

SMASH AND GRAB

Written by

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May 2009

FADE IN:

A BABY STROLLER

rolling along the sidewalk, passing gargantuan homes, set like gems within Las Vegas's famed Rancho Fantasma Estates.

CAROLINE BELL pushes the stroller. 26 years old. Sunglasses. Black hair in a pageboy bob, glistening in the sun like the skin of a bubble.

She maneuvers the stroller up a long and winding driveway.

And we ZOOM IN on the stroller. Because there is CABLE UNSPOOLING from its underside. Landing slack along the ground. 1/4-inch Hercuflex Titanium weave. Almost invisible on the gray asphalt of the driveway.

INT. SURVEILLANCE POST - THAT MOMENT

These men have been packed in here for days. Inside this metal box. Hunched over a nest of video monitors. Pissing in Gatorade bottles. Breathing air that seems to have been filtered through a dead rat.

Caroline Bell glides across their monitors.

FBI SPECIAL AGENT WARD OATES (42) leans in close, eyes almost bumping the video screen.

EXT. HOUSE - THAT MOMENT

Caroline pulls a key ring from her purse. Among the jumble of keys is a DOUBLE BALL LOCK PICK. She pops the front door with it in less than a second. Looks totally natural.

INT. SURVEILLANCE POST - THAT MOMENT

Oates watches Caroline push the stroller into the house and shut the door behind her.

DISSOLVE TO:

LATER

On the video monitor: Caroline exits the mammoth house. Walks down the driveway. The stroller is gone. Her purse is gone. Someone mutters:

SOMEONE (O.S.)
If that's her, she's not carrying
anything.

SOMONE ELSE (O.S.)
That's not her. Could that be her?

SOMEONE (O.S.)
Why would she leave her baby alone?

All the agents' eyes fixate on Oates, awaiting his command. Oates thinks for a moment, then:

OATES
I've dedicated the last two years
of my life tracking down this crew.
In that time my wife has fucked at
least four men, including her new
husband. Something's amiss. I can
feel it. They're not getting away
this time. Gear up.

EXT. STREET - THAT MOMENT

Caroline strides along, following the barely perceptible cable, which runs along the sidewalk, then veers off, across the wide open street.

EXT. HOUSE - THAT MOMENT

SEWER REPAIR TRUCKS are set up across the street, just down the block from the target house. A WINDOWLESS UTILITY VAN and a PUMP TRUCK.

Ward Oates and a team of 4 AGENTS exit the van. Speed across the street, up the driveway, to the door of the target house.

Oates double blinks-- A CABLE! Running into the house through the slightly open door. Oates turns, sees the silvery trail spanning the entire length of the driveway. All the agents see it now. Oates draws his .45. Kicks into--

THE FOYER

where there is an overturned stroller, American Girl doll hanging limply out of it.

The keypad for the house's security system dangles off the wall, suspended by a rainbow of bypass wirework.

Oates quick draws a hand radio.

EXT. STREET - NEXT MOMENT

Caroline is now waaaay down the block and on the other side of the street, about to round the corner.

A BLACK FBI SEDAN chirps its siren. Sends a neural JOLT through Caroline. Stops her in place.

The car SCREEEEEKS to a halt in front of her.

Two AGENTS fly out. Use the open doors as body shields and as elbow supports for their gun arms.

AGENT #1
Freeze!

AGENT #2
Don't! Fuckin'! Move!

Caroline dose precisely as she is told. Doesn't even react when she sees the FBI sedan is parked directly over the titanium cable.

INT. HOUSE - THAT MOMENT

Oates leads his team up the spiral stairway, fast, pistols in scan mode, following the strange cable-- down a hall, through a door, and into a--

MASTER BEDROOM

where it runs along the maple floor, then straight underneath two closed double doors on the far side of the room.

EXT. STREET - THAT MOMENT

The agents still have Caroline at gunpoint, are still hiding behind the doors of the black sedan.

AGENT #1
Place your hands on top of your head and approach the vehicle.

Caroline remains frozen.

AGENT #2
Put your hands on your fuckin' head and get over here.

Caroline's watch alarm BEEPS. She glances at the cable on the ground. She takes one big step...backward.

The agents look at each other, deeply perplexed.

INT. HOUSE/MASTER BEDROOM - THAT MOMENT

Oates approaches the double doors. Eyes fixed on the cable running underneath them. He stops. He extends a hand. He grips a brass door handle. He--

KA-VOOOOOOOOM!

is SLAMMED FLAT. BY A CHARGING RHINO. EXPLODING THROUGH THE DOUBLE DOORS, SCATTERING THE 4 AGENTS LIKE PAPER DOLLS, GOUGING WALLS, SHATTERING FURNITURE, RAMPAGING OUT OF THE MASTER BEDROOM IN A SHRAPNEL-SHROUDED ROAR.

EXT. STREET - THAT MOMENT

The cable beneath the FBI sedan is moving. Something REELING IT IN, so fast it scorches the concrete.

The agents look down, noticing it for the first time.

Caroline takes another step back.

EXT. HOUSE - THAT MOMENT

The Rhino HYPER-BURSTS out of the house, through the front door and onto the driveway. But now, out in the bright sunlight, it clearly is not a Rhinoceros.

IT'S A SAFE.

An ANTI-LANCE TXTL-60. Expertly tethered to the rip-roaring titanium tow cable. Some mysterious force on the other end, pulling it with the power of a runaway freight train.

The safe whips into the street, gouging asphalt, clipping the front bumper of a moving Mercedes, uprooting a fire hydrant, flipping a manhole cover into the air like a tossed coin.

THE TWO FBI AGENTS

holding Caroline at gunpoint see the safe, tow cable slingshotting it around a phone pole, flinging it TOWARD THEM AND THEIR CAR, like some jet-propelled, kamikaze-piloted wrecking ball.

No time to think. Only to dive. As everything blends into SUPER SLOW MOTION, the kind National Geographic uses to film Great White Sharks leaping out of the ocean to chomp meat off a hook.

The impact is silent. The impact LAUNCHES the FBI sedan. Spinning. Rippling. Coming apart like hot taffy.

The SUPER SLOW MOTIONS ENDS. The car CRASHES back to Earth. And the safe whips around a light post, around the corner. Caroline running close behind. Both are gone.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET - THAT MOMENT

A MACK TITAN TRUCK. HURTLING down a sleepy street. Flanked by Spanish mansions and a golf course. There is a man behind the wheel of the truck, up-shifting and squinting into the desert sun. CHARLIE DECKER. Maybe 27 years old.

We move around the truck, to the rear of the trailer it's towing. The trailer's hatch is open.

Bolted to its floor is a HYDRAULIC WINCH, normally used for deep sea salvage. It is SLURPING UP the TITANIUM CABLE as if it were a spaghetti noodle.

JOHNNY UNDERHILL (27) operates the winch. The safe comes smashing and clanging up the street, toward the open trailer hatch. It skips, jumps, *sliiiiides*, grinding up the ramp. SLAMS into the massive winch arm. The motor GRINDS. POPPING and SQUEALING. Underhill hits buttons, frantically trying to shut the thing down.

In the driver's cab, Charlie hears all the noise, vibrating through his seat. He calmly radios back to Underhill:

CHARLIE
Blue button on the left.

Underhill hops to the left side of the winch. Hits the blue button. Silence. Machine's off. He radios up to Charlie.

UNDERHILL
Thanks.

EXT. HOUSE - THAT MOMENT

Ward Oates wobble-walks out of the house, onto the driveway. He's panting, showered white with plaster debris. His team waddles out after him.

Oates eyeball sweeps the street, following the trail of gouged Earth, past flattened shrubs, past the hydrant geyser, past the scattered chunks of FBI sedan, all the way to the end of the block where the wake of devastation turns the corner and he can't see anymore of it.

A baby CRIES. At the end of the driveway. In a stroller. Young mother standing behind it, dressed identically to Caroline-- sunglasses, black hair in a pageboy bob. Her face is a monument of shock.

INT. MACK TRUCK - THAT MOMENT

Charlie Decker slows the truck. Unlocks the doors.

Caroline Bell yanks open the cab's passenger door. Swings inside. Removes her sunglasses and black wig, revealing a wavy, slicked-back dome of sunflower blonde hair.

He gives her a look: *Are you okay?* Her look back: *Just fucking drive.* And so he does.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE (LAS VEGAS) - DAY

Charlie Decker enters through the front door, stands on the cool granite tile of his foyer. He's holding a pizza box and a six pack of ice-cold MGD beer bottles.

Caroline Bell walks out from the TV room. Bare feet and self-cut jean shorts.

CAROLINE
(borderline monotone)
You got pizza.

CHARLIE
Sausage, onions, and jalapeños.

CAROLINE
...hmm...

CHARLIE
The Caroline Special.

CAROLINE
...

CHARLIE
Okay...what the fuck?

CAROLINE
I got in.

Charlie now sees she is holding a college acceptance packet, from UCLA. Charlie places the pizza and beer on a side table usually reserved for mail.

CHARLIE
You said you weren't even going to apply.

CAROLINE
I'm old, Charlie. Soon I'll be too old.

CHARLIE
So go to UNLV.

She shakes her head. She's heard this before.

CAROLINE
I can't do this anymore. Not after last time. Can't you just please come with me?

CHARLIE
To Los Angeles? What about Johnny?

CAROLINE
He's a grown man.

CHARLIE
I can't just leave him.

CAROLINE
Why not?

CHARLIE
Uh...He saved my life once. That's
one thing.

CAROLINE
(rolls eyes)
You were six years old. You fell
out of a tree house.

CHARLIE
And he caught me.

CAROLINE
You landed on top of him.

CHARLIE
What would I even do in L.A.?

CAROLINE
Anything. Go to school with me.
You already have all the money
you'll ever need.
(then)
All the things we've done... We're
lucky now. None of them have gone
so bad that we can't turn back. We
don't stop soon, we'll be stuck in
this life forever.

CHARLIE
No we won't.

CAROLINE
How long, then? Five more years?
Ten? Because if you're serious
about me, getting married and
everything...you have to decide.
Because I can't take it.

Charlie just stares at her.

CAROLINE
Don't just stare at me like a
fuckin' turd.

CHARLIE

Whoa, take it easy... I don't know right now. I don't have an answer, okay? I need a little time to think it over and--

CAROLINE

--How about a ballpark guess, then? I'll settle for that. Approximately how many more years are we gonna waste, here, stupidly risking our lives?

Silence. Charlie tries to think of a good reply. Shrugs.

CAROLINE

Shrug? That's your answer? Shrug? Fuckin' pathetic.

CHARLIE

Jesus Christ, you want an answer?!!

CAROLINE

No. I want a snow cone.

Charlie kicks their big TV off the stand as hard as he can. Spiderwebs the LCD screen. Casually says,

CHARLIE

There...that's my answer.

She turns, hurries through the house, picking up her keys, cell phone, and purse along the way. Charlie follows.

CHARLIE

So you're just leaving? This is it? Right now? This is madness.

She opens the front door. About to step out.

CHARLIE

(contrite)

Hold on. Hold on.

He grabs her shoulder. She stops. Turns.

CHARLIE

Caroline, you just can't move to L.A. and start things brand new. The world doesn't work that way.

CAROLINE

Fuck do you know about the world? I've done it before...when I was eighteen years old. Second time should be a breeze.

(MORE)

CAROLINE (cont'd)
(then)
Remember when we met and I told you
my name was Caroline? I lied.

The door slams shut behind her.

EXT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - DAY

A glossy new BMW 750i pulls into the driveway of Charlie's stucco mini-mansion. Johnny Underhill steps out.

INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Underhill enters the living room. Charlie lies prone on the couch. Same clothes he was wearing in his last scene, which took place a week ago. There's a 16 ounce bottle of water and a semi-nibbled Fig Newton on the coffee table. This is everything he intends to eat today.

UNDERHILL
You okay? I've been calling.

CHARLIE
Oh...I snapped my phone into a lot
of pieces.

Charlie gestures to a mutilated cell phone on the floor.

UNDERHILL
Why don't you just talk to her?

CHARLIE
What's there to say, this point...?

UNDERHILL
Come on, just... First thing...
Get up. Shower. We'll go to
Denny's for some Mihammy. On me.

CHARLIE
I'd rather eat shit out of the
toilet.

UNDERHILL
I know...I know...but the only
reason she's doing it is to get
your attention. To piss you off.
It's so obvious...a move of
desperation. Why else would she
pick a dump like The Sonic Bang?

Charlie sits up.

CHARLIE
What? Sonic Bang...?

UNDERHILL
Oh...I assumed you already...

CHARLIE
I haven't talked to anyone in a
week. What's going on?

Charlie gets the gist from Underhill's look.

CHARLIE
You're telling me she's stripping?
She's a stripper? She's a stripper
who's stripping at The Sonic Bang?

Underhill shrugs in the affirmative. Charlie chuckles.

CHARLIE
That's impossible. She and I...we
make fun of people like that.

UNDERHILL
I mean I haven't seen it. But
there have been several reports of--

CHARLIE
--Fully nude? In front of all
those glazed degenerates? Touching
that pole with her... It can't be.
The universe would sooner collapse.

UNDERHILL
Word is that she's doing it for
money...money for school. Does she
want to go to school or something?

Silence. Charlie's guts nosedive. He launches off the couch. Grabs his keys. Blurs out the door.

INT. SONIC BANG STRIP CLUB - DAY

Charlie barges through the club's double doors. Brushes past TWO HULKING BOUNCERS, as if they were holograms.

The Bouncers trade what-the-fuck glances.

Charlie dashes, eyes searching, through waves of chemical smoke and lap grinding and Depeche Mode, all the way to--

THE DRESSING ROOM

Strippers buzz about. Spray tans and body glitter. Caroline Bell sits on a folding chair amid this Milky Way of twinkling tits. She's wearing jeans and a T-shirt. She's reading a Sue Grafton novel. She looks up and half-smiles at Charlie.

CAROLINE
Scared you, didn't I?

Charlie is silent. She dog ears her book and shuts it.

CAROLINE
You know it took you long enough.
I've been paying them to let me sit
back here for four days now. Once
in a while I run out on stage in my
swimsuit and do some pretty sweet
karate moves. But mainly I read.
This is the fifth book I've--

--Charlie yanks her to her feet. Engulfs her in his arms and kisses her. *VWOOM*-- all sound drops off the soundtrack.

