

VERVE

THE
DEMOLITION EXPERT

by

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VERVE

SUGAR23

OVER BLACK...

*When a caper crew needs something blown up for a heist,
they call upon The Demolition Expert.*

*They are often minor characters who are not given much screen
time. They are often expendable, and eventually killed off.*

This is their movie.

EXT. SKYSCRAPER - DAWN

A distorted Manhattan skyline reflected in the giant windows
of A MONOLITHIC SKYSCRAPER.

REEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE... A shrill squeal as --

A SUSPENDED PLATFORM IS LOWERED INTO FRAME. A duo of
helmeted WINDOWWASHERS come to a halting stop, fifteen
hundred feet above the world.

WOOSH! A blast of wind makes the pulleys sway.

GUS BENDER (30s), skinny, unassuming, snatches the metal rail
with a petrified moan.

JOEY FIX (40s), chiseled features, impossible good looks,
squeegees the window.

GUS
...couldn't we have been, like,
copier repairmen or something?

JOEY
Where's the fun in that?

An infectious smile. And then Joey checks his watch -- a
twenty thousand dollar Rolex.

JOEY
Ten seconds.

Gus reaches into his cleaning bucket and pulls a piece of
ROLLED-UP MATERIAL. Almost looks like a yoga mat. He unfurls
it across the window, flattens it. *An adhesive of some kind.*

JOEY
Good to go.

Gus taps the center of the adhesive three times. They move
away from the window as --

The adhesive IGNITES -- turns ORANGE and then RED and then --
the window starts to MELT and -- SPLASH -- TURNS TO WATER!
Spilling down the side of the building.

Gus smiles, proudly. Looking at Joey for approval.

GUS
Sodium-acetate. When the energy of
 the molecules heats up, it ignites a--

JOEY
 --Let's dance.

Joey unhooks and gracefully leaps inside. Gus sighs. Leaps after him, almost tripping over the pane.

CHAPTER ONE
THE CREW

INT. SKYSCRAPER - 91ST FLOOR - MINDLAB OFFICES - DAWN

Wind blows papers around the sleek offices. Gus and Joey wheel a whiteboard over the missing window, stopping the wind. Eyes peeled, Joey presses his finger to his EARWIG.

JOEY
 We're good to go, Wolf.

WOLF (EARWIG)
*If you're not out in twelve minutes
 you'll be locked in... and every
 SWAT team in Manhattan will be on
 your ass.*

JOEY
 This is what I live for.

FREEZE FRAME TITLE ON JOEY: **THE MASTERMIND.**

INT. NEW YORK CITY STREET - DAWN

A white van careening through the streets, winding in and out of traffic. Scrawled on the side -- *ABE'S FLOWERS.*

INT. BACK OF THE VAN - CONTINUOUS

The glow of the laptop illuminates the scrunched-up face of WOLF (20s). She'd put a hummingbird on edge. She fidgets in the back of a high-tech electronic lair, calling up DIGITIZED BLUEPRINTS as the van speeds along --

WOLF
 (into mic)
 Head north. Fifty paces down the
 corridor. Right to the foyer doors.

FREEZE FRAME TITLE ON WOLF: **THE HACKER.**

Sweat stains the keys as she bounces around, looks up --

WOLF

Can you please slow down. I'm about
to have a nervous breakdown...

SMOKE (30s), the driver of the van, strangles the wheel as she pulls in front of the towering skyscraper with a balletic U-Turn -- centimeters away from the bumper behind her.

SMOKE

(checks her watch)
Right on time.

FREEZE FRAME TITLE ON SMOKE: **THE WHEELMAN**.

INT. MINDLAB OFFICES - FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Two GUARDS sit before a bank of monitors. A neon MINDLAB logo behind them. One of the monitors goes out.

GUARD 1

Camera sixty-two is out. Sixty-
three too. They're going out.

The cameras are fritzing and dying, one by one. GUARD 2 looks up from his crossword.

GUARD 2

Software update, it's scheduled.

He goes back to his puzzle. In the background --

JOEY AND GUS

sneak past, just out of sight. They navigate a high-tech
LIGHTED HALLWAY.

WOLF (EARWIG)

The last door on the right...

JOEY

(into earwig)
Hey, Stick, rise and shine, buddy.

INT. MEN'S RESTROOM - 91ST FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

The AC vent falls from the ceiling and a MAN in a wrinkled bespoke suit, briefcase tied to his back with bungee cords, lowers himself down from the duct.

This is STICK (30s), another Adonis chiseled out of marble, the *Pitt* to Joey's *Clooney*. He touches his earwig.

STICK
I've been up for hours.

JOEY (EARWIG)
How'd you sleep?

STICK
Dreamt I was a very rich man.

He massages his fingers and cracks his knuckles. Wiggles them mischievously. FREEZE FRAME TITLE: **THE PICKPOCKET.**

INT. MINDLAB OFFICES - CONTINUOUS

Joey and Gus reach the door of the Big Man's office. MINDLAB pulsing above in neon. Joey tries it. It's locked.

JOEY
The door, Wolf.

WOLF

is typing away, trying to fix the problem.

WOLF
Standby. Something's wrong.

GUS

pulls a THIN KEY-LIKE ROD out of his pocket.

GUS
I got this.

Jams it in the lock and -- POP! The locking mechanism falls off the door. The doors open. Once again, Gus smiles proudly.

GUS
Key bomb. Just a little something I
cooked up in my sp--

--But Joey is already inside.

JOEY
Let's dance.

STICK

trots down a HALLWAY with his briefcase, on his cell, yelling at nobody --

STICK
I'm not gonna tell you again, it's
a bear market, get on the horn with
what's his face on the floor and
get me fifty shares of--

He rounds the corner and SLAMS into a JANITOR, lifting his dangling key ring. It's a mutual apology festival ---

STICK	JANITOR
Excuse me, sorry. Pardon me.	Sorry, I didn't see you there, I'm so--

JOEY AND GUS

move their way through a dark hallway towards the huge glass doors at the end.

STICK (EARWIG)
We officially have freight elevator access.

JOEY
Great lift. You're a genius, Stick.

Gus shoots Joey a look. He's a genius?

STICK (EARWIG)
Another day at the office.

They pass FRAMED PHOTOS on the walls -- all of a freewheeling billionaire, LAZLO FISHBIEN, rubbing elbows with CELEBS.

JOEY
At Big Man's door.

WOLF (EARWIG)
I unlocked it for you.

They enter the MINDLAB FOYER. Glorious floor to ceiling LCD walls displaying a rotisserie of stunning digital art.

JOEY
Alright, we own the place.

Suddenly -- WHAM! A security grate falls down behind them.

JOEY
Wolf?!

GZZT! LASER MOTION DETECTORS ignite on the floor around them.

WOLF

is frantically typing away. Sweat stings her eyes.

WOLF
It's a separate system! Big Man must have installed it last minute!

INTERCUTTING - JOEY AND GUS

are frozen in place, surrounded by crisscrossing beams.

GUS
Move an inch these things go off.

WOLF
Oh, shit, oh God--

JOEY
Breathe, Wolf.

WOLF
I'm breathing, I'm
breathing...

JOEY
In through your nose, out
through your--

WOLF
--I KNOW HOW TO BREATHE!
(sucks in a breath)
Okay. Okay, we can get around this.
I need a manual overdrive, Stick.
Find a Mindlab guard and nick their
access badge. Bring it down to me.

SITCK
Ask and ye shall receive.

Joey glances at his Rolex. For the first time, he's sweating--

JOEY
Six minutes.

WOLF
Hurry. We're still parked out
front.

SMOKE

watches A COP approaching the van.

SMOKE
Double parked out front.

WOLF
Oh, God. Oh God. Get rid of him,
before Stick gets here.

The Cop knocks on the van window.

STICK

emerges from the stairwell, heading towards MindLab's
glorious glass doors where the Guards sit at their desk.

SMOKE

rolls down her window. Smiles weirdly at the cop.

COP
 We got a report of a suspicious
 vehicle. Strange place to be parked
 at eight AM...

SMOKE
 Just making a delivery.

COP
 Deliveries are in the back.

SMOKE
 I'm new.

COP
 Do I know you from something? You
 look... familiar.

SMOKE
 I don't know. Summer camp?

COP
 Step out of the car, ma'am.

WOLF

holds her breath, dripping with sweat. About to pass out. Her
 stomach gurgling.

STICK

knocks on the glass door of MindLab. The Guards look up.

GUARD 1
 We're not open yet.

Stick points to his watch, trying to get him to come. The
 Guard huffs and limps over. One hulking step at time.

JOEY AND GUS

just stand there. Frozen. In the sea of alarm razors. One
 false move and the gig is up.

GUS
 I could blow us out, say the word.

JOEY
 You're part of my crew now, kid.
 Fix's Six don't quit. Hell or high
 water. That's rule one.

Gus nods. They stare ahead.

STICK

waits for the Guard to unlock the door. Finally --

GUARD

We're not open for another hour.

STICK

My mistake, I must have got the--

--He drops his briefcase, it snaps open and papers spill.

The Guard bends to help him pick up the papers, and this is where Stick makes the keen pinch of the Guard's dangling badge -- quickly unclipping it, and if you blink you miss it.

GUS AND JOEY

stand in awkward silence. Finally --

GUS

So... Did you choose six people because it rhymes?

(off his look)

Fix's Six. It's got a cool ring.

JOEY

It's a coincidence.

GUS

Gotcha. And that's six, *including* you obviously... So...

He stops himself, feeling Joey's irritation. And then --

GUS

I only ask because of the possessive, not to be the grammar police, but shouldn't it be Five? Because it's *your* five? Like, you and five others?

Joey glares at him. And then --

JOEY

It's Fix's Six.

STICK (EARWIG)

Got the credentials, coming down.

JOEY

Genius, Stick.

Gus shoots him a look.

ELEVATOR

Ding! 87. Ding! 86. Ding! 85. Stick rides in the elevator with a BUSINESS MAN and his chubby SON. Chocolate smeared on his face. Wearing dress shorts and a little suit jacket. Grinning at Stick.

Suddenly, the boy slaps all the elevator buttons and once and they light up like a Christmas tree. Giggling.

BUSSINESS MAN
I'm so sorry!

Stick explodes out of the elevator on the 84th floor and -- blasts into a stairwell.

SMOKE

has her hands on the hood as the cop leafs through her paperwork. Gets on his walkie.

COP
Yeah, she's delivering flowers. It all checks out.

SMOKE
Would you mind hurrying it along? I got a lot of drops to make.

Suddenly, a dark cloud falls over the cop--

COP
Open the back please, ma'am.

WOLF'S

eyes bug out of her head upon hearing this. A petrified squeak escapes her lips.

STAIRWELL

Stick is barreling down the stairs, skipping steps, so fast, riding the railing, running down the next 80 floors.

JOEY (EARWIG)
Five minutes. What's going on?

STICK
(winded)
Slight detour.

Crashes into someone, hops on the railing, goes for a ride.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Smoke and the Cop stand at the back of the van. She is pretending to fumble with her keyring, trying to find the right key -- stalling as the Cop stares her down. He's reveling in the thrill of authority.

EXT. LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Dripping with sweat, Stick explodes out of the stairwell. Covered in sweat. He starts to run, stops himself. Power walks instead as to not draw attention.

JOEY (EARWIG)
One minute.

He passes a MAN WITH SPIKED HAIR in a baggy Men's Warehouse suit, carrying a tipsy tray of coffees. He watches Stick hurry for the exit.

This is TRAVIS (27), we'll meet him again soon...

EXT. VAN - CONTINUOUS

Smoke finally unlocks the back. And then, *here goes nothing:*

SMOKE
Sorry about that, I'm still not used to keys. Where I come from you just *flip a switch* and the engine roars to life...

She whips off her sunglasses and faces the cop, praying to God it works. And it does. The Cop lights up.

COP
Hol-ly shit! I know where I know you from! You're Bianca Bodene, I used to watch you race! Holy hell!

Smoke breathes relieved, but HUSHES him.

SMOKE
I don't want people recognizing me, it'll never end--

COP
Can I get a selfie quick? My brother will never believe me...

The Cop whips out his cell.

SMOKE
Why don't we go over by the statue there. Better backdrop.

JOEY (EARWIG)
Ten seconds.

Stick sprints out of the building.

COP
You still look fine as hell.

SMOKE

Always nice to meet a fan. Some of
my biggest fans are cops.

As Smoke leads the Cop away, she blocks his view of --

STICK

running towards the van.

JOEY

Five seconds.

Stumbles, drops the credentials in the street. *Shit!* Doubles
back-- *HONNKKKK!* Nearly hit by a truck.

COP

I was watching the day you had your
big wreck. What are you doing
delivering flowers?

SMOKE

It's a cruel business.

Panting, Stick throws opens the back REVEALING --

Wolf in her mobile lair. He throws her the card. She catches
it. He collapses in the street, out of breath.

JOEY

Three. Two--

Wolf scans the credentials -- the system boots up and --

GUS AND JOY

Exhale as the lasers die away and the grate rises. Finally --

JOEY

After you.

Gus enters BIG MAN'S LAIR.

Joey follows. The office of a billionaire man child. A
basketball hoop, a statue of Superman, an arcade.

WOLF (EARWIG)

*We did it. Oh, God. That was close.
Oh God. Okay, I'm breathing. I'm
breathing-- You have five minutes.*

WOLF

collapses on the floor of the van and releases a massive
anxiety-soaked moan.

WOLF

Does anyone have a Valium?

GUS AND JOEY

move to a MASSIVE VAULT DOOR that takes up most of the wall.

JOEY

(waves his watch)

You're on, kid. Tick tock.

He nods. Determined. *Time to shine.*

WOLF

stares down at her screen. Watching a feed of the security cameras -- *Travis from the lobby enters the MindLab offices. Passes out coffees to the guards.*

Wolf hesitates, and then turns off the feed. She shoots Smoke and Stick a look and nods, knowingly.

GUS

reaches into his satchel and pulls out a DAISY CHAIN OF SLEEK SILVER DEVICES. Sticks them in a half circle around the vault. They instantly LIGHT UP and BLEEP.

GUS

Counting down. Three. Two. One.

Joey covers his ears -- A FLASH OF BLINDING LIGHT and smoke -- but no sound. Suddenly -- *WHUMPP!!!!* The massive vault door falls into the vault. It's amazing.

GUS

It's a silent bomb! The ultraviolet light sets off a chain reaction that sends a--

JOEY

--save it, bud.

(into earwig)

We're in.

Joey dashes inside THE VAULT.

Gus looks around. The size of a Manhattan apartment. Ancient artifacts, priceless stuff. A Honus Wagner baseball card. A vintage Superman lunch box. Rare coins. Dinosaur bones.

FREEZE FRAME TITLE: **THE SCORE**.

He approaches a glittering FABERGÉ EGG on a pedestal and STRADAVRIOUS VIOLIN in a glass case. A neon sign above it blinks -- VIOLINSPIRATION!

GUS
Wow. It's like a museum no one can
visit...

JOEY
Come on.

They move to a display of GLITTERING DIAMONDS.

Joey and Gus starts looting the diamonds, greedily stuffing
them into Joey's satchel. *They hear something --*

JOEY
Go check it out.

GUS

emerges from the vault and stops in his tracks. He's face to
face with Travis.

**FREEZE FRAME: Gus' face contorted with absolute shock,
Travis' splashing coffee frozen in mid-air... TITLE: THE
COMPLICATION.**

TRAVIS
Who-- Who are you?

GUS
...The window washer?

He sees the blown out vault door. Travis' eyes roll back in
his head and he faints dead, dropping the tray of coffee.

GUS
Joey! The Assistant!

He emerges from the vault with a full satchel.

JOEY
He wasn't supposed to be in for
another hour. Come on, we gotta go.
We got three minutes.

GUS
He saw my face!

JOEY
Don't worry, it's forgettable.

**FREEZE FRAME ON GUS' HURT REACTION AS A TITLE EXPLODES ACROSS
THE SCREEN -- ALSO, THE TITLE OF OUR MOVIE --**

THE DEMOLITION EXPERT

INT. WATERFRONT WAREHOUSE - BROOKLYN - NIGHT

An abandoned warehouse. Littered with moldy cargo boxes.

The Crew hovers around BANK, 70s, a balding aristocrat in a Saville Row suit and owlish horned rimmed glasses. He examines the diamonds with a jeweler's eye piece.

BANK
Flawless. Absolutely flawless. I've never seen anything so beautiful.

FREEZE FRAME TITLE -- THE BENEFACTOR.

BANK
If my estimations are correct, and I've built an empire on estimations, we are currently sitting on upwards of sixty million dollars in glittering perfection.

HOOTS and HOLLERS. Gus' eyes swell with hope.

JOEY
Thanks, Bank.

Bank takes a victorious puff on his cigar. Stick pops a bottle of Veuve Clicquot and lets it fly, because money is nothing. Raucous laughter as he starts filling glasses. Gus is so happy -- he steps forward.

GUS
Hey, um, sorry... I just-- I wanted to propose a toast... To Joey Fix. Our Mastermind. It's been an honor to be a part of this...

He raises a glass. Everyone follows suit.

JOEY
A thief is only as good as his crew and Joey Fix is only as good as his Six. Wolf, your hacking skills are unparalleled. Smoke, I've never seen better driving in all my life. Stick, you're an artist with your fingers. Bank, your investment paid off in spades...

Joey turns to Gus--

JOEY
And our bomb guy, Mike...

GUS
(deflating)
Gus.

JOEY
Gus? Where did I get Mike?

GUS
...I don't know.

Stick is eating a ham sandwich.

STICK
Mike was the bomb guy on the
Sandals job. Mike Miller.

JOEY
Ah, Mike Miller, yeah good guy. You
know him?

Gus shakes his head, no.

JOEY
Well, anyway, good job, bomb guy.

GUS
(to himself)
...Demolition Expert.

JOEY
Close your eyes everyone!

They do.

JOEY
I want you all to picture the thing
you want most in this life... The
thing just out of reach. Your
dream.

We scan their hopeful faces -- Bank. Smoke. Stick. Wolf. Gus.

JOEY
Open your eyes.

They do.

JOEY
If you can dream it, you can do it.
Nothing is stopping you now. So,
until we meet again... "The Fix is
In."

Hoots and hollers. Applause. Gus is beaming. Swelling with
hope. Bank pats Gus on the back.

