

***VERTICAL RUN***

draft by

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FADE IN:

BEGIN MAIN TITLE SEQUENCE

EXT. PORSCHE - DAY

A vintage Porsche restored to loving perfection rumbles at a stoplight in San Francisco's upscale Sutro Heights. Rain pounds on its hood. The Golden Gate looms in the distance. Windshield wipers beat water away, revealing the driver:

INT. DAVE'S PORSCHE - DAY

DAVE ELLIOT. A corporate shark in his Porsche and Bernini suit... except for his kind eyes. A nasty COLD detracts from the image even more. A 21st Century Jimmy Stewart.

Dave takes a sip from a mug which reads WORKING JOE as NPR relays the news. Then his CAR PHONE RINGS. Dave picks up.

DAVE

Hello?

WOMAN (V.O.)

David? The market's opening! Where are my trades?

Dave grimaces, looks at his watch. His boss? No...

DAVE

Mom, it's six a.m. out here.

A traffic LIGHT ahead of him turns yellow. He slows.

HIS POV:

across the intersection, up the hill, the right lane is closed for a stricken CAR CARRIER, its DRIVER talking his mechanical troubles over with a couple of TOW TRUCK GUYS.

RESUME

MOM (V.O.)

You sound sick.

DAVE

Just a cold.

MOM (V.O.)

Remember, a twist of lime in your water, honey.

Rather than waiting for the light to turn green and squeezing past the stopped truck, Dave decides to take a right on red.

EXT. STREET - DAY

The Tow Truck Guys turn around and stare as the Porsche zips away. Rain beads off their faces. Plain faces. Scary plain.

INT. PORSCHE - DAY

Dave doesn't even notice.

DAVE  
I gotta go, Mom. I love you.

MOM (V.O.)  
I love you too, my genius son. What about Senterex?

DAVE  
Bye, Mom.

He starts to punch her off.

MOM (V.O.)  
Buy? Wait a minute did you mean buy or bye --

-- BEEP. She's gone.

EXT. FULTON ST. - DAY

Dave makes a quick left on Fulton, runs up along Golden Gate Park. He guns the car. It speeds past in a haze of spray.

INT. DAVE'S PORSCHE - DAY

His car phone SHRILLS again. He lets it ring, doesn't answer it. But it keeps ringing. He doesn't want to, but gears down fast, braking hard. The speedometer needle drops from 75. Tires shimmy on wet pavement. Dave picks up the phone.

DAVE  
I love you, but I can't give you tips on things we're involved with. SEC rules.

BERNIE (V.O.)  
All these years, Dave, why didn't you say something sooner...

Dave grimaces. The brash tenor on the phone belongs to his business partner, BERNIE LEVY.

DAVE  
Hey, Bernie. Thought you were my Mom.

(CONTINUED)

BERNIE (V.O.)

Davy boy, I'm your Mother-Father-Lover rolled into one. I'm on the bridge. You?

DAVE

The Park. What's so important you couldn't wait 20 minutes to see my face?

BERNIE (V.O.)

Nothing. You sound like you came down with a cold.

DAVE

Cold isn't the word for it.

BERNIE (V.O.)

Oughtta go home. Why don't you do that? Kick back, catch up on your crosswords. You work too hard.

DAVE

Gotta finish Lockyear today. Look, I still think it's way undervalued. This technology they've got is a gold mine. Senterex is stealing this company; I don't know what Cleric is thinking letting it go so low.

BERNIE (V.O.)

Dave, Senterex is willing to pay good money for Lockyear, can move fast, and is liquid enough to take seriously.

DAVE

This is a due diligence thing, Bern. We need to get Vooradian the best price we can while he's off around the world doing his philanthropy.

BERNIE (V.O.)

Vooradian is out of the loop because he wants to be. He's rich enough to leave his business in Cleric's hands, and Cleric says sell.

DAVE

Since when have you started turning down bigger commissions?

BERNIE

Trust me, Dave. Don't worry about it.

(CONTINUED)

DAVE

Just let me go back to Senterex with  
a better price.

(beat)

I want to be bad cop.

Bernie EXPLODES in hysterical laughter. Dave holds the phone  
away from his ear, turning angry.

BERNIE (V.O.)

You? Bad cop? Mr. Sugar and Cream?  
You are not doing bad cop. Not only  
would you get laughed out of the room,  
we would lose serious credibility as  
a negotiating team. I am bad cop.

DAVE

Bernie, I know how to be mean.

(off Bernie's UPROARIOUS  
LAUGHTER)

I do. All right, we're gonna talk  
about this when we get in. See ya.

Dave's about to punch off, but a final shout from Bernie  
catches him. There's something strained about Bernie's voice.

BERNIE (V.O.)

Dave, I'm sorry. I just... can't let  
you screw up this deal. You know,  
I've always thought you're the best.

Dave frowns. This is a strange thing to say.

BERNIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

By the way, how's the traffic on Geary  
this morning?

DAVE

I'm on Fulton. There never is any  
traffic at this hour. Bye.

Dave hangs up, distraught. Only part of him registers:

DAVE (CONT'D)

You know that.

A sudden loud TICKING SOUND suddenly begins under the hood  
of the car, and all the service LIGHTS on the dash go on.  
Dave writhes in frustration and pulls the car over.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

He can't fix it. Dave throws up his hands in frustration,  
slams the hood, grabs his stuff from the passenger seat, and  
starts walking through the rain.

(CONTINUED)

In the intersection ahead a CABLE CAR rings into view. Dave runs to catch it. The cable car slows, and Dave jumps on.

INT. CABLE CAR - DAY

Dave folds his umbrella, collapses in a seat right behind the CABLE CAR OPERATOR.

DAVE

Saved my life, pal.

As the Cable Car pulls away, Dave glances toward his workplace looming in the distance, the TRANSAMERICA PYRAMID. Only the CAMERA FINDS: the SAME TOW TRUCK AND CAR CARRIER sitting on the street in the f.g., twenty blocks from where they were last, watching the traffic for Dave and his Porsche.

EXT. FINANCIAL DISTRICT - DAY

The CAMERA pulls up and away, rising above the urban canyon of Montgomery Street, aka Wall Street West. The cable car drops away. Dave gets off, unfolds his umbrella, dwindles to a mere black speck in the gray city morning.

AND WE END MAIN TITLE SEQUENCE

EXT. TRANSAMERICA BUILDING - DAY

Dave looks up at the towering pyramid he's about to enter. Its 43-plus stories are lost in the rain and low clouds.

INT. LOBBY, TRANSAMERICA BUILDING - DAY

Dave shuffles through one of several revolving doors, umbrella and briefcase in hand, the lobby deserted at this time of the morning except for an ANCIENT GUARD at the front desk. Dave trundles toward the elevator alcove.

DAVE

Morning, Tim.

ANCIENT GUARD

How are ya, Dave?

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

Dave boards an empty elevator, snuffles, in a bad mood. He punches his floor: 28.

MARY (O.S.)

Hold that please!

Dave looks up. MARY PATTON races to catch the elevator. Dave's hand goes out instinctively for the OPEN button... but then he recognizes her. And pushes the CLOSE button. The doors shut in Mary's face.

(CONTINUED)

But then they open again. Mary glares, boards. Dave looks away. Silence. She hits her floor- 32. She's young, 20's, in sweats with a backpack and discman. She shuffles her things. Dave, in his Bernini, is from a different world.

DAVE

Sorry. Didn't see you.  
(beat, awkward)  
I've been meaning to call you.

MARY

One date and you're shutting elevators in my face. Don't worry, I'm upstairs today.

Mary juggles her things, trying to get out of her raincoat. Dave reaches over and helps her out of it, the perfect gentleman. She glares at him anyway. He notices how gorgeous she is. Long, wet blond tresses. She unzips her backpack.

MARY (CONT'D)

Turn around.

She makes a turn-around gesture. Dave turns, faces the wall. She shimmies a skirt on, pulls her sweat pants off from under it.

DAVE

What are you doing?

Back-to-back with Dave, pulls her wet sweat shirt off.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Are you... getting changed?

She slings her long wet hair, hitting Dave on the back of the neck. He starts. But likes it.

MARY

Yep. Bathrooms on my floor aren't unlocked for another hour, and the guard up there is a perv.

DAVE

I can't believe you're doing this.  
What about one of the kitchens?  
They're always open.

Mary smirks. She's torturing Dave, and now Dave realizes it.

MARY

Okay, you can turn around.

Dave turns around.

(CONTINUED)

She's changed into a gorgeous dress, no longer the GenX wastrel, but a stunning woman. Voluptuous. Feminine. Dynamic.

Dave's speechless. The elevator stops. He backs out. The door begins to close, and he sticks his foot out to stop it.

DAVE

Look, Mary, sorry I blew you off. I was just about to go steal some of my partner, Bernie's, coffee. Best house blend in the world. Nobody knows where he gets it. Known him 8 years. Still won't tell me. Want some?

MARY

Sorry, Dave. The offer is off the table.

INT. 28TH FLOOR, TALBOT & BORDICK RECEPTION - DAY

The doors close. Wistful, Dave backs away from the elevator. With a sigh he turns to his morning, blowing his nose as he passes a Guard named JONATHAN.

DAVE

'Morning Jonathan.

JONATHAN

Hi, Dave. Got that cold, huh?

Dave, nods, too busy with his handkerchief to respond. A stately brokerage-house logo on one wall announces this company is TALBOT & BORDICK. Dave crosses the expansive, splashy reception room, past the abandoned border post of a receptionist's desk, and through a pair of massive doors.

INT. HALL OUTSIDE DAVE'S OFFICE - DAY

Dave opens his door. His nameplate reads: DAVID ELLIOT, VP ANALYSIS. He glances over to the next office. It's closed, lights off, as is every one on the floor. The nameplate there reads BERNARD LEVY, VP MERGERS. Dave's the first one in and smiles at his little moral victory.

INT. DAVE'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY

Dave's outer office is a small affair. He hangs up his coat, pauses and sets two SNICKERS BARS on his secretary's desk, a daily sacrifice to the goddess who runs his life.

INT. DAVE'S OFFICE - DAY

Dave enters, closes the door, turns on the lights. His office is tidy, comfortable, erring on the side of luxurious. The sloped window looks out at San Francisco Bay beyond.

(CONTINUED)

Dave dumps his briefcase by his desk and collapses in his swivel chair. He powers up his computer, and as he waits, glances at a silver-framed photo of a shining young woman in the prime of life. Dave talks to the picture:

DAVE

I know. She's nice. I'm not ready.

He turns to his phone, punches the play button on his answering machine as he begins to sort through his work. A man's voice, urgent, pleads from the machine:

HIGHGRAVE (V.O.)

David. David Elliot. It's Mort Highgrave from Lockyear Pharmaceuticals. If you get this message, you MUST call me. It's about the meeting yesterday. I have to --

Dave hits the DELETE button before Highgrave can finish.

DAVE

-- relax, bud. If Bernie wants you to take your money and run, I won't make waves. Even if it is stupid.

INT. BERNIE'S INNER OFFICE - DAY

Lights are off in the large, sumptuous office. A door opens, and Dave enters Bernie's office from his adjoining one.

He paces over to Bernie's coffee machine which, on a timer, has brewed up. He fills his cup, dopes up the coffee with OBSCENE AMOUNTS OF SUGAR AND CREAM. And CLICK. The door opens behind him. Re: coffee --

DAVE

-- Hey, Bern. How about a jump-start?

There's a THUMP, and Dave turns around, finds himself staring at: BERNIE LEVY, in the flesh. 50, stocky, greying. His briefcase lies spilled on the floor, and he's pointing a tiny silver .25 automatic pistol at Dave.

Dave, holding the coffee pot, stares. A beat as he tries to make sense of this insane moment.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Is that a real gun?

It is. Dave and Bernie stumble backward away from each other in mirror-image fashion. Talk about jump-starts.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Oh Jesus, Bernie!

(CONTINUED)

BERNIE

Stay there! Don't open that door!  
Oh God. Get away from that door!

Dave takes his hand away from the knob.

DAVE

Okay, okay, Bernie, whatever you say.  
Calm down.

But Bernie is far from calm. He's just this side of insane.

BERNIE

They missed. Davy. Davy Davy. I'm  
so sorry. So sorry I have to do this.  
You, you just keep over there.

Bernie eases to the other side of his desk. Dave's eyes flick from the gun to Bernie. Bernie fumbles the phone, misdials a number, jabs the receiver, dials again.

DAVE

Who are you calling, Bernie?

BERNIE

I have to call him, Davy. Have to.

Dave seems to realize he's still holding the coffee pot. Bernie begins to laugh a very sad, disturbed laugh.

BERNIE (CONT'D)

Oh, Dave. Shouldn't have let you  
within a million miles of it. Not a  
million miles. It's me that should  
be dead.

(reacting to the phone)

Hello? He's here.

In that split second, Bernie's eyes flicker away, and the coffee pot EXPLODES on his head. Bernie goes down hard out of sight behind the desk.

Dave stands there in shock, barely aware he threw it. Coffee and glass cover the desk and carpet. Along with the silver pistol. A beat.

Dave leaps to the pistol, comes up fast, expecting Bernie to rise from the other side any second. Dave rounds the desk. Bernie lies in a puddle of glass and coffee, phone in hand.

DAVE

Oh God, Bernie.

Dave kicks the phone from Bernie's hand. He dials 911.

(CONTINUED)

911 DISPATCHER (V.O.)  
What is the nature of your emergency?

DAVE  
My partner, Bernie, just pulled a gun on me. He flipped out and pulled a gun on me!

911 DISPATCHER (V.O.)  
Calm down, sir. Where is he now?

DAVE  
On the floor behind his desk. I think he's unconscious. Send the police!

911 DISPATCHER (V.O.)  
You are at the Transamerica Pyramid?

DAVE  
28th floor. Hurry please. I got the gun away from him. Send an ambulance too. I hit him with a glass coffee pot. He could be hurt.

911 DISPATCHER (V.O.)  
Stay right there, sir. The police are on their way. Now I want you to put Mr. Levy's gun down and --

DAVE  
-- Wait a minute. I didn't tell you Bernie's last name.

911 DISPATCHER (V.O.)  
Yes you did, sir. Just a second ago.

DAVE  
I never call him Mr. Levy. I call him Bernie. Who is this?

A beat. No answer. The line is dead.

DAVE (CONT'D)  
Who is this?

Dave, in too much shock to worry about it, drops the phone, spins for the door.

INT. TALBOT & BORDICK, CROSS HALL - DAY

Dave rushes out of Bernie's office. He realizes he's still got the gun in his hand and puts it in his coat pocket. He passes empty office after office, trying doors, looking for help. There's no one here.

## INT. TALBOT &amp; BORDICK, RECEPTION - DAY

He barges through big double doors into the reception area. Two men in gray suits are standing there. The taller, senior one - the one with the rugged face, the Appalachian accent - we are about to learn, is named RANSOME.

RANSOME

Good morning, sir. My associate and I are a bit early for our appointment. Would you kindly direct us to a Mr. Elliot, a Mr. David Elliot?

Dave doesn't have an appointment, and barely keeps himself from saying so. He looks over the genteel Ransome and his associate: a monster named JONAH with a BRIEFCASE.

There's something wrong here. It's the cold way they're studying him, standing there side-by-side. And there's no Jonathan in sight. Dave smiles.

DAVE

I think he's on the 27th floor, next floor down. Elevators are over there.

Dave gestures to the elevator alcove WHERE HE SEES Jonathan's styrofoam coffee cup on the carpet, spilled. And a large GRAY ROLLING TRASH BARREL. A corner of plastic liner sticking out is smeared with red, red BLOOD. Goodbye Jonathan.

Ransome eases toward Dave, and Jonah strolls toward a painting on the opposite side of the lobby.

RANSOME

Why thank you. Can you tell me Mr. --

Dave looks him right in the eye as he slips his hand into the pocket with his gun.

DAVE

-- Ashby.

Ransome and Jonah are now on opposite sides of the waiting area. If Dave looks at one, he has to turn his head away from the other. Dave's vaguely aware of what they're doing.

RANSOME

Can you tell me, Mr. Ashby, do you know Mr. Elliot?

DAVE

Dave? Sure, always one of the early birds. Bunch of us come in early. Place'll be mobbed any minute now. You know how it is, make an impression.

(CONTINUED)

Ransome smiles as he glances around at the dead, dead office. Everyone's smiling...nobody's buying.

RANSOME

I most certainly do. Good morning to you. I appreciate your help.

DAVE

Sure. Excuse me.

Dave smiles and pushes open one of the big doors behind him. He's almost out of the room but:

RANSOME

Mr. Elliot --

There's a HITCH in Dave's stride. It gives him away.

RANSOME (CONT'D)

-- Thank you.

Dave whirls in time to see Jonah's BRIEFCASE fall apart, a cosmetic shell for a SUBMACHINE GUN with a silencer.

Dave yanks at his gun. It SNAGS the lining. BAM! It blows a hole through his Bernini. BAM BAM BAM. Dave jerks his pocket up, firing through it as the submachine gun CLATTERS to life. Dave trips, falls backward through the door.

And Jonah goes down atop a sofa, one lucky round in the head. A haze of gun smoke hangs over the room. Ransome, laser-sighted Glock in hand, rushes the door.

INT. TALBOT & BORDICK, MAIN HALL - DAY

Dave throws himself into a photocopier niche farther down the hall as Ransome's laser bead tracks him to it. With a POP, SHEETROCK explodes in a cloud of plaster.

Dave lands on top of the copier. The machine kicks into life beneath him. Ransome slides along the wall, pistol trained on the niche.

Dave burns his hand patting out the flames around the hole in his pocket. The copy light shuttles back and forth, throwing weird shadows and highlights on Dave's face as he shakes with adrenaline.

RANSOME (O.S.)

I have the bogie on 28. He is armed, repeat, armed.

DAVE

Stop! Stop it! This is a mistake!

Ransome, clinical, talks to a Secret Service-style CUFF MIKE.

(CONTINUED)

RANSOME

Appearance is per description.  
Converge on floor 28. Lock out the  
elevators to this floor. Jonah is  
KIA. I want containment and I want  
the collateral damage team.

DAVE

You've got the wrong guy!

Dave hits the stop button on the copier. Ransome PAUSES.

RANSOME

I assure you, Mr. Elliot, this is no  
mistake.

Dave squirms atop the copier and realizes his back is against  
a fire alarm box. He flips it open, and pulls the lever.  
The FIRE ALARM blares throughout the hall.

Ransome gives orders to his cuff mike. The alarm CUTS OFF.

RANSOME (CONT'D)

And today calling 911 will be the  
last thing you want to do.

Dave's voice becomes a whisper.

DAVE

Who are you?

In the b.g., down the hall, Ransome slowly edges his way  
toward us and the niche along the wall.

RANSOME

I'm here to help you. You see, Mr.  
Elliot, you're a dead man.

(beat)

I want you to throw your gun out and  
assume the position. I guarantee  
you'll never feel a thing.

The red LASER DOT plays dangerously close to him. Dave  
watches it, terrified.

DAVE

I haven't done anything! I'm nobody,  
NOBODY!

RANSOME

I understand.

Dave peers down the side of the copy machine. It has wheels.  
Across the hall is a door. No way to tell if it's locked.  
Dave wriggles around, plants his feet...

(CONTINUED)

## RANSOME (CONT'D)

Mr. Elliot, make this easier for yourself. Just step out.

And Dave kicks off the wall. The copier flies at the door - across the way, Dave atop it, and smashes into --

INT. SUPPLY CLOSET - DAY

-- a tiny supply closet! Ransome FIRES at the machine, putting a hole in it. The copier dumps Dave over. Reams of paper and shelves collapse all over him. We think he's out of the frying pan and into the fire as --

INT. TALBOT & BORDICK, MAIN HALL - DAY

-- Ransome rushes up to the closet and does a fast spotter's take. No Dave! Just the copy machine. Ransome reacts and spins, training his gun in all directions. Dave's vanished.

INT. SURVEILLANCE ROOM - DAY

Gasping, Dave scuttles back on the floor away from the FRAME OF A SECRET DOOR. He's gone through the back of the closet! It takes him a beat to make sense of what's just happened.

DAVE

What the hell --

All around him are MONITORS with surveillance-style angles of various locations: offices, cubicles, bathrooms. IN THE B.G., OUT OF FOCUS Ransome LOOMS. Dave feels him, whirls, gun up --

-- to a window looking into the Talbot & Bordick board room. Ransome stares back, and then AMAZINGLY turns away. It takes him a beat to realize he's looking through a one-way mirror.