When they break apart Charlie has tears in his eyes.
Caroline wipes one away with her thumb. Kisses the rest.
Every stripper watches this, utterly captivated.

CAROLINE
I'm so sorry...

CHARLIE
It's okay...I'm a fuckin' idiot...

CAROLINE
No...what is this I'm even doing?

They kiss more. Between kisses:

CHARLIE
What's...what's...your real name?

CAROLINE
Oh...that? It's--

--Charlie hits the floor hard. Kicks to the legs. Kicks to the ribs. Two Bouncers above him. One raises his boot, about to skull stomp when--

A folding chair PANCAKE-SLAMS HIS FACE. Caroline swings it again, edge first. Bouncer teeth crack and fly. The second bouncer spins. The second bouncer eats chair and crumples cold.

Charlie de-blurs his vision. Looks up at Caroline and says:

CHARLIE
Whatever your name is, will you
marry me?

EXT. HI-HO! WEDDING CHAPEL - NIGHT

Charlie and Caroline bound down the chapel steps arm-in-arm, so fast the cheap little veil blows off her head. They stop and kiss. Still laughing. Complimentary bouquet crushed between them.

EXT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - DAY

There's a for sale sign in the lawn. There's a U-Haul hitched to Charlie's Acura MDX. Caroline in the passenger seat. Charlie and Johnny Underhill on the front stoop of the house. Charlie locks the door for the last time in his life.

CHARLIE
Sure I can't change your mind?

UNDERHILL
What would I do in L.A.?

CHARLIE
Hang out with me and watch TV.

UNDERHILL
You know I'd like that, but...I got Sheila, plus my bar... I'm happy here.

(then)
Don't worry about me. I can easily find another thief with great leadership skills to take your place.

CHARLIE
Great leadership skills? That's how you think of me?

UNDERHILL
Maybe, I dunno... Why?

CHARLIE
Just funny to hear, I guess.
(then)
Anyway...

Charlie hands Underhill the house keys.

CHARLIE
Thanks for helping me with this, and for, you know...

UNDERHILL
Have a safe...good trip.

Underhill extends a hand. Charlie looks at it for a second, then hugs him for a long time.

INT. ACURA (MOVING) - DAY

Charlie drives. Caroline pulls a CD from her bag.

CAROLINE
I made a sweet CD for our drive.

She pops it in. A song from the movie *National Lampoon's Vacation* comes on at top volume. It's called *Holiday Road*, and it plays over the entirety of our--

L.A. FUN-TIME MONTAGE

INT. NEW HOUSE - DAY

A REALTOR shows Charlie and Caroline around a little Spanish-style house, high up in the Hollywood Hills, shrouded in eucalyptus trees. Caroline whispers to Charlie.

CAROLINE
This place is totally haunted.
(then)
Let's take it.

INT. UCLA FRESHMAN ORIENTATION - DAY

Charlie and Caroline sit in a lecture hall amid hundreds of rubber-faced 18-year-olds.

INT. BEVERLY CENTER/PET STORE - DAY

Charlie and Caroline look at dogs. She spies a small and sad yellow lab. Asks to hold it. Gets the warm little thing in her arms and her soul shatters and reforms in the shape of a puppy.

INT. HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Charlie installs a 52-inch LCD TV on the wall. Caroline chases COMET the yellow pup past a bunch of new furniture.

INT. SPACE MOUNTAIN - DAY

Charlie and Caroline explode through hyperspace in the front car of Disneyland's premier roller coaster.

TIME PASSES, THREE YEARS WORTH, BLURRING BY ON THE SCREEN:

Birthdays...Christmas...Vacation in Hawaii...Drinking milkshakes...Learning to surf...Celebrating good grades on report cards...Playing in the park with a full-grown Comet...Snuggling under a blanket while watching an Italian zombie movie on the couch....

FADE TO BLACK.

3 YEARS LATER

INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Caroline and Comet nap soundly on the couch. Charlie sits beside them, absorbed in a book entitled *Hitler: Nemesis*.

The doorbell rings. Charlie rises silently to answer it.

When he opens the door he sees Johnny Underhill for the first time in three years, looking sunken and impossibly tired. He sees a mildly obese man named GILBERT BLATCH. 28 years old. Wearing a black, sweat-matted tank top. Tattoo on his flesh glob of a shoulder, one word: POONTANG. And in the driveway, behind Underhill and his strange companion, Charlie sees an obscure DUTCH SUPER CAR called a SPYKER C8.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Charlie, Underhill, and Blatch sit around the kitchen table. Blatch's knee fidget-bounces without end. They whisper, careful not to wake the napping Caroline.

CHARLIE
Where's it from?

BLATCH
Valet at The Mandalay Bay... Dope
rides roll in, he calls me.

CHARLIE
Dope rides?

BLATCH
Bomb-ass whips.

Charlie turns to Underhill, tries to zone out Blatch.

CHARLIE
Why did you steal a car if you
can't move it yourselves?

UNDERHILL
I thought I could. It had been a
while but...

CHARLIE
You know all the same people I
know. You're a smart guy. Just
call one of them.

UNDERHILL
I did. Those people... They don't
think I'm so smart anymore.

CHARLIE
Isn't there anyone else you can...?

UNDERHILL
(shakes head)
The Super Bowl flattened me. And
the last three years...I know we
haven't really talked...

Blatch snort-hawks a phlegm wad into his mouth. Swallows it.

UNDERHILL
...I need help on this one,
Charlie. I need the money. I
just...I need it for so many
things. If you would make some
calls, vouch for me...

CHARLIE
I can't have trouble in my life
like that. I can't. I can not.

BLATCH
Don't tell me you don't miss it,
though.

CHARLIE
...?

BLATCH
The rush, brotha.

CHARLIE
I like sitting on the couch with my
wife and watching 90210 on SoapNet.

BLATCH
Jesus Christ, we drove all night to
listen to this bullshit? 90210...?
(right to Charlie)
Long as we're here, what other
shows about gay blowjobs do you
like to watch?

Charlie raises an eyebrow, looks at Underhill.

BLATCH
Come on, Johnny. Let's roll the
fuck out. We don't need this.

UNDERHILL
Just hold on a--

BLATCH
I thought you said you trusted my
leadership skills. Let's bounce.

UNDERHILL
Just...shut up a second.

BLATCH
Whatever.
(stands)
I saw a porta-potty down the
street. I'm gonna go take a shit
in it.

Blatch leaves. When he's good and gone.

CHARLIE
What the fuck are you doing with
that...guy?

Underhill shakes his head, looks away, embarrassed.

UNDERHILL
I dunno...I dunno...I dunno.

CHARLIE
Listen, Johnny, if you really need
my help...

UNDERHILL
Just a phone call or two.

CHARLIE
If Caroline finds out about this...
You're paying for my divorce
attorney, and then you're willfully
committing suicide.
(then)
I am serious.

UNDERHILL
Thank you.

CHARLIE
Now get out of here before she
wakes up. I don't even want her to
know you're in the city.

FADE TO BLACK.

OVER BLACK, we hear a MAN'S VOICE WHISPER...

MAN'S VOICE
Close your eyes, my darling.

INT. VEGAS HOTEL ROOM - DAY

There is a BEAUTIFUL WOMAN. Totally naked. Cuffed to a bed. SOMEONE is squirting Hershey's chocolate syrup all over her body, swirling patterns, between her legs, up her stomach, around her breasts. This someone is a man named LEE FARALLON, age 64, stone grey suit, shark tooth bolo tie, lots of scars on his hands.

Farallon draws a line of syrup from the bound woman's body, across floor, all the way to a SNARLING ROTTWEILER, tethered to a closet doorknob.

The Rottweiler licks chocolate. Lunges for more. The leash snaps taut.

KEN VERITEK (33) watches this from the corner. Veritek is 6'4", 261 lbs. Neck gorilla thick. Ears cauliflowered like chewed Hubba Bubba. The dog snarls and he cringes.

Farallon RIPS duct tape off the woman's mouth.

FARALLON

Now you're going to tell me what I want to know, or I cut Dynamo's leash. He'll eat you alive.

The woman is near mental implosion. She cries. Farallon slaps her until she sputters,

WOMAN

...okay, okay...stop! I'll tell you...please don't...I'll tell you anything...

Farallon's cell rings. He answers. He listens. He hangs up. Draws his silenced Titanium pistol. PUMPS A ROUND through the woman's face. Veritek blanches.

VERITEK

Holy-shit-what-the-fuck?

FARALLON

We have a new assignment.

VERITEK

...?

FARALLON

We are going to find a stolen car.

Farallon CUTS Dynamo's leash. The dog POUNCES on the candy-coated corpse. We don't see much. But we do hear CHEWING.

INT. CHARLIE'S ACURA - DAY

Charlie in his car. Parked outside Vons. On his cell.

CHARLIE
I am retired. It's for Underhill.

INTERCUT - VINCENT BARNES

On his cell. In his CHOP SHOP. Walking past men dicing cars with oxy-acetylene torches. Sparks spew in thick washes.

BARNES
Well...if you can personally
guarantee it, we have a deal.

CHARLIE
Isn't that what I just did?

BARNES
Since you ditched him, Underhill's
reputation has been lower than
crocodile piss. I want you to
bring the car to me.

CHARLIE
Fuck that.

BARNES
Forget it then.

CHARLIE
I am retired.

BARNES
Whatever you say.

CHARLIE
Goddamn it. Alright, fine...fuck.

BARNES
Where'd a guy like Underhill get a
quarter million dollar car anyway?

EXT. CHEVRON (LAS VEGAS) - DAY

A Chevron gas station. Webbed with yellow tape. Alive with police, trying to compute the aftermath. Blood. Everywhere. Splattered across a fuel pump. Pooled on the cement. Blooming across a chalk body outline. Streaking out of the lot, in the form of fishtailing tire tracks.

Farallon and Veritek stand just beyond the perimeter of police tape. Veritek aghast. Farallon expressionless.

VERITEK

Christ almighty....

(gathers himself)

Okay...let's go over what Francis told us. Our guys stop here. One goes in the mini mart for a Coke. Driver starts filling the tank. Guy comes out with his Coke, sees two men. Ski masks. One fat, one skinny. Fat man's got a gun. Driver's head is already blown off. Skinny guy looks confused, in a daze. Fat guy goes berserk, unloading...

(points to bullet holes in
mini mart facade)

Blam, blam, blam. Our guy drops back for cover. Comes out. Car's gone. Right...?

Farallon does not respond in any way. He eye scans-- the gas station lot, the street, zeros in on a car, a Honda Civic, a block away, parked in a loading zone, two tickets under the wiper. He walks to it. Veritek figures he might as well follow.

VERITEK

What do you think? Fatty and skinny just left their car here, walked to the station? They couldn't be that stupid.

Farallon reads the parking tickets. Tries the doors. All locked. Looks around. All clear. Puts a silenced shot through the driver's window. Opens the door. A rat's nest of used Kleenex and fast food containers. There's a McDonald's bag in the footwell. Farallon grabs it. Receipt inside. Credit card charge to John J. Underhill, dated 26 minutes before the carjacking.

FARALLON

Johnny Underhill.

VERITEK

You know him?

FARALLON

I know the thief who has employed him for the last decade.

INT. CHARLIE'S ACURA - DAY

Charlie, still sitting in his parked car in the Von's lot, dialing his cell, mumbling obscenities.

INT. HIGHLAND GARDENS HOTEL SUITE - DAY

Blatch lies on the hotel bed, reading an *L.A. Weekly*. Underhill fidgets with his phone. It RINGS. He answers.

INTERCUT - Charlie

CHARLIE

It's all set. Tomorrow at noon.
Be at my house with the car at ten.
Caroline has class.

UNDERHILL

I owe you, so much.
(to Blatch)
It's on. Noon tomorrow.

Blatch is oblivious. He frantically motions to Underhill.

BLATCH

Come here! Come here!

Underhill crosses the room. Blatch points to an article he has been reading, about a Korean Sushi bar that serves live octopus. He finger-stabs a pic of a an octopus in a chef's hand.

BLATCH

I'm gonna fuckin' eat this octopus.
(then)
Want me to make a reservation for
two at this place?

UNDERHILL

Uhhh...I really don't think we
should be going anywhere tonight.

Blatch is already dialing the restaurant.

BLATCH

Relax, brotha. I've gotten us this
far, haven't I?

EXT. FBI HRT (HOSTAGE RESCUE TEAM) TRAINING AREA - DAY

Fabricated city streets and building facades. Like a studio backlot. Special Agent Ward Oates stands before a large TOUR GROUP of 8th GRADERS, who are here visiting FBI Headquarters during their big, year-end Washington trip. The kids couldn't be more bored, texting on their phones, staring blankly into space, thinking of nothing but going back to the Courtyard Marriott, where they'll pound the vodka they smuggled in shampoo bottles, then dry hump till dawn. Oates tries to invigorate them with his presentation, to no avail.

OATES
Forget everything you've ever seen
on TV. When some perp takes a
cover position behind a car, to an
HRT operator, he might as well be a
barn in an open field.

Oates points across the street to a parked, bullet-riddled Camry, behind which is a crouching mannequin, seemingly unexposed to any forward line of fire.

OATES
Bullets cannot penetrate the car's
body. But in two shots, I will
take the dummy's head off.
Observe.

Oates draws his .45 Kimber. Aims. Before he can fire, a young agent named AMANDA WHURLITZER runs up.

Oates lowers his gun. Turns to her.

WHURLITZER
(out of breath)
Mister Oates...one of our CIs...in
Los Angeles... The crew he works
for...his boss just set up an
impromptu deal, tomorrow at noon,
with Charlie Decker.
(then)
They're giving you another shot at
the collar.

Oates feels his molecules snap into alignment.

OATES
Thank you, Agent Whurlitzer.
(to tour group)
So long, kids.

Oates turns to leave. A NERDISH 8th GRADER whines, points to the car.

NERD
What about the dummy?

Oates turns back, drawing his gun. TWO SHOTS. A second apart. The first skips off the pavement beneath the car, SHATTERS the dummy's ankle, causing it to topple. When the dummy's head hits the ground, the second skipping bullet leaps to greet it, SPLINTER-BURSTING it to sawdust.

INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - MORNING

Charlie lies wide awake in bed, next to a slumbering Caroline. His eyes are red webs. He has not slept at all.

Birds tweet. Sun shines. The alarm clock BLARES. *Fuuuuuck.*

EXT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - DAY

A Time Warner van is parked across from Charlie's house.

INT. VAN - THAT MOMENT

A three-man FBI SURVEILLANCE TEAM scans video monitors and parabolic mic frequencies. They watch as Caroline exits the front door, hugs Charlie, walks to her 1971 Plymouth Barracuda and drives away.

An FBI agent clicks a hand radio and says...

FBI #1
Princess Peach is leaving the
castle.

INTERCUT - Ward Oates

standing alone in the center of what looks like an honest-to-God, wild-west corral.

OATES
Copy that. Stay on the Plumber.

Oates talks to a young LAPD SWAT CAPTAIN standing beside him.

OATES
Soon as Decker and his crew appear
with the car, I want your men ready
for war.

SWAT CAPTAIN
You got it.

OATES
I once spent two years of my life
chasing this kid. For my efforts I
was awarded a dead marriage and a
castrated career. Today there can
be nothing left to chance. After
the deal goes down, if God tries to
levitate Decker off this Earth, I
want your sharpshooters to blow the
supreme being's head off.

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - THAT MOMENT

The Range Rover is a speck, racing across a panorama of rust.

INT. RANGER ROVER - THAT MOMENT

Farallon drives. Puffing a self-rolled cigarette. Veritek sits shotgun, head slumped against the window, almost asleep.

FARALLON

I must warn you: when I get there,
I will have to do more things,
things for my job, that you should
not see. As usual, close your eyes
when I say so. Okay, my darling?

Veritek rouses.

VERITEK

What?

FARALLON

What?

VERITEK

You say something?

FARALLON

I was talking to my wife.

VERITEK

You're married?

FARALLON

No I'm not.

They pass a big green road sign: Los Angeles - 100 miles.

EXT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - DAY

A yellow cab pulls up. Underhill exits. Rings Charlie's doorbell.

INT. FBI VAN - THAT MOMENT

The FBI surveillance team SNAPS A PICTURE of Underhill, moments before he enters Charlie's house.

INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Charlie and Underhill stand in the foyer.

CHARLIE

Whoa. Whoa. Whoa. Whoa. Stop
talking.

(then)

The fuck you mean you don't know
where he is?

UNDERHILL

I mean...I dunno... Last night he
took the car to go get food, said
he'd be back...I woke up and he
hadn't come back...

CHARLIE
You try calling him?

UNDERHILL
I left like fifty million messages.

CHARLIE
We're supposed to be there in...
(checks watch)
...less than an hour and a half.
These are serious people. I gave
them my word. I show up with no
car...
(pause)
That is not good.

UNDERHILL
I know...I know...

CHARLIE
Do you know? I didn't sleep at all
last night...my contacts feel like
razor wires in my eyes...and now...
You're killing me, Johnny. You are
fucking killing me with the way
this is. Why did you ever team up
with that load in the first place?

UNDERHILL
He drove for a Security Contractor
in Iraq. Said he'd make a good
getaway driver.

CHARLIE
(shakes head in dismay)
What are you planning with that
imbecile that you need a getaway
driver?

UNDERHILL
I... I don't want to talk about
it.

DISSOLVE TO:

MUCH LATER

Charlie and Underhill sit stone still at the kitchen table. Eyes Krazy glued to Underhill's cell. Waiting for a Gilbert Blatch call. The refrigerator hums. Ten more seconds. Something CLICKS behind Charlie's face.

CHARLIE
Fuck all this. I'm calling it off.

Charlie stands, whips out his phone.

UNDERHILL

But--

CHARLIE

--Shut up. I've already decided.

(then)

I should be lobotomized for
agreeing to this in the first
place.

Charlie finds Vincent Barnes' number in his call log. He's about to hit dial when Underhill's cell rings.

Charlie thinks. Exhales. Nods once. Flips his phone shut. Underhill answers.

UNDERHILL

Hey, where the fuck you been?

Underhill listens for a few seconds. Hangs up. Says nothing. This short silence nearly kills Charlie.

CHARLIE

Well...?

UNDERHILL

He said he's going to meet us there
with the car.

CHARLIE

Wonderful.

EXT. LEMON TREE CORRAL - DAY

Heat ripples across the ground in silver slashes. Sagebrush lines the dirt road leading up to the corral proper. The weather-ravaged wooden sign reads:
Lemon Tree Corral - Est. 1887 - Burbank, California.

Charlie's Acura truck turns off the paved road and onto the little dirt one, winding higher into the hills above Burbank.

CORRAL PROPER

Vincent Barnes is already there. He exits a blacked-out GMC Denali in a air conditioned vwoosh. Four HENCHMEN follow.

The Acura comes to a halt just inside the fenced perimeter. Charlie and Underhill exit. Maybe 30 feet from Barnes.

BARNES

Where's the car?

CHARLIE

On its way.

They wait. The wind blows. An actual tumbleweed tumbles by.

BARNES
What's the ETA?

CHARLIE
Soon.

Barnes shakes his head. Annoyed.

BARNES
How soon?

Before Charlie can give another non-answer, two cars crest the hilltop and rumble into the corral: a purple Dub City Escalade, followed by the Spyker C8, which now has an impact-shattered headlight, a partially crumpled front end, and a spare donut tire as its front right wheel.

These cars stop beside Charlie's Acura. Blatch's body extrudes out of the Spyker. Face a red and greasy mash due to some untold, all-night, hell-fueled escapade. The sub-machinegun looks like a toy in his thick grip.

Every door on the Escalade flies open at once. FIVE LARGE BLACK MEN exit, all sub-machinegun armed. They are what some circles refer to as JACKBOYS.

Charlie watches this with disbelief he can chew. Barnes' men already have their guns drawn.

BARNES
What the fuck is this?

BLATCH
This is my negotiating committee.

BARNES
Who the fuck are you?

BLATCH
I'm Gilbert Blatch.

BARNES
Gilbert Blatch?

BLATCH
You've heard of me?

BARNES
Sort of. Gilbert Blatch sounds like the noise a whore makes choking on a dick.
(then)
What is this, Decker?

CHARLIE
I...I'm... Hold on a second.

Charlie talks low to Blatch.

CHARLIE
What are you doing? Who are these
people with you?

BLATCH
Part of my adventure last night
took place among them. Don't sweat
the technique. I'm about to
quadruple our money here.

CHARLIE
The price of the car has already
been agreed upon, you fuckin'
idiot. And that was before it
looked like a whale puked it up.
They do not have four times more
money with them. You are going to
get us all killed. You can't just--

BLATCH
--Oh I can just. This ain't your
kitchen table. Out here, I call
the rules.

(glances at the jackboys)
Don't make me sic the dog pound on
your ass. I say the word, they'll
twist your fuckin' cap back.

A Jackboy snarl-glares at Charlie. Charlie just shakes his head. Wants to die. Blatch breaks out of quiet conversation mode, shouts across the corral to Barnes.

BLATCH
So it's settled then. You pay us
six hundred thousand dollars for
the car. We all go home satisfied.

BARNES
Are you fuckin' kidding me, kid?
Decker...?

CHARLIE
I am very sorry about this.

BLATCH
No I'm not kidding, see. You give
us six hundred. I spare you from
the posse's wrath. Satisfaction
everywhere.

Barnes doesn't even think. He just turns, about to climb back in the Denali.

BLATCH
(low)
Hey, what the fuck...?
(shouts)
Don't take another step, asshole!

Blatch aims his sub-machinegun off to the side. BURST-FIRES a warning.

Barnes stops cold. His men stop cold. His men aim guns on high alert.

Then, from somewhere: A MUFFLED SHRIEK OF AGONY.

All eyes pan toward this noise, sweeping across the golden brown corral, over the crumbling wood fence, finally stopping on a long HORSE TRAILER. FIVE FRESH AND SIZZLING BULLET HOLES PUNCHED CLEAN THROUGH IT.

AN LAPD SWAT OFFICER LURCHES OUT OF THE TRAILER, GRASPING HIS NECK, BLOOD PUMPING BETWEEN HIS FINGERS.

He collapses, dead.

Now everyone levels guns at the trailer, Blatch and Barnes suddenly on the same team.

Charlie and Underhill stand frozen in the background.

A voice BOOMS from a MEGAPHONE inside the trailer.

OATES (O.S.)
This is the FBI! Drop your weapons
and lie face down on the--

--Blatch fires first. Then The Jackboys. Then Barnes and his men. All UNLOADING into the trailer.

SWAT MEN SPILL OUT, wasps from a kicked nest, some bleeding, all retuning fire.

A buzzing maelstrom of crisscrossing lead. Mows down men on all sides.

Charlie and Underhill dive behind the Acura, just as a bullet storm RAKES ACROSS IT, reducing windows to sand particles.

The Jackboys fire wild. Barnes and his henchmen fire wild. Oates and his two remaining SWAT MEN fire like cyborgs, scoring precision chest and head shots.

Barnes scrambles for cover, trying to reload. Oates removes most of his head with a one-armed pistol blast.

Blatch dives into the Spyker, *PEEEELS OFF ACROSS THE CORRAL. POPPING SPASTIC, THREE-ROUND STREAMS RIGHT THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD. AT ANYTHING IN HIS WAY.* There's a Jackboy-- *BLAM!* A Barnes Henchman-- *SPLIZZAT!*

Blatch has gone apeshit bonkers. SPINNING IN CRAZED DONUT MANEUVERS. TIRES KICKING UP CYCLONIC DUST CLOUDS.

Blatch BULLET-SPLASHES both SWAT MEN. One in the face. The other in the shin. He runs this wounded one over, flat.

Oates rolls, comes up, one knee, pistol tracking the supercar, which is now BARRELING DEAD AT HIM.

Blatch BATTLE-SCREAMS. Channeling some type of demon rage from every atom of flab. He stomps the gas peddle into the floor.

Oates holds his breath. Oates target-locks. Oates hits the trigger and BLOWS BLATCH'S BRAINS OUT THE SPYKER'S REAR WINDOW. JET of pink pulp and glass.

The Spyker swerves, misses Oates by nanometers, slows, hits a fence post and stops, maybe ten feet from a cowering Charlie and Underhill. They see the headless Blatch slumped over the wheel.

Snowfall silence.

A tenebrous cloud of dust and gun smoke enshrouds the corral.

Oates pistol scans, searching for targets in this swirling ghost zone. Then-- murky flashes of movement, behind Charlie's Acura.

OATES
Decker!

Silence.

OATES
I know it's you, Decker! Believe me, hiding behind that car does you no fucking good! You have till the count of--

VWOOMP!

The shot drops Oates horizontal. Shocks his breath away. His fingers claw the smooshed slug in his vest. Another shot *ZWIPS PAST*. Muzzle flashes through the gloom. Then dry clicks. There's a wounded Jackboy on the ground, firing on empty. Oates SLAPS TWO ROUNDS through the top of his head.

An ENGINE ROARS. Oates whip-pans his gaze--
The Spyker. TURBO-LAUNCHING OUT OF THE CORRAL.
Blatch's corpse discarded in its smoking tire tracks.

Oates practically teleports to his feet. CHARGES to the edge of the bluff. The Spyker FLYING down the dirt road.

Oates BLASTING before he stops running.
Unleashing a wall of metal at the fleeing car.

INT. SPYKER (SPEEDING) - THAT MOMENT

Charlie drives. Underhill shotgun. Bullets EXPLODING all around them. BLOWING OUT quilted leather upholstery.
A SPRAY of stereo plastic.

EXT. LEMON TREE CORRAL - THAT MOMENT

Oates' gun SNICKS empty. He could give a fuck. He jams a fresh clip in at the speed of light. KEEPS FIRING. Even after the Spyker hits the paved road and races out of sight.

EXT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Lee Farallon takes notice of the Plymouth Barracuda in the carport before ringing the doorbell.

Caroline cracks the door, chain lock strung across her face.

FARALLON
Caroline Decker?

CAROLINE
Yes?

FARALLON
Hi, my name is Hank Krinkle. I'm
an old friend of Charlie's.

Caroline wonders why she has never heard of this man. There is something wrong about him. Something she cannot define. She feels dread swimming slowly up her spine.

CAROLINE
He's... He's napping right now.
(fake laugh)
You know how Charlie is.

FARALLON
Always sleeping.

CAROLINE
Would you mind coming back
later...or calling, so...

Farallon is systematically swiveling his head. Eyeing the neighbors' homes. Eyeing the street. The Time Warner van parked against the curb. There is no one watching.

Farallon answers Caroline by *THRUST-KICKING* the door open. *SMASHING* the whole thing into her face.

She sails back. *BASHING* over an end table. Hits the hardwood floor in a gelatinous heap.

INT. TIME WARNER VAN - DAY

The three-man FBI surveillance team watches this unfold on a monitor. They gasp. Muttering expletive-laden bewilderment. Frantically *RACKING* their weapons.

INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE/VARIOUS ROOM - DAY

Farallon has his Titanium pistol out. Sweeping the house for a napping Charlie. Master bedroom. Guest bedroom. Kitchen. Nothing. Nothing. Nothing. Back out to the living room. Scoops unconscious Caroline over his shoulder. He hears the growl before he turns.

Comet the dog. Fangs bared. Yellow body flexed. More lion than canine. Standing between Farallon and the wide open front door.

Farallon routinely raises his pistol and--

FBI #1
Freeze! FBI!

Two FBI AGENTS swing into the doorway, behind Comet, guns zeroed on Farallon.

This dog has had enough. He runs to the back of the house.

FBI #2
Drop it!

Farallon drops Caroline to the wood floor. Cement sack *THUD*.

FBI #2
The gun, Goddamn it!

So Farallon drops the gun.

FBI #1
Put your hands on top of your head!

Farallon does this.

The agents move in on him. FBI #2 frisks. FBI #2 feels something weird beneath Farallon's jacket. He lifts it back and can't believe what he sees.

FBI #2
Holy shit. Guy's got a grenade launcher.

