shut, she gets a quick glimpse through it. She sees Dunne and Serena conferring urgently --

-- with RABAT, the assassin.

RICK (v.o.)

Wait a minute, stop right there.

IN THE STAIRWELL,

Rick has interrupted her story.

RICK

This is Kevin Dunne you're talking about? The head of security for the Secretary?

JULIA

That's right.

RICK

Standing with the killer before the shots were fired?

JULIA

I recognized him, I'd just seen him come in with Kirkland five minutes before.

RICK

You saw wrong. It wasn't him.

JULIA

Just listen to the rest.

INT ARENA NIGHT

As the fight gets into full swing, Julia makes her way down the aisle stairs, toward the SECRETARY. She draws up close, passing the aisle RICK is sitting in. He's intent on the fight.

She reaches the Secretary's row and gestures to his BODYGUARD, who's sitting in the aisle seat just next to him.

JULIA

I need to speak to him. It's urgent.

BODYGUARD

Who are you?

JULIA

Tell him his e-mail friend is here for her five minutes.

The Bodyguard looks at her, hesitant.

JULIA (cont'd)

He'll know.

The Bodyguard leans over to the Secretary and passes on the message.



IN THE RING,

RUIZ is not handling himself very well. TYLER, with seemingly little effort, lands two or three jabs that send the challenger reeling. The crowd CHEERS.

IN THE SEATS,

the Bodyguard gets up, giving up his seat, and Julia sits down, just in front of Rick, who's still intent on the fight. Kirkland sizes her up.

KIRKLAND

Talk fast, young lady, I've been looking forward to this fight.

He turns back, to watch the fight while she talks. Julia takes a deep breath and launches in, nervous.

JULIA

My name is Julia Costello. I work at Powell Aeronautics. I'm the research coordinator of the team that's been working on the guidance system for the AirGuard missile.

KIRKLAND

So I gathered from your note. Four minutes.

JULIA

(rattled)

I write the summary reports from the test launches. Usually I just go by the results they give me from the field, but three weeks ago I decided to double check the raw data in Arizona. I don't know why, it just seemed wrong to me. Too perfect, almost, exactly the numbers you'd hope for. Ballistic tests just aren't like that, there's too many elements that corrupt trajectory and --

KIRKLAND

Coming to the point?

JULIA

I went down there myself and pulled the original data. It was different. Somebody had cleaned it up.

Finally, he turns away from the fight. She's got his attention.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JULIA (cont'd)

They supplied me with good numbers so my report would be favorable, but when I ran the real figures, the actual result of the test was a disaster. The homing interceptor consistently misreads signal noise and throws the missile off course. They've put half a billion dollars into phased array research for that unit but they've never been able to get it to --

KIRKLAND

Wait a minute, wait a minute... It worked out there today, didn't it? I saw it with my own eyes.

JULIA

No, you didn't. They blew it up.

KIRKLAND

What?

IN THE RING,

Tyler lands the soft right to the side of Ruiz' head. The challenger goes down, but quickly gets back on his feet.

IN THE SEATS,

Julia continues, talking even faster.

JULIA

They attached a pressure sensitive explosive to the surrogate target and set the altimeter to take it above the cloud cover so it was out of visual range. If you don't believe me, have the Navy get a copy of the original radar survey of the test. That missile blew up, all right, but I'll bet the AirGuard never got within five hundred yards of it.

ACROSS THE RING,

ZEITZ (the Drunk), leaps to his feet and SCREAMS at the top of his lungs.

ZEITZ

HERE COMES THE PAIN, BABY, HERE COMES THE PAIN!

IN THE SEATS,

JULIA

I contacted you because the word around the office was you had your doubts about the system. You were right. It doesn't work. They know it. And they're pushing it through anyway.

IN THE RING,

Tyler lets his guard down and Ruiz lets loose with a monster right, which catches the champ in the side of the head.

Tyler staggers back, and sideways, into the far corner.

IN THE SEATS,

the crowd SHOUTS and leaps to its feet. Julia and the Secretary, deeply involved in their conversation, do not.

Behind them, Rick SHOUTS at Tyler, but it almost seems meant for them.

RICK

UP UP UP, YOUR GUARD UP YOU IDIOT!

KIRKLAND

Jesus Christ. Bert Powell is out of his mind.

JULIA

I know what they're thinking, get it approved now, we'll say we're sorry and fix it later.

The crowd ROARS and she SHOUTS over it.

JULIA (cont'd)

But you're the one who's going to be sorry!

Behind them, Rick catches just that phrase.

JULIA (cont'd)

If you deploy that missile system and a war breaks out, a lot of people are going to die.

IN THE RING,

Tyler BANGS against the turnbuckle, his guard still down. Ruiz thunders across the ring, swinging wildly. He swings hard with his right, the uppercut that just barely misses Tyler's jaw.

The champ bounces off the ropes and falls forward, acting his heart out, we now know. He THUDS to the canvas.

IN THE SEATS,

the Crowd SHRIEKS, the noise deafening. Even Julia and the Secretary are drawn to their feet, she grabs him by the arm as they jump up to see what's going on --

-- and two RIFLE SHOTS ring out.

The first shot hits Julia, the second the Secretary. Julia SCREAMS and falls into the aisle, the wig she wore as a disguise slipping halfway off her head.

Rick winces as the blood and tissue spatter onto his suit.

The twenty or thirty FANS in the immediate vicinity instinctively lunge away.

Julia looks up, at Rick, as he leaps onto the chair, gun in hand.

For a second, it looks to her as if he could have shot them. She staggers to her feet, and Rick SHOUTS at her.

RICK

ARE YOU HIT?!

Julia, terrified, tears the wig off and runs away, up the aisle. But she stops abruptly, staring at the mouth of the tunnel.

IN THE MOUTH OF THE TUNNEL,

she sees RABAT, still with the rifle held to his shoulder. And she sees KEVIN DUNNE step calmly from the shadows, in perfect position just behind the unsuspecting gunman, his gun already drawn, extended as he takes careful aim.

POW.

Dunne fires, and Rabat goes down, dead.

INT STAIRWELL NIGHT

RICK and JULIA sit on the steps in the stairwell as she finishes her story. Rick stares straight ahead, disbelieving.