INT. BOARD ROOM - DAY

Or rather, GREASE BOARD. The plastic greaseboard with one-way paint depicts a graph. Ransome searches the room, unaware he's only feet from Dave, then lifts his mike.

INT. SURVEILLANCE ROOM - DAY

Dave backs away, gun still up, trained on Ransome who paces back and forth on the other side. Dave begins to back away --

RANSOME

I've lost him. Watch access to 28!

-- and BUMPS into a cart with a T.V. and VCR. It BLARES TO LIFE. Dave panics, tries to mute it, but not before we see:

ON THE T.V.

(CONTINUED)

an image of a conference room. Dave, Bernie, Lockyear CEO, JIM CLERIC, slick, 40's, and DR. MORT HIGHGRAVE, 50's, are buried in paper at one end of a table.

HIGHGRAVE (V.O.)

I don't understand your objections to this deal.

DAVE (V.O.)

Dr. Highgrave, Lockyear's undervalued. You guys have a license to make money here. You saved a lot of lives last year with the Wuhan C vaccine. Ten years ago you guys beat the Hong Kong Flu, and your stock price tripled.

The VOLUME dies as Dave finally manages to get it muted.

RESUME

Dave whirls back, but there's no sign Ransome's heard. Ransome exits the board room.

Dave lowers his gun and turns back to the surveillance gear, ignoring the T.V. for the moment. On the surrounding MONITORS Ransome moves from office to office, the audio feed of his search coming through with a faint electronic crackle.

DAVE (CONT'D)

My God.

The scope of the corporate espionage hardware boggles the mind. Rows upon rows of surveillance and eavesdropping equipment, VOICE STRESS ANALYZERS and more.

An INFRA-RED MONITOR catches Ransome as he enters the board room. The monitor reads: BODY LANGUAGE DATABASE.

DAVE (CONT'D)

No wonder we're so good.

Dave returns to the T.V. He turns the volume up quietly.

ON THE T.V.

A SECRETARY comes in with a tray and three COFFEES. They share them out.

BERNIE (V.O.)

Thank you.

The videotaped Dave takes a drink as the Secretary leaves.

(CONTINUED)

DAVE (V.O.)  
 Senterex will pay a lot more money  
 for your company than you're asking.  
 Why not take it?

Highgrave takes a sip of his coffee, makes a face.

HIGHGRAVE (V.O.)  
 Sugar?

They switch cups.

DAVE (V.O.)  
 That'd be mine. Sorry. Got any cream?

As Dave hunts for some unsuccessfully, Cleric speaks up.

CLERIC (V.O.)  
 Senterex is a good company; they're  
 ready to move. We could blow the  
 deal if we get greedy.

Bernie sits up straight, looks at Highgrave uneasily.

DAVE (V.O.)  
 Come on! This proprietary modelling  
 software of yours - narrowing next  
 year's flu down to a handful of  
 mutations, starting the vaccines early,  
 waiting to see which bug appears -  
 it's a winner, guys. Granted, you  
 hit one year in four, but when you  
 do...

The Secretary comes back in.

SECRETARY (V.O.)  
 Mr. Elliot, it's your call.

DAVE (V.O.)  
 Tell 'em I'll return. No. Hold on.  
 I need a quick word. Excuse me.

Dave gets up, leaves the room with his black coffee mug.  
 Cleric looks at Bernie, a tight smile on his face.

CLERIC (V.O.)  
 Your boy's a tough S.O.B.

Bernie laughs.

BERNIE (V.O.)  
 Davy? Heart of gold, but don't  
 underestimate him...

(CONTINUED)

The other guys laugh. Dave comes back in, green mug in hand. He takes a drink as he shuts the door.

DAVE

What'd I miss?

RESUME

Dave fights off the first chills of shock.

BERNIE (V.O.)

Shit. My head.

Dave snaps around. It's Bernie talking, but not on the videotape. He's on --

ANOTHER MONITOR -- live, from just down the hall. Ransome cuts him short:

RANSOME (V.O.)

Where is he? I lost him in the hall.

BERNIE (V.O.)

The hall? That's where --

Dave doesn't wait to hear the rest. He lunges for the exit.

INT. TALBOT & BORDICK RECEPTION - DAY

Dave dashes into the reception lobby. He spins about, three halls to chose from. He turns right.

INT. SIDE HALL - DAY

Dave races through a series of doors, down the hall to a last fire door marked STAIRS. He's about to crash through... when it OPENS. A surprised SECURITY GUARD stops dead in his tracks. A young guy, big like a Marine, not Jonathan.

DAVE

Officer. Thank God. There's a man with a gun trying to kill me.

The Guard looks at Dave's gun, and his hand goes to his hip.

SECURITY GUARD

Okay, sir. First thing's first. I need you to give me that gun.

Dave hesitates, looks back. No sign of Ransome yet.

SECURITY GUARD (CONT'D)

I don't want anyone getting hurt here.

(CONTINUED)

DAVE

You're right. I think they killed Jonathan. You're going to need help.

Dave starts to offer him the gun.

SECURITY GUARD

Don't worry. Everything's under control now.

There is something in his voice that bothers Dave. As the Guard reaches for the gun, Dave jams it to his head.

DAVE

First thing's first. You don't seem too upset about Jonathan. Maybe you can tell me his last name.

The Guard draws a blank. And then smiles. He's a fake, one of Ransome's men: JOSHUA. As he turns his head, Dave sees the EARPIECE in his other ear. Dave, horrified, takes Joshua's gun off his belt, backs away.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Keep your hands up! Up!  
(gesturing to earpiece)  
Take that thing off.

The Guard complies, begins to laugh an eerie, unnerving laugh.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Who are you?

Dave snatches the earpiece/cuff mike combo from him.

JOSHUA

Just a guy that gets paid to do a job. Same as you. Same as everyone.

In slow-mo shock Dave backs through the fire door.

INT. STAIRS - DAY

Dave tosses Joshua's gun over the railing. As it CLANKS its way down 28 stories he starts for the stairs, some primal instinct driving him UP.

INT. 30TH FLOOR - DAY

Dave bangs through the door to the stairs and runs down a long, long hall. Abandoned offices left and right. Not a soul in sight, like a nightmare.

DAVE

Where is everybody? Harry.

INT. 30TH FLOOR, MAIN HALL - DAY

Dave hustles down a long, wide main hall lined with independent professional suites. One office stands open. The light is on. Dave breaks into a jog.

INT. HARRY'S OFFICE - DAY

Dave bursts into a posh law office. Sitting at his desk, feet up on it, hidden by the Chronicle is HARRY HALLIWELL.

DAVE

Harry, oh thank God --

Harry lowers the paper. He's sleek, a few pounds overweight, friendly, and raises a skeptical eyebrow.

HARRY

Hey slugger, you look like hell.  
Guess you couldn't handle that extra  
set on Sunday after all.

Harry watches bemused as Dave shuts the door, spins around in the throes of paranoia.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Don't worry, I'm not going to whip  
your ass this weekend. Just bought a  
new 40-foot cabin cruiser --

Harry gestures to a PHOTO of the cruiser like a proud parent. Dave braces himself on the desk, across from Harry.

DAVE

-- you're not going to believe this --

HARRY

-- don't have to Davy, I'm your lawyer --

DAVE

-- Bernie just tried to kill me.

HARRY

Cheaper than firing you --

DAVE

Then these two guys tried to kill me.  
I killed one of them.

HARRY

Go Dirty Harry.

Harry picks up the paper to continue reading.

DAVE

-- this isn't a joke.

(CONTINUED)

And Dave thumps Bernie's gun down on the desk. Harry looks from it to Dave's eyes, and stands up.

HARRY

Shit. 911.

DAVE

No! Listen, I know this sounds nuts, but they've got control of the phone lines somehow. I don't think they'll let any calls go through to the cops.

HARRY

Dave, calm down. Let me get you a drink of water, and we'll think this through.

DAVE

Okay. Okay. There have to be four or five of them at least. Probably watching the lobby downstairs...

Dave puts his head in his hands as Harry rises, walks around behind him, checks the door. Dave lowers his hands. He breathes, and right in front of him sits a BRASS LAMP. IT REFLECTS a BLUR of motion.

Dave throws himself out of the chair as a GOLF CLUB SMASHES down on the back of it. Dave scrambles aside. Harry stands there, 3-iron in hand, shocked that he missed.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Harry, oh Jesus, Harry...

Dave backpedals, warding Harry off with his gun.

HARRY

Dave. Just calm down. I'm sorry.

DAVE

Harry, for God's sake.

Tears fill up in Dave's eyes. Tears of fear, of rage, of betrayal. He pushes them away.

DAVE (CONT'D)

I'm your best friend. Why are you doing this to me? What did I do?

HARRY

It'd be easier if you just do what they say. Cause they're gonna get you, Dave. They will.

Dave's world spins. Warding Harry off with the gun, he gropes for the door, flings it open and disappears into the hall.

INT. 30TH FLOOR, ELEVATOR ALCOVE - DAY

An elevator PINGS. And then another elevator PINGS. And then another. All of the elevators are arriving at once. The doors open, disgorging Ransome and his troops: Joshua, AMOS, ZEBEDIAH, JUDAH, ZACHARIA, DANIEL, JEREMIAH, and RUTH. They bristle with briefcases like Jonah's, all of them in gray suits. They fan out in pairs.

INT. FIRE STAIRS - DAY

Dave jumps down flight after flight. He slings himself from one banister to the next. Somewhere above a DOOR BANGS OPEN. Dave flings a look up the stairwell. Another door far below BANGS OPEN. Trapped. He goes out the door beside him into --

INT. 23RD FLOOR HALL - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

-- a hall. He looks hopelessly at the door he just came through. Then digs a handful of coins out of his pocket. He leans on the door, jams the coins into the space between the door and the frame, PENNYING it shut. He takes off.

INT. FIRE STAIRS - DAY

Ransome grabs the door from the other side, but it WON'T OPEN. He shakes it, but it still won't open. For a second, there's a terrifying look on his face. Good humor wins out. With a wicked grin he puts his gun away, glances at his men.

RANSOME

Who ever said the fraternity experience was a waste of money? You two, up.

Joshua and Amos put their pistols away and climb up the stairs. Ransome heads down, lifting his cuff mike.

RANSOME (CONT'D)

Status.

INTERCUT TO:

INT. COMMAND VEHICLE - DAY

An eighteen-wheel refrigerator truck at a loading dock somewhere down in the bowels of the building. But behind the plastic strips of the freezer screen it's filled with electronics. A TECHNICIAN checks his screens.

TECHNICIAN

Spotters in place in lobby, all service exits. Unless the bogie can fly, he isn't getting out.

INT. STAIRWELL - DAY

RANSOME

Send Halliwell to the security office.  
He knows what to do.

END INTERCUT

INT. STAIRWELL - DAY

Dave, huffing and holding his shoes in his hand, races down the stairs in stocking feet. He pauses on a landing outside a door to the third floor, listens, and then goes through.

INT. 3RD FLOOR - DAY

Dave eases the door shut and puts his shoes back on. He rounds a corner. Up ahead, a sign hangs in the hall: SECURITY OFFICE. Dave races up to it, gun in pocket. He reaches for the door, and it OPENS.

A SECRETARY comes out, holds it for him. But Dave freezes.

HIS POV:

Inside the security office, back to him, HARRY explains to the Building Security MANAGER:

HARRY

Dave's been under enormous strain since his wife died of cancer last year. Buried himself in his work. I just wish I had seen the signs.

MANAGER

Ain't your fault, bud. Don't worry, we'll put this fax out around the building, somebody'll spot him.

RESUME

SECRETARY

Well? You coming or going?

Dave snaps out of it, looks at her in astonishment, and backs off. She shrugs and goes about her business.

Two COPS round the corner, approach the security office. Dave stops, is about to go back to them... and sees they have BRIEFCASES! They're distracted by the Secretary for a beat. And when they look up, THERE'S NO SIGN OF DAVE.

INT. STAIRWELL - DAY

Dave staggers up the stairs.

(CONTINUED)

The CAMERA DESCENDS PAST HIM, the stairs spiraling down floor after floor, dropping away like a vortex trying to suck Dave down into a netherworld.

INT. 39TH FLOOR, RENOVATING OFFICE - DAY

Dave, exhausted, emerges from the stairs. The entire floor is being remodeled with large glass interior walls and doors. Very modern, very light, strange reflections. A central cavernous area filled with new cubicles.

Dave steps over rolled-up carpet, past paint cans. VOICES carry through its expanse, the echoes of WORKMEN somewhere. Dave registers a huge PAIR OF SUCTION CUPS used for lifting glass attached to a pane on a cart. He spots a duffel bag. He takes the bag, throws a wad of twenties in its place.

INT. 41ST FLOOR - DAY

Dave, now wearing the worker's baggy overalls and glasses, peers out the window of this small floor. Just beyond, anchored to the building against the wind is a MICROWAVE dish and antenna array. Rain patters on the glass.

Dave inserts the earpiece of Joshua's mike set. He listens in to the chatter of Ransome's men. But STATIC screws with the reception, courtesy of the microwave dish. Dave closes his eyes, summons his nerve, and works the radio mike.

NOTE: STATIC interferes with the clarity of the V.O. portions of their conversation.

DAVE

This is David Elliot. I'm calling the guy who's trying to kill me. The boss guy in the gray suit.

INTERCUT TO:

INT. COMMAND VEHICLE - DAY

Ransome snaps his fingers, getting a Technician's attention.

RANSOME

Mr. Elliot, good of you to join us!  
I see you're on the party line now.  
I've wondered how you've been avoiding us this last hour. I guess we're going to have to change frequencies.

INT. 41ST FLOOR - DAY

Dave paces, undeterred.

(CONTINUED)

DAVE

We have to talk. This has to be some sort of mistake. There has to be some sort of deal we can make here.

INT. COMMAND VEHICLE - DAY

Ransome smiles.

RANSOME

Oh, really. A deal. Deals are your life, aren't they Mr. Elliot?

DAVE (V.O.)

Listen, this isn't very fun for me, so you can can the Mr. Polite shit. We need to sort out this mistake. So for starters, what do I call you?

The Technician shakes his head in frustration.

TECHNICIAN

I'm getting nuked with narrow-band.

RANSOME

Then trace the narrow band and give me a ball park.

(to Dave)

If I were to give you a name, what would you give me in return?

INT. 41ST FLOOR - DAY

Dave shakes his head, trying to think of something. What does he want out of this conversation? How to get it?

DAVE

What do you want?

INT. COMMAND VEHICLE - DAY

Ransome's eyes light up with a mischievous, what-the-hell look. He lifts his mike again to talk to Dave.

RANSOME

Well, since I imagine you're not interested in giving yourself up... how about a stock tip? I know your record. Pretty good. Made a lot of guys rich. You inside guys always make each other rich. How 'bout sharing the wealth a little? As I always say, knowledge is money.

INT. 41ST FLOOR - DAY

Dave shakes his head, creeps out, unable to believe he's here having this conversation right now.

DAVE

Will you talk to me about what's going on?

RANSOME (V.O.)

That'd be the least I could do.

DAVE

Okay. Sell short Zenosystems. They're about to get the business end of a patent-infringement suit.

(beat)

Now you have to give me something. Who are you? Why are you trying to kill me?

RANSOME (V.O.)

As to your first question, why don't you call me... Ransome?

(beat)

As for the second, I'm trying to kill you because I'm being paid obscene amounts of money.

Dave reacts, runs his hand through his hair, trying to make sense of this insanity, this strange bargain. And when Dave finally speaks, it's with a reliance in Ransome's word.

DAVE

Does it have something to do with some deal I'm involved in?

INT. COMMAND VEHICLE - DAY

Ransome watches the Technician's screens, the fluctuating bar graphs relaying the signal strength of Dave's radio.

RANSOME

I can't tell you that. It would be a breach of professional confidence.

DAVE (V.O.)

I take it that means yes.

RANSOME

Honesty is a sacred thing to me. I think it is for you too. Now, Mr. Elliot, you must believe me. I will kill you, and I will make it painless if you let me.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

## RANSOME (CONT'D)

If you try to run from me, you'll bring the Grim Reaper to every friend, every loved one you turn to. I swear it.

INT. 41ST FLOOR - DAY

Dave is at wit's end.

DAVE

I can't do anything to fix things if you won't tell me what it is I've done!

INT. COMMAND VEHICLE - DAY

The Technician circles the 41st floor with a light pen.

TECHNICIAN

Microwave! He's here by the dish!

INT. LOADING DOCK - DAY

Ransome leaves the truck and shoots across the loading dock like a shark with a whiff of blood. His men fall in.

RANSOME

I'd love to tell you. I sincerely would. In fact, I believe it would be to both our benefits to do so. But it's against my orders.

(beat)

And you wouldn't believe me if I did.

INT. 41ST FLOOR - DAY

DAVE

Try me.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

Ransome, Judah and Ruth board an elevator, and hit 41.

RANSOME

I don't think so. Why don't you just sit back, relax, and tell me where you are?

INT. 41ST FLOOR - DAY

Dave pounds his fist against the wall in frustration.

(CONTINUED)

DAVE

Oh, sure. I'm in the cafeteria on the eleventh floor.

(beat, changing tack)

Let me talk to Bernie.

RANSOME (V.O.)

(through static)

Unfortunately, even if I was the kind of man who would tolerate contact with my employers- and I'm not saying Mr. Levy is my employer- you've sent him to San Francisco General for a couple of days I'm afraid.

INT. 41ST FLOOR - DAY

That makes Dave feel bad.

RANSOME (V.O.)

(through static)

I have an observation for you. An important one, I think. You've spent your life making deals.

(beat, deadly. This

part is LOUD AND CLEAR)

But some things you can't deal your way out of.

Dave realizes the static is gone.

He bolts from his spot by the window just in time. Ransome, Ruth and Judah emerge from an elevator down the hall. But Dave slams again into the stairwell. They hear the door and give chase.

INT. 32ND FLOOR HALL - DAY

It's the 32nd floor. Corporate offices. Fleeing in panic, Dave slams through a pair of double doors.

ON THE OTHER SIDE he pulls his TIE out of a pocket and loops it around the door handles. He yanks it tight, spins, turning an abrupt left into --

INT. HENDERSON CONSULTANTS - DAY

-- another corporate suite and shuts the door. The receptionist looks up from her desk. He starts to bluff his way past her into the rear offices --

DAVE

Someone called about the --

But comes up short. The receptionist is Mary.

(CONTINUED)

MARY

What are you doing here?

There's a BANG from the hall outside. Mary looks up in alarm.

MARY (CONT'D)

What was that?

Dave looks hurriedly at the rear office areas. He could run down there... but instead turns to Mary, intense.

DAVE

There's no reason in the entire world for you to believe what I'm about to say. But there are people out in the hall who are trying to kill me, and I haven't done a thing.

Mary slowly rolls away from him in her chair. CRACK! The door out in the hall gives.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Please hide me.

There's a BEEP from her computer terminal. Her eyes flicker over to it - force of habit: ON THE COMPUTER MONITOR an E-mail with a digital photo of Dave, reads: IF YOU SEE THIS MAN, CALL SECURITY 5-1111.

RUTH (O.S.)

He's not down here!

Mary's phone rings. She looks from Dave to the door. Dave leans toward her, cutting through all the distractions.

DAVE

Did you like me? On our date? Did you like me?

Mary nods.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Did I seem insane to you?

MARY

No. You were nice.

DAVE

Then believe me. Help me.

Mary stares.

MARY

Quick.

(CONTINUED)

She points to the space under her desk. Dave whips around the desk, throws himself under it. Mary scoots forward, hitting the button on her phone JUST as the door opens. Ransome enters, Judah and Ruth on his wings.

MARY (CONT'D)

Henderson Consulting. Just a moment.  
(to Ransome)  
May I help you?

UNDER THE DESK

Dave tries silently, carefully to slip the gun out of his pocket, but it's impossible with Mary's legs in the way.

RANSOME (O.S.)

We're with building security. Did a man come through your office within, say, the last minute?

RESUME

MARY

No, but it sounded like King Kong just went by out there.

RANSOME

Thank you. Sorry to trouble you.

Ransome wheels for the door.

UNDER THE DESK

Dave closes his eyes in relief.

MARY (O.S.)

(to Ransome)  
Hang on a second.

Dave grabs her calf, puts pressure on it.

RESUME

Ransome pauses, turns around.

MARY (CONT'D)

This just came in. Same guy?

She turns her terminal. Ransome comes back to look at it.

RANSOME

Yes, Ma'am.

MARY

What'd he do?