The XM320 GRENADE MODULE is snub-nosed and pistol-gripped. And it easily fits into Farallon's shoulder rig, alongside five ammo loops containing customized 40mm shells. These shells are labeled thusly: SPREAD; SMOKE; FRAG; NAPALM.

FBI #1 takes a look at the strange weapon.

Farallon wiggles his big toe. A TWO-INCH BLADE covertly whisper-snaps out of the tip of his Wheeler cowboy boot.

FARALLON
Close your eyes, my darling.

FBI #2
What?

Farallon continues talking, as though he were someplace else.

FARALLON
Don't open them until I say it's safe.

FBI #2
(chuckle)
What are you, talking to yourself--

Farallon's foot and hand move in simultaneous blurs. Hand flash-snaring FBI #1's gun. Foot embedding laser-sharp metal into FBI #2's groin.

Farallon shoots FBI #1 twice in the face. Shoots FBI #2 once, in the back of the head, as he's curled on the floor, red hands cupping his crotch.

EXT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Farallon strides out onto the front path. Caroline over his shoulder. Grenade launcher fully extended, like it is part of his arm.

INT. TIME WARNER VAN - DAY

FBI #3 bug-eyes a monitor. *Is that a grenade launcher?* He scrambles, rips open the sliding door. Jumps ou--

BLOOP! The FRAG shell hits FBI #3. Flush in the chest.

The planet SHAKES. The van is a pillar of fire.

Farallon trudges a whole block with Caroline lolling on his shoulder. Dumps her in the back of the waiting Range Rover. Then sits shotgun beside a stunned Veritek.

VERITEK
Jesus Christ. What the fuck just
happened?

Farallon catches breath. Swallows. Stares off into space.

FARALLON
You can open your eyes now, my
love.

EXT. BURBANK - DAY

The Spyker C8 is bullet-riddled and blood-spattered. Two flat tires. It SKIDS past a Fosters Freeze, veering inside a multi-level parking complex on Angeleno Ave.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - DAY

The Spyker parks in the most remote spot available.

INT. SPYKER - DAY

Charlie kills the engine. Slow burns Underhill. Stares glowing daggers at him.

UNDERHILL
...I know...I know...I...I'm...

Charlie PUNCHES the dashboard, so hard the glove box POPS OPEN. Underhill stares into it for a moment, then pulls out a large PLASTIC BAG, which contains a half gallon of water. And a LIVE OCTOPUS, swimming and swirling.

As if to explain the bizarre sight:

UNDERHILL
This is Blatch's favorite food.

Charlie's cell rings. Caller ID: pic of Caroline, sticking her tongue out.

CHARLIE
It's Caroline. Do not say a fuckin' word.

Underhill nods. Charlie answers.

CHARLIE
Hey...

FARALLON (O.S.)
Charlie Decker?

A fear vortex opens in the pit of Charlie's stomach.

CHARLIE
Who is this?

INTERCUT - Farallon

sitting shotgun in the Ranger Rover, hurtling down the sun-scorched 101. Smoke peels off his face from a self-rolled cigarette.

FARALLON
I represent the man whose car you stole.

CHARLIE
--Okay, alright, now... You don't have to hurt her. You do not have to hurt her to--

FARALLON
--She's already hurt. If you want her alive you will do--

CHARLIE
--Yes, yes, anything... I'll get you your car back. I will buy you five new cars. Just don't--

FARALLON
--I'd like it very much if you listened before speaking.

CHARLIE
Yes.

FARALLON
Are you listening?

CHARLIE
Yes.

FARALLON
You know it's not the car we want.

Charlie's forehead crinkles confused.

CHARLIE
...yes, no, of course not...

FARALLON
You...can...keep...the...car.
(then)
The package secured inside its trunk...

Charlie is more perplexed and horrified than ever now.

CHARLIE
Yes.

FARALLON
You will return it to us before sundown or I will feed your wife to something hungry.

CHARLIE
Yes. You will get it.

FARALLON
Keep your phone on. We will tell you where to meet us--

CHARLIE
--Wait, wait-- Can I talk to her, to hear her voice, to know that she's...that she is okay?

Caroline is still knocked out in the backseat. So Farallon flicks his cigarette. It lands on her shirt sleeve. It burns through. It hits skin and SIZZLES. She JOLTS AWAKE. SCREAMING. Farallon holds his cell over her. And then--

--Click. Call's over. Charlie is pale to the brink of translucency.

UNDERHILL
Who was that?

Charlie jumps out of the car. FLINGS open the trunk. Mess of tire changing tools. Shoves them aside. Finger searches around. Tears open the donut tire compartment. Empty. Finger searches more. Finds another compartment, beneath the first one. Covered with a hinged, vacuum-sealed steel lid. The lock on it has been blasted or pried off. He lifts the lid. Already knowing what he will see:

Nothing.

Whatever was hidden here is long gone. Underhill steps beside him.

UNDERHILL
What is it? What's going on?

CHARLIE
You know this dope ride you supposedly stole from The Mandalay Bay? Turns out there was something hidden in the trunk, something a hell of a lot more valuable than a quarter of a million dollar car.

(MORE)

CHARLIE (cont'd)
And if I can't figure out what an
insane, miserable, fat-fucking-dead-
fatso did with it, within the next
six hours, Caroline is going to
die. Also, I don't know if you
noticed, but I think the FBI is
after me in full force.

UNDERHILL
You'll...you'll think of something,
though...right?

Charlie sort of nods to himself. Then PLOWS HIS FIST, SMACK into Underhill's gut.

EXT. LEMON TREE CORRAL - DAY

The LAPD and FBI have invaded the Lemon Tree Corral en masse. Clearing corpses. Collecting shells. Digging velocity-smashed slugs out of almost everything.

Ward Oates moves through this semi-orchestrated chaos, walking alongside a Supervising Special Agent from the Los Angeles FBI office, an old war horse named DALE TRAXLE.

OATES
But, Sir...Sir, I can get this son
of a bitch by the end of the day if
you'll just let me--

TRAXLE
--I said no, and I mean it.

OATES
Please, Sir... If it's not me who
takes him down after all of this...
Last time they practically put me
out to pasture as a lame duck tour
guide...fuckin' 8th graders... I
spent years of my life tracking
this kid and--

Traxle stops, turns, face to face.

TRAXLE
--and you fucked that up! You
fucked it up three years ago! And
you fucked it up again today! Now
I'm gonna do you a favor. I'm
going to prevent the completion of
your fuck-up trilogy.

OATES
Oh, eat shit, Dale. If I wanna
hunt this kid down, I'm gonna hunt
this kid down!

A small crowed has gathered, watching the confrontation. Traxle pauses, nods, holds out an upturned palm, calmly says:

TRAXLE
Badge and gun. Give them to me.

OATES
Badge and gun?

TRAXLE
Hand 'em over, right now.

OATES
What is...? That's not even how it's done.

TRAXLE
Nevermind how it is or isn't done.
Hand 'em over.

A small phalanx of agents has formed behind Traxle, hands on their hip holsters, primed to pounce.

Oates chokes back molecular acid. Relinquishes his badge and gun with everyone watching. Turns, stares off into the plunging vista of downtown Burbank. Something in the wind stings his eyes as he walks toward it.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - DAY

Charlie and Underhill stand beside a silver, 1985 Toyota minivan, deep within the shadowy reaches of the parking complex. Underhill holds the sore spot on his stomach where Charlie socked him. Charlie pops the driver's door with his Swiss Army knife. He goes to work hot wiring.

UNDERHILL
We didn't know anything was in the trunk, honest. We were just sitting in my car, in the McDonald's lot eating dinner, when two hundred and fifty thousand dollars rolled by. We followed it to a gas station and... I'm sorry.

Long silence.

UNDERHILL
Are you gonna not talk to me or...?

As he hot wires...

CHARLIE
I don't have the luxury of ignoring you.

(MORE)

CHARLIE (cont'd)
Whatever was in that trunk, we have to find out what Blatch did with it and get it back. We have six...less than six hours to figure out where that maniac went last night. But I have no idea where...how to even begin.

The van's engine grumbles awake. Drowns out something Underhill says. Charlie wiggles out of the car, looks at him.

CHARLIE
What?

UNDERHILL
I do.

CHARLIE
You do what?

UNDERHILL
I know how we can maybe find out what Blatch did last night.

CHARLIE
How?

Underhill holds up the octopus bag.

UNDERHILL
Follow the octopus.

EXT. LEMON TREE CORRAL - DAY

Oates sits alone on a split wooden beam at the outskirts of the corral. Shoulders slumped. Watching all the activity humming along without him. Traxle smiling and sipping coffee, barking orders, gesticulating with great authority. Oates spits into the dirt, mumbles something.

Oates watches CORONER'S TECHS handle bodies. SWAT MEN. JACKBOYS. Filling evidence bags with personal items found on the corpses.

Oates causally walks over to the row of EVIDENCE BAGS, all stored on a long folding table, in wooden crates that once held Napa wine.

Oates rummages through the boxes. Oates sees WALLETS. Oates sees full AMMO CLIPS. Oates sees GUNS and a blood-splattered LAPD BADGE. Oates' smile is almost invisible. He grabs TWO BIG BAGS.

A TECH eyes him. Sees Oates' FBI windbreaker. Oates smiles, nods. The Tech goes back to work.

Oates leaves the corral, lugging the two evidence bags over his shoulder, never to return.

INT. LAS VEGAS OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

FRANCIS GALVAN is 33 years old, but still dresses like he is 16. Track pants. Nikes. A Jinx T-shirt which says "The cake is a lie." He sits at his desk, in his office, on the 27th floor of The American Plexar Building. Behind him a blue-green window wall makes the Vegas sprawl look like a deep sea metropolis. An 80" PLASMA plays news footage of the aftermath at Charlie's house. The exploded van. Body bags. An armada of cops. And, most disturbing to Galvan, a clear, 12 megapixel surveillance snapshot of Lee Farallon walking up to Charlie's front door.

As he talks on the phone, Galvan raises and lowers the room temperature from a touch pad built flat into his desktop.

GALVAN

What the fuck are you doing?
You're all over the TV!

INTERCUT - Ken Veritek

Phone pressed to a cauliflowered ear, standing in the kitchen of an unfurnished "SAFE HOUSE" in some barren no man's land, northwest of Rancho Cucamonga, on the rim of the Angeles National Forest. Caroline is hog-tied and with handcuffs on the living room floor. Through a sliding glass door, Veritek watches Farallon, who is sitting in the backyard, smoking in a deck chair, back turned, beside a pool half-full of black rain water.

VERITEK

(sharp and low)

It's not me! It's him! The guy is fucking whacked-out crazy. So if you wanna yell at me, I'm just going to leave. I'm just going to walk out, right now. I'm going home. I'm... Bye.

GALVAN

No wait! Kenny...listen...Bro!

(then)

Okay...I get it, I get it... This is a bad situation. For both of us. He's out of control. FBI got a snapshot of him...they'll ID him for sure...I can't have him traced back to me... Fuck!

(pause)

I'm going to send a team to your location. 3 to 4 men. Men my Dad use to use.

VERITEK

What do you mean, men? To do what?

Silence. Veritek gets the gist.

VERITEK

I don't want to be around when shit like that goes down. No.

GALVAN

What is all this squeamishness?
I've seen you rake a man's face
across the cage like it was a
cheese grater.

VERITEK

That's completely different. MMA fighters do not carry grenade launchers, Francis. Or feed women to rabid dogs. Or constantly make nonsensical comments to their wives when their wives do not exist. How could you team me up with a person like this?

GALVAN

Farallon is the best tracker I have. It's just, recently...

(then)

Look, you shouldn't know this, but... Six months ago, just after Daddy passed...there were some who believed they should be in charge of things, instead of me. So one night I sent Farallon to a party where these conspirators were all in attendance.

FLASH TO:

Cloud-forms moving across the desert moon. Farallon strolls across the lawn, toward the SPANISH VILLA. People are dark, cocktail-sipping shapes beyond the gigantic picture window.

Farallon cracks the breach of his grenade launcher. Loads a shell labeled NAPALM. Aims into that picture window--

AND THE HOUSE BLOSSOMS FIRE.

Farallon ejects the spent shell. Loads one labeled SPREAD. It looks like a MASSIVE SHOTGUN SHELL. And when the burning people begin to lurch and stagger from the inferno, some tumbling from second floor windows, the grenade launcher SPITS A BLASTWAVE OF BALL BEARINGS. Just like a GIANT SHOTGUN. Scattering the burning people to ash.

BACK TO SCENE

GALVAN

Dental X-rays confirmed Farallon's wife was at the party.

VERITEK

...Christ...

GALVAN

Dad always said she kept him sane. He almost had to put Farallon down a dozen times himself, because before she came along there was...difficulty containing him. She never knew what he really did. And he never wanted her to know. That was part of it, I think. But... I'm getting a sense, now that he accidentally murdered her, he might be sliding back into his old ways.

VERITEK

Oh you fuckin' think so?

GALVAN

You don't understand, there were things he liked to do, before she domesticated him...things that make that grenade launcher look like a water-squirting daisy.

VERITEK

Things? What kind of things?

GALVAN

Forget what I just said. He's an old man now. Just wait for the team. They'll take care of him for you.

(then)

And the package... Please, at least tell me one little fuckin' thing of good news. Please tell me that's still under control.

VERITEK

Nothing's changed. Decker has it. We just have to arrange the... whatever you call it...the drop.

(then)

Seriously, though, what kind of things did he do?

GALVAN

When Farallon's solved, call Decker. I want the team to take out him and his wife soon as the drop is made.

VERITEK

How am I gonna know when this team is here? Do I have to let them in or...?

GALVAN

Fuck no, bro. You won't know they've arrived until the smoke clears and that old bastard's a corpse.

EXT. KOREA TOWN - DAY

The Toyota van pulls to a stop in front of a restaurant called CHA SUSHI, a Korean sushi bar hidden on a tiny backstreet.

There's a "closed" sign on the door. There's a sheet of plywood where a large front window should be. Specks of broken glass shimmering on the sidewalk below it. Since the window is gone, there is no restaurant name or address.

CHARLIE

This it?

Underhill checks the article in the *L.A. Weekly*, which features a pic of the restaurant's facade in pristine condition.