BANK
You did good, kid.

GUS

Thanks, Bank. Actually, I was wondering. Maybe I could get one of Joey's cool nicknames for the next one? If there is a next one.

BANK

Yeah, I mean... nicknames just sort of happen *organically*. But why not? I'll talk to the boss.

GUS

(smiles)

Thanks.

BRINGGGGG! Gus phone rings. Incoming call from MIA.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Cramped. Flickering lights. Gus is on the phone--

GUS

The blowdown went off without a hitch. The hotel just melted right out of the sky, you should have seen it! There was a crowd, everyone was clapping--

MIA'S VOICE

You're the most destructive guy I know, it's what I love about you.

INT. GUS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Small, but well-kept. MIA (32), is cradling a cooing BABY JENNY in one arm, holding the phone with the other. A PUPPY is yipping, jumping --

MIA

--When are you coming back? We really need you home right now.
Down, Kablooie! Down!

Baby Jenny starts to cry.

INTERCUTTING --

GUS

Soon. I hear Jenny... is she okay?

MIA

She misses daddy.

She's trying to shush the baby. Moving to the KITCHEN to get her formula.

GUS
Well this will cheer her up. They
gave me a big bonus, Mia.

MIA
Gus? That's great news!

GUS
I think they're going to make me a
partner, they think I'm a genius.

MIA
(hesitates)
Does that mean more travel?

GUS
I'm telling you, things are gonna
change for us. We don't have to
worry about money anymore. We're
moving out of that dump, someplace
on Tupper Lake like we always
talked about, new car, boat, and
remember those Sea-Doos we road on
Lake George?

MIA
Sea-Doos? What are you--

GUS
--All our dreams are coming true.

MIA
They already came true, Gus-- Down
Kablooie!

The dog is barking and jumping, the baby is screaming now.
Hushing baby Jenny. It's a lot.

GUS
You're gonna get everything you
ever wanted.

MIA
I just want you to come home.

GUS
First thing tomorrow.

EXT. WATERFRONT WAREHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Gus emerges from the bathroom and stops in his tracks.
The warehouse is empty. The crew is gone.

GUS
Guys?

And so are the diamonds. Before Gus can process --

REEEEYOOPPPP!!! An explosion of RED AND BLUES as all the sirens in the world surround the warehouse. THE THUNDER OF HELICOPTERS OVERHEAD.

Before Gus can process -- *CRASH!* SWAT OFFICERS EXPLODE through the skylights in a shower of glass and reel into the warehouse, weapons drawn.

SWAT LEADER
On your knees! Now! Hands behind
your head --

Horrified, Gus hits his knees as a Godlike spotlight stings his eyes.

Another SWAT TEAM blasts inside and throw Gus to the ground. Cheek against cold cement, his eyes bug as they stab a knee in his back and cuff him.

SWAT LEADER
We got you, asshole.

His eyes bug as they rip him out of FRAME.

CHAPTER TWO
THE DOUBLE CROSS

INT. GUS' HOUSE - MORNING

The news is on the living room. Baby Jenny is in a jolly jumper dangling from the doorframe.

Kablooie won't stop barking.

MIA
Shutup, Kablooie!

Mia huffs as she prepares the baby's formula, trying to ignore the dog. And then something perks her ears.

NEWS ANCHOR (ON TV)
A suspect has been identified in
the explosion that rocked the
Manhattan offices of billionaire
Lazlo Fishbein yesterday...

She turns to the TV... drawn to it like a moth to flame when she sees --

HER HUSBAND'S MUG SHOT over helicopter crime scene footage:

A MASSIVE CHARRED HOLE in the side of the skyscraper from the opening. Smoke billowing out. Papers flying around. SIRENS scream below. A disaster area.

NEWS ANCHOR (ON TV)
 Gus Bender, decorated Iraq War veteran and owner of a demolition company in Los Angeles has been arrested on domestic terrorism charges. No motive has yet been established.

Mia drops the formula. It spills across the floor.

Kablooie bounds in, barking like mad.

Just then -- THE SQUEAL OF TIRES, THE SCREAM OF SIRENS as the house is surrounded by police. Baby Jenny starts to cry as the officers POUND on the door, screaming for her to open.

And she's just frozen in shock.

AGENT CANDY (PRELAP)
 (reading)
"The theft of resources, unprecedented greed, and exploitation of the common man marks you as pure evil. You're nothing more than a fire breathing dragon sitting a pile of gold coins in your lair..."

INT. INTEROGATION ROOM - DAY

Gus, a wreck of a man, sits at a table before a two way mirror. A camera gazing down at him from the wall.

AGENT MALLORY CANDY (30s) sits before him, reading a typed letter in a plastic evidence bag.

AGENT CANDY
 (reading)
"You continue to grow your wealth, while I can't afford seizure medication for my baby daughter. Your billions are an obscenity. A crime against humanity, the greatest moral failing of the 21st century. I will correct this mistake. Yours in brimstone, Gus Bender. The Robin Hood Bomber."

She pushes the letter across the table.

GUS
 ...I didn't write that letter.

AGENT CANDY

You know Robin Hood robbed from the rich and *gave to the poor*, he didn't just blow up the rich's shit and write the poor poems.

GUS

I told you, we stole diamonds. I didn't blow up the building! I'm not a terrorist, I'm a thief. I'm a demolition expert in a Caper Crew.

AGENT CANDY

The diamonds are intact. They were in a fire proof display. Untouched.

GUS

No. No, that's not possible. They have to be replicas, Joey must have swapped them out...

AGENT CANDY

Yeah, we looked into that. They're one hundred percent authentic. Flawless. In fact, nothing was stolen. Everything, even the stuff that was blown up or burned has been accounted for.

Gus just sits there in utter disbelief.

GUS

Why is this happening to me...?

Candy slides more paperwork across the table.

AGENT CANDY

Did you recently set up a bank account in Nigeria?

GUS

Yes, but...

AGENT CANDY

Known terrorism financiers?

GUS

Yes, but that's for embezzling! Our take was ten mill each, all of us opened offshore accounts, it was Joey's idea. And if I was going to blow up a building, I wouldn't use a friggin' PIPE BOMB! Amateur hour!

This does not help.

GUS

I know this sounds crazy... And I am guilty of crimes, but not these crimes...

AGENT CANDY

We have an eyewitness. Fishbein's assistant, Travis. He said you acted alone.

GUS

Joey was in the vault when he came in!

AGENT CANDY

So... we looked up this Joey Fix. There's no such person. I mean, it doesn't even *sound* like a real name. And the others -- Smoke, Wolf, Bank, Stick? C'mon. They sound like American Gladiators.

It's hopeless and he knows it. He melts into his chair.

GUS

(reeling)
The Fix is in...

AGENT CANDY

You're going to jail. For a very, very, very long time.

Gus buries his head in his hands.

FREEZE FRAME TITLE: ~~**THE DEMOLITION EXPERT**~~ **THE FALL GUY.**

INT. PRISON HALLWAY - DAY

Gus is on a payphone, in prison orange. A GUARD watches as he the phone rings. We hear commotion on the other end.

MIA'S VOICE

*They're tearing the house apart!
They're scaring the baby, how could
you do this to us, to our family--*

GUS

I was set up! I was framed! I was taken for a ride, I fell in with the wrong crowd...

MIA'S VOICE

You're a liar, everything's a lie--

GUS

I was doing this for us. For Jenny. I wanted to give you a better life--

MIA'S VOICE

I LOVED OUR LIFE!

This hits him hard.

GUS
But-- But we're in a shitty one
bedroom, we're killing ourselves,
we couldn't make ends me--

MIA'S VOICE
--We were making it work, Gus.
Together. We always made it work.

GUS
Mia, listen, I--

MIA'S VOICE
--I can't talk to you.

GUS
You have to believe me.

MIA'S VOICE
The baby's crying.

GUS
Please.

MIA'S VOICE
I'm sorry.

CLICK.

LAWYER (PRELAP)
*Do you see the man who committed
this crime anywhere in this room?*

INT. COURT ROOM - DAY

Travis, the spiky haired assistant, sits on the witness
stand. He points to Gus, now the defendant.

TRAVIS
That's him. That's the man.

SMASH CUT TO:

Gus receives his sentencing before THE HONORABALE MARY FINE.

JUDGE FINE
Your act of homegrown terrorism was
the product of calculated and
lengthy planning, a symbolic attack
on the United States as a whole...

Gus looks into the stands -- His wife and baby daughter are
not there. He's all alone.

JUDGE FINE

Therefore, I am recommending the
 maximum sentence of life in prison
without the possibility of parole.

Gus explodes with anguish as -- The Judge SMASHES down the gavel and we...

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. PRISON CELL - DAY

CRASH! The bars SLAM behind Gus, making him flinch. He hears a heavy breathing. Turns to see--

His CELLMATE lost in shadow, glaring down at him from the top bunk. This is CLINT.

Clint jumps down -- *WHUMP!* Descends upon him, emerging from the shadows. All six-foot-five of him. A tatted-up, blood-hungry skinhead.

GUS

(nervous)

Hey. I'm Gus.

Clint towers over him. Gus extends a trembling hand. *WHAP!* Clint levels Gus with a backhand slap -- his face SLAMS against the bars.

Clint grabs him by the neck and hurls him to the floor -- *WHAM! WHAM! WHAM! WHAM!* -- PUMMELING FOR SPORT --

AS GUS' SCREAMS bounce off concrete walls, we --

SMASH CUT TO:

T E N Y E A R S L A T E R

INT. PRISON YARD - DAY

WHAM! WHAM! WHAM! WHAM! Gus is *still* getting the shit kicked out him by an older, paunchier Clint and his SKINHEAD GANG.

But he doesn't scream anymore, he just takes the beating, resigned to the pain. A morning routine.

Satisfied with the ass kicking, Clint shoves Gus to the ground. *Exercise over.* He and the Gang hulk away, laughing.

Gus props himself up. His nose whistling. Lip busted. But he feels nothing -- he's like a giant callus, physically and emotionally. Eyes are dead and buried. Black and blue.

He sees one of TEETH in the grass. Plucks it up. Removes a MATCHBOX. Inside -- a collection of loose teeth. He sets his new one inside with all the rest.

His gaze shifts to the formidable fence. Barb-wire slithers like a steel-fanged snake. Staring at the awful world beyond.

A CORRECTIONS OFFICER approaches.

C.O.

Get up, Bender. You have a visitor.

Gus turns and looks up at C.O. Hope breaks across his face. And for the first time in ten years, he smiles --

GUS

Mia... I knew she'd come...

INT. PRISON VISITING ROOM - DAY

INMATES at wooden tables talking with LOVED ONES. Corrections Officers mill around. The doors open and Gus enters, excited, scanning the room for Mia.

He sees a woman in a plastic chair, facing away.

GUS

Mia?

She turns around. It's--

NOT MIA

Huh?

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Bro...

He whips around to find -- TRAVIS -- Fishbein's assistant. His spiky hair is starting to thin. Leg bouncing, eyes bloodshot and bleary from lack of closing. Gus sits.

GUS

You.

TRAVIS

It's been eating me alive... All these years. I tried to come before... but, like, they said I'd lose my family... like you lost yours...

He has his full attention.

TRAVIS

When I saw them interview your wife on the news... shit... Your poor baby. Jenny, right?

The name hits Gus in the solar plexus.

TRAVIS

God. I haven't slept in ten years, man, I keep thinking... she grew up without a dad... and it's my fault. I can't live with it, you know? What they did to you. What we did.

GUS

Tell me everything.

TRAVIS

Joey came to me a week before. They were scoping out the place. They knew I had it in for Fishbein... He was a shit boss...

FLASHBACK

Travis is getting reamed out in the MINDLAB OFFICES by FISHBEIN. He's so angry spit flies and he cowers.

TRAVIS (V.O.)

They knew I'd want to take him down, get rich in the process.

Wolf watches the abuse through a GLASS WINDOW as she fixes a computer, posing as a repairwoman.

MANHATTAN BAR.

Travis sits finishing a drink. A HAND pushes a fresh one over to him. He looks over and sees -- Joey sitting beside him. Smiling so big it boxes his ears.

TRAVIS (V.O.)

He recruited me.. Asked me to join the crew... My job was to come to work an hour early to distract you from the vault...

He nods back at Joey. They clink glasses.

THE VAULT.

Again, from a different point of view -- Joey and Gus are pilfering the diamonds. They hear something --

JOEY

Go check it out.

As soon as Gus is gone, Joey dumps the diamonds back in the box. Digs deep into his satchel and pulls out -- A PIPE BOMB. He sets the timer on the device for 20 MINUTES. Ducks out.

TRAVIS (V.O.)
*That's when Joey planted the bomb
 to frame you and made the switch.
 It wasn't about the diamonds...*

Joey moves over to THE FABERGE EGG on the pedestal.

TRAVIS (V.O.)
We stole two pieces that day...

He snatches the egg, and swaps it with A PERFECT REPLICA.

TRAVIS (V.O.)
*The Third Imperial Easter Egg and
 the Messiah Stradivarius.*

Joey moves to the VIOLIN in the glass case. Swaps it out with A PERFECT REPLICA.

TRAVIS (V.O.)
*The replicas were charred in the
 fire and impossible to ID.*

THE AFTERMATH.

Moving through the BLOW-UP VAULT, papers blowing around, landing on the burnt husk of a VIOLIN, buried in rubble.

BACK TO SCENE:

Travis is nervously picking at his finger. Gus is all ears. Expressionless. But hanging on every word.

TRAVIS
 We framed you to cover our tracks.
 Waited five years for the heat to
 die down and then we sold the Egg.
 50 million. Split six ways.

GUS
 Why are you telling me this now?

TRAVIS
 Because it's happening again. Five
 more years, and we're finally
 getting ready to sell the violin.
 Joey thinks we'll get 120 for it.

GUS
 For a violin?

TRAVIS

Not just a violin. The violin, the rarest, most valuable musical instrument in human history. *The Messiah Stradivarius*, made in 1716. They say it's the sweetest sound ever produced by man...

Gus continues his hard stare. Processing.

TRAVIS

I was the eyewitness. I put you here. I need to atone for what I did.

FREEZE FRAME TITLE: ~~THE COMPLICATION.~~ THE INSIDE MAN.

Gus just stares. His eyes are dead and buried. Without a hint of emotion, all he can think to say is --

GUS

...so it was the possessive. You were the sixth...

TRAVIS

I took a kid from her father.

GUS

She doesn't even know I exist.

TRAVIS

I just wish there was some way I could make it up to you.

Gus reaches into his pocket and pulls out a scrap of paper and a golf pencil, starts scribbling.

GUS

There is something you can do...

Finished, he slides the paper across the table at him.

GUS

I need you to get your hands on some items for me...

TRAVIS

Yeah. Yeah, of course! Anything.

~~THE COMPLICATION.~~ ~~THE INSIDE MAN.~~ THE BENEFACTOR.

Travis picks up the note, reading...

TRAVIS

...what are you going to do?

CLOSE ON GUS -- EYES FILL THE FRAME. A LITERAL EXPLOSION REFLECTED IN SWOLLEN PUPILS, COMPLETE WITH MUSHROOMS CLOUDS --

He sits up straighter. Something has changed in him forever. A cloud of hate falls over him like nuclear fallout.

His fuse is lit... And sizzling.

GUS
I'm going to find them. And I'm
going to blow them up.

Off Travis's nervous look, WE SMASH CUT TO:

MONTAGE - GATHERING MATERIALS

-- Gus is doing screaming sit-ups. ELEGANT DRAWINGS OF FIX'S SIX taped to the wall for motivation --

GUS
(with each rep)
Hacker. Pickpocket. Benefactor.
Wheelman. **Mastermind**. Hacker.
Pickpocket. Benefactor. Wheelman.
Mastermind. Hacker. Pickpocket.
Benefactor. Wheelman. **Mastermind**.

Rage popping out his eyes, taking it out on his abs.

Clint, on the top bunk, peeks over his holy bible, watching. Shakes his head. *Weirdo*.

TRAVIS (V.O.)
We're supposed to meet soon.

GUS (V.O.)
Tell me where.

TRAVIS (V.O.)
I don't know yet. Joey keeps us in the dark, it's a "ladder system," he designed it that way.

-- PRISON YARD. Inmates play basketball. Gus sits in the stands, making meticulous plans in a notebook. Detailed drawings. Blueprints. Notes. He turns the page revealing -- AN ILLUSTRATED FAMILY PORTRAIT. Himself, Mia, and his approximation of 11-year-old Jenny. All smiles.

-- BACK TO TRAVIS IN THE VISITING ROOM.

TRAVIS
Three weeks ago, he sent us all one
address.

He reaches into his shirt and pulls out Dog Tag on a chain. An address engraved on it. Gus eyes it --

TRAVIS

I'm the bottom rung. When I get the signal, I drop everything and go to this address. This is where Bank will be. He only knows Wolf's location...

-- BAR PARKING LOT. Travis hands a shifty CORRECTIONS OFFICER a stuffed envelope of CASH.

-- PRISON YARD. The same C.O. stealthily passes Gus a tiny plastic packet of RDX CRYSTALS.

-- PRISON VISITING ROOM. Travis and Gus are sitting across from each other at a table:

TRAVIS

...The two of us go to Wolf. She knows where Smoke is. The three of us go to Smoke. She knows where Stick is.

GUS

What does Stick know?

TRAVIS

The longitude and latitude of "*Le Gros Achat*" are printed on his tag. "The Big Buy." That's where we meet Joey. It's an underground auction. The richest men on the planet come together to bid on priceless stolen objects from around the world. But the heist itself adds to the value. The more thrilling the heist, the more the object is worth to these guys.

GUS

(seething)

I need to know one thing. Why me? Why was I the fall guy?

TRAVIS

I don't know, Gus... You'll have to ask the mastermind.

-- LAUNDRY DUTY. Gus makes sure the coast is clear. Then scoops some powdered DETERGENT into his pocket.

-- JANITOR DUTY. Gus snatches some AMMONIA from a cart.

-- KITCHEN DUTY. Gus pulls out an empty milk carton from his pocket pours in some stolen VINEGAR.

-- BASKETBALL COURT. The whistle blows. Rec time is over. Gus scoops up a STRAY BASKETBALL and tucks it under his arm.