(CONTINUED)

RANSOME

Mr. Elliot is having an ugly nervous breakdown: paranoid delusions, persecution fantasies, whole nine yards. Wife died, I guess, and he cracked. Attacked his boss, pulled a gun on his friend. We need to find him before he hurts someone.

(beat)

Are you sure you haven't seen him?

Mary studies Ransome. He studies her back. There's something in his charm that seems... practiced. Ruth and Judah are trying to look down the hall to the back offices.

MARY

Yeah, I'm sure.

RANSOME

You'll let us know if you do.

It's not a question. He exits. The door shuts. Mary looks down at Dave as he emerges from under the desk: his wild, staring eyes. He sure looks like a psychopath.

INT. HENDERSON CONSULTING, SUPPLY ROOM - DAY

Mary ushers Dave into a rear supply room, shuts the door after them. Dave wheels on her.

DAVE

I have to get out of the building.

MARY

Just calm down.

Mary just stares at him. Judging. Dave pulls his EARPIECE out of his ear and shows her the cuff mike. She reacts.

DAVE

They use these to communicate.

MARY

I'm going to call the police.

DAVE

No! They're monitoring the phones.

He turns around and around like a trapped animal. He looks at her, wild-eyed, and sees her reserved, tight face. She doesn't believe him. She can't.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Listen. You've been a saint. Just... don't let 'em know I was here.

(CONTINUED)

He moves to open the door to let her out, but she closes it.

MARY

If I help you get out, will you go straight to the police station? If you're in danger like you say you are, they'll help you. If you're having some sort of nervous breakdown they'll help you. Fair?

INT. LOBBY, TRANSAMERICA BUILDING - DAY

Ransome stands with Samuel and Isaiah near the lobby's revolving doors. The lunch-time CROWD pours out of elevators and down an escalator from the 2nd floor mezzanine above.

SAMUEL

What if he got out?

RANSOME

He's waiting for the lunch hour crowd.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

Mary boards the elevator. Another woman joins her. Mary pushes the button for the lobby. The doors shut.

MARY

Bombs away.

Oh, Jesus. The woman next to her is Dave.

DAVE

I'm going to die.

Mary looks over at him. Heavy makeup, peace symbol earrings, Doc Maartens, black leggings under a black skirt. Mary's going for an alternative, eurotrash look with him.

MARY

Trust me.

The elevator slows. It's stopping on 28.

DAVE

Uh oh. This is my floor.

Dave switches places with Mary, shrinking into a corner. The doors open and three of Dave's male CO-WORKERS get on.

DAVE'S POV:

the doors to Talbot & Bordick stand open. Beyond, the lobby is in PERFECT CONDITION. Not a sign of the firefight. The big double doors to the executive suite which Jonah shot the hell out of have been replaced. A beat, and the doors close.

(CONTINUED)

## RESUME

Dave reacts to the repaired lobby. Co-Worker #1 smiles at Mary, glances at Dave, hesitates. A flicker of recognition, but finally the man looks away. Mary glances at Dave who closes his eyes, willing himself silent and invisible.

INT. GROUND FLOOR ELEVATOR ALCOVE - DAY

Co-worker #1 holds the elevator open, letting Mary out first. He holds the door for Dave, not recognizing him. Dave strides out, not looking back. But Co-worker #2 is staring --

CO-WORKER #2

-- Dave?

INT. LOBBY, TRANSAMERICA BUILDING - DAY

Dave glances back, but the crowd swallows him up, surges out into the lobby, toward the exit. Dave catches up with Mary. They glimpse Ransome over at the revolving doors.

MARY

Goodbye. I hope you'll be okay.

Dave nods his thanks. He means it. And then he veers toward an information desk, Mary for the doors farthest from Ransome.

AT THE DESK

Dave stops, pretending to need directions. He glances back, sees Mary go right past Samuel, through the doors to freedom.

Ransome scans faces, intense, sensing Dave somewhere out there. But then, big as life, in his earpiece comes --

DAVE (V.O.)

Ransome, I want to talk.

(bus, outside sounds)

I know we can make a deal.

ISAIAH

Bus stop! He got past us!

Ransome looks shocked, recovers fast, and spins for the door.

EXT. TRANSAMERICA BUILDING - DAY

Mary reaches the street and drops a paper bag in a TRASH CAN next to an idling BUS. As she vanishes into the city, the CAMERA FINDS THE OPEN BAG: in it, her walkman is taped to the radio mike. It's playing back Dave's voice.

INT. LOBBY, TRANSAMERICA BUILDING - DAY

Dave sees Ransome's men race through the crowd for the doors. He waits a beat, then makes a bee-line for the exit.

EXT. TRANSAMERICA BUILDING - DAY

Ransome stops. Hundreds of people, no Elliot. His men spinning people around. His instinct prickles, he turns and looks back. The rest of his men continue to swarm across the pedestrian mall, a couple of them ONTO THE BUS as it pulls away.

INT. LOBBY, TRANSAMERICA BUILDING - DAY

Dave goes through the revolving door, spinning it around to the RIGHT, almost there -- and RANSOME'S IN THE NEXT PARTITION! They see each other, but Dave's faster and THROWS HIMSELF forward, going for his gun as he does. With its momentum already going his way, the door swings him around fast, hard and --

EXT. TRANSAMERICA BUILDING - DAY

-- OUT! Dave goes down on the concrete, gun bouncing out of his hand and FIRING. The CROWD SCREAMS. Dave reaches out, but the gun disappears in the stampede. He springs up and runs like hell.

Dave is lost in seconds in the milling panic around the doors. Ransome's men are carried back by the crowd as the CAMERA cranes up and away from the growing chaos...

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

A cup of cold coffee. It's been sitting here a long time.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL:

Dave in a set of donated clothes, still huddling in Mary's jacket. He's been sitting here in the small interrogation room much longer.

Across a table from him lounge two DICKS, a fat one puffing an obscene cigar and his skinny partner who paces over to:

A BLACKBOARD with a rats' nest of lines and categories connecting who killed whom and who tried to kill whom, and where everything took place. There are subcategories: MYSTERY ROOMS, MYSTERY GUYS, MYSTERY DEAD GUYS.

DAVE

You don't believe me.

(CONTINUED)

1ST DICK

A man walks into work one day at a place he's been employed for eight years. He steals his partner's coffee, and his partner tries to kill him. When the man manages to clock his partner and escape, the partner's backup team of professional hitmen chase him all over a crowded highrise in the middle of a business day, and nobody notices --

DAVE

It was early. Nobody was in yet.

1ST DICK

-- the man, who is just a businessman, escapes these ruthless mercenaries by dressing as a woman.

2ND DICK

Is that right?

Dave nods yes, leans back under the stares of the two Dicks.

1ST DICK

What's not to believe? You haven't touched your coffee.

DAVE

No cream. Look, you said you talked to Bernie.

2ND DICK

We had ourselves a real nice chat.

1ST DICK

Nice guy, though pretty shaken up.

2ND DICK

Understandably.

1ST DICK

Your pal Harry said you had some kind of nervous breakdown, Dave.

2ND DICK

Said you were waving a gun around, convinced that everyone was trying to kill you.

1ST DICK

He told us you were under a lot of stress with your wife dying and all.

(CONTINUED)

DAVE

This has nothing to do with my wife!  
I'm not having a breakdown! What  
about the door in the hall?

2ND DICK

Sorry, Dave, just a big supply of  
Bics and no secret room.

DAVE

No, the secret DOOR was in the back  
of the closet.

1ST DICK

Look, Vincent Price, we're trying to  
help.

2ND DICK

We really are.

1ST DICK

But you're not helping us.

Dave stands, paces. It's his last chance at being believed.

2ND DICK

Give us something that makes sense.  
Preferably something that doesn't  
involve the mother ship.

Dave, desperate, has nothing left to offer.

DAVE

This isn't going anywhere. Is there  
someone else here I can talk to?

One Dick looks at the other. The other looks at Dave, nods.

1ST DICK

Sure is.

INT. HALL OUTSIDE INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

The two plainclothes Dicks hand Dave over to a BIG COP and a  
LIL' COP in blues.

1ST DICK

See ya later, pal. The Doc'll be in  
in the morning. He understands  
problems like yours.

The Dicks chuckle and leave. Big Cop and Lil' Cop turn Dave  
around and lead him off down the hall, furious.

INT. LOCKUP - NIGHT

The two Cops push Dave into a completely empty wing of lockup. The steel door closes with a definitive, ringing CLANK which COMPLETELY SILENCES THE SOUNDS OF THE STATION. The Lil' Cop opens the cell. Dave walks in. The Lil' Cop follows him.

LIL' COP  
Gimme your belt.

Dave undoes the belt, hands it to the Lil' Cop.

BIG COP  
Now up against the bars.

DAVE  
For my own good, huh?

Dave grabs the bars inside the cell. The Lil' Cop kicks his legs apart. The Big Cop remains outside the cell.

BIG COP  
Something like that.

There's something in the way he says it that makes Dave look up at his eyes... and see the Big Cop's cold smile. And from out of nowhere the LOOP of his belt cinches tight around his neck like a noose. Dave gets a hand inside it just in time.

The end of the belt goes OVER a cross bar and into the Big Cop's hands. Dave FLAILS, but the Lil' Cop wraps him in a bear hug. The Big Cop HOISTS them both into the air.

Dave kicks, spinning, swinging like a pendulum. His face swells. He purples, until at last he manages to get a foot on the cross bar on the side of the tank.

He SHOVES off, spinning as hard as he can to twist the Lil' Cop around, and SLAMS the Lil' Cop into the side of the cell. The Lil' Cop grunts in pain, but hangs on and curses:

LIL' COP  
Stun the sonofabitch! Stun him!

The Big Cop, holding the end of the belt in one hand, fishes for the STUNNER at his belt and slips it through the bars at Dave. Dave, on the very edge of consciousness GRABS THE BAR THE BIG COP IS BRACED AGAINST.

The stunner's electrical charge JOLTS Dave and the Lil' Cop hanging on him, conducts across the bar, frying the Big Cop too. They all fall to the floor. A beat.

Dave's world spins. He gropes the belt off his neck. The Lil' Cop, underneath him, is out.

(CONTINUED)

The Big one on the other side of the bars tries to sit up. Dave fumbles in numb-motion for the stunner which is lying right there.

Outside the cell, the stunned Big Cop becomes aware, gropes for the safety strap on his service piece --

-- but Dave sticks the stunner RIGHT IN HIS FACE, frying him again. And this time the Big Cop is out.

EXT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Dave comes down the station's front steps to the sidewalk. His knees shake. He braces himself on the hand-rail, buffeted by waves of nausea and paranoia. He checks the officer's revolver he has taken, and pushes himself off into the night.

INT. BANQUET HALL - NIGHT

A posh banquet hall with seating for a thousand. The AUDIENCE APPLAUDS wildly. A SIGN over a head table reads HUMANITY FIRST. THE 'AMERICA HELPS' AWARD.

At the table, surrounded by VIPS, sits ARMAND VOORADIAN, dashing, grayish, in a black tux, larger than life. The APPLAUSE THUNDERS. At the podium, Cleric turns to Vooradian.

CLERIC

Ladies and Gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to introduce a man of conscience. A man of action. My boss - hope you remember this at bonus time -

(gets a polite laugh from the room)

- Armand Vooradian!

Vooradian stands. The crowd ROARS. He gives a shy and devastating smile. The younger Cleric puts a hand on Vooradian's shoulder, escorting him to the podium, superficial next to Vooradian's genuine charm.

AT A BANQUET TABLE

At one of the tables Harry, in a tux, feels his vibrating pager go off. He checks the number, excuses himself.

AT THE BACK OF THE HALL

In the shadows, Harry takes out a cell phone and dials as Vooradian begins to speak.

VOORADIAN

Thank you, thank you very much. We're here tonight because we all share a common belief: money isn't everything.

(CONTINUED)

HARRY

(to phone)  
What is it?

RANSOME (V.O.)

Your two men at the precinct missed.

Harry closes his eyes, composes himself.

VOORADIAN

While Lockyear, under my stewardship, has done a lot of good for the world, I've come to the conclusion that it's time for us to part ways. I intend to devote my time and the profits from the sale of Lockyear to my philanthropic foundation --

Harry eyes Cleric up on the dias behind Vooradian. There's a big round of APPLAUSE.

HARRY

Jesus Christ, it's going to hit the fan.

RANSOME (V.O.)

There is an upside. There's an APB out on him now. We're in their system. If the cops find him, we'll know within ten minutes. Don't worry I've seen this type of thing before. He's confused, scared shitless. He needs a friendly face. He'll turn up at one of his intimates. And we have them all covered.

HARRY

You'd better.

Harry turns off the phone, heads back for his table as the applause dies down.

VOORADIAN

-- and Lockyear, in a new strategic partnership, will continue to make good things for the world...

EXT. DAVE'S SISTER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Dave staggers down the sidewalk in the driving rain. Across the street stands a row of postcard-perfect San Francisco townhomes. Dave peers at the one his sister owns. All the lights are out.

DAVE

Come on, Wendy, be home.

## EXT. TOWNHOUSE ROOF ACROSS THE STREET - NIGHT

Opposite Dave's sister's house, on the roof, the CAMERA FINDS a shapeless tarp, rain beading off. It shifts. The CAMERA MOVES to it, discovering Amos under the spotter's cover. He's peering out from a slit with a night-vision instrument.

The CAMERA moves past, off the roof, down descending to street level right to --

## EXT. DAVE'S SISTER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Dave standing directly underneath him. He can't be seen, but all Amos has to do is look over the edge. Dave hesitates, staring at the house across the road. He looks up and down the street, starts off the curb --

-- but a minivan pulls around a corner down the street, heading toward him. Dave drops down into a below-street-level stoop in front of the nearest house.

He peers over. The minivan pulls into the driveway of the house. Dave breathes in relief.

## EXT. TOWNHOUSE ROOF - NIGHT

The tarp parts, revealing Amos. He draws up a plastic rifle bag, lets it fall, revealing the scoped sniper weapon with silencer. He lifts it, trains it on the minivan.

## EXT. DAVE'S SISTER'S TOWNHOME - NIGHT

The minivan opens, and out hops Dave's very pregnant sister WENDY. Dave stands. Wendy heads for the front door with a bag of groceries, dragging a little KID.

## EXT. TOWNHOUSE ROOF - NIGHT

Amos peers through the sight.

## HIS POV

NIGHT VISION, Wendy. The crosshairs pause on her, checking, move over the little Kid's head to the darkened interior of the minivan. No Dave.

## EXT. DAVE'S SISTER'S TOWNHOME - NIGHT

Dave starts out of the stoop as Wendy stands at the front door. He draws in his breath to call out, but for some reason stops.

Wendy fumbles with the keys. Dave eyes her stomach, the kid. Indecision. He wants, needs, so badly to rush across to her, get help, but he's paralyzed. He can't risk their lives. Wendy pauses, sensing someone out there.

(CONTINUED)

DAVE

No.

Dave snaps around, hunkers in his jacket, begins to walk away fast.

Wendy watches the shadowy figure of Dave disappear down the street, and not knowing him, turns and enters her house.

EXT. TOWNHOUSE ROOF - NIGHT

Amos sees Wendy's over-the-shoulder glance, lowers his rifle, puzzles, then slides down the pitch of the roof to the edge. He looks over.

HIS POV

Nothing. The street below is empty. Dave is gone.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO GENERAL HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Dave pauses on the street corner across from the 15-story medical plaza.

EXT. HOSPITAL, MAIN ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Dave eyes the main entrance lobby through the big glass windows. And then he spots her: Ruth. She sits in a waiting area reading a magazine, briefcase at her side. She looks up at him, but can't see him because of the glare. Dave backs away into the night.

EXT. EMERGENCY ROOM ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Dave rounds a corner, finding a group of shouting, excited PARAMEDICS hoisting a WOMAN out of an ambulance on a gurney. They're driving her straight for the electric doors to the emergency room. A beat, then Dave lunges for the action.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM ENTRANCE - NIGHT

The electric door whooshes open, and Dave enters the Emergency Room, helping the Paramedics rush the woman in.

DAVE

(shouting at doctors)  
My wife needs help!

The DOCTORS rush over, joining the rolling chaos.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Honey, I'm right here. I love you.

The groggy Woman squints up at Dave from her oxygen mask. Who the hell is this?

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Dave lets the Doctors race the woman away, and finds himself in a long, silent corridor. Next to him, a door marked LAUNDRY.

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Dave, now in SURGICAL GREENS, rides up. The doors open.

INT. 10TH FLOOR - NIGHT

Dave gets off the elevator, eyes the nurses' station and the long hall of rooms beyond. Outside one of them, in a chair, naps Joshua, in a policeman's uniform.

Dave spots him. No choice. Undeterred, he advances on the nurses' station. It's abandoned. Dave picks a chart off a nearby cart for use as a prop. Finally NURSE #2 appears.

DAVE

Hi, Mr. Levy for radiology?

NURSE #2

Again?

DAVE

Yep. Guy must have good insurance.

The tough nurse checks her papers.

NURSE #2

I thought they were doing this tomorrow morning?

DAVE

It is tomorrow morning. The doc wants 'em for breakfast.

NURSE #2

Okay. I'll call transportation. He'll see you up there in ten.

INT. RADIOLOGY LAB - NIGHT

Lights are off and curtains pulled in the x-ray room. Dave, sweating, sags against a counter to wait. He looks around, then opens a cabinet under the counter. Medical supplies, etc. And then he finds a supply of BOTTLED WATER. He takes a bottle out, opens it, drinks, screws the cap back on.

There's a NOISE FROM THE HALL. Dave spots the door to the adjoining supply room, and goes through, leaving the door open a crack.

INT. SUPPLY ROOM - NIGHT

Dave peers through the crack into the x-ray room.

HIS POV:

In his haste, he's left the BOTTLE ON THE COUNTER.

INT. RADIOLOGY LAB - NIGHT

Dave starts back to retrieve it, but the door opens first, and an ORDERLY turns on the light. He rolls Bernie in on a gurney.

BERNIE

(hoarse voice)

Shit, can you turn off that light?  
Nobody's letting me get any sleep.

ORDERLY

That's what happens when you get a  
concussion, Mr. Levy.

BERNIE

Can I at least have a drink?

ORDERLY

Afraid not. I'll be back in a little  
while.

The Orderly leaves, shuts the door behind him. Dave watches him for a beat.

Bernie, face stitched and bandaged, lies there, closes his eyes. No way he's going back to sleep. Then he spots the water bottle. He stares at it. We think it's tipping him off to Dave --

-- but then he grabs it, opens it, and takes a long drink.

Dave emerges from the supply room. Bernie can't see him as he steps over to the door, locks it, and pulls out his gun.

DAVE

Hey, big guy.

And Dave steps into Bernie's field of vision. Bernie goes rigid. A croak, a scream locks in Bernie's throat.

DAVE (CONT'D)

-- keep it down.

But Bernie's eyes aren't on Dave's gun, they're on his face.

BERNIE

Dave. I didn't... I didn't mean to...

(CONTINUED)

DAVE

I don't want an apology; I want an explanation. Why are you trying to kill me?

INT. HALL OUTSIDE BERNIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Joshua, slumped asleep in his chair, gets a hard BOOT on the side of the head, toppling him off on his ass. He jerks awake, hand going for his gun --

-- but realizes it's Ransome standing there, Ezekiel and Daniel laughing at Joshua's expense.

RANSOME

Where's Levy?

JOSHUA

Radiology.

INT. RADIOLOGY LAB - NIGHT

Dave presses in on him, intense. Bernie shrinks back in his gurney, warding him off with his hands.

BERNIE

Dave, just give me some air! I need to breathe, need to think...

DAVE

Yeah, well think about this.

Dave cocks the police service revolver, points it at Bernie.

DAVE (CONT'D)

How does that make you feel? Like it? Nice, huh.

BERNIE

Dave! It's not me! I didn't hire those guys!

He's terrified. Dave softens, gets a grip. He doesn't need Bernie screaming.

DAVE

Then who did? Why?

Bernie disintegrates, begins to sob.

BERNIE

They saw what happened. They saw what happened, Dave, and you're in trouble. Big trouble.

(CONTINUED)

DAVE

What? They saw what?

But this is too much for ol' Bern. He's become a crying, inarticulate mess.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Calm down. Take a sip of my water.

Bernie stops crying, lifts the bottle, peers at it strangely.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Don't worry, I won't bill you.

Bernie gives him a quizzical look, and gets off the gurney. Dave takes a step back, puzzled, holding the pistol on him.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Bernie, I'm warning you...

And then Bernie starts to LAUGH. An insane, sparkling laugh.