RICK

(softly)  
And Dunne, he, uh -- he wasn't running? Out of the tunnel?

JULIA

No, he was just standing there. Waiting to pull the trigger.

RICK

Oh Christ, I wish I didn't know --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JULIA

I'm sorry.

RICK

What you just told me, I wish --

JULIA

I didn't want to know either.

RICK

Then why'd you have to fly down and stick your nose in where it didn't belong? You were a number cruncher, couldn't you just crunch the God damn numbers?

She looks at him, stunned.

JULIA

I was doing my job. We were creating a defense system, we were supposed to save lives. They were building the factory in a disadvantaged part of the state -- this was a good thing to do.

RICK

Jesus, somebody hands you a line and you swallow it hole, don't you?

JULIA

I believed in what we were doing, and they corrupted it. Someone had to speak up, it was important --

RICK

Yeah? Does it feel so important now? Did it feel important when the bullet hit?

JULIA

(getting angry)

I had no choice! I didn't want innocent soldiers' blood on me. Haven't you ever done something just because it was the right thing to do?!

He just stares at her for a long moment. His answer to that one is obvious, but the fact she even asks it means these people are from different planets.

He looks away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: 2

RICK

An e-mail. Jesus Christ. Why didn't you just put up a billboard? All they had to do was sit back and wait for you to show your face. They didn't miss him with that first shot, they missed you.

JULIA

I thought I'd get fired, not killed.

(pause)

What do we do now?

(no answer)

Well, you are a cop, aren't you?

(still no answer)

I can't get past the men at the doors by myself, but with you, I'd be fine. Once I'm outside, you can forget all about me. I can take care of myself.

He gets up, thinking.

RICK

Yeah, you've done a hell of a job so far.

JULIA

Look, I'm sorry if --

RICK

Fuck you, you're sorry!

JULIA

What are you mad at me for?!

RICK

Because I didn't have to know! You decided to have this problem, not me, my world woulda gone right on turning just fine, but now either way I look, I have to do something, you understand what I'm saying, I have to do something that I don't want to do! I do not want to do this!

Pause.

JULIA

What is it you... ?

She doesn't finish, and he doesn't answer. She stares at him, trying to read his face. But he won't look at her now. Finally:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: 3

RICK  
How old are you?

JULIA  
Twenty-six.

RICK  
Married?

JULIA  
No.

He looks at her. There are a lot of thoughts in his brain, mostly dark ones, and he's not good at keeping them off his face.

RICK  
Family around here?

JULIA  
My mother, in New York.

RICK  
Boyfriend?

She pulls back a little, pressing up against the railing behind her.

JULIA  
Why are you asking me all this?

RICK  
What are you, scared?

JULIA  
Yes.

RICK  
You should be.

Julia's eyes dart around, looking for a way out. But Rick blocks the stairs that lead down, and the doors are all locked. Rick runs his hands through his hair, thinking, searching for some way out of this.

RICK (cont'd)  
(one more time)  
Dunne. Kevin Dunne. Are you positive he wasn't running when you saw him fire? Running out of the tunnel?

Julia blanches as she finally gets it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: 4

JULIA

Oh, God, you know him...

RICK

There were people rushing in front of you, you'd just been shot, you could be wrong, isn't it possible?

JULIA

Yes. Yes, now that I think about it... I might be mistaken. It seems that... He could have been running out of the tunnel.

He looks at her. He doesn't believe her.

RICK

Wait here. I'll be back in ten minutes.

He starts down the steps.

JULIA

Where are you going?!

RICK

I have to know for sure.

JULIA

Don't leave me alone, you're my only chance to get out of here!

He stops and looks up at her.

RICK

You bet the wrong horse.

And he takes off, down the steps and out of sight.

CUT TO:

INT HOTEL/CASINO FLOOR NIGHT

RICK, slightly out of breath, comes out a stairwell door in the hotel area of the casino. He sees a METRO COP standing nearby.

RICK

Hey.  
(flashes his badge)  
Post here for ten minutes. Anybody comes out this door, hold 'em until I get back, understand?

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

COP

Yes, sir.

Rick walks off, leaving the Cop standing next to Julia's only avenue of escape.

Rick heads across the casino floor, toward the arena. A figure, crossing in front of him, stops short. It's LOU LOGAN, the sportscaster he talked to earlier.

A CAMERA and SOUND MAN are behind him, carrying equipment.

LOGAN

Here you go.

Logan holds out an envelope, stuffed thick with cash. Rick just looks at it.

LOGAN (cont'd)

It's your five grand. For lettin' us hook up.

Rick stares numbly as Logan shoves the envelope into his hand and stuffs something else into Rick's shirt pocket. Rick doesn't say anything, doesn't even look at whatever Logan put in his pocket, he just walks away, distracted and confused.

LOGAN (cont'd)

(calling after him)

You're all heart, Rick!

Rick keeps walking, across the casino. Thinking. Up ahead, there is a set of a dozen bright blue doors, the entrance to the arena.

As he draws close, he notices SEVERAL DOZEN G-MEN, unmistakable in their dark blue suits, swarming around the place. One of them puts a hand out.

FBI AGENT

Sir, this entire area is now the site of an FBI investigation, I'm afraid you'll --

Rick wearily flashes his badge and the Agent lets him pass.

IN THE ARENA,

Rick walks through the main entrance, the same one Kirkland, Dunne, and Julia walked through earlier. He heads for the mouth of a tunnel, also the same one. He seems to walk slower and slower as he gets closer to the arena, looking at all the familiar locations, now with the burden of truth.

## IN THE TUNNEL,

Rick walks toward the bright light of the arena in the distance. To his left, he sees the double doors that lead to the darkened storage area described by Dunne and by Julia.

He enters the arena.

## ON THE STAIRS,

Rick stands in the very spot from which Rabat fired. Beneath his feet, the body has been taken away, a blood stain and chalk outline the only remnants. Rick looks up, into the arena.

It's empty. Of fight fans, that is, but there's now almost a hundred members of the MEDIA present.

They're setting up cameras, lights, and microphones, training them on the ring itself, which looks like it will soon be the site of a major press conference.