-- TV AREA. Gus trades two packs of smokes for A MEEK INMATE'S ASTHMA INHALER.

-- *WHAM! WHAM! WHAM!* Clint and his gang are beating the shit out of Gus in the YARD. This time he smiles. *It's just what he wants.* The smile creeps Clint out, so he beats him harder.

-- LATER. Clint and the Gang go. Gus plucks one of HIS TEETH out of the grass and, once again, stows it in the matchbox. Six in all.

-- INFIRMARY. Gus is black and blue in a hospital bed. A NURSE bandages his face. He howls in pain, knocks into a glass of water. When the Nurse bends down to grab it, he snatches HYDROGEN PEROXIDE from her kit.

-- MESS HALL. A fight has broken out, INMATES pummeling each other, GUARDS trying to break it up. Clint and his Gang are cheering them on. Gus sprinkles some STRANGE POWDER on Clint's potatoes when he isn't looking.

-- GUS' CELL. Gus sits crosslegged on his bunk -- donning goggle-like prison glasses -- magnified eyes pinned with concentration as he mixes HIS BREW in a cut off milk jug--

Ammonia, vinegar, detergent -- spraying the inhaler until it's empty -- carefully adding the RDX crystals -- And then toothpaste and petroleum jelly to make a paste, shaping it into a small brick... *He's ready.*

EXT. PRISON - NIGHT

A grapefruit moon hangs over the concrete jungle.

INT. GUS' CELL - NIGHT

Clint snores like a wounded buffalo. Gus lies on the top bunk. *Waiting.* Lifts the BASKETBALL, spins it on his finger.

Finally, he hears Clint's stomach GURGLING. *Right on time.*

Gus sets the ball aside, and sticks cotton balls in his ears.

Clint snaps awake. Moans. Farts. Jumps down from the bunk, holding his gut, frantically tangling in his pants as he drops them --

Whimpering, he plops down on the toilet. A thunderous symphony of FARTS bounces off the walls as Clint craps his brains out, doubling over, near tears --

GUS

Time for the finishing touch.

CLINT
Don't look at me!

Gus covers himself with his mattress as -- Clint reaches over to FLUSH THE TOILET -- this SPARKS something -- A FLASH of white light and --

KABLAMMMMMMMMM!!!!!!!!!

CLINT EXPLODES INTO A MILLION FLAMING PIECES AS THE SHOCK WAVE TEARS APART THE WORLD!

A SHOWER OF FIRE AND SMOKE AND BLOOD AND SHIT AS --

CHAPTER THREE
THE ESCAPE

CRASHHHHH!!!! The prison wall caves in --

Shaken, but intact, Gus hurls the mattress aside, choking on the thick pluming smoke. Fire raging around him --

ALARMS BLARING, ears ringing, Gus sets a NEATLY FOLDED NOTE down on his pillow, just so. Written on the front in neat cursive -- "TO AGENT CANDY."

He scoops up the basketball, navigates the burning rubble --

Vanishes through THE HOLE -- into the freedom of the night.

SPLAT! A section of deep-fried brain falls from the ceiling.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

SIRENS HOWL in the distance as Gus dashes out of the woods, onto a desolate stretch of road. He stops, looks around --

Headlights blink on and off. A signal.

He hurries towards A MERCEDES parked under a tree. Opens the door to reveal --

Travis, all hyped up.

TRAVIS
Man, this is awesome.

Gus hops in. REEEEEEEEEEEEEAAACHHHH!!!! They SQUEAL away.

INT. MERCEDES - NIGHT

Travis is speeding, blasting JOURNEY. Gus is contorting himself in the passenger's seat, putting on the clothes that Travis brought.

TRAVIS

For real, it's like a weight has been lifted, you have no idea. Cuz, like, I've been in prison too, cuz guilt's actually a prison if you really stop and think about it, a prison of the mind, and what if it was me and my mom had to watch me go down in flames like that, shit man, it would kill her.

GUS

It's alright, Travis. You got roped into it, same way I did...

TRAVIS

Yes! I'm actually a victim too, if you really stop and think about it.

GUS

Yeah... for sure.

Gus is resting the basketball carefully on his knee.

GUS

Has Joey sent out the signal?

TRAVIS

Not yet. But I have Bank's location safe and sound...

Travis pats his chest, Gus sees the dog tag chain around his neck. Eyes it keenly.

TRAVIS

Hey... What's with the basketball?

GUS

...You know Wilson?

TRAVIS

From Castaway?

GUS

Yeah, it's like that.

TRAVIS

Cool!

(to the ball)

Nice to meet you, Spaulding.

He pats the basketball on the head. Gus pulls it away.

GUS
Go left here.

TRAVIS
Into town?

GUS
Always hide in plain sight.

INT. MERCEDES - MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Driving down the quaint, tree-lined main street. A ghost town at this hour.

Travis sings along to JOURNEY, really getting into it. Gus' eyes are peeled. He CLICKS on his seatbelt. And then --

Gus snatches Travis by the neck and --

WHAM!!!!!! Swings his leg over and SLAMS THE GAS--

TRAVIS
HEY!

Gus YANKS the wheel and --

They swerve -- jump the curb -- devouring sidewalk --

TRAVIS
AHHHHH!!!!

ROCKETING RIGHT TOWARDS A BUILDING --

CRASHHHHHH!!!!!!! EXPLODING THROUGH THE GLASS WINDOWS --

A SHOWER OF DEBRIS -- And now they're driving through --

AN EMPTY BANK.

Gus unclicks Travis' seatbelt -- BLASTING THROUGH CUBICLES -- TURNING TELLER STATIONS INTO SPLINTERS --

WHAMM!!! THEY SLAM INTO THE VAULT --

The belt catches Gus, but --

Travis' face CRACKS against the wheel so hard he knocks out his teeth.

Smoke and fire and screaming ALARMS.

Gus shakes it off and then calmly presses in the car lighter. Turns to Travis, who is in and out of consciousness, blood streaming down his mouth.

TRAVIS

Wha-- Wha--

Gus leans over Travis to pick his teeth off the floor.

And then Gus grabs Travis by the back of the head and --

WHAM!!! Slams his mouth into the wheel again.

The last of the teeth fall and Gus catches them.

He opens his MATCHBOX, pries open Travis' jaw and dumps his own loose teeth in his mouth. And then he plugs his broken nose, forcing him to swallow.

Travis is bleeding, moaning --

TRAVIS

I... fought... we wuh... square!

Gus removes a length of WAX-DIPPED SHOELACE from his pocket and pokes it into the top of the basketball.

GUS

Almost.

We finally see the hole on the side of the orange rubber -- stuffed with a lot of something.

The car lighter POPS OUT. *Ready.*

He snatches it up and lights the shoelace fuse. Sizzling. He chucks the lighter and leaves the bomb on the seat.

Travis looks down at the sizzling ball and moans....

TRAVIS

Guttthhhh...?

Looks up at Gus -- but Gus' eyes are sizzling too.

Gus rips the DOG TAG with Bank's location from Travis' neck, snatches the flowers, and leaves the car --

Struts through the bank. Slips out the back door. Gone.

And then -- *KABBBBBBLAMMMMM!!!!!!!* THE MERCEDES EXPLODES AND THE WHOLE WORLD IS FIRE AS HELL COMES HOME TO EARTH!

GUS (V.O.)

Now we're square.

CUT TO:

~~**THE INSIDE MAN**~~

INT. GUS' CELL - LATER

POLICE investigating, wading through the wreckage of the bomb. PRISONERS screaming, banging on the bars as they are slowly evacuated.

Agent Candy emerges from the hole in the wall.

COP
Agent Candy...

The Cop hands Candy the note addressed to her. She reads...

AGENT CANDY
Here we go again...

EXT. TROPICAL ISLAND PARADISE - SUNSET

Come on, Pretty Mama.

Joey Fix, ten years older, now a silver fox, stands barefoot on the beach in flowing white clothes, watching the sun sink into his blaze orange ocean.

He breathes-in the air, and life is amazing. He turns and wanders up the beach towards his glorious glass mansion.

INT. JOEY'S MANSION - SUNSET

A sleek, smart house. Like living in a giant iPad. ARMED GOONS peppered throughout the place.

Joey pours himself a glass of wine and moves past --

THE MESSIAH STRADIVARIUS on display in a glass case.

DUNCAN, Joey's number two Goon, enters from the TV room.

DUNCAN
You better come see this.

INT. TV ROOM - SUNSET

Joey stands before the TV with Duncan, watching...

HEADLINE NEWS.

ANCHOR

"...because Capitalism is the root of all evil, and evil must be eradicated from this world in order for humanity to survive. To all the fat cats who line their pockets with the misery of others. You will pay for your sins. I will haunt you like the ghost I am. And one way or another, in this life or the next, justice will be served. See you soon. Sincerely yours, the Robin Hood Bomber..."

(to the camera)

Gus Bender's remains were identified amongst the rubble of the First National Bank...

The image DIES as Joey turns off the TV. Shrugs it off.

JOEY

He stole my mad bomber idea.

DUNCAN

Sounds like he was sending us a message or something... Right?

JOEY

Huh?

DUNCAN

Like, all that justice stuff and ghosts all that...

JOEY

It's the fucking bomb guy... not the mastermind. Okay? Blowing himself up is just about all he's good for...

Joey starts back towards the living room.

DUNCAN

You want us to, like, double check he's dead or something?

JOEY

(huffs)

It's the bomb guy!

Joey shakes his head and moves away. Duncan watches him go, all but rolls his eyes.

EXT. UPSCALE NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Gus moves down a quiet, tree-lined street, scanning house numbers. He's gripping a bouquet of flowers. He glances down at a RETURN ADDRESS on a frayed envelope. *It's a letter he's kept for many years --*

Mia Bender. 135 Clements road. Los Angeles, CA. 90036.

He's close. Approaching --

A LARGE HOUSE. 135. White-picket fence and all.

He tucks the envelope back into his pocket. Takes it in --

A warm glow in the dining room window. FIGURES moving inside.

He takes a breath. His eyes full of hope. He wets his hair, straightens it out. Heart racing.

He's about to knock on the door, but stops. He loses his nerve. He unfurls his fist and places it on the door like he's feeling for a heart beat. And then --

MIA (O.S.)
Jenny! Dinner!

Jenny. The name punches him in the heart.

Gus crawls over to the window and peeks inside --

Dinner time. My God, It's Mia. She's setting the table. So beautiful... lighting up the room, as always...

Kablooie the dog, older and fatter, but still jumping around.

Gus ducks down a little. *It's so much.* Takes a breath, and looks some more... Finally --

Jenny enters. Carrying the silverware over. *It's really her --*

11-years-old. Hair in braids. A dirty softball uniform. Must have just had a game. Brown eyes, like his. But she has her mother's smile, and she's wearing it out. Gus can't take his eyes off her. Just as he imagined her.

Everything he missed. Everything he lost. And Gus can't take it anymore -- *it's too beautiful...*

Again, he lowers himself down into the warm hug of the bushes. Tears in his eyes.

INT. MIA AND JENNY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Jenny stops. A primal instinct. Like she feels something. Drawn to the window... a pull...

She gets there, looks out and sees --

THE BOUQUET OF FLOWERS lying in the middle of the street.

MIA
Jenny? What's wrong?

JENNY
(shrugs)
Nothing.

She moves away from the window.

CUT TO:

vrooooooommm!! A SOUPED-UP CROTCH ROCKET hauls ass down the twisty cliff-hugging HIGHWAY -- testing the bike's limits...

drrrrrratTTATAT!!! A SPRAY OF BULLETS nip at The Rider's tires. A MUSCLE CAR gives chase -- bearing down --

THE RIDER SCREECHES TO A HALT with a 180-burnout -- jerking and skidding -- lifts his visor to reveal --

JASON STATHAM -- the man himself. STATHAM RIPS A GRENADE from his tactical vest, EATS THE PIN, and throws the pitch down the middle.

CRACK!!! THE GRENADE shatters the windshield and HITS A GOON SQUARE IN THE FACE. He screams, holding his geysering nose --

TICK-TICK-TICK. He sees the grenade in his lap. *Oh fuck.*

BOOM! The MUSCLE CAR EXPLODES -- CARTWHEELS through the air -- lands in a FIERY HELLSTORM at the foot of a bridge.

THE HOOD FRISBEES ACROSS FRAME -- PASSING OVER STATHAM'S HEAD -- inches from decapitation...

Statham takes a moment to revel in THE PYROTECHNIC GLORY... Mini mushroom cloud and all...

STATHAM
Swing and a miss...

Statham finally spits out the pin.

STATHAM
Strike three.

VOICE (O.S.)
CUT IT!!!

REVEAL --

A MOVIE CREW. HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE scattered across the bridge, putting out the fires, re-setting the shot. Massive movie lights, trailers -- controlled chaos.

MICHAEL BAY, the king of boom, sits tall in his director's chair before video village, presiding over playback.

CONRAD (O.S.)
How was that, boss?

He turns to see --

CONRAD HALIFAX (45), a brawny special effects wizard with long, flailing hair and a leathery tan, limping over.

MICHAEL BAY
That wasn't an explosion, it was a wet fart.

Conrad sinks a little.

STATHAM
(to Conrad)
I thought it was good, mate.

Statham takes a bite of hot pretzel from crafty.

MICHAEL BAY
It wasn't.

Statham shrugs and devours his pretzel.

MICHAEL BAY
When I say *big* I mean Michael Bay
Big, I mean I want people in
Pasadena to hear it. I've seen
bigger explosions in my pool house
bathroom.

Conrad stews. Statham rolls his eyes.

INT. PYROTECHNICS TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER

Spitting fire, Conrad storms into his truck.

A mad scientist's laboratory -- squibs, propane canons, fireworks, flame throwers, and all the explosives in the world scattered around messy work benches.

He starts tinkering with some detonators when he sees a SHADOW in the back room, stops --

CONRAD
Hello?

The figure emerges into the light --

It's Gus. A ghost. Conrad drops the donator.

CONRAD

Gus...

Gus moves towards him.

GUS

Hey, Hollywood.

A stare down. Tension hangs over the place like humidity. Finally -- A smile explodes on Conrad's face and he tackles his friend with A BEAR HUG.

CONRAD

I just had feeling... I knew you were alive...

GUS

Good to see you, Conny.

CONRAD

I used to stay up nights dreaming up ways to blow you out of there.

GUS

You did. I took a cue from your prison break movie... Magnesium heptoxide, eczema cream, a dash of propane, and six boxes of match heads stuff it in a hollowed out basketball.

CONRAD

How'd it work?

GUS

It killed.

Conrad pumps his fist in victory. But his smile fades--

CONRAD

Why wouldn't you let me visit? All these years...

GUS

I didn't want you to see me like that... I was dead in there.

Gus turns to a makeshift memory wall. There are so many tacked up photos: Family, friends, colleagues, location shoots. One stands out--

Young Gus and Conrad arm-in-arm in the sizzling streets of BAGDAD wearing BOMB DISPOSAL SUITS, holding their helmets.

GUS
I'm calling in the Bagdad favor.

CONRAD
 Anything. What do you need?

GUS
 What do you got?

CONRAD
 Everything.

GUS
 Good. That's what I need.

And then another photo catches his eye -- *Conrad, Gus, and a pregnant Mia. All smiles.*

CONRAD
 I saw her a few years ago. She came to Murphy's wedding...

Gus just stares. His face is a mask of nothing.

CONRAD
 And Jenny...

Once again, the name hits Gus like a black belt blow to the gut. Eyes flutter. Fighting a swirling tornado of emotions. He settles on *sadness*, but quickly stamps it down.

CONRAD
 I can get her new address.

GUS
 I have her address. I kept her Dear John letter... all these years...

Conrad looks at him. *And?*

GUS
 They're better off without me...

CONRAD
 Are you kidding, you're her fa--

GUS
 --She asked me to stay away.

He moves away from the memories.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Conrad and Gus move across the parking lot.

GUS
 What's it like working for Michael
 Bay?

CONRAD
 (huffs)
 Speaking of bombs...

They approach a converted BOMB SQUAD TRUCK. A cross between a tank and a black ambulance. A LOGO with explosions and firebombs emblazoned on the side --

BOOM GOES THE DYNAMTIE PRODUCTIONS LLC.

Gus circles the truck like a prize pony as Conrad unlocks the front door. Hops in, *fiddles with something in the cab* --

GUS
 You think it's too subtle?

CONRAD
 (hops out)
 What was it the Sergeant said?

GUS
 Always hide in plain sight.

Conrad unlocks the back -- All the explosives in the world are here. A makeshift laboratory on wheels.

CONRAD
 Bouncing betties, nitro, oxidisers,
 slurries, proximity mines,
 fireworks, TATP--

GUS
 I love an unstable molecule...

CONRAD
 Name it, it's here. And everything
 that isn't, you can cook up
 yourself. I'm particularly proud of
 this one--

Conrad points to a massive "HURT LOCKER" BOMB DISPOAL SUIT. Like something you'd wear in space.

CONRAD
 Bring back memories?

GUS
 I can already feel the heat.

Gus pulls out a massive RAIL OF RDX EXPLOSIVE.

CONRAD

RDX. Bought that off the demolition crew that blew down the Sands.

GUS

This is a mad bomber's dream.

Conrad tosses him the keys.

CONRAD

"Help, help. I'm being robbed."
(smiles)
Should I ask what you need it for?

GUS

No.

CONRAD

Should I try to talk you out of it?

GUS

No.

CONRAD

How about a new identify? The make-up guys owe me one. They could take a mold, make you a new face. Younger. Better looking. Wilbur in the props department could whip up one hell of a fake ID.

Gus just looks at him, not having it.

GUS

...You don't think I actually did what they accused me of, do you?

CONRAD

C'mon. It's me you're talking to. You're the most decent guy I know. The most talented too.

GUS

I have to find the men who set me up.

CONRAD

No, you don't.

GUS

They took everything from me.

Conrad looks at him. Sees the deep pain x-raying his eyes. Finally, he nods. Gus starts towards the truck.

CONRAD

They didn't take everything, Gus.
There's time to make things right.
You have a choice. Think of Jenny.

Gus just looks at him. Hesitates.

GUS

She's all I think about.

He's about to hop in when --

CONRAD

Here--

Conrad pulls a GLOCK out of a concealed shoulder holster.

CONRAD

(tosses it)
Just in case.