BERNIE

This is a good one, Dave. The best.  
Mr. Sugar and Cream. The funny thing  
is you wouldn't hurt a fly.

Bernie isn't afraid of him anymore, and takes a step forward. Dave backs off, glares at Bernie over the gun sight.

DAVE

Bernie...

Bernie stops, stands there in his Johnnie like a madman. And then he SNATCHES the gun out of Dave's hand.

BERNIE

There never was a Hong Kong flu.

Dave has time to blink. And then Bernie sticks the gun IN HIS MOUTH.

DAVE

No!

But Bernie blows his brains out all over the ceiling. Dave recoils in horror, throws himself out the door.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE RADIOLOGY LAB - NIGHT

Dave walks fast down the hallway, trying not to run. He notices Bernie's spattered blood all over him. He wipes his face off, too traumatized to respond to the few HOSPITAL WORKERS coming out of doorways in response to the gunshot.

(CONTINUED)

He exits into an elevator just as Ransome, Ezekiel, Daniel and Joshua emerge from the next one over. Ransome pauses, instantly knowing something's wrong. A SCREAM. A CLEANING LADY backs out of the Radiology Lab.

INT. 1ST FLOOR HALL - NIGHT

Dave rolls out of the elevator, pauses at a cross hall. He manages to find an exit sign and blindly follows it.

INT. RADIOLOGY LAB - NIGHT

Ransome stands in front of Bernie's body. He works his mike

RANSOME

Heads up. He's here. Get on the exits fast.

INT. ADMITTING ROOM - NIGHT

Dave finds his way into the general admitting area. Several HOSPITAL WORKERS and PATIENTS note his entry. He's spattered with blood, but this is a hospital, and it makes sense. And then he spots Ruth. He turns and heads back the way he came.

Ruth suddenly sees him way down the hall, lifts her mike.

RUTH

Got him. Ground floor.

INT. CORRIDORS - NIGHT

Dave runs past the elevators, winding through hallway after hallway, turning corners.

INT. HALLWAY NEAR ELEVATORS - NIGHT

Ransome, Ezekiel, Daniel and Joshua emerge from the elevator. Ruth runs up.

RUTH

Clear this way.

RANSOME

Move. Quarter and search.

INT. ANTEROOM - NIGHT

Dave barges through swinging double doors into a small anteroom with a glassed-in cage. There's another pair of swinging glass doors on the far side. The two men in the room, the MORGUE ATTENDANT in the cage and the UNDERTAKER in front of it, turn to Dave.

MORGUE ATTENDANT

Here he is.

(CONTINUED)

UNDERTAKER

Dr. Austen?

Dave stands there a beat, blinking.

DAVE

Yes.

UNDERTAKER

I was just about to take, uh...

(checking a paper)

Martin Bowen. Need you to sign him out.

Hurried, Dave takes the clipboard from the weird guy. He sees the sign MORGUE over the far double doors, the mist on the cold glass in them. He looks at the papers. A DEATH CERTIFICATE for Martin Bowen. Dave signs Dr. Austen. The Undertaker looks the certificate over. The guy's so slow it makes Dave want to scream -- Ransome's right behind him somewhere. Finally, the Undertaker looks up.

UNDERTAKER (CONT'D)

Thank you.

(to Morgue Attendant)

Be right back, gotta use the can.

The Morgue Attendant nods, swivels back to the tiny T.V. in his cage. Dave turns to follow the Undertaker out, but stops. The attendant is paying no attention. Dave walks straight past him, and through the doors into --

INT. THE MORGUE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

-- a long, chill pale green room. He's frantic, but the sight of the half dozen SHROUDED CORPSES on gurneys gives him pause. His ragged breath comes fast, fogging. He races by the steel refrigerator-box doors in the wall to the first body, checks the toe-tag on the foot. Wrong one.

Dave moves fast from one bare, protruding foot to the next, finally finding Martin Bowen, last in line. He throws the sheet off the body, rushes over to a fridge, opens it. Occupied. He finds another: empty. He trundles the gurney over and wrestles the corpse into the fridge.

He rips off his shoe and sock, throws it in after the body, pulls at the tightly-tied toe tag.

INT. MORGUE ANTEROOM - NIGHT

Ransome, Ezekiel and Ruth enter the anteroom. Ransome points Ezekiel to a spot by the door as lookout. The Attendant is too busy with Three's Company to notice them. They glide silently over to the Morgue double doors...

## INT. MORGUE - NIGHT

Dave lays back fast, pulling the shroud over his head. A heartbeat later, the doors open. Ransome steps into the room. Ruth follows. They draw their guns, split left and right. Ransome squats, peering under the gurneys. Nothing.

He nods Ruth over to the corpses, and turns to the refrigerated boxes, opening the first.

UNDER THE SHEET hears Ruth throw back the sheet on the first gurney. And then feels a sneeze coming on. He fights to keep absolutely still, keep from sneezing.

Ruth covers back up the corpse. Five more gurneys to go. She throws back another, gun trained. Then another.

## INT. HALL OUTSIDE MORGUE - NIGHT

The Undertaker emerges from the bathroom, whistling. He heads back toward the morgue anteroom.

## INT. MORGUE - NIGHT

Ruth comes to the second-to-last gurney. She throws back the sheet and turns her head, sickened by the head-trauma victim beneath it.

RUTH

Shit.

Ransome snaps a look at her, the body, and then the door -- for Ezekiel whistles up their attention. He hand-signs 'somebody's coming.' Ruth throws the cover on the body, and she and Ransome exit.

UNDER THE SHEET Dave gasps, out of breath, gagging on the stink of the room and gurneys. He sneezes, but muffles it.

THE DOOR swings open again.

Dave thinks he's done for. But into the room comes the Undertaker. He whistles an eerie, echoing tune. He goes straight to Dave's gurney and wheels it for the doors.

## EXT. SAN FRANCISCO GENERAL, LOADING DOCK - NIGHT

The Undertaker wheels Dave out of the hospital into a dark, abandoned parking bay. Only the distant sounds of the city, sirens wailing, accompany the old man's whistling. He pushes Dave over to a black hearse. He goes to the driver's door, opens it, pops the rear door. He returns, his whistle dies.

All that's left on the gurney is the white sheet.

## EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Dave stumbles half-shoeless, greens plastered to his body, down a rain-dark street near the wharfs.

He shudders, water streaming down his face, sneezes, his cold worse. A broken neon light for a men's hotel beckons up ahead. He pats his pockets. No wallet. The cops took it. He turns away from the hotel, walks off into the rain, a man without anything, a man without a life... a dead man.

## EXT. MARY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Soaked, vacant-eyed, Dave lingers under a street tree somewhere in the residential area just south of the coffee houses and alternative music stores of Haight-Ashbury.

A garden-style apartment building up the street from him sits in the dark. Deciding, he limps across to it.

## INT. HALL OUTSIDE MARY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

It's an old building. Dave hesitates in front of the door to apartment 109. Half-conscious of how he looks, he tries to smooth his hair back, be presentable, but fails miserably. He guts up and rings the bell. No answer. He rings again. The door opens, catches on the chain. Mary stares out.

MARY

What are you doing here?

DAVE

The police didn't listen. I'm in a lot of trouble. Help me.

She considers him: soaked, sick, traumatized. She unchains the door.

## INT. MARY'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Dave warms his hands on a cup of hot tea, huddles with a dry towel around his neck. Mary notices the bloodstains on his greens. Mary sits across from him in an oversized tee shirt. A window in the cramped galley kitchen looks out on the city.

MARY

Where'd you get the greens?

DAVE

Hospital.

He looks up. He sure looks like he escaped from an insane asylum. Dave realizes that's what she's thinking.

DAVE (CONT'D)

It's not what you think.

(CONTINUED)

MARY

You have to understand, this is all really hard to believe.

DAVE

I know. But you saw those guys. If they were building security with all that hardware, then I'm Batman.

Mary saw Ransome, but isn't ready to believe Dave just yet.

MARY

All I saw for hardware was some radio headset YOU had.

DAVE

I don't think you're in danger. We went out once. I didn't tell anyone about it. There's no way they know about you.

MARY

Thanks.

Dave realizes he's just insulted her, but there's nothing he could say to make up for it. He looks up at her, emotional.

DAVE

You can't understand. I feel like... like I don't exist anymore. Like everything I was this morning is gone.

He bows his head, gritting back tears, unconsciously rubs his neck and the vicious RED BRUISE from the belt. Mary sees the bruise, straightens. Dave doesn't notice her reaction. She tests him.

MARY

How exactly did the cops try to kill you?

DAVE

Hang me with my belt. Make it look like a suicide, I guess.

But Mary's staring at the marks, somewhere this side of skepticism.

DAVE (CONT'D)

There's something else I have to tell you. I went to find Bernie at the hospital.

(tugs at the greens)

He killed himself while I was there.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DAVE (CONT'D)

My finger prints will be on the gun he used. They'll probably say I murdered him. I didn't.

Mary is speechless.

DAVE (CONT'D)

I don't know what's happening to me, but I'm not going insane. I promise you I won't hurt you, and I won't let anyone hurt you if you decide to help me. If you don't want to, believe me I understand. And I'll never mention you to anyone ever.

MARY

What do you want from me?

DAVE

I don't know yet. I guess a place to get some sleep for starters. Then maybe some money. Took my wallet at the police station.

MARY

I have to think about this. But you can stay tonight.

INT. MARY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Dave follows Mary into her living room, a small affair with a love seat, T.V., lots of plants. And on shelves throughout the room stand pots, planters, figurines: all strange, inventive, but beautiful works of ceramic art.

DAVE

These from your travels?

MARY

In a way. The materials and techniques are from my travels, but I made them. I'm going to Nepal next.

Mary gets a pillow and blankets out of a closet.

DAVE

Six months working, six months travelling the world, if I remember correctly?

There's a hint of bemusement, disapproval in Dave's voice.

MARY

Beats punching a clock fifty out of fifty two weeks a year.

(CONTINUED)

DAVE  
 Good thing we didn't go out again. I  
 don't think it would have worked.

He smiles, benign. She looks at him skeptically: not to mention the fact you're probably insane, buddy. Mary draws a couple of hangars out of the closet - men's clothes - and hands them to him.

DAVE (CONT'D)  
 An ex I presume?

MARY  
 What do you care?  
 (beat, softening)  
 I didn't know about your wife. I'm  
 sorry. What was her name?

DAVE  
 Sally.

Dave's face tightens. There's a reason why their date went wrong now. Mary moves softly for the hall.

DAVE (CONT'D)  
 Our date --

Mary stops. Dave hesitates, looking into her eyes.

DAVE (CONT'D)  
 -- was nice.

INT. HALL OUTSIDE ISOLATION ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE ON A STEEL PRESSURE DOOR.

Inhuman WAILING reverberates through it. A man. Though we've only heard it once, its high pitch is distinctive. It is Highgrave's. The door has a wide-angle viewport in it, distorting the view of what's on the other side.

THE CAMERA PUSHES CLOSER, but just as we're about to get a glimpse, Ransome's head moves onto screen, blocks our view.

RANSOME  
 How much longer?

A man in a LAB COAT replies.

LAB COAT  
 Not long. You can have him soon.

INT. MARY'S KITCHEN - DAY

Dave sitting at the table, runs his hand over a self-inflicted crewcut, touches a one-day goatee. A little T.V.

(CONTINUED)

on the counter rattles off the morning news. Mary rifles a bag of coffee for its last few grounds. Not enough for a cup.

DAVE

Can I ask you something? You could have a good job, steady work. Something that involved travelling. Why do you temp?

MARY

We're all temps. Some of us are just honest about it.

(off Dave's look)

Would you do what you do if you weren't being paid for it?

Dave looks away.

DAVE

When I've worked all this out I'll get you anything you want, do anything you want me to. Deal?

MARY

Deals are the pathetic male substitute for human connection. Yesterday all I saw was a scared man who needed my help. Do you want it or not?

SUDDENLY, ON THE T.V.:

A photo of DAVE appears. Dave spots it. Mary's eyes track his to the image. The volume is down, quite low. But in the kitchen's silence, it's booming.

T.V. REPORTER (V.O.)

Police continue to search for David Elliot, suspect in the murder of a business associate, Bernard Levy. Police say Elliot assaulted Levy during a psychotic episode Tuesday morning and escaped custody, overpowering two officers at the Mission precinct where he was being held for psychiatric evaluation. Elliot then allegedly hunted down Levy who was being treated at San Francisco General and shot him. Levy was pronounced dead at the scene. Elliot is armed and dangerous, and police are asking the public for assistance. Should you spot Elliot, please call 555-2424.

RESUME

(CONTINUED)

Mary looks at him. Dave looks back at her, calm, his eyes clear... innocent.

DAVE

Yes. I want your help.

EXT. SIDEWALK, HAIGHT-ASHBURY - DAY

Dave glances over his shoulder. Mary is watching him from the window of a coffee shop across the street. He dials the phone in cold trepidation. The phone rings at the other end of the line. He holds his watch up, stopwatch function ready. The line clicks.

SECRETARY (V.O.)

Lockyear Pharmaceuticals.

Dave starts the stopwatch.

DAVE

Dr. Highgrave's office please.

A beat.

SECRETARY (V.O.)

I'm sorry. Did you say Highgrave?

DAVE

Yes.

SECRETARY (V.O.)

I'm sorry, there's nobody here by that name.

The stopwatch hits ten seconds.

DAVE

Look, I know there's a Dr. Highgrave. He's your chief of operations for crying out loud. Mort Highgrave, H-I-G-H-G-R-A-V-E.

SECRETARY (V.O.)

Sir, there is no listing for a Dr. Highgrave. May I ask who's calling?

Dave sees his watch come up on 20 seconds, and he hangs up.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Dave enters the hole-in-the-wall joint. Mary, at the solitary table, pushes Dave a cup of coffee. Dave dopes it up in his usual fashion, blows his nose.

MARY

So who is this guy, Highgrave?

(CONTINUED)

DAVE

Highgrave and I were working on a deal for a pharmaceutical company called Lockyear.

Dave takes a long, bitter-sweet sip of coffee.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Lockyear is up for sale. A company named Senterex wants to buy it. My company, Talbot & Bordick, is the broker, and Bernie and I were in charge of the deal. Mort Highgrave and Jim Cleric, Lockyear's CEO, were Lockyear's representatives.

Dave stares out the window at the rain. Mary listens.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Thing is, yesterday morning when I got into the office there was a message from him on my machine. He sounded upset, said 'It's about the meeting.' I deleted the message before he finished because I thought he was calling to ask me to stop making waves over the sales price.

MARY

So you think this Lockyear deal has something to do with what's happening to you? Somebody wants to kill you because you're in the way of it?

Dave shakes his head. It's not adding up.

DAVE

I work for the broker company. All I do is study companies and advise people if they're good deals or not. Even if I screamed bloody murder, Bernie could overrule me. I can't kill a deal single-handedly. To top it off, I'm not trying to kill Lockyear... I'm just trying to convince them to ask for more money.

MARY

So all you do is study companies?

Dave nods.

MARY (CONT'D)

Exciting. But maybe they think you've discovered something about Lockyear that will kill the deal.

(CONTINUED)

DAVE

Like what? And why are they asking  
such a low price... unless --

Dave stops, realizing --

DAVE (CONT'D)

-- they're going to buy it back  
themselves. Of course! They're going  
to steal the company from Vooradian.  
Bernie, Harry, Cleric and Highgrave.  
Buy it cheap through Senterex.

MARY

Harry's that friend of yours, the  
lawyer you said tried to brain you  
with the golf club?

THROUGH THE WINDOW, out of focus, barely noticeable: A STREET  
MUSICIAN picks up the payphone across the street. The one  
Dave used.

DAVE

Yeah. He and Bernie were involved in  
the IPO of Lockyear ten years ago, a  
couple of years before I met them.  
Cleric and Highgrave's stakes are  
above board - they're big shareholders,  
but Vooradian's the biggest, has 50.1  
percent of the shares. He leaves the  
day-to-day operations to Cleric and  
Highgrave, doesn't know anything about  
the company, really. They must want  
him out. Bernie and Harry must have  
had some sort of stake in Lockyear, a  
silent one, held by holding  
corporations or something. God knows  
Harry could arrange that, and with  
Bernie working the sale, he kept me  
from digging too deep on them. But  
now they think I know...

(beat)

Why didn't I see it?

Mary gives an amused shrug.

MARY

Beats me.

Dave sees she doesn't get it.

DAVE

You don't believe me.

(CONTINUED)

MARY

It's just... complicated. They say sophisticated delusions are a symptom of --

She catches herself.

DAVE

-- paranoia? I'm not paranoid.

Suddenly the Street Musician pops in the door behind Dave.

STREET MUSICIAN

Hey, man, you Dave Elliot?

Dave turns in fear... but before he can bolt, the shaggy guy continues.

STREET MUSICIAN (CONT'D)

Phone.

He points at the payphone across the street, dangling from the receiver, takes off with a little wave. Dave looks at Mary and rises. She reacts, not sure what to think.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Dave emerges from the coffee shop, stares at the swaying phone, his hair standing up on end. He glances up and down the street. Just hordes of people.

A car goes by. And then Dave starts across the street, eyeing the swinging handset as if it were a deadly cobra.

He reaches the other side, and snatches up the phone.

DAVE

Hello?

RANSOME (V.O.)

Mr. Elliot, glad to hear from you.

Dave REACTS. Dave grabs onto the phone box.

RANSOME (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I want to thank you for your tip. I made some serious money this morning.

DAVE

No problem.

RANSOME (V.O.)

You like the classics, don't you, Mr. Elliot? Movies I mean.

(CONTINUED)

DAVE

What?

RANSOME (V.O.)

Old movies. You were on the line for 19.7 seconds, suggesting you meant to hang up at twenty. Of course, these days traces happen instantly. How else would they bill you for that minute when you get your friend's answering machine but don't leave a message?

Dave gropes his way out of shock, stares up and down the street in paranoid abandon.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Mary sets her coffee down, seeing Dave's crazed look.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

DAVE

So what are you waiting for? Why don't you come get me?

U RANSOME (V.O.)

Oh, I will in a minute or so. I just wanted -- well, I'm kind of embarrassed to ask -- but what the hell.

DAVE

Another tip.

RANSOME (V.O.)

If it's not too much trouble. I know you find this hard to believe, but I actually like you, Mr. Elliot. You're a man with soul in a soulless world. If things were different, I'd be honored to call you a friend.

Dave is pissed.

DAVE

What'll you give me for another tip?

RANSOME (V.O.)

I promise you'll die painlessly.

DAVE

Thanks.

Dave is bitter, but hangs a beat. Shaken by the promise.

(CONTINUED)

DAVE (CONT'D)

There's this company that's about to have a big management turnover.

RANSOME (V.O.)

(eager)

What's it called?

Dave becomes one mean bastard right before our eyes.

DAVE

Lockyear Pharmaceuticals. The sonofabitches who are running it are crooks, and when I get through with them, the only paper they're going to be pushing is the library cart in San Quentin.

Dave slams the receiver down.

INT. VAN - DAY

Ransome rides shotgun beside Amos, the driver. The van corners hard. Ransome leans into it, hands the car phone back to Joshua in the rear. And he smiles.

RANSOME

Gentlemen, I think Mr. Elliot intends to fight. That means he will be predictable and we will get him.

INT. COFFEE HOUSE - DAY

Mary watches Dave dodge traffic as he crosses the street. She sees the fear on his face, stands up. Dave barges in, pulls Mary close so the COFFEE SHOP KID can't hear him.

DAVE

Walk out of here right now.

MARY

What? What's going --

Frantic, Dave watches the colorful DENIZENS of the Haight crowding the sidewalks in both directions.

DAVE

Go. You can't be seen with me. Meet me at the Exploratorium tonight at six. If I'm not there... go on one of your trips.

MARY

Wait a second --

(CONTINUED)

DAVE

-- get out now. They traced the call.  
They'll be here any minute.

Mary blinks. Dave leads her to the door, opens it for her, thrusts her out into the stream of people. She's swept away, looking back, baffled and angry.

Dave watches her vanish, turns his attention to the scores of strangers - college kids, street artists, tourists - thronging the bookstores, record stores, outdoor stalls, etc. in both directions up and down the street.

And then, a block down on the opposite side of the street: a white, unmarked van. Ransome gets out.

Dave whips around, stares up the street in the other direction. There, on either side of the street, coming his way are two men in gray suits - Judah and Zebediah.

He's trapped in the coffee shop between the two teams of killers out on the street. Dave turns like a cornered animal. The Coffee Shop Kid looks at him from under his psychedelic beret.