Rick looks back, at the tunnel wall behind him, at the large number "26" painted there. Then he looks up, toward the ceiling of the arena. At the very peak of the arches is a video camera on a servo-mount.

CUT TO:

## INT PAY-PER-VIEW TRAILER NIGHT

In the pay-per-view trailer, RICK stands in front of the giant bank of monitors, which now show a variety of shots of the nearly empty arena. Two monitors are tuned to local TV stations, one of which is doing a news report from the arena, the other has an image of the front steps of a hospital somewhere in town.

The storm is still raging outside, but a swarm of TV REPORTERS waits on the steps of the hospital, under a portico.

But the monitor Rick is staring at, the big main screen, has the videotaped image from the God's-eye-view camera he saw earlier, looking straight down at the fight when it was still in progress. The tape crawls forward, in frame-by-frame mode.

The image is tight in on the Drunk again, right at the moment when he speaks into his sleeve.

RICK

Stop right there.

The DIRECTOR, the only one left in the booth, hits a button and the image freezes as the Drunk speaks into his shirt cuff.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RICK (cont'd)  
Now zoom out and move over to tunnel  
twenty-six.

PPV DIRECTOR  
Twenty-six?

RICK  
Yeah. Other side of the arena.

The image obediently pulls back, up over the ring, and crosses the arena, over to tunnel 26. Rick walks up and peers closely at the screen. In the mouth of the tunnel, he sees a figure standing in the shadows. He points to it.

RICK (cont'd)  
Go in on that guy.

Slowly, the image crawls down. As it grows to fill the screen we see that it's a man in a suit, but we can't see his face, just the top of his head. His right hand is up, touching an earpiece in his right ear.

RICK (cont'd)  
Roll it.

The image goes forward and the man raises his left arm and speaks into his sleeve, responding.

RICK (cont'd)  
Stop.

Rick leans in and takes a good look at the right hand. On the ring finger is a Neptune High School class ring. Rick sits back and closes his eyes.

RICK (cont'd)  
(softly)  
Oh... man.

A VOICE calls from behind him.

VOICE (o.s.)  
There you are.

Rick turns. KEVIN DUNNE himself stands in the doorway to the trailer, smiling at him. Rick looks at him. Dunne reads the look on his face, glances at the video screen, and then looks back, his smile fading.

He turns to the Director and flashes an ID.

DUNNE  
Give us a minute alone, will you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: 2

The Director leaves. Dunne looks down at the ring he wears, the one now captured on the video screen. He slips it off his finger and puts it in his pocket.

DUNNE (cont'd)  
That'll teach me to be sentimental.

He looks back at the screen.

DUNNE (cont'd)  
You know, they were specifically told they couldn't have a camera up there. What's the matter with these fucking TV people?

Rick gestures to the empty arena outside.

RICK  
Where is everybody?

DUNNE  
I let them go.

RICK  
Why'd you do that?

DUNNE  
Because, Kid, you found what we've been looking for. Didn't you?

Rick just stares at him. Dunne notices something on one of the monitors.

DUNNE (cont'd)  
Oh, hey. Watch this.

He leans over and turns up the sound. GILBERT POWELL, bloodstained and bedraggled, walks out through the hospital doors and under the portico, blinking from the harsh glare of the TV lights.

ON SCREEN,

Powell reluctantly stops for the cameras, allowing microphones to be shoved into his face.

POWELL  
(his voice unsteady)  
Secretary Charles Evans Kirkland is dead. He passed away at 10:48 p.m. I... I want to extend my deepest sympathies to the Secretary's family, and to the people and government he so faithfully served. And...  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POWELL (cont'd)

and I have something else to say. To those who would try to bully us, to terrorize us, to those who would use an assassin's bullet to try to divert us from the causes of peace and democracy -- for you cowards I have a promise. Production of the AirGuard missile system will go ahead, as planned, in accordance with Secretary Kirkland's wishes. Your aggression will be met with strength. Your terrorism with justice. We will not be swayed from the course of peace and security.

A fusillade of questions is fired at him.

IN THE BOOTH,

surrounded by dozens of TV monitors, Dunne turns and looks at Rick, who is completely overwhelmed.

DUNNE

Now this guy knows how to tie some shoes.

RICK

I was so proud of you, man. You were different. You got out of here.

DUNNE

Hey, you can take the boy out of Atlantic City...

(no more charm)

Where is she, Rick?

RICK

The missile system doesn't work.

DUNNE

Don't be simple.

As he talks, he goes to the monitor that shows the incriminating God's-eye-view. He reaches for the VCR underneath it, the one that holds the master tape from that camera angle, and hits backscan. The images zip backwards while he talks.

DUNNE (cont'd)

You think they weren't going to fix it? You don't cancel an entire system because of a few bugs.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DUNNE (cont'd) (cont'd)

In the meantime, two and a half billion dollars will come into the economy. Seventeen thousand people will have jobs. I'd say all in all the system works pretty God damn well.

Rick has no response.

DUNNE (cont'd)

There is an order to things. It may be flawed, but it provides. Kirkland called himself a reformer, but he couldn't have been more wrong. He was a destroyer. One man cannot be allowed to come in and dismantle everything.

RICK

Why'd you want me next to you? Why'd it have to be me?

Dunne stops the tape at a spot before the beginning of the fight. He hits another button and the screen goes blue.

The word "ERASE" appears in the lower right corner.

DUNNE

I had ninety minutes to cover, and a lot to get done. I needed a cop in charge who was smart enough to look the other way if he saw too much. No offense, Ricky, but I didn't count on you getting as far as you did. Your instincts for keeping your head down used to be better than this. C'mon. Where is she?

RICK

It's no good, Kevin. You forgot about Tyler. He knows he was part of something now.

Dunne just waves that off, unconcerned.

DUNNE

Look, as soon as Powell's done, all the networks are going to switch over to those cameras right out there. I will walk into that ring, start talking, and the first draft of history will be written. And it's going to hold.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: 2

DUNNE (cont'd)

I want you up there next to me. All you have to do is tell me where she is.

RICK

What are you going to do to her?

DUNNE

What do you care?

RICK

She didn't do nothin' wrong. She was just trying to save some guys' lives. Soldiers. Guys she didn't even know.

Dunne thinks, then tries a new tack.