Gus catches it. Snarls. He hates the way it feels in his hands, and tosses it back.

GUS

No. No guns. Bombs.

CUT TO:

WOOSH!!! The Boom Goes the Dynamite Truck rumbles down THE EMPTY HIGHWAY like a big black seething monster.

Gus rattles down the highway, reading the dog tag --

3400 S Las Vegas Blvd, Las Vegas, NV 89109

Gus rings it around his neck. Tortures the wheel. Eyes on the road. Eyes on the prize.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE BEST SERVED DISH

EXT. LAS VEGAS -- LATE AFTERNOON

The Bomb Squad Truck climbs the final hill to reveal --

LAS VEGAS. Uncanny at this hour, sans glitz, like a vampire dying in a dull beam of sun. A sizzling husk of a city surrounded by high desert and stark mountains. Yuck.

He looks in his rearview mirror and sees --

A BLACK MUSTANG on his tail. It's been on his ass for a while now. *Not good.*

He turns left. So does the Mustang. He turns right. So does the Mustang.

Finally, Gus pulls over to the side of the road. Craning back through traffic. When it parts -- The Mustang is gone.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - NIGHT

The construction site is eerie at night. A full moon. Massive flood lights. Flapping tarps. Empty bulldozers and cranes strewn about.

A MONSTER CASINO is on its way up. An Artist's rendering on a BILLBOARD sells the dream --

COMING SOON -- THE MAR HOTEL & CASINO!

But right now, it's a forty story, five-thousand room SHELL.

A CHUBBY GUARD patrols the perimeter. He stops when his flashlight illuminates -- a pack of OREO COOKIES on the ground. *Weird.*

He approaches, looks around. No one. He gives the cookies a little kick. Against his better judgment, he picks up the pack. Examines it. Good as new. He licks his lips.

Screw it, he tears the cookies open with his teeth and -- *SSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS* -- sizzling black smoke wafts out and -- he catches a whiff and instantly starts giggling.

He drops the cookies, and the giggles turn to laughter -- as more smoke envelopes him -- the laughter turns to harrowing, gut-grabbing guffaws, *screaming with laughter now* -- louder like he's about to have the world's funniest stroke --

And then -- the laughter stops. His eyes roll back in his head and -- *WHUMP!* He hits the dirt, out like a light. One last reflexive giggle.

Gus, dressed in black, wearing a ski mask, hops over the fence. Falls beside the felled guard and grabs his keys.

SERIES OF SHOTS

-- Gus opens the construction gate. Drives his bomb truck through, parks behind a crane.

-- The Guard, in his tighty whities, tied up and giggling merrily in THE BACK.

-- Dressed in the Guard's uniform, a size too big, Gus passes other GUARDS and give them nods. Scoping out the place.

-- On the TOP FLOOR of the site, Gus is boring a hole into a concrete column with a massive drill.

EXT. THE MAR - DAWN

Dawn breaks over the site. Workers still haven't come in yet.

INT. THE MAR - TOP FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Now wearing an expensive toupee and sporting a Van Dyke beard, BANK and his CONTRACTORS navigate the top floor of the exposed site. No walls or windows, and nothing but a plastic fencing preventing a fifty-story fall.

BANK

The elevator is unacceptable, I asked for the fastest elevator on planet earth, I'm talking light speed here, folks, I want them out of their rooms and losing money in the blink of an ey--

Suddenly, he stops in his tracks. Drops the blueprints. They roll across the floor and land at the feet of...

GUS... at the edge of the structure, immune to heights, wearing a a snug BACKPACK. *What's in there?* He crushes the plans under his boot.

BANK

Mike.

GUS

Gus.

BANK

Gus.

GUS

Beautiful place you got here, Bank. Must cost you an arm and a leg.

CONTRACTOR

Everything okay, boss?

GUS

Maybe they should go to lunch.

BANK

Yes, why don't you go to lunch.

CONTRACTOR

It's six AM.

BANK
Go to lunch, Carl.

The Crew nods, a little nervous, and hurry off, leaving the two alone on the top floor. Desert wind blowing around them.

BANK
They said you were dead.

GUS
They were wrong.

BANK
What do you want?

GUS
I've come to collect.

BANK
Maybe we can do business. Walk with me. I'll give you the VIP tour.

GUS
After you.

They start walking, navigating the construction, exposed wires, mangled steel --

BANK
Welcome to the Mar.

GUS
Mar? Like the sea?

BANK
Like the sea. Yes. Only really like Kretschmar, my real name. Like the casino is me and I'm the casino.

GUS
So, this is your dream?

BANK
Took ten years to come true. This will soon be the most glorious casino on the Strip. The best of the best. Five star dining, luxe rooms, 24-hour action. Whoever comes into the Mar is going to walk out feeling like a winner... whether they win or lose.

GUS
I'll certainly look forward to that. Walking out of here. Feeling like a winner.

BANK

Just a feeling, Gus. It's just a feeling. Because the truth is, the house always wins. Always.

GUS

What if I blow up the house?

BANK

What?

GUS

The house. What if I...

Gus flicks his fingers like they're exploding and makes a POOF sound.

GUS

...Blow it up.

Bank starts to clam.

GUS

What if I sneak on to this site... late one night... like last night for example... and wire this place for demolition? What if I wire it with one hundred rails of military grade RDX explosive?

Gus motions to a column. Bank looks closer and sees -- a hidden RAIL OF EXPLOSIVE protruding from bore holes. Wires dangle.

BANK

What have you--

Gus whips out an electric DETONATOR GUN like a pistol. Turns it on. **BLEEP!** A timed countdown.

GUS

In three minutes, ten years worth of dreams come crashing down on top of you in eight seconds.

(smiles)

A controlled demolition. You'll be crushed by your dream. And it will be the best show in town.

BANK

What do you want? Money? I can give you money.

GUS

I don't want money.

BANK
Everyone wants money.

GUS
Not me. Not anymore. All I want is
your dog tag.

BANK
What?

GUS
I want the next rung on the ladder.

Bank clutches his chest. The dog tag hidden beneath. Or maybe
he's just clutching his heart.

BANK
I can't. If I give up my rung,
they'll destroy my collateral. We
all had to put in collateral in
case we ratted. Fix has the deeds
to all my hotels in his safe.

GUS
I guess you have a choice to make.
Two minutes and twenty-five seconds
till blown down.

BANK
What are you doing to do?

GUS
I'm going to find Joey. I'm going
to strap on a suicide vest. I'm
going hug him hello and goodbye.

BANK
We underestimated you.

GUS
Everyone always underestimates the
Demolition Expert.

The detonator says: **2:27**. Trembling, Bank yanks off his dog
tag. Hands it over.

GUS
Good choice.

Gus puts it on. It clatters against Travis'.

BANK
You got what you want. Now turn it
off...

Gus looks down at the detonator. Thinks. And then, softens --

GUS
...Why me?

BANK
What?!

GUS
Why did you pin it on me?

BANK
...I-- I don't know! That was
always Joey's plan! It wasn't
personal, it was business!

GUS
It was personal to me. You took
everything...
(and then)
You want to know my dream?

BANK
What?

GUS
Destroying all of yours.

And then he winds up and hurls it out the building --

BANK
NOOOOO!

Bank's breath is RIPPED OUT OF HIS LUNGS as he watches it
fall -- spiraling through the air -- falling fifty floors and
landing in the dirt. His blood runs cold.

BANK
What happened to honor amongst
thieves?!

GUS
I'm not a thief, I'm a terrorist.
Remember?
(and then)
You still have one minute and fifty-
five seconds to get out of here.
Fifty stories, wasn't it? I'd get
on a move on...

Gus turns and -- RUNS FOR THE OPENING AND LEAPS OFF --

Hurtling through the sky! At the last second, he pulls the
ripcord on his backpack and --

A PARACHUTE explodes out!

Gus soars over THE LAS VEGAS SKYLINE! Leaving the doomed hotel behind.

BACK TO:

BANK

staring with his jaw on the floor. Frozen there. And then he snaps out of it -- tick tock.

BANK

Shit.

He takes off running. Desperate. Jumps into the SERVICE ELEVATOR.

Throws the switch and rides it down. A big orange coffin on a suspended hoist system -- *vertigo inducing* -- lowering him down the side of the building.

Lowering him paiaiiiiiiiiiiiiinfully slow.

Bank jumping up and down trying to make it go faster. Finally, he reaches the bottom -- He's racing through the skeleton of the massive lobby. Sprinting -- with all he has --

He throws open the door, barreling out of his building --

INTO THE PARKING LOT. He could make it... Determined -- he cranes back and -- **BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!** A rapid series of deafening blasts, spewing fire and debris and --

KABLOOOOOOOOOWMMMM!!!!

A shockwave so big it hurls Bank across the lot. He lands hard. Groaning, he props himself up in a daze.

BANK

HA! FUCK YOU! THE HOUSE WINS!

But as he climbs to his feet -- The Mar starts to buckle and tilt and sway above him and --

THE SHRILL SCREAM OF TWISTING METAL AS -- THE BUILDING STARTS TO TOPPLE! FALLING STRAIGHT AT BANK LIKE A SLAIN GIANT!

He takes off running for his life -- *Trying to outrun a casino...*

A MASSIVE SHADOW chasing him down on him and -- ***WHAMMMMMMMMMMMMM!!!!!!*** AN EXPLOSION OF TOXIC DUST AND RUBBLE ENVELOPES THE WORLD AS -- Bank is crushed by his dream.

CUT TO:

~~**THE BENEFACTOR**~~

INT. BOMB SQUAD TRUCK - DAY

Gus is leaving Vegas in the dust. His face betrays no emotion. The sun is sizzling. He lowers THE VISOR and gasps --

He's staring at the photo from Conrad's memory wall, tucked into the straps --

Gus, Conrad and a very pregnant Mia. And scrawled across the bottom in Sharpie are the words --

CHOOSE JENNY

A stab of pain. Gus quickly SLAPS THE VISOR SHUT and lets the sun sting. *Out of sight, out of mind.*

He reaches into his shirt and pulls out THE NEXT DOG TAG. Glances at the address. He's made his choice. He looks in his rearview and double takes when he sees --

The same BLACK MUSTANG on his tail. His knuckles whiten around the wheel.

INT. MUSTANG - DAY

A WOMAN at the wheel, listening to Terry Gross. She's in her 40s, dressed in black. An angry purple burn scar bisects her brow, and clouds her left eye.

This is MARY BETH. She watches the Bomb Truck take the next exit. She lets him go. *She'll catch up with him later.*

INT. JOEY'S MANSION - DAY

HENCHMAN in white gloves are carefully placing THE MESSIAH STRADIVARIUS into an oaken violin case, nestled velvet.

Joey and Duncan stand in the back, in a heated conversation.

DUNCAN

I think it was Travis' body that was burned in the bank.

JOEY

What are you talking about?

DUNCAN

I think Travis told Gus everything, and Gus killed him anyway. I think he's climbing the ladder. I think he's coming to The Big Buy.

JOEY
Well. I'm glad you *think things*,
Duncan, but I'm the mastermind here,
okay? Leave the thinking to me.

DUNCAN
Yessir. But...

JOEY
But what?

DUNCAN
Well, it's just that we don't have
a contingency plan.

Suddenly, Joey explodes to his feet, spit flying--

JOEY
I'M SORRY I DIDN'T PLAN FOR THE
FUCKING BOMB GUY TO BREAK OUT OF
PRISON AND FAKE HIS OWN DEATH, DUNCAN!

The Henchmen stop packing and look over at them. Joey slinks
back into his chair, defeated.

JOEY
Find him and kill him. That's the
contingency plan.

INT. CITY STREET - DAY

Gus is parked on a busy street, staking out an OFFICE
BUILDING, staring down at an iPad --

Howstuffworks.com -- How Bluetooth Works

Scanning through the article, muttering --

GUS
"...when Bluetooth devices come
within range of one another, an
electronic conversation takes place
to determine whether they trust
each other or not... and have data
to share."
(and then)
Careful who you trust, Bluetooth.

When -- he hears a GIGGLING, looks over and sees --

YOUNG PARENTS in the CITY PARK across the street. Their
TODDLER taking wobbly steps towards her DAD'S outstretched
arms -- MOM shouting words of encouragement as the baby makes
it to her Dad and falls into his arms.

A melancholy falls over Gus. He peels himself away from the sight. Fighting back tears. Goes back to his research.

CUT TO:

SERIES OF SHOTS

-- BEST BUY. Gus enters and beelines to a BLUE SHIRT.

GUS
I need a dual antenna, low latency
Bluetooth transmitter and receiver.

-- BACK OF THE TRUCK. Gus sits a work bench, toiling. It's a bomb making heaven in here. Spools or wiring. Stacks of artillery, C4 plastic explosives. Electronics, batteries, motherboards.

-- Gus is shirtless now, with a cardiac monitor strapped around his chest. Connected to an iPad via Bluetooth, watching his steady heart rate --

-- Gus is doing pushups, watching his heart rate rising.

-- Gus sits behind a MASSIVE LIGHTED MAGNIFYING GLASS that makes his eyes look like dinner plates. He is carefully cutting open some kind of pillow and ripping out the stuffing.

INT. iGURU ENTERPRISES - HALLWAY - DAY

A pulsing neon sign says -- *WELCOME TO iGURU*. Similar to MindLab. Wolf has built her own tech empire.

It's a sleek, alternative workplace with an ICE CREAM TRUCK inside the common area. Loitering TECH BROS in hammocks and pods clacking on laptops.

Wolf rounds the corner, dressed in flowing meditation clothes. She's had some cosmetic surgery on her face. Her head is shaved like a monk. She moves down a maze-like hallway with flashing LCD walls, like they're walking through a video game.

She's changed, calm and collected -- walking with CHRIS, a Silicon Valley startup guy.

WOLF
I'm out, Chris, I brought you a
whale and you blew it.

CHRIS
There's a million whales in the
sea...

WOLF

Well, you better sharpen yer harpoon, because you just freed Willy, and my investment plus interest is coming due. Fifteen percent of a million is one hundred and fifty thousand!

CHRIS

Give me another shot, Guru, I have a vision, I know what I'm--

Her watch goes off -- *BLEEP!*

WOLF

I can't do this, you're raising my heart rate. Talk to my attorney. Namaste.

She bows and leaves him in the dust, passing a mural motto on the wall: "*PLAY HARD, PLAY HARD.*"

INT. WOLF'S OFFICE - DAY

Wolf enters. Breathes. Turns on her massive flatscreen, hooked up to her iPhone. Her app appears on the screen.

inHale by iGuru.

AN AVATAR OF WOLF on the screen, sitting crosslegged on a meditation pillow. We see a cartoon heart beating a little too fast in the corner of the screen.

AVATAR

*Elevated heart rate. 120 bpm.
Target heart rate 80 bpm. Time to breathe.*

Wolf takes a deep breath. The app animates her breath, in synch with her avatar.

AVATAR

In five seconds. One, two, three, four five. Hold Five seconds. One, two, three, four, five. Out five seconds. One, two, three, four, five...

The breathing technique is working. Heart rate is now **100**.

AVATAR

Time to meditate!

WOLF

Good idea.

She sits on a MEDITATION PILLOW. Settles into presence. Strikes a small gong. *DONNNNNGGG!!!!* The pillow lights up, pulsing in synch with her heart rate. It's an app accessory, also by iGuru.

AVATAR
*Congratulations, you have reached
your normal resetting heart rate.*

But A SHADOW falls over her -- she feels a presence. She opens her eyes and sure enough -- Gus is looming over her. Expressionless.

WOLF
You.

On the screen, her heart-rate spikes to **121**. The pillow pulsing a little quicker.

AVATAR
*Elevation detected. Time to
breathe.*

The calm vanishes, the old Wolf coming out. Nervous, fidgety, like a walking Adderall.

WOLF
Look... Look, I didn't know it was
a double cross... I just did what
Joey told me to do, he was the
mastermind, I had no idea. I was
just the hacker, I was hired to do
a job and I did it, okay?

Gus sits before her, cross-legged like her. He eyes her dangling dog tag. **155**. The pillow pulsing faster.

AVATAR
*Elevation detected. Go to your
happy place.*

GUS
I'm glad you got your anxiety under
control. And making the world a
better place in the process...

DONNNNNGGGG!!!! He rings her gong.

GUS
More than 30 million downloads
worldwide, I read...

WOLF
We're up to 40 now.

GUS
 So, this was your dream? Is this
 what you thought of when you closed
 your eyes in the warehouse?

WOLF
 What do you want?

GUS
 I want your dog tag.

Her heart rate increases -- **158**.

AVATAR
*Elevation detected. Meditation
 time.*

She's sweating now. Trembling. **160**. Another spike.

GUS
 Careful. Your maximum heart rate is
 183. 220 minus your age. Anything
 about above is the danger zone.

He takes out an iPad. Shows it to her. It's mirroring her app
 on the flatscreen.

WOLF
 That's my avatar, that's my app,
 how did you--

GUS
 You know what a Bouncing Betty is?

She shakes her head, no.

GUS
 It's a land mine developed by rouge
 German engineers during the 30s, a
 defensive strategy against the Third
 Reich -- one of the deadliest tools
 ever made for the battlefield. You
 hear the click, you're stuck. If you
 move, you die.

WOLF
 (nervous)
 So?

GUS
 So, I planted one inside your
 meditation pillow. Also hooked it
 up to your app via bluetooth, so if
 your heart rate exceeds 183... you
go boom.

AVATAR

Elevation detected.

WOLF

Bullshit. You couldn't hack my app, you couldn't pull off a hack that good, you're just a bomb guy! I couldn't even pull it off and I'm the fucking hacker!

GUS

Maybe you're right. Maybe I'm full of shit. One way to find out, right?

AVATAR

Heart rate elevated. Approaching danger zone. Time to take a vacation!

Wolf breathes. Sweating. Terrified.

WOLF

He'll destroy my collateral. There's a kill switch. He'll shut down my app, everything I've worked for...

GUS

Imagine that. 40 million simultaneous panic attacks.

Her heart rate is **169**. Her pillow pulsing quickly now.

GUS

Careful of the old ticker. Tick. Tick. Tick.

WOLF

Please.

GUS

Give me the tag and I'll deactivate Betty.

She nods. Rips off the dog tag and hands it over.

WOLF

Deactivate it.