DAVE (CONT'D)

My girlfriend's husband is across the street.

COFFEE SHOP KID

Back door's over there, man.

He thumbs behind the counter. Dave nods his thanks, whirls around the end of it.

INT. COFFEE SHOP, BACK ROOM - DAY

Dave dashes down a short hall past boxes of supplies to a closed back door. He's about to slam through, but stops. He pushes it open just a crack, peers out.

HIS POV:

An alley behind the row of buildings. And at the far end of the alley, Ruth, hand under her jacket. If he goes out, she'll spot him instantly.

RESUME

Dave shuts the door, fear tearing at his sanity. He pushes back into --

INT. COFFEE SHOP, FRONT AREA - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

-- the shop. The Kid stares. Dave takes a fast look out the window to his right.

(CONTINUED)

HIS POV:

Ransome, Amos and Ezekiel pick their way down the block, scanning the crowd, sticking their heads in shops, one man always staying on the sidewalk. They stick out like sore thumbs with their grim suits in this colorful crowd.

RESUME

Dave looks left.

HIS POV:

Judah and Zebediah are doing the same thing, coming up the street, less than fifty yards away now.

RESUME

Dave is trapped. He's about to just burst through the doors and run for it -- when by some miracle a TAXI CAB slows for a light on his side of the street RIGHT OUTSIDE THE DOOR.

Dave blinks, can't believe his luck. A beat as he holds his breath, and then pushes straight out the door into the open.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Dave is swept up in a group of college kids, and in ten steps is grabbing the handle to the rear door of the cab.

INT. TAXI - DAY

Dave jumps in the back seat. The CABBIE glances at him over his shoulder.

CABBIE

Pal, I'm on a call.

Dave just rams money at him through the blurred bullet-proof glass divider. Maybe forty bucks. Dave slouches, eyeing Ransome who's coming up on the right, now thirty feet away.

CABBIE (CONT'D)

Not too far, all right?

DAVE

Yeah. Anywhere. Just go.

Ransome's almost on him. Dave stares straight ahead.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Ransome scans left and right, eyes settling on the cab, it's back seat... and Dave. But the glass partition blurs Dave's features. The light turns green and the cab starts to move. Ransome turns away.

INT. TAXI - DAY

Dave breaths, doesn't look back as IN THE WINDOW BEHIND HIM we see Ransome and his men meet just outside the coffee shop. Dave remembers how to breath, trembles with adrenalin.

CABBIE

Look like you're having a bad day.

DAVE

You have no idea.

The Cabbie goes from gruff to compassionate.

CABBIE

Sorry to fuss at ya. Walk in the park'll do you good.

DAVE

Yeah.

Dave looks back out the window as the car turns off of Haight. Goodbye Ransome.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREETS - DAY

The Taxi speeds off down the road toward Golden Gate Park.

EXT. BOOKSELLER STALLS - DAY

Mary steps out from behind a bookstall sheltered from the rain by an awning. She lowers the book she's pretending to thumb through and peers up the street.

Ransome and his men are piling back into the white van. She recognizes him with a start. They are all smiling. She turns away before anybody notices her.

INT. TAXI - DAY

Dave looks out the window, this neglected end of Golden Gate Park desolate in the rain, as the Cabbie blusters on, friendly.

CABBIE

Hey, why don't I drop you at this place I know. There are these hippie girls sunbathe nude over here some days. Course with this rain...

DAVE

Sounds good.

There's a beat. The Cabbie studies Dave in the rearview.

(CONTINUED)

CABBIE

Mind me asking what you do for a living? Look like a stockbroker, but your clothes don't go.

That makes Dave turn and look at the Cabbie on the other side of the partition. Does he recognize him?

DAVE

Something like that.

CABBIE

Yeah? Just opened an IRA. Now if you were a fella like me, not a lot of green you know, what would you invest in?

Dave's hackles go up. His eyes meet the Cabbie's in the rearview mirror.

DAVE

It depends on your risk tolerance.

For the first time Dave sees the screen in the speaking port in the partition is missing.

CABBIE

My motto is live dangerously.

And Dave knows this is Ransome's man. The cab was a trap.

His hand shoots out for the doorlock, but it's POWERLOCKED. He lunges across the seat for the other. It won't open.

CABBIE'S SIDE OF THE PARTITION:

Game's up. The Cabbie goes for the automatic pistol under his seat. Car swerves.

DAVE'S SIDE OF THE PARTITION:

Dave punches the side window with his bare fist, the blow rebounding off the bulletproof glass. Dave spins, frantic in time to see the Cabbie raise the pistol across his body to the speaking port. Dave's trapped like a fish in a barrel.

Dave falls to the floor, covering his face. BAM BAM BAM BAM! The Cabbie can't aim and drive, so he does both badly. Bullets THWACK off the rear windows, blow stuffing out of the seat.

The car cuts right and left hard, throwing Dave back and forth only inches below the deadly banging fire of the gun.

With a WHAM that knocks Dave into the air, the car goes up and over a curb.

(CONTINUED)

Dave tries to scabble into the footwell behind the Cabbie. The Cabbie swivels his gun in the port, trying to angle on Dave, and FIRES.

CABBIE'S SIDE OF THE PARTITION:

Casings ricochet off the dashboard and windows as he blindly BAM BAM BAM BAMS away, the Cabbie flinching at the backblast right by his face. Click. He's out. With a furious, killing grunt, he jams on the brakes, pulling off the road.

DAVE'S SIDE OF THE PARTITION:

Dave looks up from the floor. He sticks his head up fast, sees the Cabbie ramming home a new clip. Dave throws himself at the spiderwebbed rear window, but the glass doesn't break. He flails, panicking, smashing at the doors.

Then Dave sees a PEN somebody forgot stuck in the back of the seat. He grabs it. The car jolts to a stop.

The Cabbie draws the slide, chambering the next clip's first round, turns to take better aim at Dave through the port. Dave throws himself as far to the side as he can, and the Cabbie sticks the pistol through the port in the partition.

The Cabbie squeezes, but Dave rams the plastic Bic into the barrel a split second before...

CABBIE'S SIDE OF THE PARTITION:

KERBANG!!! The pistol disintegrates in a blast, slide and hammer blowing straight back in the Cabbie's face, killing him.

DAVE'S SIDE OF THE PARTITION:

ear-ringing silence. Smoke fills the other side of the partition, little wisps of it drifting in through the port. There's a fine haze of blood on the blurry glass.

Shaking, Dave looks down at his chest. A long sliver of the pen has torn open his shirt and is sticking out of the cab door under his arm.

Then the Cabbie's foot falls from the brake, and the car begins to roll.

DAVE

Shit.

Dave sits up fast, throws himself at the doors again. No use. He tries to see where the car's heading.

EXT. GOLDEN GATE PARK - DAY

The taxi cab slowly rolls farther off the side of the road and begins to travel diagonally down the face of a steep hill.

INT. TAXI - DAY

Dave jolts from side to side, the car gaining speed, threatening to tip over on its roof and roll down to a bike path and row of bollards a hundred yards below.

Dave throws his weight as far to the right side as he can, trying to keep the car from turning over on its side.

The car rolls faster, brush and grass scraping along the doors. The tilt grows, but he's managing to keep it from going up on two wheels. If he can only get it down the hill on its wheels...

And then the Cabbie's body seems to sit up.

DAVE

No!

It falls against the driver's side door, the weight just enough... Dave grabs onto a handstrap for dear life.

EXT. HILLSIDE, PARK - DAY

The Taxi goes up on two wheels, totters, and tips over on its side and then ONTO ITS ROOF. It slides down the hill, upside down.

INT. TAXI - DAY

Dave falls to the roof of the cab. The car bashes over a rock, goes airborne, comes down hard.

EXT. HILLSIDE, PARK - DAY

Like a sled, the cab pounds down the hillside on its roof, careening off a Eucalyptus in a blizzard of shearing bark. It spins, sliding faster and faster -- until the entire wreck SLAMS into the row of bollards along the bike path.

INT. TAXI - DAY

Dave rolls over, gasping, stunned. His door is sprung maybe a foot wide. Daylight. He claws out of the car onto the rain and leaf-slick ground.

INT. EXPLORATORIUM - NIGHT

Hordes of KIDS rush by Mary who wanders among the science exhibits and displays of the San Francisco Exploratorium.

(CONTINUED)

The long, noisy, cavernous room is crowded. Mary searches among the ADULTS who marvel with their kids at strange demonstrations of physics.

And then she sees Dave, standing in a niche in the wall on the far side of the room. He's watching her. She starts over, but he gestures to something behind her. An identical niche in the wall. She goes over to it, glancing at the sign beside it: WONDERS OF ACOUSTICS. With a smile she steps into the niche.

Dave, a hundred feet away across the noisy room speaks in an undertone, but the niches are designed so that Mary in the other niche can hear him loud and clear.

DAVE

Hear me okay?

MARY

Yeah. This is cute.

DAVE

Thanks for being here. After this morning I wasn't sure you'd come.

MARY

Look, I don't know what it means, but I saw those guys. I watched from down the street. Whatever problem you've got, those guys in the gray suits weren't building security.

Dave closes his eyes, overcome with emotion and relief. She believes him. A little at least.

DAVE

Thank you.

MARY

But this business deal you've been describing... it seems like there would be better ways of shutting you up than killing you.

DAVE

I've been thinking all afternoon about that too. I just don't understand it. If they thought I was onto their scam to steal the company from Vooradian, why didn't they just try to cut me in? Bernie and Harry were my best friends.

MARY

I don't know, Dave.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MARY (CONT'D)

For some reason you don't come across as the bribable sort.

Dave considers.

DAVE

We're missing part of the equation. These guys are stealing the company from Vooradian, but it's not something I could ever prove. They could claim it was an honest mistake in valuing the company. No. To resort to Ransome means they're afraid of me. Afraid I know something that will blow the deal out of the water if it came out.

(beat)

Just before Bernie shot himself he said something strange. He said there never was a Hong Kong flu.

MARY

So?

Dave hesitates, mind beginning to race.

DAVE

Lockyear created the vaccine for it and made hundreds of millions of dollars. There obviously was a flu. How could there not be --

And then Dave stops, hair standing up on his neck, eyes widening with understanding... and horror.

DAVE (CONT'D)

-- my God. They created it. Lockyear made the Hong Kong flu. Last year's Wuhan C. And they made the vaccines for them. That's how they were so fast to market! It was like a miracle getting the vaccine out in time to stop it from becoming a pandemic.

MARY

That's... that's insane.

Dave just shakes his head, knowing in his gut that it's the truth. He stares out at the hordes of little kids playing with the science exhibits. One of them sneezes.

DAVE

They think I know. That's why they weren't pushing on the price.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DAVE (CONT'D)

And here we were listening to this bullshit about sophisticated computer models that could predict next year's flu. They think I know...

Mary shakes her head, looks at Dave, pitying him. He can tell she's finally decided: he is crazy.

MARY

The flu kills people. What you're saying is --

DAVE

The Hong Kong flu killed 20,000 people. Wuhan C 40,000.

The numbers give Mary pause. Dave is pale.

MARY

-- insane. They'd be insane to do something like that. If anybody found out --

DAVE

-- they'd kill him for it.

(beat)

I have to prove it, blow it wide open. It's the only thing that might get Harry and Cleric to call off the dogs.

MARY

So what do we do? Break into Lockyear and find the secret files?

DAVE

Yeah, right. Bernie and Harry are too smart. They'd never let anybody keep records on something like this.

(beat)

I have to find Highgrave. He wasn't calling to ask me to ease off the deal -- he was calling to blow the whistle! Which means he must've had something, some sort of evidence. It would've been too dangerous to take these guys on if he didn't.

MARY

You're talking about the guy in the past tense.

A long beat. Dave stares at her from across the room.

(CONTINUED)

DAVE

When I called Lockyear today they  
said they had never heard of a Dr.  
Highgrave...

EXT. GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE - DAY

A battered red Isuzu speeds north across the Golden Gate in  
the opposite direction of the morning rush.

INT. MARY'S CAR - DAY

Mary drives. Dave sits beside her, nervous.

MARY

What if I call?

DAVE

No. This guy Ransome's a walking Pac  
Bell.

MARY

We'll drive by twice, half-hour apart  
before we stop. Any sign of anyone  
watching the place, we're out of there.

EXT. SHADY RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

Mary pulls over under a row of shade trees in an expensive  
Marin county residential neighborhood.

INT. MARY'S CAR - DAY

Mary looks over to Dave, slouched in the seat beside her,  
still more nervous.

MARY

That's four times. I don't see anyone.

Dave hesitates. Then nods. They get out of the car.

EXT. HIGHGRAVE'S HOUSE - DAY

They walk up the driveway to Highgrave's 4000 square-foot  
manse. Dave glances to his right. At the house next door  
an OLD MAN waters his flower beds. He looks up at Dave and  
Mary, nosy, acknowledging Mary's smile with a grunt.

Dave and Mary mount the steps to the front door. Dave looks  
at her. She reaches out and rings the bell.

A long beat. No answer. Dave looks across the street behind  
them, at the houses, windows, bushes. Nothing. No sign of  
Ransome's presence. Just two KIDS going house to house in  
their soccer uniforms, carrying a cardboard box. And then  
the door unlatches. Dave turns.

(CONTINUED)

A middle-aged JANET HIGHGRAVE, yuppie with a plastic smile, opens the door.

MRS. HIGHGRAVE  
Yes?

DAVE  
Mrs. Highgrave?

MRS. HIGHGRAVE  
Yes?

Mary looks at Dave. So Highgrave really does exist.

DAVE  
My name is Dave Elliot. I'm a  
colleague of your husband's.  
(beat, anxious)  
Do you by any chance know where he  
is?

Mrs. Highgrave smiles her plastic smile.

MRS. HIGHGRAVE  
Mort? He's upstairs.

Dave exhales, closing his eyes in emotion. Mary's heart goes out to him. When he looks up, Mrs. Highgrave is still smiling.

MRS. HIGHGRAVE (CONT'D)  
Would you like to come in? I'll call  
him down.

The CAMERA pushes past the emotionally overwhelmed Dave --

INT. HIGHGRAVE HOUSE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

-- past Mrs. Highgrave, REVEALING OFF TO THE SIDES the source of her forced, plastic smile:

RANSOME! His gun is aimed at the back of her head. Weapons drawn, his men are spread about the house.

DAVE (O.S.)  
Please.

EXT. HIGHGRAVE HOUSE - DAY

Dave's about to cross the threshold when the two Soccer Kids come racing up. Dave turns at the sound of their steps.

SOCCER KID #1  
Mrs. Highgrave! Mrs. Highgrave!

They jostle Dave and Mary out of their way.

(CONTINUED)

SOCCKER KID #2  
We're selling Reeses, wanna buy some?

SOCCKER KID #1  
Five bucks.

Dave and Mary get pushed back. And Mary notices a fleeting look on Mrs. Highgrave's face. Anger? Fear?

MRS. HIGHGRAVE  
What are you kids doing out of school?

SOCCKER KID #1  
Teacher workshops.

Mary studies her reaction. Dave doesn't notice anything. Mrs. Highgrave manages to recover her plastic smile. And now Mary's instincts are on guard.

MRS. HIGHGRAVE  
Sure just a minute.

She turns from the door. Dave stands there, oblivious to the fact that Ransome is just on the other side of the wall. Mary now eyes the windows of the house. The curtains are all closed. Strange, it's gloomy enough outside today.

SOCCKER KID #2  
Wanna buy some candy, Mister?

Before Dave can answer, Mrs. Highgrave returns. She hands the Kid five bucks. And now Dave notices her HAND SHAKING. His eyes travel fast up to her face. Just that damn smile.

SOCCKER KID #2 (CONT'D)  
How 'bout it?

DAVE  
No, no thanks.

Dave glances at Mary, shifts toward the door, but before he takes a step--

SOCCKER KID #1  
What about all those guys? Think they want to buy some?

Dave looks back at the kids in surprise. Mrs. Highgrave frowns, acts baffled.

SOCCKER KID #2  
You know, those guys in the white vans!

A THRILL OF FEAR courses through Dave. They look into Mrs. Highgrave's eyes and they KNOW.

(CONTINUED)

Mary takes an unconscious step back. The innocents get in the way. And now the Old Man calls from next door.

OLD MAN

Hey Janet! You going to Mickey's on Sunday?

-- Dave and Mary drift backward down the steps. She continues to stare at Dave, the smile gone.

MRS. HIGHGRAVE

I don't think so, Bob.

Dave and Mary turn as one and RUN for the car.

INT. HIGHGRAVE HOUSE - DAY

Ransome, looks on as Amos operates a monitor with a fiberoptic snake camera through the curtains.

RANSOME

They're running! Go!

Ransome's men slam Mrs. Highgrave aside, and are out the door.

EXT. HIGHGRAVE HOUSE - DAY

Ransome knocks a Soccer kid flat in pursuit of Dave and Mary.

RANSOME

Stop! Police!

It may fake out the shocked Old Man, but it doesn't throw Dave or Mary for even a stride.

INT. MARY'S CAR - DAY

Dave skids over the hood, Mary turns the car over. She drops the peddle, the car launching out into the roadway.

EXT. HIGHGRAVE HOUSE - DAY

The car screeches away as Ransome and company give up the foot chase, turn, and run for the back of the house.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREETS - DAY

Mary's car comes hard around a corner. A beat, and at the far end of the street one of Ransome's white vans appears. Mary peels across the road, into the twists and turns of a suburban subdivision.

## INT. MARY'S CAR - DAY

Dave hangs on, looks back over his shoulder. Ransome's van comes around the corner a few hundred yards back. A second van cuts straight across the road, vanishing from sight.

DAVE

Shit. There are only two roads out.  
They're going to cover them.

Mary goes over a curb rounding the next corner tight. And there in front of them, a house, garage door open, one car in the garage. Mary sees it at the exact same time as Dave.

MARY

Get the door!

Mary aims the car at the empty slot in the garage next to a big SUV. It launches up the driveway --

## INT. GARAGE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

-- and into the garage, jamming to a stop just short of the hot water heater. Dave is out and into the SUV grasping for the remote he finds on its visor. He jams it. The garage door descends, but oh so slowly.

## EXT. STREET - DAY

Ransome's van corners the same curb Mary took just as the garage door drops its final inch. The van blasts by.

## INT. GARAGE - DAY

Mary kills her engine. Dave, panting, eyes the door to the house. He backs away, gets back into the car with Mary. They both stare at the door to the house. A long beat. Nobody comes to investigate. The light overhead goes out.

## INT. RANSOME'S VAN - DAY

Ransome rides in the passenger seat, secure-link phone in hand.

JOSHUA (V.O.)

We lost 'em, sir. Didn't get a plate.

Ransome, in frustration, bangs the phone down. Amos, in the driver's seat, looks over at him. Ransome lifts the phone.

RANSOME

Goddamn it. This is Ransome. Take care of Mrs. Highgrave.

(beat)

And get the girl's fingerprint from the doorbell.

INT. MARY'S CAR - DAY

Dave and Mary sit in Mary's car in the dark, windowless garage. They've been there a long time. Dave coughs, sinks back in the seat, exhausted, sore from his cold and everything he's been through. And he despairs.

DAVE

Highgrave's dead. He had to have evidence, and now we'll never get it.

MARY

We need help. There's got to be somebody, the government, someone we can go to.

Dave looks up at her. She's staring at him, intense, beautiful... believing in him.

DAVE

You... believe me.

A beat.

MARY

Yeah. I do.

Dave chokes back a sob. He nods, wanting to explode with emotion, all the stress overwhelming him.

DAVE

Thank you.

They sit silently in the garage. Mary looks about, tries to lighten things up.

MARY

I feel like a teenage kid hiding in here with a boyfriend. I wonder when mom's going to catch us.

Dave glances at her. Not quite the thing to say.

DAVE

You're in trouble now. I'm sorry.

MARY

You should have called me back.

That makes Dave smile. They stare into each other's eyes.

DAVE

I wasn't your type. Conservative, boring businessman.

(CONTINUED)

MARY

I wasn't your type. Liberal, free-spirited artist.

DAVE

When we met, I thought to myself you were the most beautiful woman I had ever seen. Including Sally. And that couldn't be.

The words, coming from Dave, are so simple, and so sincere that they upset Mary. Dave pushes the feelings aside.

DAVE (CONT'D)

You're right. We need help. We need somebody who can get their hands on proof.

MARY

FBI. A government guy or something.

DAVE

No. It's gotta be somebody these guys can't touch. Somebody who can't be bought, can't be corrupted --

And Dave stops in mid-thought. He turns back to Mary.