DUNNE

What is it you want, Rick? You really want to be mayor? That's no problem, he gets people elected all the time. You want to retire? What'll that take? Two hundred grand? Three hundred? You hit a fifty to one shot here, all you have to do is cash in the ticket.

Shaken, Rick fumbles in his shirt pocket and pulls out his pack of cigarettes. As he pulls them out, something else falls to the ground, whatever Lou Logan shoved in there earlier.

DUNNE (cont'd)

You need this. Your family needs this. Don't you think Angela would like a few nice things for once in her life? Don't you think she deserves them?

Rick bends down and picks up whatever fell from his pocket. It's a bloody hundred dollar bill, the one he took from Cyrus, the drug dealer, and later passed back and forth with Logan.

DUNNE (cont'd)

All I'm asking for is the location of one person at one moment in time.

Rick looks up at Dunne and mumbles something, almost inaudible.

DUNNE (cont'd)

What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: 3

RICK

I said I never killed nobody.

DUNNE

You won't have to. Just say the words. You name one little hiding place in this great big hotel, and I guarantee you'll never hear about this or her again. You and I will just walk out of this room and into the best part of your life.

Rick says nothing.

DUNNE (cont'd)

What's the alternative, pal? You think you're gonna take Him on? Make a heroic stand, expose the whole thing? You're the wrong guy. You'll be alone in a spotlight, and guys like you can't stand up to that light. You'll burn up under it. They start looking for dirt on you, it'll be a mudslide. Forget about your job, start thinking about jail. Your girlfriend'll be gone at the first sign of trouble, but not before she has a little chat with Angela, so say goodbye to your wife too. You liked that house in Margate, didn't you? Gone. The kids? Twice a month ain't so bad, if can get 'em to spend the night in your shitty apartment. You will lose it all, my friend, everything in your whole connected life will fall the fuck apart.

RICK

If there's any falling apart around here, Kevin, you're the one who's doing it. You're still forgetting Tyler. If he talked to me, he'll talk to somebody else.

DUNNE

Yes. You pointed that out for me earlier.

Dunne leans back, into the doorway, and gestures outside. He moves out of the way --

-- allowing LINCOLN TYLER to step into the room.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: 4

DUNNE (cont'd)  
Fortunately, Lincoln and I have come  
to an understanding.

Rick stares at Tyler, thunderstruck, but Tyler won't meet his  
gaze.

RICK  
Ah, shit.

He turns and looks out the window of the booth. The two  
construction workers Dunne met in the tunnel have come into  
the arena and are standing just next to the ring, staring in  
at Rick with intent. (Let's call them GUNMEN now.)

DUNNE (cont'd)  
You got nothin', Kiddo. Snake eyes.  
The house wins. Where is she?

Rick looks behind him. There's a door that leads out the back  
of the booth. He backs slowly toward it.

DUNNE (cont'd)  
(enough already)  
Riiick.

INT STORAGE AREA NIGHT

Rick comes through the door and into a small storage area  
under the main grandstand. It's a tight space, jammed with  
television cable and equipment, and with no way out.

Rick turns around --

-- but Tyler, Dunne, and the two Gunmen come through the door,  
blocking his path.

DUNNE  
Where is she, Rick?

Rick is backed into a corner.

DUNNE (cont'd)  
Where is she, Rick?

Rick still won't answer. Dunne checks his watch, impatiently.

DUNNE (cont'd)  
Okay, then. What do you say we have  
a little boxing match of our own?

He nods to Tyler, who reluctantly steps forward, raising his  
fists. Rick just looks at him, crestfallen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RICK

Aw, come on.

TYLER

(to Rick)  
Just tell him what he wants to know.  
Don't make me do this.

DUNNE

Jesus, what are the odds on this one,  
about five million to one?

Rick starts to push his jacket aside, to reach for his gun.

DUNNE (cont'd)

(to the Gunmen)  
If he touches that weapon, shoot him.

Rick lets his jacket fall.

DUNNE (cont'd)

Where is she, Rick?

Rick stands there, facing Tyler. He looks at Dunne,  
desperate.

RICK

Kevin. Come on. It's just -- I  
can't, man. This is over the line  
for me. Everybody's got one,  
somewhere. Don't make me do it.  
Please.

Dunne stares at him for a long moment, pained. Finally:

DUNNE

It's out of my hands.  
(to Tyler)  
Hit him.

Tyler moves quickly, giving a quick one-two to Rick's ribs.  
The punches fall like pile drivers and Rick crumples,  
GROANING.

DUNNE (cont'd)

Sounded like three broken ribs to me,  
Rick. Can we stop now?

Rick staggers to his feet.

RICK

Fuck you.

Gamely, he raises his guard. Dunne nods to Tyler, whose fists  
flash again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: 2

This time it's trickier -- a soft right to the kidneys, a left to the gut, and the recoil right, the hard one, to the side of Rick's face.

Again, Rick falls to the ground, now bleeding from his mouth.

Tyler looks down at him, a combination of rage and sympathy on his face.

TYLER

At least try, man.

RICK

I was trying.

Rick grabs hold of a stack of video cables and drags himself to his feet. Hoping to catch Tyler unaware, he spins around quickly and launches a roundhouse at Tyler's head.

But the champ pulls back, ducking it easily, and counters with three quick jabs while Rick's off balance, one to Rick's eye and two more to his mouth.

Rick spins around and falls, hard. He has a badly split and swollen lip, and blood pours from his mouth. Dunne winces.

DUNNE

Jesus, Lincoln, don't make it so he can't talk.

Rick pulls himself to his feet one more time. He stands there, weaving. Dunne steps closer to him and lowers his voice.

DUNNE (cont'd)

You're not stopping anything, you're just slowing it down. These guys don't play games they can't win. Last time. Where is she?

Rick spits a mouthful of blood, spraying it all over the front of Dunne's shirt.

RICK

Look. Now you're ready to go on TV.

DUNNE

(to Tyler)  
Put him out.

Reluctantly, Tyler turns to Rick, who is too weak to even raise his guard.

TYLER

Stand still. This'll go easier.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: 3

He swings, catching Rick right on the chin. Rick's head snaps back and his legs go out from under him. He collapses to the ground right where he stands, a snowman that melts all at once.