GUS

No need. It'll deactivate itself. In seven days. Happy meditating.

AVATAR

Approaching maximum rate, time to breathe!

Gus starts out.

WOLF
I have a daughter.

171. He stops, his back to her. She's desperate --

WOLF
I have a little baby girl.

And this hits him hard. Finally --

GUS
So did I.

WOLF
Don't do this, Gus. Please.

177. He leaves.

CUT TO:

~~**THE HACKER**~~

INT. iGURU ENTERPRISES - HALLWAY - DAY

Gus moves down the hall, a little shaken. Pulls out the iPad.

WOLF (O.S.)
Help! Help!

A war inside. Finally, with A SIGH -- clicks: DEACTIVATE.

CUT TO:

THE HACKER

INT. WOLF'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Wolf sits on the pillow, screaming --

WOLF
HELP!!!

But no one can hear her scream.

AVATAR
Approaching danger zone.

WOLF
SHUT THE FUCK UP!!!!!!!

181.

AVATAR
DANGER ZONE.

WOLF
Okay, okay, okay. Calm down. Clam
down. Breathe.

She breathes. 179.

WOLF
You can do this.

175.

WOLF
You can do this. You can do this.

INT. BOMB SQUAD TRUCK - NIGHT

An endless black road. Streaking yellow lines illuminated by dull orange headlights. Gus lowers the visor. Staring at the photo of Mia's pregnant belly. Like a compass. Splitting his attention between the belly and the dark road --

INT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Three black SUVs scream through the night.

INT. SUV - CONTINUOUS

A GOON at the wheel. Armed GOONS in the back. Duncan sits shotgun, on the phone with Joey, reading an article from the Las Vegas news on an iPad --

**LOCAL REAL ESTATE DEVELOPER KILLED IN
BIZZARE CONTROLLED DEMOLITION**

DUNCAN
He killed Bank. Wolf is next. We
have to get to her before he does.

JOEY'S VOICE
Wolf's as good as dead. Go to
Smoke. We have to stay a few steps
ahead.

DUNCAN
I think he's trying to get to the
Big Buy. I'll get Stick to the safe
house. There's no way Gus will get
to him there.

JOEY'S VOICE
Not bad for a henchman.

Duncan rolls his eyes.

EXT. DOG PARK - DAY

A perfect day. Jenny is walking KABLOOIE through the park. The old, fat dog is a little wheezy. Suddenly -- he explodes with life, like it's a puppy again -- jumping and barking.

JENNY
What's wrong, boy?!

The dog pulls harder at the leash --

JENNY
Stop! Down, boy--

Kablooie breaks free, bounding across the park. Jenny gasps and gives chase, running after it--

JENNY
Kablooie!

The dog is running towards --

GUS. Sitting on a park bench.

CHAPTER FIVE
THE DETOUR

The dog goes to him, losing his mind. Jenny is running over. Gus leans in and pets the dog. His heart is singing with love, but he's trying not to show it.

GUS
Good boy. Good boy.
(whispers)
Don't blow my cover.

Kablooie licks Gus' face. Jumping all over him, and he's trying like hell to keep his emotions at bay.

Jenny approaches, a little nervous.

JENNY
He doesn't usually like strangers.

Gus hands her the leash.

GUS
Nice dog. What kind is it?

JENNY
Ummmm... I think he's a mutt.

GUS
What's his name?

JENNY
Kablooie.

GUS
Sweet name.

JENNY
Thanks. Mom says it's cuz he has an explosive personality.

Gus smiles, petting his old pal. And then he looks up at Jenny. Really looks. And she's staring at him, curiously.

JENNY
Um... do I know you?

GUS
No... I don't think so.

JENNY
Okay, because... I don't know...

GUS
What is it?

JENNY
I felt like I met you before.

GUS
(smiles)
Well, I'm Gus.

JENNY
Jenny.

GUS
Nice to meet you, Jenny.

They shake hands. He shudders at the touch. Jenny looks confused. And then --

JENNY
Sorry... I gotta go practice...

GUS
Softball?

JENNY
My recital. School band.

GUS
What instrument do you play?

JENNY
Violin.

Gus bursts out in laughter.

JENNY
What's so funny?

GUS
I'm not sure exactly. Just... uh...
anyway, I bet you're real good.

JENNY
I'm first chair. But I just like
doing it, it calms me down.

GUS
You're a special kid, I bet your
mom is proud of you.

JENNY
I guess so.

GUS
You get along, you and your mom?

JENNY
Yeah. She's the best.

GUS
Hey. Listen to what she says. Okay?

A moment passes between them.

JENNY
I better go.

GUS
Nice to meet you, Jenny. And you,
too, Kablooie. When's your show?

JENNY
Friday night.

The dog is going nuts as Jenny tries to pull him away.

JENNY
I dunno what's gotten into him.

And then... her jaw drops --

JENNY
Dad?

GUS
What?

JENNY

DAD?!

GUS

(gushing)

Jenny, I--

But he realizes she's looking right past him. She jumps to her feet and runs away from Gus, right into the arms of ANOTHER MAN --

STANLEY

Kiddo!

JENNY

What are you doing back, mom said you weren't back till Monday...

STANLEY

Grandma felt better so I cut it short, I didn't want to miss your concert.

A MASSIVE HUG. Stanley gives her a kiss on the head.

This knocks the wind out of Gus. Stanley actually looks a little like Gus, too... just taller, darker, and handsomer.

STANLEY

(to Gus)

Who's your friend?

Gus jumps to his feet, still reeling from shock --

GUS

Sorry, I was just-- I was--

A GASP. They all turn to see --

Mia drops a picnic basket. The contents spill. And then... her eyes flutter back and she faints dead.

JENNY

Mom?!

INT. MIA'S HOUSE - DAY

Gus sits across from Stanley and a visibly shaken Mia. They speak in whispers, so Jenny doesn't hear. Her VIOLIN MUSIC is wafting out the living room, wallpapering the conversation.

MIA

They said you were dead.

GUS
I'm sorry... I realize... I've put
you through so much...

MIA
You're doing it again, you're
putting us in danger just being
here. You know that? What are we,
accomplices now?

Gus looks away. Stanley adopts a gentle tone...

STANLEY
What are you doing here, Gus?

GUS
I don't know. I just want some kind
of a relationship with my daughter.

Mia and Stanley look at each other. Jenny's violin getting
louder, and faster--

GUS
We don't have to tell her who I am.
I can be uncle Gus. Or a friend of
the family. Anything...

STANLEY
(to Mia)
Maybe we could consider some kind
of a visitation, some kind of--

MIA
--What are you talking about, Stan?
He's a fugitive, he broke out of
prison, he's dead for chrissakes! I
should call the police right now!

STANLEY
Shhhhh, she'll hear you--

GUS
I didn't do what they said I did. I
was framed.

MIA
Fine. You're not a terrorist.
You're just a thief. You took
everything from me.

Familiar words. He looks away in shame.

MIA
(hushed)
You weren't there for your
daughter's first steps, you don't
know her first words.

(MORE)

MIA (CONT'D)

You missed every birthday, every concert... *She's never gotten a present from her father.* That was your choice. We were never enough for you, Gus. That's the truth. You always needed more. You blew up our life. I was so lost after you went away. And now I've finally picked up the pieces, I'm finally happy, and I'm not going to let you blow it up again. You made your choice. And now you have to live with it.

Gus rises, devastated. He starts for the door. Stops.

GUS

...We were so rich, weren't we?

MIA

Don't ever come back. Understand? Never again.

GUS

I'm sorry. For everything. I'll go.

STANLEY

That's probably for the best.

Mia storms off. Gus starts for the door... stops to listen to the VIOLIN MUSIC coming from the living room.

He moves to the french doors and peeks inside. Sees --

Jenny before a music stand, playing A VIOLIN -- a much-loved school loner with TWO BUTTERFLY STICKERS on the side. Jenny is lost in the music.

Gus is listening, tears in his eyes. Stanley approaches.

GUS

She's really good at that...

STANLEY

Mrs. Crumb says she's a prodigy. She loves the violin.

They stand there listening to the sweet music. Her little fingers dancing across the strings, working the bow like pro.

MEMORY FLASHES:

At the hospital, Gus is holding Baby Jenny for the first time -- never knowing he could feel a love so deep -- the perfect screaming bundle -- his glowing wife takes his hand -- and everything is so perfect --

BACK TO:

And now it's gone. A million vibrant colors wafting over the room as every emotion known to man plows into Gus like a Mack truck. He snaps himself out of it. Turns to Stan --

GUS
Thanks, Stan. You did good.

STANLEY
Take care of yourself.

Gus hurries out of there, before he bursts into tears.

Jenny watching him go through the window --

Stops playing. Watching Gus run down the street... And something in her eyes... *knows*....

CUT TO:

~~**HOPE**~~

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Gus runs towards his truck and collapses against it. He falls to his knees and collapses, bursts into a convulsion of tears. Devastated. Reeling. He winds up and --

WHAM!!!! Punches the door so hard he dents it. Knuckles bleeding. And then --

Sorrow metastasizes into hate. Rage pops out his eyes. He reaches into his pocket and pulls out -- the next dog tag.

MARY BETH (O.S.)
Don't do this.

He starts, whips around to see -- MARY BETH standing behind him. Her Mustang parked across the street.

MARY BETH
It won't work. You'll just end up dead, or back in prison. And you'll fuck it up for the rest of us.

GUS
Who are you?

MARY BETH
The Demolition Expert.

FREEZE FRAME TITLE ON MARY BETH: **THE DEMOLITION EXPERT.**

EXT. DINER - DAY

Mary Beth and Gus sit in a corner booth. Mary Beth eyes Gus as he dumps way too much sugar in his coffee.

MARY BETH

Fix always pins it on the demo men. I took the fall for the museum heist a few years after you. Before you it was Mike Miller.

GUS

I've heard of him.

MARY BETH

There were at least a couple more before him. Some are dead, some in jail. I blew my way out of the paddy wagon with a shoe bomb.

GUS

Semtex?

MARY BETH

Putty.

GUS

M112?

MARY BETH

118. The shoelace was the fuse.

GUS

Really? I used a shoelace for my basketball bomb.

MARY BETH

Dipped in wax?

GUS

Exactly.

MARY BETH

Genius.

GUS

Genius.

They laugh. A moment passes between them. But then Gus stops himself. His walls rise.

MARY BETH

You worked in controlled demolition, right?

Gus nods, sips his coffee.

MARY BETH

Military?

Nods again.

MARY BETH

I grew up in demo. I got bang in my blood. My first memory is of a blow down. My dad was a local hero, crowds would gather to watch. I'd sit on my Dad's shoulders, and plug my ears as the buildings fell. They left a ghost of themselves in the air as they sank, blowing out rings of smoke. It was beautiful. "Out with the old and in with the new," he'd say, "It's not destruction, it's renewal. A blank canvas. A second chance."

Off Gus' look --

MARY BETH

You've got a second chance, Gus. Don't fuck it up. If you go after Joey, you're going to die, and he'll get nervous, and come for the ones of us who got away.

GUS

I have to finish this.

MARY BETH

You're going to fuck it up for all of us.

GUS

You think it will end with me?
He'll just keep doing it to us.
He'll keep destroying our lives,
tossing us aside like trash.

(off her look)

Why is it always the bomb guy?

MARY BETH

Who cares?

GUS

We can't let him get away with this. I have to fight back.

MARY BETH

So you kill everyone, blow them all to high hell? You kill Joey? What do you want, their money?

GUS

I don't care about money. Money's what got me here.

MARY BETH

And revenge is what kept you there.
 (off his look)
 It's a short fuse to nowhere.
 When's it enough, Gus?

He looks away.

MARY BETH

You're alive. I've been Andorra for years. A small country squeezed between France and Spain. Not far from the hot spas of the Escalades, skiing, soaking, shopping. More important, no extradition treaty. It's a good life. I'm going back in three days. Come with me.

He looks at her. Taken aback by her offer. She hands him a CARD with a phone number and --

9.24. 12pm. Long Beach pier.

He looks at the card. Considering.

MARY BETH

The ship leaves in three days. You can start fresh. You don't have to blow shit up anymore, build something new for a change.

With that, she rises. Drops some money on the table. Pops on her sunglasses, and exits the diner.

Gus stares down at the card. Thinks. Takes out the dog tag.

EXT. HOME DEPOT PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The moon is a grapefruit. Crickets chirp. The Bomb Squad truck is parked in the back of the empty lot.

INT. BACK OF THE BOMB SQUAD TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Gus is toiling at a cluttered work bench, making elaborate modifications to Conrad's massive bomb disposal suit.

He's hard at work, surrounded by a scatter of blinking PROXIMITY MINES -- the size of chocolate chip cookies.

He carefully places one inside of an encasement on jerry-rigged BANDOLIER.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Gus emerges from the back of the truck and locks it up.

INT. SPORTS BAR - NIGHT

A rowdy REDNECK CROWD, hooting and hollering at the NASCAR race on the TVs.

Gus sits at the bar, sipping Diet Coke and taking notes on a legal pad as she watches the race closely. A NASCAR FAN shoots him a look. He scrolls through his iPad --

*Hotcars.com
24 Things We Didn't Know NASCAR Teams
Do To Prepare For A Race.*

EXT. RACING WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Gus' bomb squad truck pulls in the back of the warehouse. A lighted sign reads -- "BODENE RACING."

INT. RACING WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Dark and cavernous. A FUGIRE moving across the skylights.

A portion of glass turns to water and -- *SPLASH!* Soaks the floor. *WOOSH!* Gus rappels down with a duffle bag slung over his shoulder. He clicks on his head lamp.

Navigating the shells of STOCK CARS. Moving towards --

A GIANT TRACTOR TRAILER parked in the middle of the warehouse. Bingo. He sticks a keybomb in the lock and -- *PIFF!* The door opens on its own. Inside --

Smoke's beautiful STOCK CAR.

CHAPTER SIX
JUST A LOT OF FUCKING BOMBS

EXT. LOS ANGELES COLISEUM - DAY

Smoke and Duncan strut down a drab cinder block hallway, racing helmet tucked under her arm. She dons a jumpsuit, adorned with decals. A walking billboard, and you'd buy what she's selling. An army of GOONS fan out behind them.

SMOKE
He can't get to me here.

DUNCAN

We think he might already be on his way. Joey wants you to postpone the race and go into hiding--

SMOKE

Not a chance in hell. The show must go on, I got a lot of people waiting for me out there.

DUNCAN

I had a feeling you'd say that.

He snatches the dog tag from around her neck. She pulls away. Duncan puts a finger to his lips -- shhhhh.

DUNCAN

Don't forget your collateral.

They lock eyes. But then she hears THE MUFFLED FANS THUNDER ABOVE HER HEAD. And she nods. Starts towards the tunnel... towards the track... Puts on her helmet.

INT. LOS ANGELES COLISEUM - HALLWAY - DAY

A JANITOR moves down the hallway, pushing a cart. He stops when he sees -- A package of OREO COOKIES sitting deliciously in the middle of the hallway -- His eyes widen.

ANNOUNCER (PRELAP)

LADIES AND GENTLEMAN -- START!!!!
YOURRRRR!!!! ENGINES!!!!

CUT TO:

THE HARROWING SHRIEK OF 900 HORSEPOWER ENGINES AS -- CARS EXPLODE ACROSS THE SCREEN IN A RAINBOW BLUR -- SCREAMING FANS SOUND DEMONIC --

It's a NASCAR race -- 200 left turns. And Smoke is doing great -- drifting through a wave of burnt rubber fumes --

INTERCUTTING:

GLASS BOOTH

AN ANNOUNCER presides over the race --

NASCAR ANNOUNCER

Bianca Bodene's driving like she has something to prove. And she saves it, unbelievable save! Bodene hung back and got a sling shot restart! Shades of Richard Petty and LOOK AT THIS! She takes the lead!

(MORE)

NASCAR ANNOUNCNER (CONT'D)

And her fans are on their feet!
Hold it! Here comes fifty-five!

ON THE TRACK

VROOOOMMM!!!! NUMBER 55 bears down -- pushing on Smoke's left rear, trying to spin her out. He's aggressive and she's drifting now. Seethes, like she's suddenly possessed.

Sizzling, Smoke gets on the Coms --

SMOKE

55 is turning me again! He's trying
to put me out of the race!

She's talking to MOOKIE (70s) her grizzled old crew chief in THE PIT.

MOOKIE (ON COMS)

Eyes on the prize, Bee!

SMOKE

THE LID'S GONNA BUBBLE OFF THIS POT!

MOOKIE

*Don't get fazed, that's what he
wants, he's trying to--*

A BLAST OF STATIC and -- HEAVY BREATHING.

SMOKE

Mookie?

GUS

Not Mookie.

SMOKE

This is a secure line, how'd you--

GUS'S VOICE

--I swapped out your steering wheel
last night, Smoke. You have your
hands wrapped around an IED...

She loosens her grip a little.

SMOKE

You.

GUS'S VOICE

Keep your speed above 200 and it
won't go off. If you fall below
200, an alarm sounds with a five
second warning. Wiggle room.

And then it hits her. She flips up her visor and her eyes
burn like rubber --

GUS'S VOICE
Don't get fazed, Wheelman.

SMOKE
What do you want?

GUS'S VOICE
The next rung on the ladder. I want
your dog tag.

SMOKE
I don't have it.

GUS'S VOICE
Where is it?

SMOKE
I'm not telling you shit. They have
my collateral. Joey will send my
rap sheet to my sponsors. They'll
drop me. If I talk, I'm done.

GUS
You hear that? It's the sound of
the world's most expensive violin.

SMOKE
I'll lose my dream.

GUS'S VOICE
Your dream or your life.

Left. Left. Left. Left.

COLISEUM TUNNEL

Duncan and the Goons are moving through the halls. Looking
for their man. They turn left, left, left.

EMPTY LOCKER ROOM

Gus. Dressed in the janitor's outfit, pushing a squeaky cart.
On the coms, mopping the floors.

GUS
But you better not run out of gas
while you're making up your mind.

INTERCUTTING:

SMOKE
I know he lives near Santa Monica!

GUS
Not good enough.

SMOKE
Near San Vicente, I think!

GUS
Listen closely. I want you to drive
to the Pacific Ocean.

SMOKE
What? What are you--

GUS
--Drive there. To Ocean.