DAVE (CONT'D)

-- Armand Vooradian.

EXT. REFINERY - NIGHT

A van lumps down the road through an east-bay industrial wasteland. It turns at the gate to a refinery. The refinery's lit distillation towers sparkle in the darkness as the van disappears within the complex.

INT. REFINERY POWERPLANT - NIGHT

A long, dark single-room building runs along the base of the refinery's distillation towers. Rows of gigantic oil-burning BLAST FURNACES power the distillation process. And that's not all they're good for.

GLOVED HANDS

swing open the rear doors of the van, grab hold of an odd-looking gurney.

THE GURNEY

is shrouded in a thick, translucent plastic. We get a vague impression of a human figure inside it, covered in gore.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM, POWERPLANT - NIGHT

Watching from a glassed-in overseers office above the plant floor are Ransome and Harry.

RANSOME

Everything stays in the bag this way.

Harry tries not to be ill as the gurney's legs are folded up, and the two HENCHMEN in hazmat suits slide the gurney into the open furnace. Ransome smiles at Harry's pallor.

RANSOME (CONT'D)

You said you wanted to see Highgrave taken care of yourself.

(addressing his mike)

Okay, clean up and get out of here.

The suited men give him a thumbs-up, and retrieve power saws from another van. As fast as a professional chop-shop they begin to cut up the van that carried the gurney, throw its parts in the furnace too.

HARRY

Is all this necessary?

RANSOME

That furnace gets a lot hotter than a crematorium. They can recover dental material, even DNA from a crematorium.

(off Harry's skepticism)

The grease in the chimney, you know. You said you wanted him to disappear without a trace.

HARRY

Yeah.

RANSOME

I take 'without a trace' very seriously.

Harry just looks at Ransome's rictus-like grin. Ransome moves for the door.

INT. LIMO - DAY

Ransome and Harry get into a limo. It pulls away.

HARRY

What about Elliot?

RANSOME

We'll find him. He's the last now that Highgrave's wife has been taken care of. Soon as she's processed.

(CONTINUED)

He tilts his head at the furnace.

RANSOME (CONT'D)

A shame. Talk about bringing your work home with you.

Ransome laughs a disturbing laugh. Harry's not amused.

RANSOME (CONT'D)

We'll find him. Relax.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT

Dave rolls Mary's car out of the garage, hops in as she starts the engine. They just pull away from the house when a BMW turns onto the street. The OWNERS stare at Dave as they turn into their driveway. He waves, and Mary pulls away.

INT. MARY'S CAR - NIGHT

Mary drives back over the Golden Gate, the lights of San Francisco, through wisps of fog, filling their windshield.

DAVE

He's got more money than God, so they can't buy him. Big national figure. Anything happened to him, all hell would break loose. Armand Vooradian puts the H in Humanitarian. And he's going to be pissed when he finds out what his employees have been doing.

Mary nods at Dave's confidence.

MARY

So how do we reach him and persuade him to listen to us?

DAVE

You can't just reach a guy like this. There are tiers of people to get through if you try to contact him through regular channels, and an army of bodyguards if you try to get to him personally. He's in town for a series of charity events this week. Still, it won't be easy. There are things he won't show up at.

(beat, remembering)

But he'll be at Pebble Beach. The charity tournament. He hosts it.

EXT. INDUSTRIAL AREA, PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Ransome's two command vehicles, a pair of RVs and a half dozen white vans are encamped at a deserted parking lot in a run-down industrial area. Helicopters sit in the distance.

INT. COMMAND VEHICLE - NIGHT

Ransome, rubbing sleep off his face, staggers into the Command Vehicle. Amos turns from a computer, nods to him.

AMOS

We got her, sir.

On the computer screen is Mary's driver's license photo.

RANSOME

Mary Patton, it's nice to meet you.

Ransome turns to his gathering men.

RANSOME (CONT'D)

65 Apple Hill Lane, apartment 109,  
gentlemen!

EXT. MARY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

White vans pull up on both sides of the street. Ransome and his men jump out, fan out around the building.

INT. HALL OUTSIDE MARY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ransome, Joshua and Daniel pause outside the door. Daniel produces a locksmith's key and RAMS it into the lock.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

BAM! Mary bolts upright from bed. Dave jumps up from another bed beside her. They stare at the door to the room. It's shut, chained. And then BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP - a truck backing up. Mary turns on the light. We're in a Super 8 Motel room somewhere.

INT. MARY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ransome and his men sweep through the empty apartment.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dave returns from the window, curtains drawn.

DAVE

Garbage truck.

He crashes back on his bed. They're both fully clothed, exhausted. She checks her watch, gets up.

(CONTINUED)

MARY

I'm going to start getting ready.

INT. COUNTRY CLUB BANQUET ROOM - DAY

Big windows look out on the fairways and ocean of Pebble Beach. The ornate banquet room is sunny, light, California-modern. An AUCTION is underway. At a head table sits Armand Vooradian, owner of Lockyear, with a group of GOLF PROS.

AUCTIONEER (O.S.)

Aaannnd we have the last spot in the famous foursome...

The CAMERA PANS over the head table, past the Auctioneer at his podium, out over the well-heeled CROWD of businessmen and women to MARY. Wearing a power suit, glasses, she cuts a gorgeous, daunting figure. No sign of Dave anywhere.

AUCTIONEER (CONT'D)

A round of golf. Pit your putter, wheel and deal with the man, our host, himself ... ARMAND VOORADIAN!

There's a big round of applause. Mary studies the grinning man. Likes what she sees. Maybe Dave's right and this is the ally they need after all.

AUCTIONEER (CONT'D)

Remember all proceeds go to the Vooradian Foundation's efforts to bring medical relief to the world. Who'll start the bidding at twenty thousand dollars?

While Mary blinks back her sticker shock, there's an immediate bid from a SLICK BUSINESSMAN.

AUCTIONEER (CONT'D)

Thank you! We open at twenty. Thirty thirty thirty, do I have thirty?

Another BIDDER raises his card. Mary is in shock.

MARY

(sotto)

Jesus.

AUCTIONEER

I have thirty. Forty. Who'll give me forty. forty thousand dollars?

Mary looks around, agitated, but then remembers her part, and calmly raises her card. The Auctioneer spots her in a split second.

(CONTINUED)

AUCTIONEER (CONT'D)  
Forty from the lovely lady!

She makes eye contact with Vooradian. Vooradian smiles.

AUCTIONEER (CONT'D)  
Do I have fifty? Fifty fifty fifty.

Slick raises his card.

AUCTIONEER (CONT'D)  
I have fifty! Sixty! Sixty! Anyone?

MARY  
Fifty five.

Mary swallows, can't believe she's doing this. Bidder shakes his head, throwing in the towel. Slick glances over at her.

SLICK BUSINESSMAN  
Sixty.

There's a murmur of excitement in the crowd now.

MARY  
Sixty five.

SLICK BUSINESSMAN  
Seventy.

MARY  
Seventy five.

Mary and Slick look at each other while the Auctioneer acknowledges the volley. Slick is pissed. He wants this spot bad to work Mr. V. for some business purpose. And he's willing to pay through the nose for it.

AUCTIONEER  
I have sixty five, seventy and seventy five.

SLICK BUSINESSMAN  
Eighty.

There's a delighted chatter from the crowd who are now reduced to mere spectators. Vooradian leans over to the golf pro beside him.

VOORADIAN  
I hope she wins.

MARY  
Ninety.

(CONTINUED)

AUCTIONEER

I have ninety! Ninety thousand dollars for a round of golf! Who will give me a clean, round one hundred?

SLICK BUSINESSMAN

Ninety five!

Mary looks like she's received a physical blow. But what the hell, she's not really going to pay for this.

MARY

A hundred thousand dollars.

AUCTIONEER

I have one hundred thousand dollars for the last spot on the fantastic foursome. Will anyone give me a hundred and ten?

The crowd eggs Slick on, he thinks about it. And despairs. He shakes his head, and Mary has won.

INT. CASHIER'S OFFICE - DAY

Mary writes out the check, has trouble with the sum: one hundred thousand dollars. A CASHIER across the desk from her doesn't notice as she peeks at her balance- 452 bucks. Mary tears out the check, hands it to the Cashier.

CASHIER

Thank you, ma'am. Enjoy the golf.

EXT. PEBBLE BEACH GOLF COURSE, TEE - DAY

A small crowd applauds as a Golf Pro, another BUSINESSMAN and Vooradian shake hands. Vooradian beams as he turns to the lovely Mary.

VOORADIAN

I have to confess I was rooting for you.

MARY

I'm sorry. This is a birthday present for my husband.

DAVE

John Hanson.

Vooradian's face falls as Dave steps up from behind her. He's wearing golf clothes now, and though he looks presentable, is still ragged from his full-blown cold. Vooradian offers him his gloved hand.

(CONTINUED)

VOORADIAN

You'll forgive me if I'm a bit disappointed.

DAVE

Understandable, sir. No offense taken.

VOORADIAN

Well I guess you're with me, Mr. Hanson.

Dave searches his face for any sign of recognition. None. Any sign of malevolence. Even less.

VOORADIAN (CONT'D)

Guest's courtesy.

He gestures for Dave to tee-off first. Dave smiles, and approaches the tee. He tees up, swings, and hits the ball straight down the fairway two hundred yards.

There's a round of applause for him. Dave's more surprised than anyone. Vooradian slaps him on the back, taunts the Golf Pro and the other Businessman.

VOORADIAN (CONT'D)

Look out, boys.

EXT. FAIRWAY - DAY

Dave rides beside Vooradian in the golf cart. Another cart with the CADDIES and a BODYGUARD follows them.

VOORADIAN

Where do you normally play, John?

Dave hesitates. He looks at Vooradian.

DAVE

That was the first time I ever swung a club in my life.

Vooradian laughs, but then realizes he's not joking.

DAVE (CONT'D)

I need to talk to you privately.

Vooradian raises an eyebrow, goes serious, thinking he's about to get the wheelum-dealum. He stops the cart, and he and Dave walk out alone toward Vooradian's ball.

VOORADIAN

I feel a man should leave his business at the club. When he steps out here onto the course... why it's something sacred.

(CONTINUED)

DAVE

Mr. Vooradian, my name isn't John Hanson. It's David Elliot.

Vooradian doesn't bat an eyelash. The name means nothing.

DAVE (CONT'D)

I work, or worked, at Talbot and Bordick. I was chief analyst on your sale of Lockyear to Senterex.

Vooradian's listening - serious, interested - but not scared.

DAVE (CONT'D)

I'll get straight to the point, and my point will sound insane. Moreso because I have very little in the way of proof. In fact, I have nothing. But I know it's true.

(Beat, intense)

Sir, individuals in your company are creating flu strains, releasing them, and then profiting from the sale of the vaccines to the viruses. Harry Halliwell, a lawyer working on the deal, my former partner Bernie Levy, and your CEO, Jim Cleric, are the masterminds.

Vooradian stares, unable to respond.

INT. CLUB HOUSE LOBBY - DAY

Anxious, Mary paces amongst the Vooradian Foundation presentation boards, information tables, etc. in the lobby. She picks up one of the pamphlets, idly flips through it.

EXT. FAIRWAY - DAY

Vooradian stands, dumbfounded, unreadable.

DAVE

I'm coming to you because I know you're not involved. I have no proof. But there's nothing I can do to prove it. You have to.

At last Vooradian finds his voice.

VOORADIAN

That's crazy. You're crazy, Mr. Elliot.

He turns away. Vooradian makes eye contact with his Bodyguard. The Bodyguard perks up. Vooradian scratches his nose. The Bodyguard eyes a telephone on the cart.

(CONTINUED)

DAVE

This man Ransome will kill me eventually. It's up to you to look into what's happening at your company. I understand what this news will do to it.

VOORADIAN

This is ridiculous.

Vooradian spins back to Dave.

VOORADIAN (CONT'D)

You start putting rumors like this out there, I'll have my legal affairs on you like a pack of wolves.

DAVE

Mr. Vooradian, I'm not going to be spreading any rumors. I'm a dead man. I am not going to last a week against these professional killers.

That takes Vooradian aback. Dave says it so quietly, with so much conviction, Vooradian has no answer.

BODYGUARD

Mr. Vooradian. Telephone.

Vooradian looks from Dave to the Bodyguard, then strides over to the cart, takes the phone, leaving Dave by the ball, out of earshot.

INT. CLUB HOUSE LOBBY - DAY

Mary flips idly through the brochure on the Vooradian Foundation: medical relief throughout the world, sanitation projects, hospitals -- and then she stops. Her attention grabbed by a small color photo.

In the photo Vooradian stands with a group of relief workers somewhere in a war-torn section of central Africa. The medical caravan is guarded by armed men in fatigues.

Their leader, standing next to Vooradian and pointing to something in the distance, is RANSOME.

MARY

Oh my God.

EXT. FAIRWAY - DAY

Vooradian stares at Dave still waiting for him out on the fairway.

(CONTINUED)

VOORADIAN

The fourth hole. It's a blind fairway.

Vooradian hangs up, dropping his golf gloves on the floor of the cart.

VOORADIAN (CONT'D)

These don't fit. Give me another set.

The Caddy hands him a new pair of gloves. Vooradian strides out to Dave, putting them on.

VOORADIAN (CONT'D)

Mr. Elliot, I can't tell you how disturbed I am by these allegations. For decorum's sake, we'll finish this round. But if you can't convince me by the eighteenth hole, I'm going to have the police pick you up in the parking lot.

Dave nods in relief. He has a chance now.

DAVE

I guess I'd better start at the beginning...

EXT. CLUB HOUSE - DAY

Mary runs from the club house, weaving in and among the various businessmen, golf fans, media crews in the direction of the fairway.

EXT. FAIRWAY - DAY

Dave lines up for his shot. This one he slices way off to the right. Vooradian watches him like a wary hawk, keeping a respectful distance as he returns to the cart with him.

DAVE

What I don't understand is why they just don't buy up your shares. Why use Senterex to take over?

EXT. CLUB HOUSE - DAY

Mary dashes along a row of bleachers, the golf crowd dispersing from them as the show has played through. She's looking the other way and SLAMS into a MAN IN A GRAY SUIT.

MARY

Excuse me.

The man turns, and she sees the EARPIECE IN HIS EAR.

(CONTINUED)

She freezes. And the man stares at her... She takes a step back in fear. The man reaches into his pocket and draws out --  
-- a HEARING AID. He turns it up.

GRAY SUIT

I'm sorry, what was that?

Mary reacts, tears herself away. She runs to the edge of the Fairway, spots the carts travelling in the distance, but is stopped at the edge by a GROUNDSKEEPER.

GROUNDSKEEPER

Hey, you can't go out there!

He blocks her way. She's about to just push him aside, but, thinks better of it.

MARY

You're right. That cart has a phone?

GROUNDSKEEPER

They all do.

EXT. FAIRWAY - DAY

Dave and Vooradian drive along, the cart with the Bodyguard and Caddies behind.

VOORADIAN

But what about the proprietary software? I've seen it myself.

The phone rings. Vooradian picks it up.

VOORADIAN (CONT'D)

What?

INTERCUT CALL TO:

EXT. CADDYSHACK - DAY

Mary calls the cart from the caddy master's desk.

MARY

Mr. Hanson, please.

EXT. GOLF CART - DAY

Vooradian hands the phone to Dave.

DAVE

Yes?

EXT. CADDYSHACK - DAY

MARY  
Vooradian is behind it all!

EXT. GOLF CART - DAY

Dave goes cold at the news. It's a beat before he can answer.

DAVE  
Why do you think that?

EXT. CADDYSHACK - DAY

MARY  
He knows Ransome! I'm holding a  
picture of them together right here  
in my hand! In Africa or something,  
like Ransome's some sort of mercenary.

EXT. GOLF CART - DAY

Dave, chilled, peers sidelong at Vooradian.

DAVE  
(beat, loaded)  
You've earned one of your vacations.

EXT. CADDYSHACK - DAY

MARY  
No! I'm not going without you.

EXT. GOLF CART - DAY

DAVE  
It's either vacation or you're fired.  
I'm sorry. But you need it.  
(pained, final)  
Have a good time.

He hangs up.

EXT. CADDYSHACK - DAY

Mary stares after the golf carts dwindling in the distance,  
and finally pulls herself away, blinded by tears.

END INTERCUT

EXT. GOLF CART - DAY

The cart passes out of view of the stands, way down the course  
at a bend. They're almost alone. Vooradian glances at Dave.

(CONTINUED)

DAVE

Mr. Vooradian. What sort of person could sit by and watch tens of thousands of people die, and all along have the power to stop it?

VOORADIAN

I've spent my life trying to figure that out.

And in that moment, Dave knows Vooradian is the monster. The cynicism of it is too much. Dave chokes back his rage.

VOORADIAN (CONT'D)

This attorney friend of yours, Halliwell, how do you think he arranged for these hired killers?

DAVE

I imagine whoever he's working for knew them. I imagine they're probably on their way to get me this minute.

Dave stares at Vooradian. And Vooradian knows he knows. Vooradian stops the cart and gets out near Dave's ball at the edge of the rough. Vooradian breaths deeply of the sea.

VOORADIAN

Well well. Then I guess all a man in your situation could do is relax, enjoy the ocean air and a last good game of golf.

Dave stands there squinting into the distance. So this is how it ends. His eyes fill with tears. His last hope - this man - is gone. He tees the ball up.

He hits the ball. It sails way off into the trees.

VOORADIAN (CONT'D)

Drop one. We won't count it.

DAVE

Not me. I believe in playing it where it lies.

Dave starts off for the far tree line at a determined stride. Vooradian watches him. Dave disappears into the trees. And with a start, Vooradian realizes he's trying to escape.

INT. MARY'S CAR - DAY

Mary races across the parking lot, jumps into her car, sobbing. She fumbles the keys for the ignition...

... and JOSHUA RISES UP from the back seat.

EXT. TREES - DAY

Dave runs like hell through the trees, golf club still in hand. Suddenly a pair of Bell Jetranger HELICOPTERS thunder past overhead. He dodges into the thicker growth.

INT. HELICOPTER - DAY

Ransome and his men hang in the doors of the helicopters. Ransome's lowers him to earth at the far end of one of the fairways. The other prowls past.

EXT. SEASIDE CLIFF - DAY

Dave runs at the edge of a cliff. Below, the sea thumps against the walls of a small cove. Just off shore, a powerboat rides at anchor. A pair of diver-down buoys bob nearby. The helicopters circle in the distance. One heads for him. He darts back under cover of the woods.

EXT. HELICOPTER - DAY

The Helicopter skims along the treeline. Inside, cuffed to a chair opposite Ruth and Joshua, sits Mary.

EXT. TREES - DAY

Dave sees her, and wants to die. The Helicopter races by, missing him.

EXT. FAIRWAY - DAY

Ransome and his men start into the woods, fanning out. Dave is caught between them and the sea. Suddenly, Ransome's earpiece buzzes.

TECHNICIAN (V.O.)

Sir, patching through a call from the boss.

Ransome stops, looks back across the fairway. Vooradian sits in his cart, holding the phone.

VOORADIAN (V.O.)

I don't know how he knows, but he's figured out everything. Except the kicker. Get him.

Ransome nods, and jogs into the woods.

EXT. SEA CLIFF - DAY

Dave eyes the retreating Helicopter. He looks over his shoulder. Distant shapes are coming through the woods. Dave turns to the sea. The cliff. He watches the surge come in.... and he jumps.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

Dave hits the water hard. He comes up gasping, and is swept fast and hard out by the retreating surge. He gets his head up above water, finds the powerboat, and swims for it.

EXT. POWERBOAT - DAY

Dave clammers aboard, rushes to the bow, and fumbles at the anchorline.

EXT. SEA CLIFF - DAY

Ransome and his men emerge in line from the woods. No Dave. Agitated, Ransome works his headset.

RANSOME

Double back.

EXT. POWERBOAT - DAY

Dave turns the engine over and guns the boat.

EXT. SEA CLIFF - DAY

Ransome watches his men disappear back into the trees. He pauses, thinking. And hears the faint sound of an engine. He turns around and looks at the cliff. He hustles over to it and looks down. Nothing there. Just the two buoys.

Because Dave has rounded the nearby point and is out of sight...

EXT. SAUSALITO HARBOR - NIGHT

Fog and rain shroud a cluster of boats at moorings just off shore. Buoys clank, and out of the gloom putters a small Zodiac. It draws up to the cruiser and hooks on.

EXT. CABIN CRUISER - NIGHT

A figure hefts a sack of groceries from the Zodiac which is rising on a motorized winch between the davits, and turns to the CAMERA. It's Harry.