UNDERHILL

Yeah, it's gotta be.

INT. CHA SUSHI - DAY

A very tired teenage boy named JUNG TAE CHA sweeps the restaurant floor. In the corner is a mound a broken glass and busted furniture, as well as a shattered sea food tank.

The door opens. Jung Tae Cha looks up, sees Charlie and Underhill in the doorway, does not stop sweeping.

JUNG TAE CHA

We're closed.

CHARLIE

We're not hungry. We're looking for somebody.

JUNG TAE CHA

Who?

CHARLIE
 Somebody who ate here last night.
 White. Fat. Extremely disgusting.
 Ordered live octopus.

Jung stops sweeping, looks up with a start, almost frightened.

FLASH TO:

LAST NIGHT

GILBERT BLATCH, alone at a table, plate of octopus squirming in front of him. He wraps one around a pair of chopsticks. Jams it in his mouth. CHOMPS. Swallows. Black tentacles slithering into his mouth like Medusa hair.

There's an *L.A. X...* Press open on the table before him. Two full pages of hooker ads. Blatch whips out his cell. Dials an actual hooker. Right there in the busy restaurant. Before he can finish dialing, Jung Tae Cha approaches.

JUNG TAE CHA
 Excuse me, sir. No cell phones,
 please.

Blatch recoils in confusion. Jung points to a large message board on the wall. Written on it, in red magic marker, is a list of rules diners must obey. At the top of the list, in handwriting twice as big: NO CELL PHONES.

Blatch shakes his head and smiles, as if to assure young Jung everything is a-okay.

BLATCH
 No, no, no...you don't understand.
 I've been researching this all day.

Blatch points to a hooker ad, which he has circled with a heart.

BLATCH
 This is the semen demon I'm gonna
 mount tonight.

Blatch turns away from Jung, re-dials.

Jung shrugs to his father, JUNG YUP CHA, who is behind the sushi counter, watching the scene unfold, eyes blazing.

Blatch listens to the hooker's voicemail. Starts to leave his phone number.

Jung Yup Cha YANKS the phone from Blatch's hand before he can say the last digit. A waiter flash-clears Blatch's table.

Blatch stands. Eye-to-eye with the fearsome Jung Yup.

BLATCH
What the fuck?!

All diners stop and stare.

JUNG YUP CHA
YOU. GO.

He hands the phone back to Blacth.

Blatch HEAD BUTTS. SMASHING Jung Yup Cha's nose in. Jung Yup Cha flails back in a spray of blood. Diner's SCREAM.

EXT. CHA SUSHI - NIGHT

A table EXPLODES THROUGH THE FRONT WINDOW. Through the octopus tank behind it. Spilling octopi. Hundreds of them. Wriggling on the sidewalk in a slush of broken glass.

Blatch leaps through the broken window, sneakers squish-skidding tentacles. Without stopping, he gathers as many of the sea creates as he can, then sprints off, cackling, into the neon night.

BACK TO SCENE

Charlie and Underhill stand facing Jung Tae Cha in the empty restaurant.

CHARLIE
Did you call the police?

JUNG TAE CHA
My father...he makes his own justice.

CHARLIE
What does that mean?

JUNG TAE CHA
He is going to find the fat man himself.

CHARLIE
How?

JUNG TAE CHA
He left his hooker newspaper behind. When my cousins get here, they are going to call the woman he circled in it and--

--Jung Yup Cha walks out of a back room, nose bandaged. He barks something in Korean. His son replies in Korean.

Jung Yup Cha seems to bristle, and is soon joined by three KOREAN MEN, all thick as a brick shit house, brandishing BUTCHER KNIVES and CLEAVERS.

Charlie tries to graciously engage the elder Cha.

CHARLIE
Sir, please listen to me, I have--

Jung Yup grumbles. The THREE BLADE-WIELDING MEN advance on Charlie and Underhill. Jung Tae quietly says,

JUNG TAE CHA
You should leave very quickly.

Charlie and Underhill take his advice.

INT. TOYOTA VAN (PARKED) - DAY

Charlie and Underhill stare out the windshield of the parked van, faces awash with defeat, staring at the smashed facade of the Sushi Bar.

UNDERHILL
What if we call in a bomb threat?
Whole place clears out, we run in,
grab Blatch's hooker newspaper.

CHARLIE
How about I lay my head on the
street and you run it over with
this van?

UNDERHILL
I'm telling you...if we flesh it
out...there's something to this
bomb idea.

CHARLIE
No there isn't.

Underhill points out a homeless man pushing a shopping cart filled with trash bags.

UNDERHILL
Okay...What if we pay that guy to
strap a bunch of road flares to his
chest and run in like a suicide
bomber?

Charlie just stares blankly at Underhill.

UNDERHILL
Road flares look just like
dynamite.

CHARLIE
Your ideas fuckin' suck.
(then)
This is ridiculous. They're not
gonna hurt us...the man is a
business owner, for Christ's sake.

UNDERHILL
Yeah, a business owner who makes
his own justice. Korean justice.

CHARLIE
What is that?

UNDERHILL
I don't know. But it's gotta be
pretty fuckin' horrible.

CHARLIE
This is insane. We can't just sit
around.
(then)
Wait here.

Charlie hops out of the car.

UNDERHILL
What're you gonna do?

CHARLIE
I'm gonna offer to renovate his
whole Goddamn restaurant.

INT. CHA SUSHI - DAY

Charlie enters. Front room's empty. Goes to the--

BACK ROOM

Everyone's there. Gathered near a supply closet: Jung Yup
Cha and son, plus the three blade-brandishing shit kickers.

They all stop talking, snapping eyes on Charlie. Charlie
opens his mouth, about to appeal to the better angels of
their nature, when he sees it, on a counter inches to his
right: Blatch's *L.A. X...Press* newspaper.

Charlie grabs it and runs.

EXT. CHA SUSHI - DAY

Charlie BOLTS OUT THE DOOR, onto the street, SCREAMING.

CHARLIE
Johnny! Start the car!!!

Underhill scoots into the driver's seat. Starts the engine. Sees THREE HUGE KOREANS barrel out after Charlie. Throwing KNIVES. CLEAVERS. Edged steel CLANGING off van metal.

Charlie DIVES THROUGH THE DRIVER'S WINDOW. Across Underhill's lap. The van lurches off, around the corner and out of sight.

EXT. GOLF 'N STUFF/SNACK ZONE - DAY

The Snack Zone abuts the miniature golf course and the bumper boat pond. Kids squeak and squeal. Oates sits at a picnic table. There is an OLD PHOTO BOOTH in the background. He is examining a freshly developed photo strip from it. Five vertically stacked headshots of himself, staring forward without expression.

He slices off his favorite pic with a pocket knife. Opens a black, bi-fold wallet. On one inside flap: a blood-smeared LAPD badge, on the other: an LAPD ID. Oates removes the ID from its plastic sleeve. Carefully tapes his picture over the face of one SERGEANT HENRY RULES. Slides the ID back in the wallet. Looks just fine. Quite convincing beneath the transparent plastic, next to an honest-to-Christ LAPD badge. Oates dunks a napkin in his extra large Coke and polishes the shield to a high, blood-free shine.

INT. TOYOTA VAN (MOVING) - DAY

Underhill drives. Charlie looks at the circled hooker ad. Blonde pigtails and a smile clogged with braces. The name below the face: ASHLYNN BRATT.

UNDERHILL
So...are you gonna call her?

CHARLIE
No, I'm gonna write her a letter.

Charlie opens his phone. Dials. Hears no rings, just a recording of a GIRL'S VOICE.

GIRL'S VOICE
Hi, this is Ashlynn. I never answer my phone. But If you leave your name and number, I'll call you back, fast.

Beep!

CHARLIE
...um...hi, Ashlynn? This is Ralph. Uh, please call me back, right away, please. My number is 323-446-1087. Thank you and uhhh... Bye-bye?

Charlie hangs up, slightly shaken.

UNDERHILL
Ralph?

CHARLIE
I'm not giving out my real--

RING! Charlie's heart skips. Underhill's heart skips. Caller ID: unknown. Charlie clears his throat and answers his phone.

CHARLIE
Hello?

The girl's voice is different than the one from the voice mail. It's smoother, quieter, like someone telling secrets in study hall.

GIRL'S VOICE
Hi, Ralph.

INT. SAFE HOUSE - DAY

Farallon is outside, smoking by the pool. Caroline lies on the living room floor, handcuff bound. Veritek stands in the kitchen, fidgeting, compulsively checking his watch, sweating big wet blots through his T-shirt. Caroline studies him for a bit, then...

CAROLINE
...hey...
(sharply)
Hey.

Veritek twitch-turns his head toward her.

CAROLINE
You look like shit.

Veritek makes a face.

CAROLINE
Relax...I'm sure I look way worse.
(then)
So....what do you say we get the
fuck out of here...?

Veritek is silent. Thinking.

CAROLINE
Also, do you know how much money I
could pay you if you help me?

Silence.

CAROLINE
 The answer is: a fuckload.
 (then)
 Think of how good it would feel,
 escaping out the front door, right
 now.

Veritek thinks: *Goddamn, that would be heaven.*

CAROLINE
 So what do you say? Unlock me and
 let's blow this hellhole.

Veritek nods slightly. Walks over to Caroline. Kneels. Grabs a roll of DUCT TAPE off the floor. Slaps a big piece of it over her mouth.

Caroline's eyes sink.

Veritek lumbers back into the kitchen.

Caroline rolls over. Faces the wall. There is an electrical outlet, a few feet from her face. Two small screws hold the outlet's plastic frame in place, and one of them is LOOSE, protruding a few centimeters from the wall. Caroline's eyes LOCK ON, ZOOM IN, mentally FREEZE FRAMING that LOOSE SCREW.

EXT. VALLEYRAMA APARTMENTS - DAY

A metal keypad. A finger punches buttons. Two rings. Then a voice from the intercom speaker says...

GIRL'S VOICE
 Hello. Who am I speaking to?

Charlie leans close to the call box.

CHARLIE
 This is Ralph.

BZZZZZZZZZZZ. The vine-covered gate clicks open. Charlie and Underhill walk through it, entering the courtyard of the Valleyrama apartment complex in Sherman Oaks, California.

The pool is the centerpiece of the three-tier, hacienda-style complex. And it is full of girls. And it is surrounded by girls. The universe is suddenly in bloom with girls. Backstroking. Lounging. Sipping brightly colored ice drinks. Smoking purple-flowering weed. They are all under twenty five. All topless. With skin that is smooth and tan, and softly sparkling, like volcanic sand. They splash and smile and wave, giggling musical hellos to Charlie and Underhill.

Charlie and Underhill just keep walking, up to the third tier of the complex, stopping before apartment 301.

Charlie rings the bell. Four second wait. The door opens. Revealing a PLUMP MEXICAN WOMAN who smiles hi.

CHARLIE
Uh, I'm Ralph. I called... Is
Ashlynn home?

PLUMP MEXICAN WOMAN
Si, si... Come in. Come inside.

Charlie and Underhill enter--

APARTMENT 301

The Mexican woman has a cart, full of fresh towels and sheets, like a maid at the Holiday Inn.

PLUMP MEXICAN WOMAN
You wait. She be here soon.

The woman exits, pushing the cart. Charlie and Underhill stand alone in the lemon-fresh studio apartment with a neatly made queen bed.

CHARLIE
What the fuck is this place?

Underhill shrugs. Charlie checks his watch.

UNDERHILL
So... what do you think was in the
trunk, that they want so bad...?

CHARLIE
Diamonds, Krugerrands...who fuckin'
cares. Whatever it is, we have a
little over four hours to find it.

UNDERHILL
Maybe it was plans?

CHARLIE
Plans?

UNDERHILL
Like microfilm blueprints for
something. Like maybe for a top-
secret, invisible jet fighter.

CHARLIE
You know, if you put the same
amount of effort into the rest of
your life as you put into that
totally idiotic remark...we
wouldn't be in this nightmare.

UNDERHILL

What about when I thought to follow
the octopus? That was helpful.

CHARLIE

That remains to be seen.

UNDERHILL

Look, I know I fucked up today. I
know that, but... That doesn't
mean I am a fuck up for life.

Charlie takes a decorative bowl of Jolly Ranchers off the
coffee table.

CHARLIE

How about, from now on... Whenever
you do something right...I'll toss
you one of these?

UNDERHILL

Jolly Ranchers?

CHARLIE

Like giving a dog a treat.

Underhill waves his hand: *fuck off.*

The door opens. ASHLYNN BRATT enters. Looks vaguely like
the girl in the ad. Blonde. Tan. Yellow sundress. Maybe
19. But no braces on her teeth.

ASHLYNN BRATT

Hiya, boys. I'm Ashlynn.

And with that, she expertly whips off her sundress.
Exploding a shockwave of nakedness across the room.

CHARLIE

Whoa, whoa, whoa...put your dress
back on.

She smiles. Bites a shiny lip.

CHARLIE

I am serious.

She realizes he is, and suddenly blushes, shielding her
breasts with her forearms.

As she gets dressed...

CHARLIE

We're not here for that. We are
here because... Were you with a
man last night?

(MORE)

CHARLIE (cont'd)
A fat and disturbing man? You
would remember him.

ASHLYNN BRATT

...?

CHARLIE
This is incredibly difficult to
explain. We're not cops or
anything. You are not in any
trouble. We just need your
help...to tell us anything about
last night and the man you were
with. Someone's life depends on
it. My wife's life depends on it.

Ashlynn looks scared now.

ASHLYNN BRATT

I... I wasn't with anyone last
night.

CHARLIE
You are Ashlynn Bratt, though,
correct?

ASHLYNN BRATT
Yes...well sometimes...not really.
I mean, every girl here is Ashlynn
Bratt sometimes now I guess,
because of the ads Nigel put out.
Call that number and you could get
any one of us, depending on who
Nigel gives the job to.

CHARLIE
Who's Nigel?

ASHLYNN BRATT
He runs this place?

CHARLIE
This...? This whole place...this
is a whore house?

ASHLYNN BRATT
(indignant)
No. This an apartment building,
not a house.

CHARLIE
I'm...sorry...just...I need to
know, do you know anyone here who
might have met, or had a date, or
whatever you call it, with a very
fat man last night...?