SMOKE
Why?!

GUS
Why not?

SMOKE
When?!

GUS
Now.

SMOKE
NOW?! ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR MIND! I'M
IN THE MIDDLE OF A RACE! LIVE TV!

GUS
You got a new race to run,
wheelman. Check under your seat.

She reaches down and pulls out -- A SPEEDOMATER, hooked up to spaghetti of red wires -- **210 MPH.**

GUS
Think of The Pacific as Victory Lane. I'm giving you twenty minutes to get there or I set off the bomb. Keep it above 200 or it goes off itself. You know, like the movie "Speed." *Only faster.*

SMOKE
You're sick.

GUS
Oh, and try not to crash, you're basically driving a missile.

SMOKE
Alright, you didn't hear this from me. Joey's Goons are inside the coliseum, they took my dog tag.

Gus hesitates. Thinking.

SMOKE

I'm sorry, okay? I never regretted anything more in my life than what we did to you. We all had a lot to lose and... I just went along with it, and that was wrong... I should have questioned Joey.

GUS

Why me?

SMOKE

I don't know. Luck of the draw? Could have easily been any of us. I liked you. You were a good guy. Basically a genius...

Gus is wavering. It seems to be working.

SMOKE

I'm truly sorry, Mike.

GUS

(snaps out of it)
That's not my name.

She gasps. *Shit*. He sets his watch.

GUS

Twenty minutes staring now.

The *nice* falls away. She turns ice cold --

SMOKE

You fucking clown. You're pathetic, everyone hated you, we all laughed at you. We called you Mr. Wizard behind back -- we had a party after your sentencing. We laughed and laughed. No one cares about your little fucking bomb inventions, loser!

It stings. But he fights through the hurt --

GUS

So I did have a nick name. Better hit the road before it hits you. I'll deactivate the bomb if you can get there in time.

SMOKE

You'll pay for this.

GUS

I paid in advance.

Smoke screams in agony and strangles the wheel. Finally--

SHE JERKS IT HARD TO THE RIGHT! *WOOOOSH HHHH!!!!* Leaving the track -- sea of fans are suddenly baffled.

Mookie, fiddling with his headset, looks up and sees -- *WHAMMMMM!!!!* Smoke's race car blast through THE SERVICE EXIT, crashing through a gate.

NASCAR ANNOUNCNER
What in the name of sweet Baby
Jesus is Bodene doing?!

Mookie's jaw hits the dirt.

COLISEUM HALLWAY

Duncan and the Goons are watching on a mounted monitor as SMOKE DRIVES THROUGH THE PARKING LOT --

DUNCAN
He's here.

The Goons fan out, searching.

INT. SMOKE'S STOCK CAR - CONTINUOUS

An explosion of burnt rubber smoke as -- *SMOKE TAKES OFF LIKE A ROCKET DOWN THE RESIDENTIAL STREET!*

Her screaming engine wakes up the neighborhood.

SMOKE
Shiittttttt--

She makes a sharp turn, losing speed -- falls below 200.

BLEEEEEEEEEPPPP!!!! A warning sounds. She grits and floors it -- **200MPH**. *WOOOOOOSH HHHHH!!!!* Passing --

A bewildered COP, who almost spills his coffee.

She's heading towards to THE HIGHWAY. *REYYYYYOOOOOOPP!!* The black and white gives chase, but he can't keep up.

She STREAKS through an intersection -- if you blink you miss it and --*WHAMMM!!!* Confused Drivers SMASHING into each other as SMOKE EXPLODES UP A FREEWAY RAMP --

VROOOOOOOOOOMMMMMM!!!!!! And now she's going **210 MPH ALONG THE SANTA MONICA FREEWAY IN A FUCKING NASCAR** -- heading there in Guinness time --

INT. COLISEUM HALLWAY - DAY

Gus whistles an ear worm as he pushes his janitor cart towards the locker room. Enters.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

As shower of reds and blues as A FLOCK OF POLICE CRUISERS FAN OUT BEHIND SMOKE -- *WHA! WHA! WHA! WHA!* -- *REEEEYOOOOOPPP!!!*

But they can't keep up, they never had a chance.

INT. SMOKE'S STOCK CAR - CONTINUOUS

Smoke weaves through LA traffic -- impossible speeds -- dodging cars -- skating the shoulder -- and she might be the best driver on planet earth --

The cops vanish behind her. They never had a chance. The speedometer says -- **220 MPH!**

Driving so fast the world is a gray blur -- passing vehicles like they're standing still -- A POLICE HELICOPTER blasts overhead.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gus sits on a locker room bench holding a mop as he watches the car chase on a mounted TV as a NEWS ANCHOR has joined the NASCAR COMMENTATOR in the color commentary --

NEWS ANCHOR

This chase is a bit different from the usual chases we cover because her keen driving skills are making it quite hard for the police. Reaching speeds of 250 miles an hour, going so fast the helicopters can't keep up. And look at the way she's weaving through traffic--

NASCAR ANNOUNCER

--We call that "threading the needle," Bob. Whoa, up the outside, here she comes, and she saves it, unbelievable save!

Gus changes the input on the TV to see SECURITY CAMERAS.

Duncan and the Goons moving down the hallway with their guns drawn, checking rooms. *Time to dance.*

INT. SMOKE'S STOCK CAR - CONTINUOUS

Smoke evades spike strips. Falling below 200 -- *BLEEEEEEEPP!!!*
A warning.

SMOKE

Shit--

She wrangles the wheel and picks up speed as --

A new batch of COPS on her tail. She speeds up -- crosses the divider -- spitting up grass --

Cuts through the center, punches the gas, and now -- She's driving the wrong way down the highway!

Near misses, weaving through cars. Chewing pavement. Expert driving. Impeccable control. Eyes pinned with presence -- *but it might as well be a Sunday drive.*

SURGING FORWARD -- she side-wipes a rusty Mazda -- SPRAYING SPARKS -- spinning him around and --

WHAM! CRASH! WHAM! A ballet of destruction -- A PILE-UP of spinning, somersaulting cars and twisted metal --

WOOOOSHHH!!! Smoke evades. Always. Eyes burn. Teeth grit --

SMOKE

I'm gonna win this fuckin' race.

Bangs the gear shift and -- REEEEEEEACCCHHHH!!!! A high-speed pirouette -- split-second reflexes -- murdering the wheel -- spinning around -- losing speed -- THE WARNING SOUNDS --

Three. Two. One-- She blasts off -- **200 MPH!** And now she's going with the flow of traffic. Rather -- traffic is going with the flow of her.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

TWO GOONS enter the locker room with guns drawn.

It's empty. They creep forward, eyes peeled. Stop when they see -- A FIGURE hulking in the shadow of the shower room.

Gus lumbers out of the shadows...

He looks terrifying in his MASSIVE BOMB SQUAD SUIT -- like the Michelin Man in hell. Gigantic black boots, hulk-like gloves and a bullet-proof visor.

And he's made modifications -- a jerry-rigged BANDOLIER crisscrosses his chest. The baffled Goons level their guns.

GUS

(muffled)

Bombs away.

Gus PUNCHES a MAKESHIFT LEVER on his chest and -- **KTSCHH!!**
TWO PROXIMITY MINES CLUMSILY PROTRUDE FROM THE BANDOLIER LIKE THE DEVIL'S PEZ DISPENSER --

Gus winds up and HURLS THE MINES LIKE FRISBEES!

WHAP! WHAP! They stick to the Goons' CHEEK and FOREHEAD -- the chemical adhesive searing their skin as they cry out, dropping their guns -- *Bleep. Bleep. Bleep* --

The Goons try like hell to rip them off their faces.

GOON
GET IT OFF!

Bleep-bleep-bleep -- KABOOOOOOM!!!! THEIR HEADS EXPLODE LIKE POPPED ZITS -- spraying the locker room with gore.

Gus' eyes sing behind the blood-flecked visor. He can't believe it. Looking down at his bandolier in amazement --

GUS
It actually fucking works.

EXT. SANTA MONICA FREEWAY - DAY

WOOOOSHHH! Greased lightning. Smoke hurtling at impossible speeds. The highway has been closed, traffic rerouted. It's all hers now. The open road, her play thing.

The cops are so far behind, eating her squealing smoke.

NEWS ANCHOR
She's now approaching speeds of 300 miles per hour!

NASCAR ANNOUNCER
Fun fact, Bob, NASCAR started as moonshiners tinkering with their stock cars so they could outrun the law...

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

FIVE GOONS moving towards the locker room. Towards the plume of smoke billowing out from under the door...

A LANKY GOON makes some military hand signals as he creeps to the door. *BLEEP. BLEEP. BLEEP* --

KABLOOOOMM!!!

A FIREBALL BLASTS THROUGH THE DOOR AND OBLITERATES LANKY! HE CRASHES INTO THE WALL AND LANDS IN A SIZZLING BLACK HUSK.

SSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS! A smoke bomb rolls out and envelopes the hall in hissing blue plumes. Everyone coughing, confused, disoriented as --

Gus cuts through the swirl -- waddling like a rabid penguin in his bulky suit -- charging the perplexed Goons -- ripping mines from his bandolier as --

They pull it together and -- *BLAM! BLAM!* -- spray fire --

But the BULLETS BOUNCE off Gus' suit and nip and bite the walls -- sparks flying as they cough and spit and hack and --

MASSIVE GOON
Hold your fire, he's a walking
landmine!

Gus HURLS mines -- *WHAP! WHAP!* They STICK to a Goon's legs.

KABOOOM!!! His legs are blown clean off his torso and -- *WHAMMM!!!* He SLAMS face first into the floor as --

THE SHOCKWAVE knocks Gus off his feet -- flying through the air -- through a glass partition -- *CRASSSSH!!!* it EXPLODES in a shower of shards --

The legless, screaming Goon is bleeding from the stumps as --

Gus struggles to get up -- stuck on his back, like a turtle on its shell. Wriggling and groaning, he summons all the strength he has -- finally managing to pull himself to his feet with an agonized scream. Just then --

THE MASSIVE, HOWLING GOON runs at Gus from behind and -- *WHAMMM!!* DROP KICKS HIM -- knocking the mine from his hand... It clatters across the floor --

MASSIVE GOON
FUCK YOU, MARSHMALLOW MAN!

Two more Goons jump on Gus and it's a melee in the blue and red smoke. They're raining down blows -- fluorescents flicker and strobe -- the whole thing looks like modern dance --

Gus is bucking and kicking and trying to get away.

A RIPPED GOON snatches the fire extinguisher off the wall and starts slamming Gus' helmet, trying to break it off -- *WHAM! WHAM! WHAM!* Cracking his mirrored visor --

Gus sees the loose mine on the floor. Reaching... *Reaching...*

He punches the sticky mine with his MASSIVE KEVLAR FIST. It lights-up. Activated. Now his hulk-fist is a bomb.

As the Ripped Goon shatters his visor with the extinguisher --

WHAP! Gus PUNCHES him in the face and -- *KABLAMM!!* HIS HEAD EXPLODES! The deadly punch showers Gus with gore.

Holy shit! He screams with glee. He can't believe it worked!

Three Goons left. They dart down the hallway in horror as --

An invigorated Gus pulls himself to his feet -- *he's getting better at that* -- and gives chase -- *WHUMP, WHUMP, WHUMP* -- hulking down the hallway like some fucked up Humpty Dumpty -- hurling sticky mines from his bandolier --

BOOM! BOOM! A geyser of blood paints the hallway --

Just then -- DUNCAN and TWO MORE GOONS hurry around the corner and -- stop dead in their tracks when they see --

A debris of blown-apart Goons littering the blood-splattered hallway. And --

Gus... sitting amongst the wreckage... trying to catch his breath. He looks silly in the massive suit sans helmet, like a man with a tiny head.

Duncan's jaw drops. He locks eyes with Gus... who takes a deep breath. And then he sees SMOKE'S DOG TAG dangling around Duncan's neck. Round three.

EXT. SANTA MONICA - DAY

Smoke blasts down a street at **220 MPH** -- pedal to the metal -- eyes on the prize --

VROOOOomm!!! A ROUGE COP PULLS OUT OF NOWHERE --

A Tuner Z06 CORVETTE CRUISER -- aftermarket modifications for racing -- *the fastest cop car on the planet* -- *WAHMMM!!* He SLAMS into her from behind.

Now it's a one-on-one -- the COP is doing AGGRESSIVE PIT MANEUVERS -- trying tries to spin her out -- *just like number 55 did during the race* --

SMOKE
DON'T TAKE ME OUT! THERE'S A BOMB
IN THE CAR!

She sizzles as -- the Cop gives her another love tap and spins her out, but she takes control --

They're side by side and they lock eyes through the window--

SMOKE
THERE'S A BOMB IN THE C--

WHAMMM!!!! HE SLAMS INTO HER AND -- ***KABLAMMMMMM!!!!!!***

*BOTH CARS EURUPT IN A VOLCANO OF SCORCHING OF HELLFIRE --
LIFTED OFF THE GROUND -- EXPLODING HEAVENWARD -- AND THEN
SOMERSAULTING THROUGH THE AIR -- AERODYNAMIC WITCHCRAFT --*

CUT TO:

~~**THE WHEELMAN**~~

INT. GOLF COURSE - DAY

A perfect day. Joey and his Goons are in the middle of a golf game on a glorious tropical course with ocean views. Just as he's about to take a shot, Joey's phone rings...

IT'S DUNCAN. Joey answers.

JOEY
How'd it go?

GUS' VOICE
It went great. Just not for you.

Joey stops in his tracks.

EXT. PARKING LOT - INTERCUTTING

Gus limps towards his Bomb Squad truck with Duncan's cell and Smoke's dog tag.

GUS
You took everything from me, Joey.
And I'm gonna do the same to you.
Everything. I'm coming for you. And
I'll blow up the world to find you.

Fear betrays Joey's face, but he pivots to anger --

JOEY
Listen to me, you bombed-out
bastard, I'm not afraid of you,
you're nothing, you hear me? I'm
the mastermind, the word master is
in my title. Master and mind. That
means I got a big fucking brain,
and it's deadlier than any bomb
known to man. I'm E=MC squared,
you're just the mushroom cloud. You
think I give a fuck about Duncan?
Bianca? Any of them? All you did
was make me a hell of a lot richer.
Because I'm selling that violin.
And nothing's gonna stop me.
Especially not the Bomb Guy.

GUS
Demolition Expert.

JOEY
Bomb Guy.

GUS
I'll see you at *Le Gros Achat*.

JOEY
Not a chance, fuckface. I'll always
be ten steps ahead.

GUS
You're underestimating me again.

JOEY
Even if you did find the auction,
it's the most fortified place on
earth. State of the art security,
an army of guards, bullet proof,
bomb-proof. You proof.

GUS
Maybe I'll go nuclear.

JOEY
Let's dance.

CLICK. Joey explodes and HURLS his club across the green.

JOEY
SHIT!

GOON
You okay, boss?

JOEY
SHUT UP!
(and then)
Go get it.

INT. BOMB SQUAD TRUCK - DAY

Gus drives into the sunset, listening to the radio.

ANNOUNCNER
*--still no motive in the wild chase
that ended in tragedy. Officer
Edward Tilly died in the blast
while doing his job -- protecting
and serving the community he loved.
He was well-liked, highly respected
by his co-workers and truly loved
serving our residents.*

(MORE)

ANNOUNCNER (CONT'D)

*There are no words to make sense of
this tragedy or to ease the pain
for Officer Tilly grieving famil--*

Gus SLAPS OFF the radio. A cloud of guilt falling over him...

He takes out Mary Beth's CARD and lays it on the dash --
9.24. 12pm. Long Beach pier. A freeway sigh ahead --

SOUTH 405 -- LONG BEACH 10 WEST -- SANTA MONICA

A fork in the road. Eyes on the Long Beach exit. Darting over to Santa Monica.

Long Beach. Santa Monica. He chooses Long Beach -- A smile breaks across his face for a split second before the devil grabs the wheel and --

REEEEEEEEEECHHHHHH!!!! He's drifting across four lanes of HONKING TRAFFIC -- careening down the exit ramp to...

SANTA FUCKING MONICA --

Gus releases a BLOOD-CURDLING SCREAM of pain -- exploding with emotion -- everything he's been stamping down breaks free as he tortures the wheel --

GUS

I'm sorry... I'm sorry--

VROOOMM!!! Speeds up, trying to out run the feelings.

INT. BOMB SQUAD TRUCK - SERIES OF SHOTS - NIGHT

-- John William's *Schindler's List* soundtrack plays on Bluetooth speakers. *The saddest violin of all time...*

-- Gus, a broken man, toiling away at his work bench, sewing up the finger of a bulky SKI GLOVE with a needle and thread. The music is making him cry. A kaleidoscope of emotions.

-- Now he's wearing goggles as he tinkers with what looks to be A SHOWER CURTAIN RING. He presses a button on his iPad. Suddenly, the ring glows green, making his face glow too. He presses another button and the ring glows red. Now he looks like the devil himself. The music continues...

EXT. DOOMSDAY COMPOUND - DAY

Barbed wire slithers across like a steel fanged snake. GOONS patrolling in a guard tower. And in the distance, the entrance to a heavily fortified UNDERGROUND BUNKER.

INT. DOOMSDAY BUNKER - DAY

A survivalist dream. Hundreds of feet below the earth. THE WINDOWS are LCD SCREENS, projecting lush country views.

Stick sits in a well-stocked bunker with a couple GOONS. They're playing poker. Stick sports a bushy mustache. His golden locks have been dyed black. He studies his cards. And then his phone CHIMES, making him jump.

A text from "DUNCAN" --

Yo. The Bomb Guy blew himself up. You're good to go home.

STICK
(grins)
All in.

He pushes some chips into a pile.

EXT. SAN VICENTE BOULEVARD - NIGHT

A gargantuan modern monstrosity of a mansion sticks out like a sore thumb against the neighborhood's older homes.

A Lambo, Porsche, speed boat, and Sea-Doo in his gated driveway. Toys. It's the middle of the night. The neighborhood is dead quiet.

A black Escalade pulls up. Stick emerges. The DRIVER helps him get his luggage out of the back.

INT. STICK'S MANSION - NIGHT

Stick enters. Yawns. Turns on the lights. A grand foyer with a crystal chandelier and a spiral staircase. He looks around. It's so big, and so empty. It makes him a little sad.