This time he's not getting up.

Dunne comes and leans over him, laying one hand on his back. He speaks softly, for Rick only.

DUNNE (cont'd)  
If it were anybody but me, you'd be  
dead.

He gets up, gestures to the others, and they head for the door.

DUNNE (cont'd)  
(to Gunman 1)  
Stay outside the door. I'll be back  
in half an hour.

They beat it out of the room, leaving Rick alone.

He coughs. Spits. Drags himself to a sitting position.

He regroups for a moment, then pulls himself to his feet.

He stands there, wavering, but up.

INT        PAY-PER-VIEW BOOTH        NIGHT

Rick steps out, into the pay-per-view booth. It's empty.

He limps across it, to the door. Outside, he can see the First Gunman, waiting outside. But from down the hall, Rick can also hear some sort of commotion.

He slips forward, hidden by the door frame, and looks down the corridor.

IN THE CORRIDOR,

another swarm of TV NEWS CREWS are racing toward the ring, late for the press conference.

As they pass, they momentarily block the First Gunman's view of the door to the booth. Rick slips out, into the thick of them. The First Gunman doesn't see as Rick slips out and heads down the corridor in the opposite direction, as fast as he can force himself to move.

When the crews pass, the First Gunman's line of sight clears, just in time for him to see Rick disappear around a corner.

But the Gunman does not give chase.

INT ARENA - MAIN ENTRANCE NIGHT

Rick hobbles out of one of the tunnels, across the main entrance of the arena, and out the blue doors.

INT CASINO NIGHT

Picking up speed now, Rick staggers across the casino. He turns heads, his face a swelling mess, his shirt spattered with his own blood.

As he goes, he keeps looking back, over his shoulder, to make sure he isn't being followed. To his surprise, he's not.

But as he walks, we move in closer and closer, and notice a small metal "roach clip" that clings to the back of his jacket. It's in the same spot where Dunne put his hand just moments ago.

INT ARENA - MAIN ENTRANCE NIGHT

CLOSE ON Kevin Dunne's handheld locator receiving unit. DUNNE, standing in the main entrance of the arena with the two GUNMEN, stares down at the screen, at a single blip that moves across a floorplan of the hotel.

DUNNE

The casino.

They head out, into the casino, after him.

INT STAIRWELL NIGHT

JULIA, still hiding, SCREAMS as the stairwell door slams open, BANGING hard against the cement wall in the firewell. RICK stands there, holding it open. Julia gets a look at his face.

JULIA

What happened to you?

RICK

I did the right thing. Feels great.  
You still want to get out of here?

She starts down the stairs, but he grabs her by the arm.

RICK (cont'd)

Not that way.

He pulls her back out of the stairwell --

INT ELEVATOR BANK NIGHT

-- and into the elevator bank on the thirty-eighth floor. He pushes a button and an elevator DINGS open.

INT CASINO FLOOR NIGHT

Dunne and the two Gunmen stand in the middle of the casino floor. Dunne looks at the monitor, which now shows the blip just outside the outline of the building.

DUNNE

Main entrance, he's right outside the doors!

They take off, toward the main doors.

INT ELEVATOR NIGHT

Rick and Julia, technically outside the walls of the hotel, are actually ensconced in one of the glass elevators that run down the outside of the building.

The back wall of their elevator car looks out onto the boardwalk and the roiling ocean beyond.

EXT CASINO NIGHT

Dunne and the two Gunmen race out the front doors of the casino and are immediately lashed by the stinging rain of the storm, which has increased considerably in its ferocity.

Their clothes billow around them as they struggle to keep their balance on the boardwalk, squinting like hell as they search the exit area.

DUNNE

SEE ANYTHING?!

But the boardwalk is deserted, the "tropical storm" has sent almost everyone scurrying back home.

Dunne looks back down at the monitor. It still shows the blip is right outside the main entrance, and not moving.

DUNNE (cont'd)

WHAT THE HELL?!

A large wave hits the beach, exploding in a shower of seawater as it is repelled at the edge of the boardwalk.

Behind Dunne, the glass elevator shafts are illuminated, running down the front of the building like bright teardrops.

INT ELEVATOR NIGHT

Rick turns around and notices the back wall of the elevator is glass. He looks down. Below, he can see Dunne and the two Gunmen, out on the boardwalk, still searching, getting closer as the elevator descends.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He turns around and hits the L button, again and again. He looks up at the floor indicator lights. They're on ten and dropping.

Eight. Six. Five. Four. But on three --

-- they stop.

RICK

Ah, shit.

Julia looks at him, concerned.

The doors open. An elderly couple is waiting to get on, an OLDER WOMAN pushing a VERY OLD MAN in a wheelchair with an oxygen tank.

She starts to wheel him slowly aboard, keeping the doors open.

Julia, still trying to figure out what Rick saw, notices the glass wall, and the figures waiting below. She turns to face it.

JULIA

Oh, my God.

EXT BOARDWALK NIGHT

Dunne turns around, to face the hotel again. He looks up, at the elevators, and sees Julia standing there, brightly lit for a second, before an arm reaches out and turns her around.

DUNNE

UP THERE!

The Gunmen see her too and they all race for the front doors of the casino. Behind them, an even larger wave washes over the beach and this time surmounts the boardwalk, climbing right over it. A dozen boards RIP right up out of the joists, the nails SCREAMING as they're torn free.

INT CASINO NIGHT

As Dunne and the Gunmen open the doors to the casino and go inside, the last of the wave swirls around their feet and fingers its way inside, penetrating the lobby for the first time, soaking the carpet. Although the casino is much emptier than before, there are, incredibly enough, die-hard GAMBLERS still at it, the ROAR of the angry ocean outside drowned out by MUZAK.

Up ahead, Rick and Julia race out of the elevator bank and head deeper into the casino. The Gunmen start to run after them, but Dunne slows them, not to attract attention.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DUNNE

Don't run. Let him think he lost us.

Dunne and the Gunmen slow, allowing Rick and Julia to disappear into the crowd up ahead. Dunne looks back down at the locator monitor. He sees Rick turn sharply, headed off the screen. Dunne furrows his brow, but then smiles.

DUNNE (cont'd)

I know where you're going.