We can see Ashlynn think. Nose freckles scrunching up.

ASHLYNN BRATT

Tori did maybe. I saw her leave with a guy like that, I think. I was also high as fuck at the time, so...I dunno. Have you ever smoked Purple Pie Man? That shit's the bomb.com. I wonder if I have any left in my--

CHARLIE

--Where is this Tori?

ASHLYNN BRATT

Um... if she's here she's probably over in Nigel's apartment. They're married.

CHARLIE

Oh how sweet.

INT. VALLEYRAMA APARTMENTS/TORI MILES' BEDROOM - DAY

That inert lump beneath the bed covers is named TORI MILES.

Charlie and Underhill stand in the doorway staring at her. Ashlynn Bratt is behind them. On the nightstand is a plastic bag, full of water and a LIVE OCTOPUS. Underhill nudges Charlie. He already sees it.

ASHLYNN BRATT

There she is. That's Tori.

CHARLIE

Can you...wake her up?

Ashlynn walks over. PUNCHES the slumbering lump. SCREAMS, full force into the lump's ear:

ASHLYNN BRATT

WAKE! UP!

Nothing.

A bathroom door opens. NIGEL SMALLS enters the scene. Age 42. Bald head like a wax orb. He is wearing a tuxedo. His complexion is beet red from too much sun and steroid use. He eyes the sleeping Tori. And with a Cockney accent says...

NIGEL

She's out like a fuckin' log. I've tried everything short of setting her hair on fire.

Nigel reaches under his coat. Draws an actual WALTHER PPK PISTOL. Looks right at Charlie and Underhill.

NIGEL
Hello, boys. Might want to protect your eardrums.

Ashlynn slaps her hands over her ears. Charlie and Underhill don't, having no idea what the fuck is going on until--

Nigel BLASTS A ROUND into a mountian of dirty laundry. The gunshot is a planet of noise.

Tori doesn't move. Nigel looks at her, shakes his head, thoroughly disappointed.

NIGEL
Lesson learned: never let your wife loose with a demented lard ass the night before she has a booking in Palm Springs.

CHARLIE
Do you know where they went?

NIGEL
...?

CHARLIE
The lard ass...where did he take her?

NIGEL
He took her up the fuckin' ass!
How should I know!
(then)
The bloody hell are you doing in my house anyway?

CHARLIE
Is there anything about the lard ass that you remember?

NIGEL
What the fuck is this...?

CHARLIE
Please... Look where my life has taken me. I'm a Goddamn freak. It is futile to question my motives.

Ashlynn nods in agreeance.

NIGEL

I do remember his car, a Spyker C8. Because he refused to shut up about it. And because Tori wanted to go for a "quick spin" in it. That was the last I saw of her until nine o'clock in the fucking morning!!

Nigel SHOOTS the laundry pile again. Everyone jumps, except Tori. Nigel checks his watch.

NIGEL

Fuck it all! Sweetheart, grab a suitcase. We gotta be in the desert in two hours. Gonna have to dump her in the backseat again.

Ashlynn and Nigel grab luggage.

NIGEL

Boys, it's been a joy. But if you're still here when I get back, I'll fucking kneecap the both of you.

Charlie and Underhill are suddenly alone with Tori Miles. They talk in urgent whispers.

CHARLIE

You grab her feet. I'll grab her arms.

UNDERHILL

Kidnap her? Are you nuts? She's not a newspaper. Fifty girls will see us hauling her out. That guy will shoot us to death.

CHARLIE

She was with Blatch for sure. She could know everything. It's my only chance. We have to take her.

UNDERHILL

How? We have minutes...less than that. We're fucked. We're screwed. We're fucked.

CHARLIE

Shut up!!

Charlie thinks for five seconds. Something blinks behind his face. He points-- the window!

UNDERHILL

We're three floors up. The fall
will kill her.

CHARLIE

We're not gonna drop her, idiot.
Come on.

Charlie and Underhill work fast. They strip the covers off Tori. She is wearing full body pajamas with the feet attached (aka footie pajamas). They un-tuck the king-size sheet she is sleeping on and envelope her in it, tying all four corners together.

Charlie's eyeballs dart across the room. There-- speaker wires. Running along the perimeter of the ceiling, part of a 10,000 dollar, 7.1 channel sound system.

Charlie YANKS the wires clean off. Ties them together. About 30 feet worth. Ties one end to the sheet sack in which Tori Miles is encased.

They open the window. They pop out the screen. They survey the alley below. All clear. They push the sheet sack out the window. And lower it. Inches per second. Passing the second floor...

A MECHANIZED RUMBLE.

They stop the sack's descent. Charlie looks down. A GARAGE DOOR has opened, almost directly below the dangling Tori.

A black ASTON MARTIN DB9 backs out of the garage. Stops. The trunk POPS OPEN.

Nigel exits the driver's seat.

Tori swaying 20 feet overhead.

Charlie and Underhill wrap the speaker wire around their hands. It constricts. It digs in.

Ashlynn walks out of the garage carrying luggage. Puts it in the trunk. Talks to Nigel for a few moments. Then goes back into the garage. Nigel moves to follow. But then...

His phone RINGS. He stops. He answers. HE BEGINS TO TALK. JUST STANDING THERE. Smack below his pendulous wife.

The speaker wire digs deeper. Cutting circulation. Fingertips bulge purple-white. Charlie and Underhill fight sharp slicing pain.

They feel it before they see it. Vibrations shooting up the speaker wire. Tori is slipping.

Slowly sliding out of the sheet sack. Legs, arms, elbows, knees...everything folding and unfolding and pouring out in slow motion.

A GASP. It's Ashlynn Bratt! It's Ashlynn Bratt in the bedroom doorway! Staring freak-eyed at the stripped and empty bed. Those strange men at the window.

ASHLYNN BRATT
OHMYGOD! HELP! HEL--

--WHAM! Underhill SLUGS her. FLAT IN THE FACE. KNOCKING HER COLD.

Charlie can't hold the wire alone. It *buuuuuuuurns* through his hands.

NIGEL

hears screams. Looks up. A plummeting body. FLATTENS HIM.

CHARLIE

looks down. Sees Nigel and Tori. Motionless in the alley.

Underhill stands over an unconscious Ashlynn. He is sad.

UNDERHILL
I've never hit a girl in my life.

Charlie tosses him something. Underhill instinctively catches it. Opens his stinging hand and sees--

A Watermelon Jolly Rancher.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Charlie and Underhill run out of the garage and into the alley. Tori sleeps comfortably on her husband's prone body.

They lift her. Stuff her in the back of the Aston Martin.

Nigel groans. Eyes fluttering. Charlie stomps his head. Slams him back to sleep.

Then he and Underhill slide inside the Aston Martin. Charlie jams it in gear and fishtails out of the alley at warp speed.

INT. FBI SEDAN (PARKED) - DAY

Ward Oates sits behind the wheel of a tan Chevy Caprice, parked against the curb, next to a field where kids are playing a heated game of blam ball.

Oates is pouring LIQUID URETHANE FOAM into a 4-inch length of PCV PIPE. He caps the pipe and sets it in a cup holder.

Oates reaches into the HOME DEPOT bag on the passenger seat. Pulls out a cordless, super compact POWER DRILL. Slaps in the lithium ion battery. Attaches a 6-inch drill bit.

He uncaps the plastic pipe. Now full of hardened foam. Drills a hole clear through the foam center. Swaps drill bits. Bores four small holes along the pipe's side.

EVIDENCE BAG in the passenger footwell. Oates retrieves a SWAT-issue, KIMBER CUSTOM II PISTOL from it. Dabs Krazy Glue around the muzzle. Affixes the 4-inch pipe.

He rolls down the window. He slow pans the gun's sight across the park: joggers, dog walkers, the blam ball game-- the batter SMACKS the red rubber ball into a HIGH SOARING ARC. Oates tracks its trajectory. Oates hits the trigger. His pistol *WHISPERS FIRE*. The ball EXPLODES ACROSS THE SKY.

The kids GASP. The kids LAUGH. The batter rounds the bases, arms raised in triumph. None of them notice the tan Caprice pull away from the curb and speed off down the street.

INT. SAFE HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ken Veritek opens a bottle of water. Sips. Fidgets with the cap. Squeezes it in his hand. Indents a red ring in his skin. His eyes darting window to window. Tall palms sway against a bright sheet of carcinogenic grey. Nothing else.

His eyes shift to the floor. Caroline. Bound and gaged. Peering up through sweat-matted hair. Big eyes pleading, locked on Veritek's Arrowhead bottle.

Veritek avoids eye contact, moves out of her sight line.

Caroline turns her body like a compass needle, eye-locks the water bottle once more.

Veritek moves. Caroline pivots. Eye-locks. Eye-pleads.

Veritek hangs his head. Looks through a doorway. Makes sure Farallon's still sitting and smoking by the pool. Takes a knee. Folds his jacket into a pillow for Caroline's head. And that's when we notice: there is a SCREW MISSING from that wall socket cover.

KA-CHANK!

Handcuffs, SNAP-LOCKING, one loop-- around Veritek's wrist!

KA-CHUNK!

Other loop-- on his ankle!

Veritek is bowed in a Quasimodo hobble. Staggering. Lopsided. Circling. He strains his neck. Looks up. Sees a FIST. Caroline's. SMASHING HIS FACE DEAD CENTER.

The screen FLASHES. NEURO-SHOCK WHITE. Veritek hits the floor. On his back. An upturned bug.

Caroline at the door. Knob twisting. Hand on her ankle. Veritek's. RIPPING HER BACKWARD. FWOOOSH-CRACK! MECHANICAL FORCE. Sprawling her flat.

She kicks. Spastic. Hits body. Shoulders. Face. Veritek grunts. Tries to hold her. Absorbing face kicks. Can't.

Caroling wriggles free. On her feet. STOMPS Veritek's head. Darts to the door. Throws it open, and--

Lee Farallon.

On the other side. Poised on the font stoop. Aiming his grenade launcher. Point-bang.

Caroline GASPS.

Farallon FIRES.

INTO THE SOLAR PLEXUS. LAUNCHES HER, FLYING, SOARING, BACK INTO THE HOUSE, ON A BALLISTIC TRAJECTORY, ACROSS THE LIVING ROOM AND INTO A WALL...where she seems to stick for a moment, before sliding to the floor in a quivering mound.

Farallon steps inside. Cowboy boots clip-clopping on the maple floor. He cracks his grenade launcher. He drops the spent shell. The label on it says BEAN BAG.

Veritek, face bloody, on his back, body tangled, looks up at Farallon, eyes pleading: *unlock me!*

Farallon drops the handcuff key on the floor, several feet beyond Veritek's reach, and makes him crawl for it.

EXT. LEMON TREE CORRAL - DAY

Dale Traxle and FOUR FBI AGENTS stand beside the Coroner's van. Traxle is grilling the poor Coroner's Tech who last saw Oates rummaging through evidence bags.

TRAXLE
You just let him waltz away with
two evidence bags?!

TECH
I...I thought...he looked like he
was...
(deep breath)
(MORE)

TECH (cont'd)
Yes. I did. Okay. But let me
explain. He--

--Traxle turns his back on the babbling Tech, mid-sentence, and addresses the four agents standing behind him.

TRAXLE
Looks like one of our cowboys has left the ranch. Oates is trying to nab Decker, all by himself. And he'll slide down a razor blade into a pool of rubbing alcohol to do it.

A young agent named MIMI HOGAN runs up.

MIMI
Quantico just came back with the identity of Man X.

She hands Traxle a file. He thumbs through it. Sees the pic of Farallon outside Charlie's house, along with others that are grainy and old and out of focus. Traxle's face darkens. He mumbles something. One of the agents standing beside him speaks up.

FBI #1
Who is it?

Traxle hands him the folder. He reads for a second.

FBI #1
Lee Farallon? Lee Farallon is an actual human? And he really used to...he really used to do that?

Traxle nods once.

FBI #1
I always assumed those stories were bullshit, made up to scare Vegas cops.
(then)
Where did he learn to do that?

TRAXLE
I'm sure it comes naturally to him, like other curious things.

MIMI
What's he doing with Decker, though?

TRAXLE
Farallon spent the last 30 years working for Stanton Galvan.
(MORE)

TRAXLE (cont'd)
But Galvan shot himself last
Christmas when the chemo didn't
take. His half-wit son is running
things now.

FBI #2
Running them straight into the
ground, from what I hear.

TRAXLE
Wouldn't surprise me if Farallon
jumped ship and hooked up with an
industrious boy like Decker.

MIMI
But Decker has no prior history of
Farallon-scale violence.

TRAXLE
That's the funny thing about
people, Mimi. They always seem to
be changing into murdering pieces
of shit.

EXT. SAFE HOUSE - DAY

The safe house sits alone atop a windswept hill. No other man-made structures in sight. A red GMC utility van stops at the hill's base. The doors open. 3 MEN and 1 WOMAN exit. SUB-MACHINEGUNS and Rolex dive watches. The driver leaves the key in the ignition. Leaves the engine running.

THE ASSASSINS rack their weapons. Then move up the hill, low and fast through the brush

INT. SAFE HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Veritek holds a Ziploc bag filled with ice cubes to his head. Sips a new bottle of water.

Caroline is on the floor again. Hog-tied with handcuffs, same as before. Only now she is thoroughly shredded.

VERITEK
You still...want some water?

Her eyes burn up at him. Nevertheless, he kneels beside her, gently peels the duct tape off her mouth. Twist-wipes the water bottle clean on his shirt. Holds it to her lips so she can drink. She resists for a few moments. But then gives in, gulping mouthfuls. He pulls the bottle back.

VERITEK
Don't...not too fast. You'll make
your stomach sick.
(pause)
Trust me. I know from experience.
(MORE)

VERITEK (cont'd)
 I used to be a fighter. A
 professional one, if you can
 believe that.

He holds the bottle back to her mouth. She sips.

VERITEK
 This I am not a professional at. I
 am not... If it were up to me, I'd
 let you go right now, but....
 (then)

You see I owe a lot of money and...
A lot of money. And this
 friend.... This friend I've had
 since second grade, he said if I
 did some work for him he'd...
 Forget it...it's meaningless. I
 just want you to know that I will
 not hurt you. I don't hurt people
 like that. Never in my life.