Hundreds of thousands of dollars in stacked bricks on the table. A money counter. Thousands of loose bills. All the money in the world. So what?

He goes to the bar. Makes himself a drink. Sighs. A SHADOW comes up behind him and -- *WHAP!* Lights out.

INT. DOOMSDAY BUNKER - DAY

WHAMM!! Joey throws the card table against the wall.

JOEY
WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU LET HIM GO?!

GOON

Duncan texted us, he said the bomb
guy was dead--

JOEY

--DUNCAN'S DEAD! *THE BOMB GUY IS*
*REALLY, REALLY FUCKING **ALIVE!***

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Stick's eyes flutter open. He comes-to. Looking around. As
his eyes focus, he sees --

Gus sitting across from him on the couch wearing a blinking
bandolier. Rundown. A few weeks worth of stubble, eyes bleary
and black. So over it.

STICK

They said you were dead... again.

GUS

(numb)

Nope. Still not dead.

Sticks sits up straighter.

GUS

Can get this over with please?

Stick finally looks down at his hands. He's wearing STRANGE
BLACK GLOVES with glowing green rings on each finger.

STICK

What is this? What are you--

GUS

--Where's the dog tag?

Stick says nothing.

GUS

(so over it)

I want the lat/long of the Big Buy.

STICK

I'm not giving you shit.

GUS

I guess we're doing this then.

STICK

Doing what? What are you--

GUS

(impatient)

--They call you Stick...

(MORE)

GUS (CONT'D)
because of your fingers? Correct?
Sticky Fingers, Pickpocket, etc?

STICK
What are you-- hold on, what are--

GUS
--I'm giving you ten chances.

STICK
No, no, I can't, man, I'm down to
my last million... I owe a lot of
people a lot of money...

GUS
Give me the coordinates.

STICK
HEY, FUCK YOU, MAN!!!

Stick flips Gus the bird and -- Gus presses a detonator and --

The GREEN ring around Stick's finger turns RED and -- *POP!*
STICK'S MIDDLE FINGER EXPLODES AND GOES FLYING!

GUS
The bird flies.

But Stick is in shock, screaming in pain, staring at his
missing digit --

GUS
Hey, Stick... Why me?

STICK
Huh?!

GUS
You pinned it on me? Was it because
I talked a lot? Like, I needed
approval?

STICK
It was Joey's idea! And it worked!

GUS
I liked you. All of you. I really
liked being part of something. A
team. And you were nice to me. I
really thought we were friends.

STICK
Maybe that's why...

It hits Gus in the solar plexus. He deflates. And then --
PRESSES THE BUTTON -- *POP! POP! POP!*

-- STICK'S POINTER FINGER, RING FINGER, AND THUMB go flying off his hand and bounce off the ceiling.

STICK
(howling in pain)
ALRIGHT! ALRIGHT! I'LL GIVE YOU
WHAT YOU WANT!

INT. BACK ROOM - LATER

A SAFE hidden behind kingly portrait of Stick. Moaning in pain and far from kingly, Stick taps the code in with his pinky. *KTSCHH!* It opens.

Gus pushes Stick aside. Only one thing inside... sitting on a small pedestal -- A DOG TAG.

Gus grins. Snatches it. Checks it out. All it says is:

Fuck you, Mike.

Before he can process -- *DING!* Stick dives out of the way --

KABLOOOOOOOM!!! THE SAFE EXPLODES! Sending Gus *flying backwards* in a spew of fire -- skipping across the carpet like a stone on water.

Stick sprints drunkenly for a cabinet and snatches a PISTOL.

Gus rolls around the floor, howling in pain -- his face seared and pocked with shrapnel --

STICK
Taste of yer own medicine,
fuckface! Safe bomb! little
something I whipped up in my spare
time!

BLAM! A bullet bites the couch above his head. Gus cowers.

STICK
(mockingly)
When the tag's lifted off the
pedestal it ignites a tripwire that
triggers an IED!

BLAM! BLAM! Gus crawls across the floor.

STICK
...Oh, wait. No one gives a shit!

Stick is struggling to hold the gun on account of his lack of digits -- high on pain and adrenaline -- dangling RING FINGER hanging on by a thread --

Gus climbs to his feet and sprints down THE HALLWAY.

BLAM! BLAM! Bullets nip his heels -- Stick using a pathetic pinky to pull the trigger, nearly dropping the gun -- *BLAM!*

Gus ducks behind a wall. He pulls a bit of shrapnel out of his chin, groaning.

GUS
(struggling)
Amateur hour, Stick! If I had
designed it, I'd be dead!

Stick turns out the lights, plunging them into DARKNESS.

STICK
Yer mine, demo man.

Gus ducks through the moonlight -- *BLAM! BLAM!* Bullet spray as he goes. He falls into THE KITCHEN -- snatches a PROXIMITY MINE from his bandolier. Just then --

Stick blasts into the kitchen, screaming and--

BLAM! Shoots Gus in the collar bone -- the mine rattles across the linoleum as Gus screams in agony.

Stick unloads on Gus -- *Click. Click. Click.* Out of ammo. So he chucks the gun at his wound -- TACKLES HIM to the floor --

They roll around, trading blows -- both men howling in pain -- Stick gets the upper hand -- stabs knee into Gus' chest -- fear flashes on Gus' mangled face as --

Stick grabs his throat -- starts to choke him out with all the fingers he has left -- murder dancing in his eyes as he vices down --

Veins bulging in Gus' forehead -- lips bluing -- blood vessels pop in his red-rimmed eyes like a million tiny explosions -- his consciousness begins to fade...

But it's not his time. Not yet. He clocks the proximity mine BLINKING behind him. *Waiting patiently.*

Summons all the strength he has and -- with a blood-boiling scream --

WHAM! Knees Stick in the balls -- he howls and falls back -- releasing Gus seconds before the long goodbye.

Gus sucks in a massive breath, choking on air and then --

WHUMP! Kicks Stick in the gut -- sending him flying back and landing on top of the mine!

The bomb bites his butt and he yelps -- confused -- trying to tear and rip and pull but it's no use --

STICK
Get it off! Get it off!

Gus staggers to his feet. He looks insane, face burnt and scarred -- putting pressure on his bleeding collar bone. Chalk-white and trying to stay conscious.

GUS
The coordinates. Give 'em to me.

STICK
I NEVER HAD THE COORINDATES!!!!

Gus stops, hovering over Stick like a hungover angel of death. Now his finger is hovering over his detonator watch.

STICK
I never had them! My brother would never trust me with the fucking coordinates, man, look at me, I'm an idiot!

Gus looks down at the gape-mouthed, fingerless, Stick -- *he's not wrong*. And then --

GUS
Your brother?

STICK
Joey! My brother! He was going to meet everyone here and kill them all and take their cut at the auction. I'm the only one who knew his real plan. He didn't want any loose ends...
(snarls)
You've just been doing his dirty work for him.

Gus is trying to process, staggering in pain.

STICK
You got off easy, Gus. You just went to jail.

The anger fades for just a moment. And then -- Gus slaps the remote on his watch and --

KABLLLLLAMMMM!!!! Blows Stick's butt off his ass. STICK SCREAMS, rolling around the floor in agony, and then he cranes back in a rage --

STICK
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO GET AWAY WITH THIS, YOU FUCK! MY BROTHER ONLY CARES ABOUT ONE THING! SELLING THAT STRADIVARIUS!

(MORE)

STICK (CONT'D)
 NOTHING'S NOT GONNA GET IN HIS WAY!
 NOTHING! YOU'RE GOING DOWN!

Gus stops. Looks him dead in the eyes --

GUS
 You're going up.

INT. SUV - NIGHT

The Goons drive Joey down Stick's street.

JOEY
 We're coming up on it... last house
 on the left--

EXT. STICK'S MANSION - LATER

Joey's SUV pulls up in front. The Goons open the door for Joey and he gasps when he sees --

Stick gagged and tied to a lawn chair in the middle of his driveway, bleeding all over himself --

JOEY
 What the fuck is--

Suddenly -- TCHAIKOVSKY'S 1812 OVERTURE starts blaring from speakers that have been wired in the trees -- waking up the neighborhood.

Joey jumps. His Goons whip out their guns. Dogs bark. Lights turn on in windows as --

AN EXPLOSION OF GLORIOUS FIREWORKS ROCKET FROM THE ROOF OF STICK'S HOUSE --

TURNING NIGHT TO DAY!

Joey and his Goons stumbles back in horror -- craning up at the glorious rainbows of arching starlight --

THE MUSIC BUILDS TOWARDS IT ICONIC FINALE --

Stick howling through tape, tries like hell to break out of his bounds --

And Joey GASPS as when he sees --

A SPARKLING COUNTDOWN MADE FROM A FIREY SPRAY OF TEN FOOT NUMBERS ACROSS THE ENTIRE FACE OF STICK'S HOUSE --

...in perfect synch with Tchaikovsky's crescendo with his 20 CANNONS, putting the mental in instrumental --

K A B L O O O O O O M M M M ! ! ! !

A GLORIOUS EXPLOSION SENDS STICK FLYING ACROSS THE DRIVEWAY IN HIS LAWN CHAIR AS --

THE HOUSE IMPLODES AND COMES CRASHING DOWN INTO ITS OWN FOOTPRINT -- A DEMOLITION WORTHY OF A VEGAS CASINO -- GREAT PLUMES OF SMOKE AND --

-- THE SHOCKWAVE knocks Joey and his Goons down --

Stick comes to a stop at the end of the driveway -- manages to get an arm free and finally props himself up in time to see the finishing touches -- in perfect synch with THE THUNDEROUS MUSIC --

The Boat -- *KABLAMM!!* Lamborghini -- *KABLOOOM!!* Porsche -- *BALMMMM!!!* Sea-Doo -- *BOOOOOOOOM!!!*

The toys heave upwards -- riding fireballs into hot heaven --

GUS

is watching his masterpiece down the street in his truck. But there's no pleasure left. He looks like he's about to die from sorrow. Weeping. Snot pouring down his chin, blood spilling down his chest. Eye bleeding, face charred.

The raging fire reflects in the windshield and dances on his face as he screams in harmony with it. Just then --

The flaming Speed Boat lands on top of Stick, flattening him like a pancake. Joey runs to his brother --

His feet sticking out from under like the wicked witch of the west, Joey trying to pull him free, screaming--

JOEY
EDWIN!! MY BROTHER!! MY BABY
BROTHER!!!!

CUT TO:

~~THE PICKPOCKET~~

EXT. SANTA MONICA STREET - NIGHT

VROOOOMMM! A dead-eyed, blood-soaked Gus speeds down the main drag of Santa Monica Boulevard. night life in full swing.

He starts throwing Stick's hundred dollar bills out the window --

IT'S RAINING MONEY! Hundreds of thousands of dollars in cold hard cash fluttering down from heaven like a gift from God.

PEOPLE chasing after the truck -- jumping and catching free money -- *their lives changed* -- crying with glee and joy and hope as they catch the rain of booty -- laughing and dancing and life is kind of amazing sometimes!

They don't even seem to mind the blood stains.

MUSIC UP: A *WONKY MIDDLE-SCHOOL ORCHESTRA*, playing their hearts out... even as they're flubbing notes...

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Jenny is on stage in a pretty dress. She's first chair violin, playing with supreme concentration. She's on another level... a bit of euphonious grace amongst the atonal assault of middle-school band.

Stan and Mia are in the front row, all smiles and encouragement.

We slowly BOOM UP to the RAFTERS...

where Gus haunts the hall like the Phantom of the Opera. Bruised and deformed. A weeping bandage covering his eye. A bloody collar bone. He's welling up as he watches his daughter. She's so good.

Jenny gets a feeling. The hair on the back of her neck stands at attention. She slowly turns and look up at him.

The lock eyes. Jenny GASPS and FLUBS a note. Gus ducks into the darkness.

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Gus hurries out the back door of the auditorium, into the parking lot... hiking up his jacket when --

JENNY (O.S.)

Hey!

He stops in his tracks. Slowly turns to find Jenny standing in the doorway. It's cold. She's shivering.

JENNY

What happened to your face?

GUS

Had a little accident, I'm okay.

A look passes between them.

JENNY
Maybe we can see each other more.

He hesitates.

JENNY
I know who you are.

His heartstrings sing like a Stradivarius.

JENNY
It's okay, I won't tell mom.

GUS
How did you know?

JENNY
I don't know, I just knew. I feel like I've known you for always.

GUS
I hope I didn't mess you up. I just had to see you one more time.

JENNY
...maybe we can see each other more and more?

GUS
I don't think that's a good idea.

JENNY
I'll talk to mom... she listens to me. You don't gotta do anything. We can just maybe talk sometimes or visit sometimes or get to know each other. That would be enough.

GUS
I shouldn't have come. I'm sorry.

He runs away into the dark. She watches him go. Devastated.

As he hurries through the night, we move to REVEAL --

TWO GOONS slumped in a black sedan. Watching him. They turn their attention to Jenny.

INT. BOMB SQUAD TRUCK - NIGHT

Gus sits in the back, numb to the world as he toils away... He is constructing an improvised SUICIDE VEST. A tangle of wires and plates of explosives.

The window is open... a gust of wind blows the photo of pregnant Mia around the back. It lands on his work bench.

Stares down at it... *thinking*... He reaches into his pocket and pulls out MARY BETH'S CARD.

CHAPTER SEVEN
THE BIG BUY

EXT. PRIVATE AIRPORT - DAY

Joey and his Goons strut away from a private jet, to a waiting SUV. THE VIOLIN CASE is HANDCUFFED to his wrist.

SUPER: **33.9743° N, 91.9623° W ...SOMEWHERE IN LOUISIANA...**

They reach the SUV, Joey hands the coordinates to the DRIVER.

He starts to climb in. Stops. He can't help himself. He looks over his shoulder... No sign of Gus.

INT. SUV - DAY

Driving through the swamplands of Louisiana on winding roads, the violin in Joey's lap. Bald cypress trees rising tall from dark, murky waters where hungry ALLIGATORS are waiting patiently.

And Joey is always looking in the mirrors. He's gripping his own DOG TAG -- the lat/long of the Big Buy. Spinning it through his fingers, mindlessly -- always craning back... like there's a phantom on his tail. Suddenly, the GPS chimes:

GPS VOICE
Rerouting.

DRIVER
Shit. Sycamore road is closed, it just added twenty minutes...

Joey checks his watch.

JOEY
Step on it. We can't be late, they said the doors lock at five on the dot, no exceptions.

The Driver speeds up.

GOON 1
What are we looking for exactly?

JOEY
We'll know it when we see it.

But Joey fidgets, nervously.

GOON 1
Don't worry, boss. We radioed ahead. They know about Gus. They're all keeping an eye out for him.

They pull up to a stop sign. The road is desolate.

GOON 2
Yeah, everyone's son high aler--

Joey whips out his pistol and-- **BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!** Shoots his three Goons. *Heart. Lungs. Head.* They slump.

EXT. SWAMP - DAY

Joey kicks his Goons into the alligator swamp. The most manual labor he's done in years.

EXT. SWAMP ROAD - DAY

Joey is driving now. The road narrows as the SUV winds through haunted swampland. Gnarled trees squeeze the road like a vice. Weepy branches scratch the windows--

GPS VOIE
In three hundred feet, turn right.

Joey moves through a clearing to find...

AN OLD RED BARN in the woods. Bordering on a ruin. Armed GUARDS with machine guns approach the car. Joey rolls down the window and hands the Guard an INVITATION.

GUARD
Buyer or seller?

JOEY
Seller.

GUARD
Around back.

As Joey drives around back, he sees a line of FAT CATS AND MONEY MEN in formal wear, the 1% of the 1%, getting patted down and scanned with hand-held metal detectors before they hand off their invitations, and enter.

JOEY
All the money in the world.

AROUND BACK

BUYERS and GUARDS are loading priceless artwork into the barn. Van Goghs, Picassos, second century Roman antiquities, sculptures, pilfered artifacts from all over the world.

Joey's eyes dance as he watches them load in priceless booty. But then he starts throwing nervous looks around the place -- looking for someone who isn't there...

INT. BARN - DAY

The interior is high-tech and pristine. At odds with the dilapidated exterior. Modern. Museum-like. Complete with auditorium seating and crystal chandeliers. It's amazing.

Joey is backstage. He unlocks his handcuffs and puts them in his pocket.

TWO GLOVED HANDLERS in smart black and red uniforms, carefully transfer THE MESSIAH STRADIVARIUS from its oaken case to a waiting push cart.

Joey scans the barn... looking for Gus... trying to wrangle his flop sweat with a hanky. It's not working.

Billionaires sit with paddles and programs before a lavish, well-lit stage.

BANG! BANG! BANG! Joey jumps out of his skin, and yelps -- but it's only A BRITISH AUCTIONEER banging a GAVEL on a podium. Behind him, flatscreens show off a DOROTHY'S RUBY SLIPPERS from "The Wizard Of Oz."

AUCTIONEER

Sold to you for seventeen million dollars. A piece of cinema history. Good to have you back, Mr. Von Vanderveen...

Joey clutches his heart and manages a laugh.

MR. VON VANDERVEEN (70s), a German aristocrat who is actually wearing a fucking monocle, twists his little mustache and basques in the glory of his purchase. Nodding to his fellows.

MR. VON VANDERVEEN

There's no place like home.

A new item appears on the SCREEN -- a stunning PISCASSO PAINTING. Shown in glorious detail.

AUCTIONEER

We move on now to lot number twenty-two, ladies and gentlemen. A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

The Handlers push the painting on to the stage on a cart and place it on display. *OOOHS AND AHHS* bounce off the walls.

AUCTIONEER

Lot twenty-two. A fine piece. One of the painter's most famous works. *Le pigeon aux petits pois* by Pablo Picasso. Stolen in broad daylight, very keenly I might add, from the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris by the Great Thief Heinrich Hemmer and his very talented crew of seven, Hemmer's Seven. Mr. Hemmer, if you please...

A spotlight shines on HEINRICH HEMMER as takes the stage to applause and fanfare, waving to his fans. He bows graciously as articles about the heist flash on the monitors --

AUCTIONEER

You can read about Mr. Hemmer's meticulously planned heist that shook the art world and left police baffled in your catalogue. It was a fine work of art in and of itself.