INT FIGHTERS' TUNNEL NIGHT

Rick and Julia race down the tunnel outside the fighters' dressing rooms. They run past the rooms and turn right, the same direction Cyrus went when evading Rick earlier.

AROUND THAT CORNER,

they reach the same door Dunne went through, but with no key card of their own, they find it locked. Rick pulls his weapon and BLASTS the lock.

INT CONSTRUCTION SITE NIGHT

Rick and Julia race into the construction area. To the right are the large overhead metal doors that lead to the outside.

RICK

Look for a panel, something that opens the doors!

JULIA

Here!

She hits three buttons on an electrical panel and the huge metal doors at the right side start to GRIND open. The doors are massive, big enough to allow earth movers and heavy drilling equipment through.

The storm immediately SLASHES into the tunnel. Rick and Julia head for the opening doors.

POW! POW!

They freeze, chunks of mud flying up at their feet. The First Gunman races down the loading ramp, straight at them, FIRING as he comes.

Rick pulls his weapon and FIRES twice. He misses, but he forces the Gunman to take cover, just outside the frame of one of the doors.

Rick grabs Julia by the hand and they take off in the only direction left open to them -- deeper into the tunnel.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

A few moments later, the access door BANGS open. Dunne and the Second Gunman hurry into the tunnel.

FIRST GUNMAN

They went further in!

The three of them give chase, just as the giant overhead doors finish rolling open, all the way. The very tops of the doors are fifteen feet in the air, high enough to see all the way outside, across the boardwalk --

-- to the blackening ocean.

INT TUNNEL NIGHT

Rick and Julia run through the tunnel as fast as they can, but it's awfully dark. The only light is coming from behind them, and now it's fading rapidly.

BEHIND THEM,

Dunne stops at a bank of light switches and flicks them on, about twenty in all.

Above him, the first light clicks on. The rest click on in sequence, drawing a line right down the center of the tunnel, one after the other, lighting further and further.

We follow the lights, dozens of them, as they streak ahead. The lights catch up to --

JULIA AND RICK,

who were groping in the dark several hundred yards ahead. As everything brightens around them, they stop, staring at something in front of them, their faces falling.

JULIA

Oh, no.

Fifty yards ahead of them, a lot of construction materials and equipment are parked in front of --

-- a solid wall of earth. The tunnel isn't finished.

They're cornered.

Rick looks up, for any means of escape. At the very end of the tunnel, high above them, there is an exit tube, a vertical shaft three feet across that may lead to the surface. Rick runs to it.

A work light inside illuminates a ladder that runs up the inside wall of the tube, but that ladder is fifteen feet up, and there's no way to get to it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

From further back in the tunnel, they hear Dunne call out.

DUNNE (o.s.)

RICK?!

FURTHER BACK,

Dunne and the Gunmen walk down the tunnel slowly, warily, guns drawn. With the lights overhead, it's now fairly well lit, although it drops off into shadows at the edges and among the stacked equipment.

They draw closer to the end of the tunnel. Up ahead, Rick and Julia are nowhere to be seen.

Dunne gestures to the others to stop and calls out again.

DUNNE

You took the long odds, Rick. That's not like you.

No answer. They're hiding somewhere up there, among the bulldozers and earth movers. Dunne gestures to the Gunmen to split, to go to either side of the tunnel, and they do.

DUNNE (cont'd)

You made a very bad decision. I'll give you about thirty seconds to unmake it.

BEHIND AN EARTH MOVER,

Rick and Julia are hiding. From their vantage point, they can see Dunne, coming toward them, about ten yards away.

Rick holds his weapon out, looking for a clean shot.

In the distance, he hears a hollow BOOM.

He looks up.

IN THE MIDDLE OF THE TUNNEL,

Dunne heard it too. He turns around, looking back toward the mouth of the tunnel.

The BOOM comes again, closer. Dunne squints. Far away, the floor of the tunnel is becoming shiny, reflecting the lights above. The shininess moves closer and closer to him, until it swirls around his feet.

It's water.

EXT BOARDWALK NIGHT

You can call Jezebel a spring shower if you want, but the truth is she's a big, nasty, vicious hurricane, and she is about to kick the living shit out of Atlantic City.

A giant wave towers over the beach and EXPLODES onto the boardwalk, shooting spray a hundred feet into the air.

AT THE MOUTH OF THE TUNNEL,

the wave sweeps down the loading ramp, CRASHES through the gaping hole where the overhead metal doors were, and ROARS into the tunnel.

Equipment tumbles, light bulbs EXPLODE, dirt and mud fly everywhere as the water rakes its way inside.

AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL,

the wave drops to around knee-height, wraps around Dunne's legs, and peters out. But the message is clear. More to come.

Dunne looks up, nervous.

DUNNE

Uh, Rick? We're kinda on a clock here, buddy.

BEHIND THE EQUIPMENT,

Rick and Julia are shin-high in water.

DUNNE (o.s.)

You have my word -- you will walk away from this. I'll pretend we're still back in the arena. The same deal applies. It's just her. Not you.

Julia turns and looks sharply at Rick. Abruptly, he turns toward her, points his gun directly over her shoulder --

-- and FIRES. Over her shoulder.

The First Gunman, who had crept around behind them, catches the slug in the chest and goes down.

Dunne turns his head sharply, the shot giving away Rick's position. He turns and jumps onto a bulldozer, gaining both height and cover.

EXT BOARDWALK NIGHT

Another wave hits. It CRASHES onto the boardwalk and POUNDS against the heavy doors of the casino, demanding entrance. But the doors hold.

AT THE MOUTH OF THE TUNNEL,

however, there are no doors to hold back the sea. The wave BOOMS through the opening and rushes into the tunnel, completely obscuring this end of it. It's about twice the size of the first wave.

AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL,

Rick looks around, frantic, as Dunne has disappeared from his field of vision. The ROAR of the approaching wave grows louder.

ABOVE HIM,

Dunne peers over the top of the bulldozer, unseen. He raises his weapon, aiming it at an exposed corner of Julia's head.

BEHIND THE EARTH MOVER,

Rick hears the sound of the wave coming and dares a look up, ahead. He sees the wall of water approaching.