(then)
 Things might go crazy...and seem
 crazy...very soon. But we're about
 to get out of this, okay? Trust
 me. You are going to be okay. We
 both are. Okay?

He takes the bottle from her mouth. Wipes her chin with his
 shirt sleeve. Puts the ice pack back on his forehead

VERITEK
 By the way, you hit like a fuckin'
 mule kick.

CAROLINE
 I know.

EXT. SAFE HOUSE/POOL DECK - DAY

Farallon sits on a deck chair. Legs crossed. Face oozing
 cigarette smoke. Expression remote as a Jupiter moon.

A group of crows SQUAWK, somewhere nearby, then flap over the
 tall shrub hedge which surrounds the backyard.

Farallon snaps alert. *What disturbed those birds?*

He stands. Grabbing his shoulder rig off a side table. Pans
 his head 180 degrees. Hears something. Soft and rustling.
 Beyond the hedge wall. But he can't see. Zero visibility
 through the calligraphic squiggles of twigs and little green
 leaves. He loads one of his customized, super-shotgun-like
 SPREAD SHELLS into his grenade launcher. He whispers:

FARALLON
 Close your eyes. Close them tight.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE HEDGE WALL,

the 4 assassins have the backyard surrounded. Flat on their stomachs. ASSASSIN #1 snakes a FIBER OPTIC SPY CAMERA through the hedge. Sees the pool deck: void of humans. The sliding glass door to the house: wide open.

Assassin #1 hand signals the other three. Then stands. Back flush against the hedge wall. He boosts his three fellow assassins over the hedge. They land ninja silent on--

THE POOL DECK

They move toward the open glass door in stealth mode. Skirting the perimeter of the pool.

They hear a gentle splash. They stop. They look down.

The old man laying flat on the bottom of the pool is a murky outline. His grenade launcher barely breaking the surface of black rain water.

BWAAAAAAAM! SPREAD SHOT.

BLASTWAVE OF BALL BEARINGS. Liquefies all three assassins. Gouges out ten pounds of pool wall.

ASSASSIN #1

on the other side of the hedge, saw this on his fiber optic spy cam. He takes off at top speed. Bolting down the hill.

FARALLON

waist deep in the concrete swamp, glimpses the fleeing assassin, through small holes blasted in the hedge.

Farallon slosh-charges out of the pool. Heaves his grenade launcher. Onto the roof of the single story house.

He leaps onto the wrought iron table, then on top of the pool shed, then, finally, onto the roof of the house, wet boots skidding, knee scuffing, knocking clay tiles loose.

The last assassin is a dot. Speeding down the barren hillside. Farallon cracks his grenade launcher. Loads a standard, explosive FRAG shell. Extends the butt stock. Unfolds the ladder sight. Aims...aims...

BLOOP!

The shell flies invisibly. Silently. For almost 2 seconds.

Farallon sees the assassin vaporize before he hears the echoing pop.

INT. SAFE HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Veritek lies on the floor, shielding Caroline with his body.

Farallon enters the living room, dripping wet, grenade launcher curling smoke.

Veritek's face drops-- *Farallon is still alive!*

VERITEK
What...happened?

FARALLON
Double cross.

VERITEK
What...? What do we do?

Farallon reloads his launcher, flips the breach shut with a solid metal CRUNCH.

FARALLON
Triple cross.

INT. ASTON MARTIN (MOVING) - DAY

Charlie drives. Underhill shotgun. Tori Miles dead asleep in the backseat. Underhill shakes her, to no avail.

UNDERHILL
I think she's in a vegetative coma.

Charlie's cell rings. Caller ID: Caroline's face.

CHARLIE
Hey, shut up.
(he answers)
Hello?

INTERCUT - Farallon

in the living room of the safe house. Caroline bound on the floor behind him. Veritek on a knee next to her.

FARALLON
Charlie Decker?

CHARLIE
I'm listening.

FARALLON
Sundown. El Mirage Cemetery.
Victorville. Be there.

Click. Call's over. Charlie checks his watch.

UNDERHILL
What'd they say?

CHARLIE
We have 3 hours and 29 minutes to
get to Victorville and trade
something we do not have for
Caroline's life.

UNDERHILL
(looks back at Tori)
What if we bought an air horn, and
blasted it right in her ear? That
would wake anyone up.

CHARLIE
Or we could crash her head between
two gigantic cymbals.
(then)
This isn't a *Tom & Jerry* cartoon.
There is something chemical keeping
that girl asleep. We need to
inject her with saline, or try
smelling salts.

UNDERHILL
What if we threw her in a freezing
cold swimming pool?

CHARLIE
She'd drown.

UNDERHILL
What if we electrocuted her?

CHARLIE
Stop talking. We're going to Rite
Aid. We are going to Rite Aid and
buying smelling salts.

UNDERHILL
But we just passed a Big 5 Sporting
Goods two blocks ago.

CHARLIE
So fuckin' what?

UNDERHILL
They sell air horns.

This sentence hangs in the air a moment.

CHARLIE

It's amazing I actually used to feel bad about leaving you in Vegas like I did. Now I'm just upset you were never hit and killed by a bus.

UNDERHILL

I'm just trying to help...to make things up to you, you know...

CHARLIE

Oh, you think there's something you can pull from the depths of your mongoloid brain that can make up for what you've done today?

UNDERHILL

I thought...I thought maybe, back there, when you gave me the Jolly Rancher, that that was--

CHARLIE

--There is nothing, *nothing* you can ever do that will...

(pause)

Fuck it. Forget it. You're an idiot.

(then)

...jolly ranchers... Goddamn bullshit. You don't deserve it anyway. Give it back.

UNDERHILL

I...ate it.

CHARLIE

Of course you did. Retards crave candy.

UNDERHILL

I am not retarded.

CHARLIE

What were you doing with Blatch, then? Solving geometry problems?

UNDERHILL

We had a good plan when we started.

CHARLIE

Which was...?

UNDERHILL

We were....

CHARLIE
Yes...?

UNDERHILL
We were gonna rob a casino.

Charlie can't help but laugh.

CHARLIE
I suppose you were gonna assemble a
crack team of rakish dickheads to
help you.

UNDERHILL
It could have worked. With the
money from selling that car, we
could have set up a major score.
We would have been bigger than you
and me ever were. We would have
been legends.

CHARLIE
Brad Shit and George Assfuck.

UNDERHILL
Fuck you. You know how many people
I asked to help me move that car?
You were the only one stupid enough
to agree. You were the only one
stupid enough to believe it
actually came from a valet at the
Mandalay Bay.

CHARLIE
You think I didn't suspect
anything? I was trying to be a
good friend. That's what I'm
stupid for doing. A fuckin' loser
like you could never get anything
past me.

UNDERHILL
Oh, really?

Underhill pulls out a watermelon Jolly Rancher. Holds it
aloft like a prized ruby.

UNDERHILL
I was saving it for later.

Underhill unwraps it with a flourish. Pops it in his mouth.

Charlie SLAMS ON THE BRAKES. The car SCREECHES. Shimmies.
Stops. In the middle of Moorpark. Charlie starts WAILING ON
UNDERHILL. Awkward, oblique, seat belt-hampered punches to
the head and chest. Underhill tries to block.

Tries to hit back. Both men screaming, swearing. Flood of motorists honking, weaving around the Aston Martin. When a VOICE rises over the din...

VOICE
Guys...guys...guys...guys!

Charlie and Underhill ease down their assaults, heads turning in unison toward the backseat, where Tori Miles is sitting up, WIDE AWAKE, staring bright-eyed at them.

TORI MILES
There're better ways to vent your anger, you know. Whenever I get super mad, I just always remind myself: "I'm sucking these big black cocks for you, daddy."

EXT. WATTS/STREET - DAY

The FBI sedan parks. Against a curb. On a residential street in Watts, California.

INT. FBI SEDAN - DAY

Ward Oates flips open a wallet from an evidence bag. Name on the drivers license: CHAUNCEY DEAKENS. Who we recognize as one of the JACKBOYS from the Showdown at the Lemon Tree Corral. Oates crosschecks the address on the ID with the address on a house across the way. It's a match. So he--

EXITS THE CAR

Pops the trunk. Pulls out a long, grey DUSTER COAT. Puts it on. Checks chamber on his silenced .45. Slips it in his hip holster. SLAMS the trunk. Turns. THREE BOYS, maybe 14 years old, stand watching him. Nervous after seeing the gun.

OATES
Don't even think about fuckin' up this car.

He flashes his counterfeit LAPD badge.

OATES
Know what this is? This is a license to kill car-fuckeruppers.

Oates takes a quick step toward them. The boys run off at top speed. Oates feels pretty good about himself.

A DOORBELL

Oates rings it. Waiting on the front porch of a little two story house.

The door opens a crack. A young man named JAMES DEAKENS peers over a chain lock.

DEAKENS
Fuck you want?

Oates badges him.

OATES
My name is Detective Rules. Do you know a Chauncey Deakens?

Silence. Blank stare.

OATES
Chauncey is in a great deal of danger. I need your help to get him out of it.

More silence. More blank staring.

OATES
You don't feel like talking, that's fine. I'd be happy to arrest you right now, question you at the station.

DEAKENS
Arrest me for what?

OATES
For inhuman stupidity. I smell enough weed in there to float a zeppelin.
(then)
Do you know what a zeppelin is?

DEAKENS
Motherfuckin' dirigible.

OATES
That's right. So, what's it gonna be?

Pause. Deakens hangs his head, mutters:

DEAKENS
...fuckin' bullshit...

He opens the door fully, allowing Oates--

INSIDE THE HOUSE

There's a couch, a coffee table, and a 60" TV, on which is a paused game of NCAA FOOTBALL 09. TWO YOUNG THUGS sit on the couch holding Xbox controllers. They are MARVIN and TRACY.

MARVIN
Fuck is he?

Oates flashes his badge.

OATES
I'm that sinking feeling in your
stomach.

Marvin's eyes go from the badge, to the gigantic Skeletor
bong on the coffee table.

Deakens, standing beside Oates, gets a good hard look at the
badge. His eyes narrow.

DEAKENS
It's cool, Marvin. He just wants
to ask some questions about
Chauncey. It's cool.
(then, to Oates)
So what you wanna know?

OATES
It seems Chauncey has gotten
himself involved with a thief. A
very dangerous thief named Charlie
Decker. And I need to know--

DEAKENS
--Charlie Decker?

OATES
You know him?

DEAKENS
Motherfucker was just through here.

Oates' pupils flare.

OATES
When?

DEAKENS
Couple hours ago. Needin' money
and shit.

Tracy and Marvin share a look: *what the fuck is Deakens
talking about?*

OATES
Do you know where he is now?

DEAKENS
No. But I know where to reach him
at. He left a number. I can call
him and try to find out.

OATES
You would do that?

DEAKENS
Shit yeah. I barely know the
motherfucker. I ain't going out
for his ass.
(then)
Hold up. Number's on the fridge.

Deakens walks into the kitchen. Oates stuffs his hands in
his coat pockets, looks at the Xbox 360, the Wii, and the
Playstation 3, all lined up next to each other below the TV.

OATES
You guys like *Metroid*?

Marvin and Tracy nod/shrug. Deakens speaks from the kitchen.

DEAKENS (O.S.)
I got a question for you now,
though.

When Deakens walks out of the kitchen, the hammer on his .44
BULLDOG PISTOL is already cocked. He's got Oates dead bang
locked.

DEAKENS
Why is your picture taped onto that
motherfuckin' badge?
(then)
You know you fucked up, right?

Oates smiles. Oates chuckles. Deakens smiles. Deakens
chuckles. Even Tracy and Marvin join in, smiling then
chuckling. The room swells with strange, giddy laughter.

Until Oates' duster coat *WHISPERS FIRE*. And Deakens' THUMB
BLOWS OFF. And his gun clatters. Then another *WHISPER*. And
another thumb disappears. Dropping Deakens to his knees.

Marvin and Tracy are running. Oates' coat whips open. His
hand runs through a slit in his coat pocket. Allowing him
covert access to his pistol. Which he *FIREs* again. BLASTING
Tracy's head out.

Marvin bolts upstairs. Silent shot. SPLINTERS BANISTER
WOOD. Microseconds after he dashes above ceiling level.

Oates hears Marvin's footsteps. Oates aims up at the sound.
Oates UNLOADS. There is a muffled THUD.

And blood *POURS* through ceiling holes.

Oates sidesteps the red waterfall, stands over Deakens, who is trying to pick up his pistol with a pair of thumbless hands. Oates kicks the gun away. Kneels. Aims. Silencer plastic hits Deakens' groin.

DEAKENS

...please...I don't...I don't even
know no Charlie Decker....I...

OATES

Chauncey did.

DEAKENS

Chauncey don't live here no more.
He don't--

OATES

--Where did he live?

DEAKENS

He...he stay up in Bel Air...with
Tat Spector...

Oates eyes flare again, bigger this time.

OATES

Tat Spector? Tat Spector and
Charlie Decker have joined forces?

DEAKENS

Man, I told you... I don't even
know no--

--*THWAP!* Oates shoots him through the mouth.

EXT. MULHOLLAND DR. - NIGHT

The SPYKER C8 TURBO-BOOSTS around a blind curve, ACCELERATING RIGHT AT US. The car SNARLS. SKIDDING off the road. Flying up, into a banking hillside, then down, skipping across the road, BATTER-RAMMING a metal guard rail, beyond which is a 98 foot drop into the midnight depths of Studio City.

The rail holds. The Spyker backs up and stops. GILBERT BLATCH ejecting through the driver's door, cackling like a monkey in a banana factory.

BLATCH

Now that was awesome!

He zips up his pants. Tori Miles staggers from the passenger side, vibrating with terror.

TORI MILES

Fucking asshole!

BLATCH
What's wrong?

TORI MILES
You almost killed us! You're lucky
I didn't accidentally bite your dick
off!

BLATCH
Oh please. We're both
professionals. Me at driving, and
you at slobbin' fuckin' knobs.

Flat tire. Blatch kicks it. Pops the trunk. Opens the donut tire compartment. Lifts the tire out. Freezes. Stares. At the strange compartment underneath. There is a lock on the stainless steel lid. Blatch pulls a compact .357 Magnum from an ankle holster. BLASTS the lock.