He never notices the POWERBOAT Dave stole riding at the bow.

INT. GALLEY, CABIN CRUISER - NIGHT

Harry descends into the dark galley. He sets the bag down on the folding table, opens the fridge. Its light shines cold and pale on Dave, sitting right there at the table.

DAVE

Is she still alive?

(CONTINUED)

Harry whirls. He drops a six pack of beer on the floor. The cans explode with a hiss of foam.

HARRY

Dave.

DAVE

Nice hideout you've got here. Took one look in the yacht dealer's case. This one had you written all over it.

A paralyzed beat. Then Harry's hand flashes out to slam shut the folding table, trapping Dave behind it. Dave lunges at him, but Harry bounds up the steps and out of the cabin.

EXT. CABIN CRUISER, MAIN DECK - NIGHT

Harry slams shut the cabin door, knocks a set of deep-sea fishing poles over which lodge in the superstructure and block the doorframe. A beat, and then the cabin door springs, but jams on the poles. Dave can't get it open.

INT. CABIN CRUISER - NIGHT

Dave throws himself away from the door, plunges through the cabin to the bow bunks and the hatch in the ceiling there.

EXT. CABIN CRUISER, STERN - NIGHT

Harry hits the motorized winch which begins lowering the Zodiac to the water. He doesn't wait for it to get there, but jumps in, and pulls the outboard starter cord. The engine roars to life.

EXT. CABIN CRUISER, BOW - NIGHT

The bow hatch slams open, and Dave heaves himself out. He hears the Zodiac's motor, sprints up the sloped face of the cruiser to THE BRIDGE, hurls himself into the air... and grabs one of the long whip antennas. He slides down it --

EXT. ZODIAC - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

-- and lets go, falling onto the stern of the Zodiac. Dave struggles to climb in with Harry, trying to avoid the roaring outboard. Harry kicks him then grabs the outboard's tiller, forcing its lethal whirling prop at Dave's side.

Dave grabs Harry's collar. Harry leans on the engine arm. The prop inches closer to Dave's waist... and connects, catching his BELT, whipping it off his body and around its drive shaft. The outboard dies with a terrific BANG.

And Dave lands a hard left on Harry's eye. Harry falls back, and Dave climbs the rest of the way in. He punches Harry a couple of more times, then hefts him up by the collar.

(CONTINUED)

DAVE  
Is she still alive?

HARRY  
Oh, God! Dave!

DAVE  
IS SHE ALIVE?

HARRY  
Yes. Yes. Yes. She's still alive!

A wave sloshes aboard the Zodiac still secured to the cruiser.

DAVE  
Where is she?

HARRY  
I don't know!

Dave shoves Harry's face into the couple of inches of water in the bottom of the Zodiac. Harry gargles seawater, drowning in only three inches of it. Dave sits atop him as he thrashes. Finally Dave lets him lift his head. Harry gasps.

HARRY (CONT'D)  
I don't know! Ransome has her. We're compartmentalized! He wouldn't tell me even if I asked him!

DAVE  
Then how do you know she's alive?

HARRY  
'Cause those are our orders! We keep her alive til we have you!

Harry is disintegrating in fear, whimpering, shielding his face from Dave. Dave's just beat him pretty good, but the terror in Harry's body language is overwhelming. Dave doesn't quite get it. Harry covers his face with his hand.

HARRY (CONT'D)  
Dave! Just give me a little air!

Dave puzzles. That's what Bernie said at the hospital. He grabs Harry's hair and gets in his face.

DAVE  
We're going to make a deal. You get her back, and I don't kill you.

HARRY  
Just GET AWAY FROM ME, Dave! You don't understand!

(CONTINUED)

Dave holds him up, searching his face. Harry sobs uncontrollably, afraid, terrified for his life.

HARRY (CONT'D)

You have it, Dave. You caught the new bug.

DAVE

What?

HARRY

Oh, Jesus, Dave, let me go for God's sake! God, let me go!

DAVE

I have what?

HARRY

Your cold isn't a cold, Dave. You caught their next flu from Highgrave!

DAVE

I'll get better.

HARRY

No you won't. They made a mistake. A big mistake. The bug is lethal!

Shock. Shock shock shock. Dave goes cold and still.

DAVE

I don't believe you.

HARRY

It killed Highgrave. You got it from him. You're going to go contagious any time now. Oh, Jesus!

Dave looks away. He doesn't want to believe, can't bear to, but everything begins to make a sense.

DAVE

Bernie thought he got it from me...

HARRY

Just let me go, Dave! For God's sake!

DAVE

How do you know? How do you know I got it?

HARRY

I don't know! They said so. They said they knew it. Were sure of it!

(CONTINUED)

DAVE

I've only met Highgrave once in my life...

HARRY

I don't know, Dave, please let me go. Please. Oh, God, I don't want to die like you are. Please...

He drops Harry. Harry slashes in the bottom of the Zodiac.

Dave casts off the Zodiac, then grabs the stern ladder to the cruiser. He climbs up into it, looks back down at Harry. Dave's voice is distant, fated, from another world: the world of the dead-already.

DAVE

I'll let them have me if they let her go. I'll call her at her home in two hours. If she's there, I'll give Ransome instructions for the trade. If she isn't, I check myself into a hospital and take my chances.

The Zodiac drifts away from the cruiser. Dave vanishes. And then with a rumble the cruiser's big engines turn over, carrying Dave across the water into the fog.

EXT. NEWS STAND - NIGHT

Dave studies the Transamerica building from the cover of a closed-up news stand across the street. He contemplates it, the towering labyrinth of the corporate world.

Dave's gaze settles on the 28th floor. Mesmerized, he steps to the wet curb. A coughing spell racks his body. He covers his mouth. He takes his hand away, looks at the deadly sputum on it. He reaches down to a sewer opening and tries to scrape it off, making sure it vanishes, never to hurt anyone. Wind whips past him in the darkness, anonymous and alone in the gutter before the towering building.

EXT. TRANSAMERICA BUILDING - NIGHT

Dave pauses outside the doors. Inside only the Ancient Guard, Tim, dozes at his post behind the information desk.

INT. LOBBY, TRANSAMERICA BUILDING - NIGHT

Dave's world slows as he thump-thumps through the revolving door. The Ancient Guard sits there asleep. No reaction.

Dave glides toward the elevator alcove, heels making too much noise. He makes it to the elevators. He pushes the call button.

(CONTINUED)

## AT THE INFORMATION DESK

The Ancient Guard wakes up, rubs his neck. He glances at the empty lobby, unaware Dave's in the elevator alcove behind him. He settles back in his seat to resume his nap, but then a SECURITY MONITOR catches his eye.

## ON THE MONITOR

Dave holds a beat for the camera, and then vanishes into the opening elevator.

## RESUME

The Ancient Guard sits up, grabs a telephone.

## INT. SURVEILLANCE ROOM - NIGHT

Dave enters the surveillance room. The monitors display rooms upon empty rooms. Dave goes to the VCR, turns the T.V. on. It begins to play. And Dave watches how he caught his death.

## ON THE T.V.

HIGHGRAVE (V.O.)

I don't understand your objections to this deal.

DAVE (V.O.)

Dr. Highgrave, Lockyear's undervalued. You guys have a license to make money here...

## EXT. SERVICE ALLEY, TRANSAMERICA BUILDING - NIGHT

A deserted service alley leads to the Transamerica building's loading docks. HEADLIGHTS appear. An eighteen-wheeler turns into the alley, followed by the rest of Ransome's task force.

## INT. COMMAND VEHICLE - NIGHT

Ransome spins around in his command chair.

RANSOME

Lucky dog, Harry!

A sweating Harry gives him a weak smile. A COTTON BALL is taped to Harry's arm, his face bandaged. Vooradian is beside Ransome, rolling down his own sleeve.

RANSOME (CONT'D)

A clean bill just like Mr. V.

Harry is led away by Ruth and Isaiah in red BIOHAZARD CONTAINMENT SUITS with bright yellow HAZMAT patches on them.

(CONTINUED)

And then we see the back of the vehicle full of Ransome's men, all suited up in the same space-suit like gear. Ransome checks his stopwatch.

RANSOME (CONT'D)

Shut down the building... Now!

He points at a pair of containment-suited TECHNICIANS at a communications board. On cue, the FIRE ALARM goes off.

Ransome rises, and takes his own containment suit HELMET in hand. And now he turns to: MARY. A bandage on her arm too. But she's not suited up, only handcuffed to a chain belt around her waist.

RANSOME (CONT'D)

Take her up.

INT. SURVEILLANCE ROOM - NIGHT

Dave looks up at the blaring fire alarm. In here, the sound is not so deafening. Even so Dave turns up the T.V.'s volume.

DAVE (V.O.)

...it's a winner, guys. Granted, you hit one year in four, but when you do...

INT. COMMAND VEHICLE - NIGHT

As Ransome sweeps past the Technicians at the com-board, we get the gist of the ruse de guerre:

TECHNICIAN #1

This is Hazmat. We are responding to a fire at Bay Imaging Labs in the Transamerica Pyramid. An isotope storage locker. Possible radiation.

EXT. TRANSAMERICA BUILDING - NIGHT

Ransome's men in their containment suits, looking like something out of a Mars movie, cordon off the building. But it's mostly unnecessary as the small evacuated crowd on the plaza is dispersing for the street fast.

INT. LOADING DOCKS - NIGHT

More of Ransome's MEN in suits pour out of the trucks in the docks. But these ones are armed with M-16s. In their suits they're anonymous and scary.

Joshua and Harry, now in a suit himself, push Mary in front of them. They move for a pair of freight elevators, open them with keys, and board.

INT. LOBBY, TRANSAMERICA BUILDING - NIGHT

Ransome leads a group of his unarmed troops up to the Ancient Guard who looks over his checklists by the desk.

ANCIENT GUARD

I think that must be most everybody.

RANSOME

(filtered, by suit)

Great, pops. Time for you to split.

ANCIENT GUARD

Except Mr. Elliot. I called just called the police. They said they'd be here any minute. I don't want him to get hurt up there.

RANSOME

Don't worry about that. We'll find him.

The Ancient Guard nods, and hustles out of the building. Ransome and his men stand there a beat in the vacant lobby. Ransome draws his hand across his throat, one of his henchmen makes a call on his radio, and the fire alarm goes SILENT.

And then out of the elevator alcove steps Vooradian and his Bodyguard in biohazard suits.

INT. SERVICE ELEVATOR ACCESS - NIGHT

Ransome and his guys join up with the ones on the freight elevators arriving from the basement. The men in the elevator hand out weapons to the men arriving from the lobby. Ransome sticks a machine pistol in his belt.

INT. 15TH FLOOR - NIGHT

The freight elevators open. Vooradian, Ransome and most of his men get off. Harry and Joshua remain in the elevator with Mary.

RANSOME

Take her upstairs.

Ransome leads the others to the various stairs and passenger elevators. He boards the first one that arrives.

INT. SURVEILLANCE ROOM - NIGHT

Dave watches intently. What did they see that makes them think he caught the disease? Why didn't Bernie get it too?

ON THE T.V. THE CAMERA FOLLOWS IN CLOSE UP:

(CONTINUED)

Highgrave taking a sip of his coffee, making a face.

HIGHGRAVE (V.O.)

Sugar?

DAVE (V.O.)

That'd be mine. Sorry. Got any cream?

And then Highgrave SWITCHES THE COFFEE with Dave.

RESUME

Dave pauses the image. And he understands. He slumps against the wall in despair. As his world ends, the pause slips off and the scene continues to play, but goes unheard as Dave's breath comes hard and he turns away.

DAVE (CONT'D)

God, help me. Help me.

And as Dave disintegrates, one line finally bleeds through:

DAVE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

What'd I miss?

He returns to the T.V. with renewed interest. He watches himself returning to the room, and drink the coffee. But rather than despair in his eye, there's a flicker of triumph --  
-- which lasts all of a half-second, for suddenly he spots:

A SECURITY MONITOR showing the Talbot & Bordick lobby. And from all corners of the room converge Ransome's Containment-suited men, M-16s up, moving like a SWAT team on the suite.

Then, the JANGLE OF A PHONE. Dave goes to it, on the wall.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Yes.

INTERCUT CALL TO:

INT. TALBOT & BORDICK, MAIN HALL - NIGHT

Ransome's men cover the supply closet from nearby offices. Ransome stands behind them with a cell phone.

RANSOME

Good evening, Mr. Elliot. I trust you've had the opportunity to inspect Mr. Levy's infamous tape?

INT. SURVEILLANCE ROOM - NIGHT

The image on the monitor is frozen on the green mug in Dave's hand.

(CONTINUED)

DAVE

Yes.

INT. HALL - NIGHT

Vooradian steps out of the shadow, takes the phone.

VOORADIAN

Then you understand what all this is about now.

INT. SURVEILLANCE ROOM - NIGHT

Dave glances over the equipment, takes a blank tape off a shelf and rips it open. He feeds it to the recorder under the monitor showing the hall.

DAVE

It's not about Lockyear. It's not about any of this insane tangle of corporate dirty tricks, correct Mr. Vooradian?

The RECORDING lights go on all over the VCR.

INT. HALL - NIGHT

VOORADIAN

No, Mr. Elliot, it's not. It's very simple. You've caught your death, as the unfortunate Dr. Highgrave caught his before you. We tried to create a more robust strain of flu for this year by introducing certain nucleic acid sequences from the hemorrhagic fever family.

INT. SURVEILLANCE ROOM - NIGHT

DAVE

I see. The scarier the bug the bigger the vaccine sales.

VOORADIAN (V.O.)

Except in this case the bug turned out too scary. Too scary by far, I might say. Its mortality rate is 81 percent. I've decided to close down that division of Lockyear it has scared me so much, in fact. Hence, without guaranteed profitability, I am selling. By the way, that idiot, Cleric, is completely innocent. A suitable figurehead, and he does whatever I tell him to, no questions asked.

(CONTINUED)

DAVE

How did Highgrave get it?

VOORADIAN (V.O.)

Lab accident. Your meeting with him took place on the first day he was contagious, and he swapped cups with you. He later had intercourse with his wife. Fortunately, we believe we've been able to contain the virus.

(beat)

Unfortunately, life can turn on the wrong cup of coffee.

DAVE

You mean I haven't spread this thing?  
But Bernie --

INT. HALL - NIGHT

VOORADIAN

-- Mr. Levy was a little too hasty. The good news, which he was not aware of, has something to do with statistics. In all likelihood your viral load did not reach the contagious threshold until sometime around eight o'clock this evening. Up until then you were incubating. It's highly unlikely you passed on our little friend. As of this evening, however, the game changed. Like Dr. Highgrave, you are now able to transmit the virus by direct contact with bodily fluids. In 24 hours as you begin to notice the first severe symptoms, your viral load will be so high that breathing on someone will give it to them.

Vooradian hands the phone back to Ransome.

RANSOME

I had the opportunity to observe Dr. Highgrave's passing. There will be an exceedingly high fever. You will wish you were dead as you bleed to death in agony from every bodily orifice while your internal organs quite literally dissolve, until at long last, in one final spasm, you void yourself from pancreas to brain stem, and that wish will be granted.

INT. SURVEILLANCE ROOM - NIGHT

Dave stares down at the monitor showing Ransome on the phone in the hall just outside the room.

DAVE

Why didn't you just tell me?

RANSOME (V.O.)

That was a decision made by Mr. Vooradian, although I can understand the reason why he couldn't let you publicize your problem. Or rather, I understand the 2.1 billion reasons.

INT. HALL - NIGHT

Ransome speaks directly to the sprinkler head on the ceiling above him, where the surveillance micro-camera is hidden.

RANSOME

And I understand why you will be coming out of that room in the next 30 seconds. We will make this painless for you. That I promise. However, if you chose to continue resisting us, I will order my associate to bring Miss Patton down and I will torture her right here in front of you.

INT. SURVEILLANCE ROOM - NIGHT

Dave's appalled.

DAVE

Mary. You have Mary here.

INT. HALL - NIGHT

RANSOME

Yes, I do. As much as I'd hate to hurt her, I don't intend to have you kill any more of my men. Mr. Elliot. Dave, if I may. As they say, this is a no-brainer.

INT. SURVEILLANCE ROOM - NIGHT

DAVE

You'll kill Mary anyway.

RANSOME (V.O.)

True. But I won't torture her.

Dave sees Ransome's men moving and in position on all of the cameras. He's trapped in here, and makes up his mind.

(CONTINUED)

DAVE

You have to let us talk first.

INT. HALL - NIGHT

Vooradian nods. Ransome raises his mike.

RANSOME

Very well. Put her on the line.

INT. SURVEILLANCE ROOM - NIGHT

MARY (V.O.)

Dave? Dave?

DAVE

Mary. I'm here. Do you know what's happening?

INT. RENOVATING OFFICE - NIGHT

Harry holds his wrist mike up for Mary. Joshua walks his post behind them.

MARY

They say you caught their latest model.

DAVE (V.O.)

Yeah. That's what they say.

Mary hears a strange inflection in his voice.

DAVE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I'm going to turn myself in. They're going to kill you.

It all hits her. Her eyes mist up.

MARY

I guess that means no Nepal.

She stares around her at the renovating office. She spots the small sign on the elevator threshold that reads 39.

MARY (CONT'D)

I always thought I'd make it there before I turned 39.

INT. SURVEILLANCE ROOM - NIGHT

Dave smiles a sad smile.

DAVE

Why 39?

(CONTINUED)

MARY (V.O.)

It's one of those threshold numbers.

Dave's smile fades as he realizes she's telling him something.

MARY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Once you get past 39, you've missed it, know what I mean?

And Dave gets it.

DAVE

Yeah. I know exactly what you mean. I gotta go now. See you in Nepal.

END INTERCUT

Dave hangs up. He looks to the door, then once again at the monitors which illustrate his hopeless position. The hall and supply closet are covered from both ends by a dozen men. Dave removes the videotape from the machine, sticks it in his belt, pulls out his shirt to conceal it.

INT. HALL - NIGHT

Ransome watches from an office doorway. Weapons are trained on the door to the supply closet. And then it slowly swings open. Dave backs out. The automatic weapons follow Dave out to the middle of the hall.

RANSOME

Thank you Mr. Elliot.

And in unison, in a general wave of relief, Ransome's men RELAX their weapons. Dave takes a tentative step to the two men holding open a containment suit for him. They don't frisk him, don't spot the tape in his belt.

RANSOME (CONT'D)

We'll be taking you to the BL-4 lab at Lockyear.

The two men with the suit step up to Dave. Dave looks at the faces behind the glass plates. Sweating. Afraid.

RANSOME (CONT'D)

Sterilize the suite.

A team of men with spray tanks begin to hose down the walls and carpet with caustic antiseptic.

Dave stares at Vooradian as he's zipped up, the baggy helmet placed over his head. Ransome spins Dave around, and with two of his guards, leads him off. Ransome and Dave disappear around the corner. Vooradian steps into the closet, following the sterilizing team in.

## INT. FIRE STAIRS - NIGHT

Ransome and his two men follow Dave into the stairwell. Dave takes the center hand rail, and proceeds down.

RANSOME

(to cuff mike)

We are in the north stairs. We will take freight elevator from 20 direct to the loading dock. We roll in 5.

Dave, pale, turns the flight. As he does, he glances over the railing. 28 stories is a hell of a long way down.

## INT. SURVEILLANCE ROOM - NIGHT

Vooradian paces across the room. And he pauses by the trash can. In it, the VHS tape wrapper. Vooradian's eyes shoot to the VCR. He lifts his mike.

VOORADIAN

Ransome, stop and search Elliot now.

## INT. FIRE STAIRS - NIGHT

The railing slides through Dave's gloved hand. Dave glances sidelong at Ransome, preoccupied with his headset.

RANSOME

Say again? Search Elliot?

Dave freezes, they know. And with one smooth burst of effort, vaults the hand rail into the well.

## IN THE STAIRWELL

Dave falls four floors, bounces off the sides on the way down, flailing, trying to grab on --

-- but can't as he careens off one last rail, hits the opposite side of the well, and HIS OXYGEN TANKS CATCH.

## 4 FLOORS UP

Ransome curses, slings up his gun and fires.

DAVE

realizes his suit is TEARING OPEN. Bullets spark off concrete by his head. He scrambles over the rail onto a landing.

RANSOME (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Get after him! Bogie has evaded in north stairwell!

Dave slams through the door at the landing: floor 19.

## INT. SURVEILLANCE ROOM - NIGHT

Vooradian spins to the security monitors in panic, but there's far too many of them, too much going on for him to spot Dave. Dave's in a suit like the rest of them, after all.

## INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Dave waits for the elevator, painfully slow to arrive. Finally it does, but instead of boarding, he hits the button for the ground floor, and jumps out. The elevator closes.

## INT. COMMAND VEHICLE - NIGHT

One of the Technicians spots the elevator moving DOWN on one of his graphics. All the other elevators are moving UP.

## TECHNICIAN

Heads up, I've got elevator 2 heading for the ground floor.

## INT. HALL, 19TH FLOOR - NIGHT

An elevator opens, and Ransome rushes the two men with him into it as he raises his mike.

## RANSOME

Ground floor! Watch the exits!

The elevator shuts on his men, but Ransome doesn't board, his instincts telling him Dave's still around here somewhere.

## INT. CROSS HALL, 19TH FLOOR - NIGHT

Dave runs down a cross hall, enters the south stairwell.

## INT. FIRE STAIRS - NIGHT

Dave strips off the remainder of his biohazard suit, and climbs the stairs like the marathon man.

## INT. SURVEILLANCE ROOM - NIGHT

Vooradian moves from monitor to monitor. On the MONITOR BEHIND HIM, which he doesn't see, Dave races up the stairs. All Vooradian has to do is look over his shoulder... Then Dave vanishes out of range of the security camera. Vooradian turns around a split second too late to spot him.

## INT. FIRE STAIRS - NIGHT

Dave races up to the 39th floor. It says so in big numbers right on the door. He reaches the landing, flattens himself against the wall next to the door. He gets control of his breath, listens, and then he reaches for the door handle.

(CONTINUED)

WHAM! The door bangs open in his face. Joshua, in biohazard suit, lunges through. Dave grabs him by his M-16. Dave and Joshua fall to the landing, the door closing behind them. Joshua pushes the barrel of the rifle to Dave's face.

But before he can chamber a round, Dave gets his finger up to the magazine release, and the gun's magazine falls out. It skitters across the floor and falls into the well.

Joshua gives up on the gun, and gets Dave in a bear hug. The big bruiser stands and begins to crush the life out of Dave. Dave's feet dangle off the floor.

One of Dave's ribs CRACKS. Yelling in pain, Dave gets a hand up to the side of Joshua's helmet, and PULLS OUT THE AIR HOSE. He puts it in his mouth and empties his lungs into it. Joshua's face mask FOGS up.

Joshua drops him. Dave falls on the floor. Joshua SCREAMS, backpedals right over the railing and falls 39 floors.

INT. 39TH FLOOR - NIGHT

The stairwell door swings silently open to the 39th floor. Dave slides out, easing the door shut behind him. The few emergency lights on this floor leave much in shadow, and the temporary walls and plastic provide cover.

Dave checks Joshua's M-16. No magazine. He thinks about dumping it, but decides not to. Dave makes his way into the labyrinth of unfinished offices and cubicles.

INT. SURVEILLANCE ROOM - NIGHT

Vooradian, turning helplessly from monitor to monitor, trying to follow the action throughout the building, suddenly stops. He steps up to a screen. Dave is there, M-16 in his hands.

INT. 39TH FLOOR - NIGHT

Dave steps out of the shadows. He eases down what will be a hall lined with glass-walled offices to:

A vast open area filled with empty cubicles. Hundreds of them. A veritable maze. Glass panels stand on hand trucks, two per truck for the offices along the sides of the room.

At the center of the room, in a central waiting area, Mary is handcuffed to one of the glass-carrying carts. Harry paces by her. He's armed. Dave crouches, and as Harry PACES AWAY, he hustles across to the maze of cubicles.

IN THE CUBICLES

Dave winds his way closer to Mary until he reaches the last cubicle, one quick leap away from her.

(CONTINUED)

He listens as Harry's footsteps grow closer, and then stop. The scrape as he turns and paces the other way. And as the footsteps recede:

RESUME

Dave stands, trains his M-16 on Harry, hoping he won't notice the missing magazine.

DAVE  
Harry, drop it!

Shocked, Harry freezes. But before Dave can do anything, Harry swings his gun to Mary's head. Dave steps out. Standoff.

MARY  
Dave!

HARRY  
Put down the gun! Think about what you're doing! Jesus, Dave, you're the goddamn pale rider!

DAVE  
How could you let all this happen, Harry?

HARRY  
We never meant for it to. Bernie and I helped Cleric and Highgrave set up Lockyear. Straight pharmaceuticals play: looked like they had this hot technology. But they didn't. We got in way in over our heads. We staked everything. We were going to lose it all.

DAVE  
And then a white knight came along. Vooradian.

INT. SURVEILLANCE ROOM - NIGHT

Vooradian turns up the volume, listening to the conversation.

VOORADIAN  
Mr. Ransome, Elliot is on the 39th floor.

INT. 39TH FLOOR - NIGHT

Dave paces out from the cubicles, stands exposed.

HARRY  
Not a white knight, Dave. The devil.  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HARRY (CONT'D)

We made a deal with the devil. He had this idea. If we could make both the virus and the cure, it would save the company. So we let him take over, and he made us rich.

(beat)

We never meant for anything like this to happen. Especially to you. You're Mr. Sugar and Cream.

Dave stops, trains his gun on Harry's face plate.

DAVE

Let her go.

HARRY

Put down your gun. This is crazy. You can't do this to the world. You can't. You're not like this.

(beat, scared, angry)

DROP THE GUN OR I'LL SHOOT HER NOW!

Dave lowers the gun to the floor. Harry fogs his helmet he's breathing so hard. He trains the gun on Dave now, but doesn't have the balls to shoot.

DAVE

Harry. I'm not sick.

HARRY

What the hell do you mean? Look at you!

DAVE

It's just a cold. I never drank from Highgrave's cup.

(Beat, understatement  
of the decade)

You've made a big mistake.

Harry blinks, not quite hearing.

HARRY

But the tape... you switched cups and then you drank from it...

DAVE

I got another cup when I left the room. Go look for yourself.

INT. SURVEILLANCE ROOM - NIGHT

Vooradian sees Ransome on a monitor coming up the stairs.

(CONTINUED)

## VOORADIAN

Halliwell talks too much. He has become a liability. Kill him too.

INT. 39TH FLOOR - NIGHT

Harry backs away from Mary. Mary stares at Dave. And Harry's face goes wide in understanding. He lowers his gun.

HARRY

-- Jesus.

BANG! The explosion of Harry's head is contained in the plastic bag of the suit. He totters over, exposing Ransome on the far side of the room.

Dave leaps for the cart Mary's cuffed to. She jumps ON it. His momentum sends the cart across the floor into the maze. Ransome emerges from the shadows, his Glock machine pistol bucking in his hand.

IN THE CUBICLES

Bullets spack off the walls. Mary fights with the handcuffs.

DAVE

Forget 'em! Push!

They slalom through the maze of cubicles, pushing the cart together like some mad bobsled team.

RANSOME

sprints after them through the field of a hundred cubicles, weaving left, right, left.

DAVE & MARY

push like hell, but it's no use. This cart she's cuffed to is big and slow. Dave sticks his head up to risk a peek. A bullet blows the stuffing out of the padded cubicle wall.

Dave steers them around the next corner, then in a U, heading back in the direction the shot came from.

ANGLE ABOVE:

Ransome continues his zig-zag pattern right toward Dave and Mary, an aisle over! They're almost on top of each other... but Ransome zags right when he should have zigged left, and Dave and Mary shoot past him an aisle over to Ransome's left.

DAVE & MARY

Emerge from the cubicles, aim for a door to a hallway.

(CONTINUED)

MARY

Come on, through there!

The race up to the door at full tilt and BAM! The cart lodges in it. It won't fit through.

RANSOME

Hears the collision from the other side of the room, whirls.

DAVE & MARY

Struggle to get the cart unstuck. Dave braces his feet against the door frame, and PULLS. The cart lurches free. Dave picks himself off the floor as Mary tries to wheel back to the cubicles. But then Dave spots an open elevator.

DAVE

No, over there!

Mary sees the elevator and races for it as Dave catches up with her and adds his momentum to hers.

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Mary and the cart go into the elevator.

DAVE

Hide. They want me more. And take care of this.

Dave pulls the VIDEOTAPE from under his shirt, tosses it on the cart. He looks Mary in the eye, an edge on his voice.

DAVE (CONT'D)

This is the evidence. Narrated by Vooradian. It's everything.

She nods, knows what to do. And he leans forward, looks in her eyes. She believes in him, in everything he says finally. And she kisses him. He retreats from the elevator, staring after her, then breaks away. The elevator doors close.

INT. CORNER OFFICE, 39TH FLOOR - NIGHT

Dave ducks into a corner office. A pair of GLASS PANES stand to the side. Behind Dave, the fog-shrouded lights of San Francisco loom in the exterior window. Dave looks for an exit, spots Ransome out by the elevators.

INT. 39TH FLOOR, BY ELEVATORS - NIGHT

Ransome races up to the elevators, sees the lit numbers above the door. The light goes out on 39, then lights up on 38. And stays lit. Mary got off one floor down. Ransome sneers.

INT. 38TH FLOOR - NIGHT

Mary's elevator opens, and she races out, shoving the unwieldy cart before her. She hunts for something desperately, weaving from corridor to corridor. At last she spots it: A FEDEX BOX. She races up to it, grabs the tape.

INT. CORNER OFFICE, 39TH FLOOR - NIGHT

Dave watches from the shadows as Ransome summons the elevator. Dave can't get past, but can't let him chase after Mary either. She has to get away with the tape. Dave eyes the suction cups for carrying the glass panes. He detaches them.

INT. 39TH FLOOR - NIGHT

The elevator opens in front of Ransome, but just as he's about to board he hears:

DAVE

Ransome!

Ransome's machine pistol is up and blazing like a reflex.

INT. CORNER OFFICE, 39TH FLOOR - NIGHT

The window behind Dave explodes, and he vanishes through it in the blink of an eye, so fast we're not sure what happened.

EXT. TRANSAMERICA BUILDING - NIGHT

A blizzard of glass is sucked out into the howling night, Dave with it. He slams the suction cups at the building. They connect with the window on the floor below and slide...

Frantic, Dave scrabbles to reattach them, but before he can, the cups stop sliding at the very last inch on this pane.

INT. 39TH FLOOR - NIGHT

Ransome isn't sure what happened either, his view partly blocked by a desk. Gun up, he moves to the corner office.

INT. CORNER OFFICE, 39TH FLOOR - NIGHT

No Dave on the floor. Ransome swings left, right, then edges over to the blown-out window. He looks down.

EXT. TRANSAMERICA BUILDING - NIGHT

A suction cup detaches and disappears around the corner of the building just as Ransome sticks his head out.

## INT. CORNER OFFICE - NIGHT

Ransome sizes up the 39-story fall down the terrifying pitched side of the Transamerica Pyramid. From up here the slope looks worse than a sheer fall. And there's no Dave.

## EXT. TRANSAMERICA BUILDING - NIGHT

Because Dave's AROUND THE CORNER, a floor below, clinging by the suction cups to the desperately-pitched window! He tries to find purchase on the millimeter-wide window casement. Dave knows he shouldn't, but looks down.

The steep slant of the building drops away like a black slide to hell. Emergency vehicles line the street.

## INT. CORNER OFFICE - NIGHT

Something catches Ransome's ear. A strange POP. Followed by another. Ransome spins around, sees the panes of glass and the SUCTION CUP MARKS on them. But NO SUCTION CUPS!

## INT. 38TH FLOOR - NIGHT

Mary, hands shaking, double checks the sealed FedEx package, and we see the addressee: FBI. She slides it into the box. She hears the soft BONG of an arriving elevator, and launches the cart forward. She disappears. A beat. And Ransome emerges from the elevator!

## EXT. TRANSAMERICA BUILDING - NIGHT

Dave relentlessly moves across the face of the building with the suction cups. He eyes a WINDOW WASHING PLATFORM suspended by thick nylon ropes, several floors below and maybe twenty yards away horizontally.

He goes from one pane, over the concrete division between panes, to the next. And just as he attaches the suction cup, there's a RUMBLE OF THUNDER. Dave looks up at the sky.

The first spatters of rain pelt off the glass. Dave looks in horror at the suction cups. He speeds up, crossing to another window. This time his suction cup SLIDES when it attaches. He scrabbles fast as he can go to another pane. But he's still got 10 yards to go til he's above the platform.

Then, from the office window he's hanging on: A LIGHT. And the suited figure of Ransome stands in the doorway. Dave gets to the next pane just in time --

## INT. 38TH FLOOR OFFICE - NIGHT

-- because Ransome opens up on the window with his machine pistol. The pane vanishes, and Ransome shouts in fury.

INT. 38TH FLOOR HALL - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Ransome dashes to the next office, replacing the spent magazine from the machine pistol on the run.

EXT. TRANSAMERICA BUILDING - NIGHT

Dave gets to the next window just in time. But now the rain hits full force, and the suction cups don't grip.

INT. 38TH FLOOR HALL - NIGHT

Ransome kicks in the door, Dave right in his sights. The suction cups LET GO as Ransome empties his magazine at him.

EXT. TRANSAMERICA BUILDING - NIGHT

The glass window above Dave detonates, and he falls, tumbling down the face of the building and...

EXT. WINDOW WASHING PLATFORM - NIGHT

...slams into the window washing platform. He gasps in pain and surprise. He's still alive.

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF TRANSAMERICA BUILDING - NIGHT

The Cops look up and point as glass rains down and the muffled report of gunfire reaches them.

COP #1

Holy shit, what's going on up there?

INT. SURVEILLANCE ROOM - NIGHT

Vooradian turns away from the monitors, satisfied to leave this to Ransome. He works his mike.

VOORADIAN

Time to be going, gentlemen.

EXT. WINDOW WASHING PLATFORM - NIGHT

Dave sits up, clutching his chest.

RANSOME (O.S.)

Elliot!

Dave looks up. Ransome stands there in the window above, reloading his gun, chambering the first round. He raises the machine pistol.

RANSOME (CONT'D)

You're a fool. And I thought you were a good man.

INT. OFFICE, 38TH FLOOR - NIGHT

Ransome never sees it coming: racing across the office at full speed is Mary and HER CART. WHAM! She knocks Ransome out the window.

EXT. WINDOW WASHING PLATFORM - NIGHT

Ransome roars, bounces down the face of the building, his pistol jarred out of his grip. He lands hard on his back, his tanks taking the impact as they smash the side rail and shear off a safety brake lever.

BAM! With the brake gone, Ransome's side of the platform falls five feet.

INT. OFFICE, 38TH FLOOR - NIGHT

The cart almost follows Ransome out the window, taking Mary with it, but she stops it - teetering over the edge.

EXT. WINDOW WASHING PLATFORM - NIGHT

Dave drags himself up on the rope hand rails, and taking advantage of Ransome being stunned, swings at him. It's a good punch, but Ransome's baggy helmet absorbs the blow.

Ransome totters to his feet, grabs Dave by the shirt and hammers him with a headbutt. They go down hard, and the entire platform JOLTS HARD against its support ropes.

They claw at each other. The wind and rain roar past them, the city lights around and below them sparkling.

EXT. TRANSAMERICA ROOF, WINDOW WASHING SUPPORT POSTS - NIGHT

The battle below WARPS one of the posts from which the platform hangs. Anchor BOLTS crack at the base of the post.

EXT. WINDOW WASHING PLATFORM - NIGHT

Ransome aims a vicious punch at Dave's head, but before he can deliver it, the platform DROPS another five feet on Ransome's end. Ransome clutches for a hand rail instead, and Dave throws himself at him.

EXT. TRANSAMERICA ROOF, PLATFORM SUPPORT POSTS - NIGHT

The warped post BENDS in half, and the anchor BOLTS pop from their base like gunshots. The post goes over the side --

EXT. WINDOW WASHING PLATFORM - NIGHT

-- and Ransome's end of the platform DROPS AWAY. Ransome falls flat and grabs on.

(CONTINUED)

Dave crashes over him, grabbing onto Ransome's leg an instant before he somersaults over him and plunges into the void.

The Platform ends up in a nearly vertical position with Ransome at the top, Dave half way down, hanging onto him. And the momentum causes the entire platform to SWING like a pendulum parallel to the face of the building.

It whips, twisting across the face of the building like a malfunctioning Viking Ship ride at an amusement park.

The falling support post SMASHES into the top of the platform where Dave was a second ago and ricochets into the darkness.

Ransome tries to kick Dave free. Dave lets go of him and grabs the platform. Ransome stomps on Dave's fingers. Dave slides further down. The platform wobbles and CRASHES into a window.

INT. 30TH FLOOR OFFICE - NIGHT

The platform blows glass all over, knocking over lamps, filing cabinets. For a split second it looks like they could drop off into the building, but the platform swings back out --

EXT. WINDOW WASHING PLATFORM - NIGHT

-- and PLUNGES another thirty feet as --

EXT. TRANSAMERICA ROOF, PLATFORM SUPPORT POSTS - NIGHT

-- the single remaining boom carrying the weight of the platform PEELS away from the building, hanging only by a final two anchor bolts.

EXT. WINDOW WASHING PLATFORM - NIGHT

All Dave can do is crawl up to Ransome's end. Ransome, with the high ground, expertly hits him again and again. But the swinging platform keeps him from landing a lethal blow.

RANSOME

It's funny. You'd think I'm the bad guy. But I'm the one saving the world.

Dave somehow hangs onto the hand rails. The dizzying arc, the city lights, make Dave's head swim. Two quick karate blows sink him. Dave falls to the bed of the platform.

Ransome, above Dave, slides down the bed and slams his feet into Dave's shoulders, sending Dave further down and OVER THE EDGE. Dave grabs onto the last bit of hand rail line.

A beat as Dave swings from the platform like a marionette. Clutching the hand rail with one hand, Ransome squats down to pry Dave's hands off --

(CONTINUED)

-- but Dave LASHES OUT, letting go of the lines, and grabs Ransome by his helmeted head. The helmet SHREDS open, face plate peeling right off.

Ransome now lies on the carriage, Dave hanging off the carriage from the shredded face plate. Ransome is immobilized, and in horror can do nothing but watch as:

Dave slowly lifts himself up to Ransome's face.

DAVE

People always say I'm too nice. They say I don't have killer instinct.

(beat)

They're right.

And Dave gives Ransome a kiss on the mouth. Ransome SCREAMS --

RANSOME

NOOOOOO!

-- and slides right by Dave and off the platform. Dave catches hold of a guideline.

Ransome falls, oxygen tanks spewing streaking clouds of gas, as he skips off the building, SCREAMING ALL THE WAY as the cold, hard ground RUSHES UP AT HIM AND US.

EXT. PLAZA OUTSIDE TRANSAMERICA BUILDING - NIGHT

Shocked Cops cover their heads as Ransome hits a mail box, exploding in a cloud of fluttering white mail.

EXT. WINDOW WASHING CARRIAGE - NIGHT

Dave, exhausted, drags himself back onto the swinging platform, clings to it like a shipwreck survivor would a piece of flotsam.

The platform JERKS again and falls another five feet. Dave realizes he's still in trouble. He lets the momentum of the swinging platform carry him back, and then he leaps feet first right through an office window.

In that instant, the lines go slack and the support post up top GIVES WAY. The entire platform, supports, lines and all, drop for the street below.

EXT. TRANSAMERICA BUILDING PLAZA - NIGHT

Cops react to the sight of the huge platform BOUNCING down the face of the building, sparks and shattered windows in its wake.

The huge platform slams into an emergency vehicle, cratering it into the pavement.

EXT. SIDEWALK, FEDERAL BUILDING - DAY

Vooradian is bundled down a flight of stairs by a group of AGENTS, under arrest. REPORTERS cover the madhouse scene.

INT. UNMARKED CAR - DAY

Dave and Mary hold hands in the back seat of an unmarked police car. In the front seat sit Dave's old friends, the two Dicks.

1ST DICK

Who'd a thunk it?

2ND DICK

Not me.

MARY

How long til we can get on with our lives?

1ST DICK

Year til trial.

2ND DICK

Trial will last... couple months.

1ST DICK

Til then its just the four of us, one big happy family.

2ND DICK

Cheer up. Protective custody can be fun...

INT. CHEVY SUBURBAN - DAY

The arresting Agents sit Vooradian in the back seat. The doors close. The vehicle begins to move. Agent #1, the same guy who was debriefing Dave, turns to Vooradian.

F.B.I. AGENT #1

Sorry about that, sir. You won't need 'em once you post bail. Don't imagine that's a problem, huh?

And Vooradian just smiles as the Agent UNLOCKS his cuffs.

FADE OUT