TO HIS RIGHT,

the Second Gunman has a clear bead on him. He tightens his finger on the trigger.

RICK

dives to the ground at that very moment, grabbing hold of Julia and dragging her down with him. Two gunshots ZING off the equipment just over their heads, missing both of them. Rick ignores all that, they've got bigger problems.

RICK

(to Julia)

Hang onto me.

He throws both arms around her and points up, to the exit tube fifteen over their heads.

RICK (cont'd)

Swim for that.

JULIA

Swim?

She cranes her neck, to see what's coming --

-- and the wave hits.

The Second Gunman is lifted off his feet and SLAMMED into the side of a bulldozer. Who knows, he may die of internal bleeding even before he drowns.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dunne is swept away, off the top of the bulldozer he is on, and sucked under the maelstrom of churning water.

The earth mover Rick and Julia are hiding under is ripped right off the top of them and they tumble backwards after it, heads over heels.

UNDERWATER,

Rick opens his eyes. For a moment, it's all foam and mud and debris. He's still clinging to Julia, who is twisting in his arms.

From inside the mayhem, he sees the glowing mouth of the exit tube up above them. A light inside it still burns, beckoning. He swims for it, pulling Julia along with him.

IN THE EXIT TUBE,

they break the surface about three feet from the bottom of the tube. The water pressure isn't great enough to force it all the way up into this hollow area. Yet.

Rick forces Julia's hands onto the metal rungs of the ladder that runs along the side. He looks up. The top is about fifty feet away.

RICK

GO!

He gives her a shove and she starts climbing. Rick starts to follow her, when, from the churning water below --

-- a hand reaches up and grabs hold of his ankle. Rick looks down, and Dunne drags himself up, out of the freezing seawater, GASPING for air.

Rick reaches down and grabs him by the collar, dragging him up onto the lowest rung of the ladder. Dunne's body still hangs in the swirling water below, buffeted violently, but his head and hands are above the surface.

DUNNE

Pull me up!

As Rick reaches down to pull again, he notices something. The water level in the tube is dropping.

RICK

It's going back out.

DUNNE

(frightened)  
What?!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sure enough, the water quickly becomes a torrent, RAGING back out the way it came, sucking everything right along with it. Dunne SCREAMS, his fingers slip on the railing as the ferocious undertow pulls him back underwater.

RICK

HANG ON!

Dunne loses his grip and is pulled all the way down to the mouth of the tube, but Rick lunges and grabs hold of his hands. Now Dunne's head is actually underwater, and the force of the undertow still rips at him, trying to drag him under.

Rick GROANS with effort, pulling as hard as he possibly can, but he can't get Dunne's face above the water level. They struggle mightily for what seems forever, eyes locked on each other from only a foot away.

Finally, Dunne panics and opens his mouth in an underwater SCREAM. His lungs immediately fill with the muddy, brackish water, and he goes still. He stares up at Rick, his eyes glaze, his grip relaxes --

-- and he's sucked away by the water RAGING past the mouth of the tube.

AT THE MOUTH OF THE TUNNEL,

before the last one has entirely receded, another wave hits. It BELLOWS down the half-filled tunnel with even more force than the last one. The surging water reaches the mouth of the exit tube --

IN THE EXIT TUBE,

-- and rushes up it, forcing Rick and Julia along ahead of it, shooting them to the top like corks, where they BANG against the bottom of a manhole cover.

The tube is now completely filled with water. Rick puts both hands against the bottom of the manhole cover, pushing like hell, trying to raise it.

No luck. They thrash, panicked.

EXT BOARDWALK NIGHT

Okay, here it comes. Out on the ocean, the biggest wave yet rolls up like a cobra, preparing to strike the seacoast. The glittering hotels, strung along the edge of the boardwalk, seem to hold their chins out, asking for it.

EXT BOARDWALK NIGHT

The wave hits. First, it surges under the boardwalk, sending boards flying up by the hundreds, one after the other, exploding into the air.

Next, it CRASHES down on the boardwalk, driving whatever remained ahead of it --

-- into the casino.

INT CASINO NIGHT

The front windows and doors of the casino EXPLODE in showers of glass and brass, sending shards flying into the room.

The wall of water becomes the casino, upending DEALERS and WAITRESSES and PIT BOSSES and GAMBLERS, decimating bars and bottles and television sets, crushing walls and tables and chairs and ceilings, dashing everything in front of it as it rolls, shoves, and sweeps across the casino floor.

EXT MOUTH OF TUNNEL NIGHT

The monster wave obliterates the mouth of the tunnel.

INT EXIT TUBE NIGHT

An underwater tidal wave forces even more water up into the exit tube. The intense pressure blasts Rick, Julia, and the manhole cover right up and out. Rick's head CRUNCHES into the metal cover, hard.

INT CASINO FLOOR - UNDERWATER NIGHT

The access cover squirts up into the now-submerged main floor of the casino. A geyser of seawater forces its way into the surging tide pool, and Rick and Julia shoot up with it.

Julia looks up and sees light above her. She kicks toward it.

NEAR THE CEILING,

Julia breaks the surface of the churning water and finds herself up near the ceiling tiles above the casino floor. She GULPS a deep breath of air and looks around. Rick is nowhere to be seen.

UNDERWATER,

it is remarkably like what we saw in the the opening. It's kinda peaceful down here, underneath, as casino debris floats lazily past us.

Rick, dazed from the blow to his head, floats along under the water, looking at the strange sights around him. Up ahead, he sees a mirror and floats toward it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He gets a glimpse of his own face -- not dead like in his dream, but beaten and floating in a cloud of blood that pours from his head wound. He stares at himself and slowly his eyes start to close.

A HAND reaches down from above, grabs him by the arm, and pulls him up, out of the dark water.

ABOVE THE SURFACE,

Julia has hold of Rick, who is lapsing into unconsciousness, blood running down his face. She SCREAMS at him.

JULIA

No, don't die, don't die!

She pulls his head around to face her, grabs him by the hair.

JULIA (cont'd)

OPEN YOUR EYES, OPEN YOUR EYES!