This seems to add to the value somehow. As Hemmer bows and leaves the stage, the Auctioneer bangs the gavel.

AUCTIONEER

So, with those juicy details in mind, ladies and gentleman, my colleges are armed with their phones, and all of you are locked and loaded with your paddles, we shall start the bidding at 40 million.

Paddles SHOOTING UP as the bidding gets heated --

AUCTIONEER

I have 40 million, thank you Mr. G, do have 50 million. Don't hesitate, participate. Do I have 50 million. 50 million, gentleman's bid, thank you sir, pleasure to have you back. 50 million against you, sir, I like it very much and so should you, do I have sixty, seventy against you --

BACKSTAGE

A Handler approaches Joey.

HANDLER

You're next, Mr. Fix.

Joey nods, straightens his tie. Smiles. And then he sees --

MOMENTS LATER

The BANG of the gavel.

AUCTIONEER

Sold to you, sir, for 110 hundred million dollars!

The room BURSTS with applause.

AUCTIONEER

We move on now, ladies and gentlemen, to lot number twenty-three... The Messiah Stradivarius. Made in 1716 by the Italian luthier Antonio Stradivari of Cremona. It is considered to be the only Stradivarius in existence in as new state...

The Handlers wheel out the violin in its oaken case. And carefully transfer it to the display.

AUCTIONEER

"The sweetest sound ever produced by man," rivaled only in nature by the call of a Golden Pheasant and a baby's coo. Heisted by Mr. Joey Fix and a crew of six experts in one of the most elaborate and ingenious capers The Big Buy has ever been a part of, with all the twists and turns and double crosses of a Hollywood movie -- no doubt adding to the value of an already priceless piece of musical history.

News articles of Joey's heist flash of the monitors. Gus Bender's downfall.

AUCTIONEER

Mr. Fix, if you please.

JOEY

Let's dance.

A spotlight shines on Joey as takes the stage. The place goes wild for him. He bows.

AUCTIONEER

You can read about Mr. Fix's inspired idea to pin his crimes on a series of unsuspecting demolition experts in your catalogue.

A FAT CAT flips through his program -- a photo of Joey Fix smiling with his arms crossed.

AUCTIONEER
And with that, ladies and gentlemen, we shall start the bidding at 60 million dollars.

Mr. Von Vanderveen's paddle shoots up. Joey smiles. It's on.

AUCTIONEER
We have 60 million, do I see 70?

Mr. POPOV, an unkept Russian man, raises his paddle.

AUCTIONEER
70 million down in front, please to see you again, Mr. Popov. 70 million against you, sir--

Von Vanderveen raises his paddle.

AUCTIONEER
80 million, do I see 90--

Mr. Popov raises.

AUCTIONEER
90! Back to you, sir, do I see 100--

Von Vanderveen raises.

AUCTIONEER
100 million dollars, a fine advance indeed, do I see--

Mr. Popov leaps to his feet --

MR. POPOV
One hundred and fifty million dollars!

GASPS from the crowd as Mr. Von Vanderveen pulls himself up --

MR. VON VANDERVEEN
One hundred and eighty million!

Joey's eyes ignite with glee. A bidding war! And it's not about the money anymore. Russia and Germany are at war, spit flying as they hurl meaningless numbers at each other --

MR. POPOV
Two hundred million dollars!

MR. VON VANDERVEEN
Two hundred and fifty million!

The place is alive and reeling -- Joey's about to faint.

MR. POPOV
Two hundred and eighty, you old
Nazi bastard!

MR. VON VANDERVEEN
THREE HUNDRED MILLION DOLL--

--WHAMMMMMMMMMM!!!!

The Bomb Squad truck PLOWS THROUGH THE BARN WALL in a shower of splinters --

CRASHHHHH!!!! SLAMS INTO THE STAGE --

The place goes insane, billionaires screaming, running for the door as --

Handlers snap up priceless objects and haul them towards the exits and --

Guards surround the vehicle with their guns drawn.

GUARD
Come out with your hands up!

Joey can't believe what he's seeing. His face twists with hate and fear as he lays the violin back in its oaken case and takes off running for the exit.

The Guards throw open the Bomb Truck door, but --

The cab is empty. A stick attached to a brick on the pedal.

Guards look at each other, baffled as --

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BARN --

Gus moves against the tide -- pushing his way through throngs of billionaires and sellers and --

WHAM! CRASHES into Joey Fix. Face to face. Joey gasps.

GUS
Boom.

Gus is gripping a detonator. He's pale green, scarred, and wearing an EYE PATCH. A weeping bandage over his collar bone.

Strapped into the makeshift SUICIDE VEST. Joey backs away in fear as Gus takes a step at him.

JOEY
OVER HERE! HE'S OVER HERE!

Guards see Gus and level their guns, screaming--

GUS
I'm wearing 50 pounds of C4. Shoot
me and we all go up.

Gus looks desperate, insane. A countdown on a digital timer
across his chest.

2:13 --

JOEY
You lost your mind.

Gus nods. He has.

GUS
Everyone out. This is between me
and him.

The Guards exchange looks.

GUS
You better move. This bomb goes off
in two minutes, no matter what.

The Guards obey, and almost instantly -- the place is empty.
Just the two of them, six feet apart.

JOEY
You killed my brother.

GUS
(gritted teeth)
You killed my life.

JOEY
Okay, fine, I underestimated you,
is that what you want to hear?

GUS
You know, it's funny that we're the
ones who are constantly being
underestimated. The word "expert"
is literally in our title.

JOEY
Honestly, Gus, in all this time,
you're the first one who ever got
wise...

GUS
How many of us have there been?

JOEY
I don't know. I lost count. And
it's not just me anymore.

(MORE)

JOEY (CONT'D)

Everyone's framing their demo men now. It's a thing.

GUS

Why me? Why us? Tell me.

Joey smiles. So charming...

JOEY

You're the bomb guysssss! Everyone knows bomb guys are the perfect mark. You're not criminals, you're blue collar. Good guys. Honorable, salt of the earth. Nice, trusting folks. Too trusting maybe. That's why you're so easy to double cross.

Gus sizzles.

JOEY

But you're not just a bomb guy, Gus. Not anymore. We think alike, you proved that. There's nothing good about you, you're an evil fucking genius...

Gus processes what Joey is saying.

JOEY

I'll tell you what. Let's defuse this situation. Why don't you come in with me? Take my brother's cut. We'll split everything from now on. Sixty-forty.

GUS

No deal.

JOEY

Fifty-fifty? What do you want?

GUS

I want what you took from me. Everything.

JOEY

Not everything. Not yet.

He reaches into his pocket and takes out his phone. Slides it across the floor. It lands at Gus feet. He picks it up.

A photo of his DAUGHTER'S HOUSE taken from the windshield of a car across the street.

JOEY

You want to be a mastermind, you gotta think ten steps ahead.

Gus is reeling, thrown off --

JOEY

There are two men sitting outside her house as we speak. If I don't call them in one hour, they go inside. Nothing you can do, Gus.

GUS

(thrown)
How did you--

JOEY

--You led them to her.
(smiles)
Killing me is killing Jenny.

Gus drops his detonator. The digital clock says: **1:23** --

JOEY

You did good, but you can't out-mastermind the mastermind.

Gus is at a loss for words.

JOEY

No hard feelings. I'll be honest... I like you, Gus. No one works as hard as you, not even me. You're a talented guy, you're an artist and your paintings are dynamite. I want you on my new team. I'm planning something. We're gonna take a Freeport in Geneva. And maybe it's time the pickpocket took the fall for change.
(smiles)
I'll give you twenty percent, and you'll be my right hand.

GUS

And if I say no?

JOEY

You really want me to answer that?

Gus considers.

JOEY

You can send her your share. Every need she has will be met for the rest of her life. She'll be so goddamn rich, she'll never have to worry.

Finally --

GUS
Okay, Joey... you win.

It kills him to say it. **1:05** --

JOEY
We'll have a blast.

Joey approaches slowly... holds out his hand for a handshake --

Gus nods. And as he takes Joey's hand -- *CLICK!* Joey handcuffs him and -- *CLICK!* Cuffs the other end to the stage. *The cuffs from the briefcase...*

Gus GASPS, tries to pull away, but he's stuck --

JOEY
(laughs)
Fuckin' demo men. It's like candy from a baby. You didn't learn shit in ten years behind bars.

0:55 --

JOEY
You think you can diffuse that bomb in 55 seconds?

He starts yanking his hand.

GUS
Please, Joey, it doesn't diffuse, I designed it that way.

JOEY
Too smart for your own good.

With that, Joey grabs his violin and hurries out of the barn.

GUS
JOEY! DON'T HURT HER! PLEASE DON'T HURT MY DAUGHTER!

EXT. THE BARN - DAY

Joey runs out of the barn as fast as he can, clutching the violin for dear life -- suddenly --

He's running in SLOW MOTION AS --

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO MMMM!!!!

THE BARN EXPLODES -- A HELLFIRE RAIN --

Joey walks away from the mass destruction in SLOW MOTION, OF COURSE -- AND HE LOOKS REAL COOL IN SLOW MOTION --

Until he trips a little, but quickly regains his balance.

Terrified Billionaires, Sellers, Guards, and Handlers scatter for their cars, or hightail it into the woods --

Joey calmly gets into his SUV, never looking back at the raging fireball. Smiling so big it tickles his ears.

INT. SUV - NIGHT

Joey speeds down the highway, blasting Led Zeppelin, singing along, drumming the steering wheel.

The violin rides shotgun, strapped-in with a seat belt. He sees something up a head and slows... and his eyes narrow... *what is that?* It's a roadblock. A sea of lights.

AGENT CANDY. And an army of Police Officers waiting for him.

WOOOOOSH!!! A helicopter EXPLODES over head. A spotlight. Candy picks up a bullhorn --

AGENT CANDY

Alright, Fix, come out. We got you surrounded.

Joey panics, quickly grabs the violin and tries to make a run for it. But he doesn't get far.

He's tackled by POLICE who rip the violin from his hands --- stab a knee in his back -- wrangle handcuffs on him as he howls in fear --

INT. INTEROGATTION ROOM - DAY

Joey looks tired. His steel blue eyes have dulled. He's aged ten years in two days.

AGENT CANDY

We know you stole violin and the egg from Fishbein. We also know you systematically murdered the rest of your crew, one by one, so you could steal their share.

JOEY

It's not true! I'm being framed!

AGENT CANDY

By whom? You keep saying that--

JOEY

Gus Bender. The Bomb G--
(sighs)
The Demolition Expert.

AGENT CANDY

You're being framed by a ghost?
That's really spooky stuff, Joey.

JOEY

I'm telling you, he's not dead! I
mean, he is dead! He's dead now,
but he wasn't dead before--

AGENT CANDY

--So, you admit that you were
working with Bender, that you had
him framed?

JOEY

(losing it)
He stole my idea!

AGENT CANDY

We know you set up Gus to look like
a terrorist. Everything he told us
was true. You're not gonna get us
with that one twice. We have
footage of your inside man coming
to see Gus in prison. And we know
you planted that manifesto before
you blew Gus up in the bank to
cover your tracks.

JOEY

...why is this happening to me...

AGENT CANDY

I just need to know one more thing.
What did you do with the real
violin?

JOEY

What?

AGENT CANDY

We know you pulled a switch. It's
your M.O. So, what did you do with
the real Messiah?

Joey's eyes are darting back and forth, trying to make sense
of what she's saying.

Agent Candy opens the oaken case to reveal --

A battered violin. With two butterfly stickers. All beaten
up. An elm school loner.

JENNY'S VIOLIN.

It hits him like a K.O. punch. Off his stunned look, we--

CUT TO:

~~THE MARK~~

INT. ANDORRA BEACH - DAY

Welcome to Paradise. The Pyrenees Mountains soaring beyond.

Gus Bender, very much alive, and more alive than ever, stands on a perfect beach before a sea of DEMOLITION EXPERTS -- all dressed in flowing white clothes. They're all so tan.

We recognize them as the Guards, Billionaires, and Handlers from the Big Buy!

CHAPTER EIGHT
THE TWIST ENDING

Gus raises a flute of champagne. He is wearing a tropical colored eye-patch.

GUS

A caper is only as good as its crew, and what a crew we got! A toast! To Mary Beth!

Wild whoops and applause. Mary Beth raises her glass.

GUS

...who gave Wolf a run for her money!

FLASH: *Joey is driving to the Big Buy, always craning back... like there's a phantom on his tail. Suddenly, the GPS chimes.*

GPS VOICE

Rerouting.

DRIVER

Shit. Uh, boss, it says it just added twenty minutes.

The speed past -- A BLACK MUSTANG parked in a turnaround. Mary Beth in the driver's seat, clacking away on a laptop, hacking the GPS. FREEZE FRAME TITLE: THE HACKER.

BACK TO:

GUS

To Conrad, who called in every favor he could --

Conrad takes a bow, everyone explodes with applause --

FLASH: AN ENTIRE MOVIE CREW -- all the grips and set dressers in Louisiana -- are setting up the ABANDONED BARN for the phony Big Buy. PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS are putting A PICASSO POSTER in a beautiful frame.

Conrad sits in a make-up chair -- dressed up like Mr. Von Vanderveen, an ARTIST applying his prosthetic face -- FREEZE
FRAME TITLE: **THE BENEFECTOR.**

Jason Statham is dressed in his Mr. Popov costume, another MAKE-UP WOMAN applying prosthetics. A DIALECT COACH hovers over his chair--

COACH

Pronounce the vowel sound used in
"In" more like the vowel in "Seen".
"I will make this thing bigger"
would become "I weel make thees
theeng beegger."

STATHAM

(Russian accent)
"I weel make thees theeng beegger."

BACK TO:

GUS

To Mike Miller, I've been hearing
about you for a while, my friend,
great to finally meet you in
person.

THE AUCTIONEER, A.K.A. MIKE MILLER -- raises his glass --

FLASH: As Joey is distracted by the commotion of the Bomb Squad truck crashing -- Mike, dressed as the Auctioneer, crashes into Joey and -- swaps out the Violin cases. FREEZE
FRAME TITLE: **THE PICKPOCKET.**

BACK TO:

MIKE MILLER

They're not gonna mix us up again.
You can take that to the bank.

His Auctioneer's English accent has gone full Bronx.

GUS

And of course, we couldn't have
done it without Duncan--

Reveal Duncan, smiling big. He raises his glass. FREEZE FRAME
TITLE: **THE INSIDE MAN.**

FLASH: DUNCAN and TWO MORE GOONS hurry around the corner of the STADIUM HALLWAY and stop dead in their tracks when they see -- A debris of blown-apart Goons littering the hallway.

Gus... sitting amongst the wreckage. He locks eyes with Duncan... who takes a deep breath.

Suddenly, Duncan turns and -- BLAM! BLAM! Shoots his Goons in the heart and head. They fall like snipped marionettes.

GUS
What took you so long?!

DUNCAN
Sorry, this place is a maze.

Duncan helps Gus to his feet. Smiles.

GUS
Give me your phone, let's do this--

BACK TO:

GUS
If I learned anything from Joey,
it's to always go after the
disgruntled employee.

FLASH: Joey and his Goons strut away from a private jet, to a waiting SUV. Gus and Duncan watch with binoculars through a tinted SUV.

BACK TO:

GUS
We didn't need the coordinates, we
just needed to know what airport he
was flying into. Thanks for getting
us Joey's flight plan.

DUNCAN
Thanks for making me feel seen.

Mary Beth takes the stage, throws an arm around Gus --

MARY BETH
I want to toast Gus! For thinking
ten steps ahead...

FLASH: Mia and Stanley are in the front yard tending the garden together.

Joey's Goons are parked across the street from Jenny's house. Suddenly -- the back window SHATTERS, scaring the shit out of them and -- TWO SILENT MINES fall in their laps --

SPIFF! A NON-EXPLOSION. GORE QUIETLY PAINTS THE INTERIOR.

REVEAL GUS -- on the phone with Duncan --

DUNCAN'S VOICE
His plane lands at 3PM at Esler
Regional in Louisiana.

Gus nods -- he's carrying Jenny's violin. FREEZE FRAME TITLE:
THE MASTERMIND.

Gus climbs into the Goon's car, pushes aside the driver's body and speeds away just as Mia looks up and wipes the sweat from her brow. It's a beautiful day in her beautiful garden and she gives her beautiful husband a beautiful kiss.

BACK TO:

GUS
To the Demolition Experts!

MARY BETH
To Bender's forty-three!

The Demolition Experts raise their toast.

THE DEMOLITION EXPERTS
To the Demolition Experts!

FREEZE FRAME TITLE: **THE DEMOLITION EXPERTS.**

PRE-LAP -- GLORIOUS VIOLIN MUSIC --

INT. JENNY'S HOUSE - DAY

CLOSE ON JENNY. She stands before the window, her favorite spot, playing the violin with all her heart.

WIDEN TO REVEAL -- The Messiah Stradivarius pressed against her chin --

The most expensive instrument in the world... the most beautiful sound ever produced by man...

On the floor by her feet, we see the oaken case... And then a cardboard box, torn open. Her eyes exploding with joy as she plays the violin, a gift she'll always cherish... And she knows how to make it sing.

Mia ENTERS FRAME and picks a note on the floor. Reads --

Jenny. I hope you play it for the rest of your life and think of me always.

42.5063° N, 1.5218° E

Come see me sometime. Dad.

EXT. MOUNTAIN TOP - ANDORRA - SUNSET

A TINY CABIN on a glorious mountainside. The Pyrenees soaring in the distance.

Gus is on the roof, hammering away with Mary-Beth. Building something together. It's almost done. It isn't much, but it's everything. *Almost.*

A rental car winding down the driveway, kicking up dust. Gus lowers his hammer. Wipes the sweat. Eyes explode with joy.

GUS
She's here.

Mary Beth smiles, squints against the sun as Gus jumps off the roof, hurries towards the car and --

Jenny jumps out. Mia and Stanley emerge, smiling as --

Father and daughter BLAST into each other arms.

FADE TO BLACK



CHAPTER NINE
THE POST CREDITS SCENE

INT. WOLF'S OFFICE - DAY

Wolf, covered with sweat, hair a greasy mess, is still sitting on her meditation pillow.

WOLF
You got this, Wolf. You got this.
Just one... more... day...

She takes her deepest breath yet.