His head rises slowly --

DISSOLVE TO:

INT RICK'S SHITTY APARTMENT DAY

-- and RICK opens his eyes. He's not underwater anymore, not even in the casino, but lying in bed, some time later. He looks rough, his eyes red-rimmed, still tired after a full night's sleep. His head wound seems better, he's only got a small bandage on his scalp, and some of the swelling in his face has gone down. Still looks like hell, though.

He sits up, slowly, and swings his legs over the side of the bed. He puts his elbows on his knees and drops his face into his hands. For a long time.

His bed is a twin, the only furniture in this small bedroom. The walls are bare, and two suitcases are open on the floor.

He finally gets up, goes into the bathroom, and splashes water on his face. Outside the window, the morning sun shines in. The SOUND of heavy construction comes from nearby, HAMMERS and SAWS.

IN THE LIVING ROOM,

the place isn't much cheerier. There are maybe a dozen unpacked moving boxes stacked against one wall, an old sofa, and nothing else. Rick walks out of the bedroom, pulling on a pair of jeans. He opens the door, picks up the newspaper from the hallway, and goes into the smallish kitchen.

The phone rings and he picks it up.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

RICK

Hello.

There is a long pause, then he lowers the phone, as if the sound of the other person's voice alone is enough to wrench him. He puts it back to his ear.

RICK (cont'd)

Yeah, I'm here. Just caught me before coffee, that's all.

He drops the newspaper onto the kitchen table, revealing a below-the-fold headline.

**GOVERNOR LAUDS POWELL RESEARCHER FOR HEROISM  
Says 'Courage to Speak Out' Saved Lives**

Hey, that's great, and there's a very flattering picture of Julia Costello right below it. Good for her.

RICK (cont'd)

No, I didn't send it yet. Because it woulda bounced, Angela. I got suspension pay coming on Thursday, I'll send you that.

The table is something of a newspaper morgue, papers cut up everywhere, clippings saved for masochistic reasons. While Rick talks on the phone, we keep reading:

**POWELL CLEANS HOUSE IN WAKE OF AIRGUARD SCANDAL**

RICK (cont'd)

Let me talk to Michael. Come on, he can be a few minutes late, just put him on. Give me a break.

We read on. This headline is over a photograph of Rick:

**AERODROME "HERO" CONNECTED TO EXTORTION, PAYOFFS**

RICK (cont'd)

Hi, Mikey. Yeah, well, they can wait for you a minute, can't they? How ya doin'? Yeah? Ah, I'm okay.

The headlines keep getting worse. Try:

**D.A. WON'T CALL DIRTY COP IN AIRGUARD HEARINGS**

And the last headline is the worst:

**SANTORO TO FACE CRIMINAL CHARGES  
'Pattern of Corruption'  
Dates Back to Early 80s**

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: 2

Rick's still on the phone, bent over the kitchen counter, one hand covering his eyes.

RICK (cont'd)  
 Woah, woah, wait a sec, will ya? Did  
 you have practice last night?  
 (giving up)  
 Yeah. I guess you better hurry,  
 then, huh? I love you, Michael.  
 Give the phone back to --

But Michael has hung up. Rick stares for a second, then hangs up and picks up a pack of cigarettes.

It's empty. Figures.

CUT TO:

EXT BOARDWALK DAY

It's a cool, gray day. RICK walks across the boardwalk, tearing the cellophane off a fresh pack of cigarettes, and finds a bench. He sits, the sea behind him, tapping the pack into his palm, staring down. A sharp CRACK, like a gunshot, startles him and he looks up --

-- at Gilbert Powell's Aerodrome Hotel & Casino, crawling with CONSTRUCTION WORKERS. The sound was only a worker's sledgehammer. Plywood is up over the shattered windows and doors and repairs are proceeding at a brisk pace. A friendly sign in front says "PARDON OUR DUST!"

Rick pulls out a cigarette and digs in his pocket for a lighter. A shadow falls over him.

VOICE (o.s.)  
 I brought you a present.

Rick looks up. JULIA stands over him, holding out a brown paper bag. He opens it and pulls out a whole carton of Dunhills. He smiles and holds up both the carton and the pack he just bought.

RICK  
 When it rains, huh?

JULIA  
 Mind if I sit down?

He shakes his head and shoves over. She sits. He offers her a cigarette, but she shakes her head.

(CONTINUED)

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JULIA (cont'd)

That one I smoked with you was the only cigarette I've had in three years.

RICK

Oops.

Rick lights his own cigarette. A long moment goes by.

JULIA

Your wife told me where to find you. I came twice before, but you were out.

RICK

Yeah, I've had a lot of social engagements lately.

JULIA

I'm surprised you stayed in town. I thought you'd want to move away.

RICK

Actually, I may be spending some time upstate.

JULIA

Upstate?  
(figures it out)  
Oh.

RICK

I keep dreaming I'm back in that casino. Underwater. Only in my dream, I drowned. Wonder what they woulda said about me if I had, huh?

JULIA

You didn't have to do what you did. I know it cost you -- everything, and... if it helps, I...

RICK

Don't try to make a hero out of me. It won't fit. If I hadn't put a face to you, things might have gone a whole lot different.

She looks away. She tries again.

JULIA

I testified this morning. In front of the grand jury.

(CONTINUED)

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RICK

How'd it go?

JULIA

Very, very well. There are going to be a lot of indictments, all up and down Powell's organization. The prosecutor said they're even going after Powell and they have a good chance of implicating him. Things are really going to change in Atlantic City. I mean, finally, things are going to be different.

Rick stands up, buttoning his coat.

RICK

You know, they say back two, three hundred years ago, pirates used to put phony lighthouses out near the big rocks in the bay. Right out there. Ships would set a course by the lights and crash on the rocks. Then everybody'd go out and rob 'em blind.

He drops his cigarette and grinds it out.

RICK (cont'd)

Only one thing's changed around here since then. The lights are brighter.

She looks up at him.

JULIA

I'm naive?

RICK

There's worse sins, Julia. There's a lot worse sins.

He kisses her on the cheek. He starts to pull away, but she pulls him back and kisses him on the other cheek too.

He smiles, straightens up, and stuffs the carton of cigarettes in the pocket of his coat.

RICK (cont'd)

Thanks for the smokes.

He turns and walks off, down the boardwalk. Around him, the brilliant lights of the casinos beckon.

FADE OUT.