Tori Miles, who is now standing on the side of the road with her thumb out, jumps at the sound.

Blatch slowly lifts the stainless steel lid. A hiss as the vacuum seal breaks. And just as we are about to see what's inside, we CUT TO:

TORI MILES

in the back of the parked Aston Martin, relating her story to Charlie and Underhill.

CHARLIE
What was it?

TORI MILES
He wouldn't say. After that, he seemed kinda...weird. Which was weird...spooky. He just wanted to know if I knew anyone who would be interested in buying something that was like majorly expensive. So I took him here.

Charlie looks out the window. They are parked in front of a sprawling, walled estate in Bel Air.

CHARLIE
How do you know someone like Tat Spector?

TORI MILES
He's always paying for girls to come over, to just hang out and party with. He loves me. I'll get us in there...tell him what happened. He's a great guy.
(MORE)

TORI MILES (cont'd)
Whatever it is, he'll give it back
to you.

CHARLIE
Tori, a man like Tat Spector isn't
gonna give me shit but a bullet to
the brain.

TORI MILES
No. You don't know the real Tat.

CHARLIE
Are you sure you know what you're
even saying? Because the stories
I've heard...

TORI MILES
I'm not stupid, okay? I finished
three semesters at Cal State
Fullerton. I'm aware of the world
around me.

CHARLIE
Twenty minutes ago you were a
drugged-out zombie who I dropped
out of a window.

TORI MILES
I don't do drugs. I only take
stuff to help me sleep...and for
anxiety attacks...and for my
restless leg syndrome. But nothing
real.

Charlie raises an eyebrow.

TORI MILES
Listen, trust me...you tell Tat
about your wife, just like you told
me... His heart will dissolve.
He'll help you, I promise. The man
is a complete sweetheart.

EXT. TAT SPECTOR'S MANSION/BACKYARD - DAY

TAT SPECTOR (35. NBA tall. Flannel suit. Huge, perfectly round afro) stands on a flagstone patio. He is flanked by BODYGUARDS, all of whom wield platinum plated AK-47 machineguns. Partygoers hangout everywhere. Music thumps. Girls slink through the crowd, some carrying trays of burgers and hotdogs and opaque plastics cups overflowing with ice-cold Miller High Life.

FRONT GATE

Charlie, Underhill, and Tori Miles walk through the front gate and onto Tat Spector's 100-meter-long driveway.

Tori smiles at the GUARD in the booth beside the gate.

TORI MILES
Thanks, Reggie.

Old cars line the driveway, all the way up to the house. Many are dimpled with rusty bullet holes. Tori points to these cars like a tour guide.

TORI MILES
This is Tat's car museum. He collects cars from famous American crimes and displays them for all his guests to marvel at.

She points to a very old, gunfire-saturated Ford V8.

TORI MILES
That one was Bonnie and Clyde's.

BACKYARD

Tat feels a finger poke his ribs. He looks over and down and sees Tori Miles standing there, in her footie pajamas, beside two strange white men.

TORI MILES
Hi, Tat.

TAT SPECTOR
Who are they? More bitch-ass tricks fittin' to sell me shit?

TORI MILES
No, no, no. They're....
(turns to Charlie)
What are your names again?

TAT SPECTOR
Whoa. Whoa. Trudie...

TORI MILES
Tori.

TAT SPECTOR
Don't be bringin' motherfuckers through you don't even know their Goddamn names.

TORI MILES
But I--

TAT SPECTOR
--Where you know 'em from?

TORI MILES
They just kidnapped me, but...

Tat shakes his head in disgust. Charlie steps in.

CHARLIE
Mr. Spector. It's not what you--

--Tat waves a finger. A bodyguard SLAMS the butt of his Platinum AK into Charlie's face. Drops him cold.

EXT. SAFE HOUSE - DAY

We see the world as GLOWING BLOBS OF COLOR. Hot reds phasing into cool blues, and all the gradations between, a CinemaScope landscape of this, panning from left to right.

Lee Farallon is crouched on the roof of the safe house, HEAT VISION GOGGLES strapped to his face, like a Medieval Gargoyle with electric eyes. Scanning miles of desolate hills for enemies. Grenade launcher resting on his shoulder.

INT. SAFE HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - THAT MOMENT

Caroline bound on the floor. Veritek on his cell, talking low and fast.

VERITEK
He thinks you meant to kill both of us. His plan is to sell the package, split the profits with me, and then, as he put it, dematerialize. He already set the meeting place with Decker.

INTERCUT - Francis Galvan

on the phone in his office, pacing in and out of FRAME.

GALVAN
Where is it? When?

VERITEK
Someplace... El Mirage Cemetery.
Near Victorville. At sundown.

GALVAN
Cock. Sucker.

VERITEK
You know, at this point, I think you should just be happy you're getting back fifty percent of whatever this shit is worth.

GALVAN

Bro, if I don't get the genuine article back by tomorrow night, I am a dead man.

VERITEK

What are you talking about? What is in this package? Plutonium? The body of a dead alien?

GALVAN

It's a skull.

VERITEK

A skull?

GALVAN

The skull of a man named Jesus Malverde.

VERITEK

Who the fuck is Jesus Malverde?

GALVAN

To you and me, he is no one. But to the Mexican Mafia chieftains who are expecting to pick up the skull tomorrow night, Jesus is God.

(then)

Sounds stupid, but these fuckin' beaners from Culiacan are fanatical about him. He was some sort of folk hero bandit. Hundred years ago. Has shrines all over Mexico. Drug runners pray to him like he's their narco-saint. They leave him stacks of dope and money. Some leave Ferraris.

(then)

You see, there is a massive network of Mexican drug smugglers that has always been closed off to the white man. But Daddy knew that if someone were to offer these smugglers the lost skull of Jesus Malverde, gringo or not, they would accept him as one of their own.

It's a relationship that is potentially worth hundreds of millions of dollars. For years my dad had men scouring North Western Mexico for this nonsense. But then, just last week...

(then)

To be safe we snuck it over the border using one of our *French Connection* cars.

(MORE)

GALVAN (cont'd)
But someone must have talked.
Tipped off Decker. And now...If
these guys arrive and find me
without a skull... They don't have
a sense of humor about this shit.
Mexicans love a bloodbath.
Farallon knows this.

(then)
You have to stop him. You have to
kill him. Soon as possible.

VERITEK
No fuckin' way, Francis. I don't
even have a gun.

GALVAN
He's old as fuck. You're a Goddamn
wrecking machine. Go put your fist
through his head and call me back.

VERITEK
Can't you give them a fake skull?

GALVAN
A man tried that once, to gain
access to the smuggling network.
Cops found this man and his family
nailed to the walls of their living
room.

(then)
Plus the skull's face is bonded in
Aztec gold with red diamonds set in
each eye socket. Hard to fake.

VERITEK
Send more assassins.

GALVAN
You know how much money you owe me?
All I've done for you...?

VERITEK
How...how about I grab the skull
from Decker and run? Just run away
with it before Farallon knows
what's happening? I'm fast. I'll--

GALVAN
--Goddamn it, Kenny!
(then)
If you don't kill Farallon and stop
this... They are going to crucify
me. Do you understand?

VERITEK
...

GALVAN
Kenny?!

VERITEK
Yes. Yes. I understand. I got it.

GALVAN
Do you? Then call me when it's done.

Click. End of call. Then...

FOOTSTEPS. From above. Farallon moving across the roof. Veritek stares at the ceiling. It's quiet again.

INT. CHAUNCEY DEAKENS' HOUSE - DAY

Chauncey Deakens' living room. Fresh crime scene area. Clockwork of LAPD.

Dale Traxle and his FBI team enter. Immune to the gore. Traxle approaches the OFFICER IN CHARGE.

OFFICER IN CHARGE
Girlfriend called it in. Came back from Smart & Final and found 'em.
(then)
All three victims were known associates of Tat Spector.

TRAXLE
Where are the witnesses?

EXT. CHAUNCEY DEAKENS' HOUSE/BACKYARD - DAY

THREE TEENAGE BOYS, the ones Oates frightened away from his car, stand with some cops near a detached garage.

Traxle pulls a picture from his pocket: Ward Oates, grinning by a lake, holding a large mouth bass next to his head.

TRAXLE
Look at this closely. Look hard.
Is this the man you saw?

The kids look hard. The kids nod.

TRAXLE
This is the man who identified himself to you as a Los Angeles police officer and then entered this house? You are sure?

KID #1
That's him. I remember.

KID #2
He had that smile even.

Traxle puts his palm on his forehead. Shuts his eyes. Thinks. Then talks, without removing his palm or opening his eyes.

TRAXLE
Mimi, get HRT. I want a tactical assembly at Tat Spector's house in ten minutes. If Oates tracked Decker here, he is going there.

Mimi whips out her phone. Traxle opens his eyes. Sees the teenage boys still standing there.

TRAXLE
Get these kids out of here.

A cop escorts them off. As they go, Traxle notices BRIGHT ORANGE SPLOTCHES on the cuffs of the kid's shirt sleeves. He points this out to the officer in charge.

TRAXLE
What's all that orange shit on 'em?

OFFICER IN CHARGE
That's spray paint.

EXT. TAT SPECTOR'S MANSION - DAY

The FBI sedan pulls to a stop. Across the street from Tat Spector's house gate. SPRAY PAINTED on the sedan's hood in big thick DayGlo-orange letters: HOMO COP.

Oates exits the defaced car. Walks to the GUARD BOOTH beside the house gate. Reggie the guard inside. Oates flashes his LAPD badge for a microsecond.

OATES
My name is Detective Rules. I need to speak to Mr. Spector.

REGGIE
Can I see your badge again, please, sir?

OATES
What for?

REGGIE
I barely got a look at it.

Oates just stands there.

INT. TAT SPECTOR'S MANSION/STUDY - DAY

Charlie lies on a couch. Unconscious. Bloody bandage on his forehead.

SOMETHING inches INTO FRAME, right beside Charlie's head. Right beside Charlie's EAR. This something unleashes a SHOCKWAVE OF SOUND.

Charlie's eyes SNAP OPEN. Whole body JERKING like an electrocuted frog leg. He sees Tat Spector, two bodyguards, and Tori Miles standing over him, fingers in their ears, all gravely concerned.

TORI MILES
He's awake! He's awake!

The SOUND CUTS OFF. Charlie slowly sits up. Tat giving him some help. Charlie feels the bandage on his forehead, then blinks at Underhill, who is kneeling beside him, holding an AIR HORN.

UNDERHILL
Told you it would work.

EXT. TAT SPECTOR'S MANSION - DAY

Dale Traxle and his 5-man team, now joined by 8 HRT COMMANDOS in HARD-SHELL ARMOR, stand outside the guard booth. Guard Reggie is a bloody, bullet-riddled mess on the floor. Mimi checks Reggie's pulse. Shakes her head: stone dead.

Traxle looks at Oates' defaced sedan, then at his team.

TRAXLE
Ward Oates might be the best
gunfighter alive...and he has gone
totally insane. If you have to
shoot, shoot to kill. Go for the
shit shot and he will drop you like
a fuckin' penny.

EXT. TAT SPECTOR'S MANSION/BACKYARD - DAY

Oates moseys into the massive backyard party scene.

INT. TAT SPECTOR'S MANSION/STUDY - DAY

Charlie sits on the couch. In Tat's study. Still a bit dazed. Sipping a can of Coke. Tat Spector, two bodyguards, Tori Miles, and Underhill stand over him.

TAT SPECTOR
Don't you worry 'bout a thing.
(motions to Underhill)
(MORE)

TAT SPECTOR (cont'd)
He explained everything while you
was knocked out. Talked me out of
killing both you on the spot.

CHARLIE
He did?
(then)
How?

TAT SPECTOR
He's gotta be one of the craftiest
motherfuckers alive.

Charlie gives Underhill a look. Underhill shrugs.

A third bodyguard enters. Hands Tat a BLACK, HARD-SHELL PORSCHE SUITCASE, with a collapsible handle and rollers, small enough to be a carry on item.

TAT SPECTOR
Got the shit the fatso sold me in
here.

CHARLIE
What is it?

Tat opens the case. Inside, snugly secured in neoprene packing foam, is the skull of Jesus Malverde. Face a gold devil's mask. Eyes flaming diamonds. White jawbone frozen in a gaping, gold-fanged death howl. Charlie is speechless.

TAT SPECTOR
Means nothing to you, right?
Didn't to the fat boy, neither. He
thought it was just some fancy
fuckin' museum junk. Low-balled
him at two hundred thousand. But
to folks in my line of work...folks
who know things... Well, it's a
long story, but this skull is the
key to some highly profitable
business relationships...worth
millions.

CHARLIE
Sounds like you might be reluctant
to part with it.

TAT SPECTOR
If I have one weakness, it's
empathy. I've had my fair share of
bitches kidnapped from me. Worst
pain there is.
(MORE)

TAT SPECTOR (cont'd)
So, I'm prepared to return it to you, right now, temporarily, on one condition: I want you to allow me and a squad of my most evil-hearted niggers to follow you out to the drop, size-up the motherfuckers who snatched your wife, and then, when the time is right... We will swarm down on them like a jigaboo jihad.

Just then, TWO MORE BODYGUARDS exit an open, walk-in CLOSET, which has been converted into a small ARMORY. RACKS of pistols and machineguns stretch back and out of sight. The BODYGUARDS are wearing Kevlar vests, replete with HUGE AMMO CLIPS, and carrying M4 CARBINE MACHINEGUNS. They hand out GUNS and VESTS to the other bodyguards.

TAT SPECTOR
So...what you say to that?

Charlie thinks. Extends his hand. Tat shakes it once.

TAT SPECTOR
Fuck yeah.

INT. SAFE HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Veritek paces. Wringing his giant hands. Caroline bound on the floor. Farallon's footsteps on the roof.

CAROLINE
Listen to me. The man is insane.
You can't trust a word he says. He
is going to kill both of us if you
don't do something.

Veritek continues to pace, seemingly oblivious.

CAROLINE
You might not be a professional at this. But I am. If you don't do something, we are fucked.

VERITEK
I know...I know....

CAROLINE
You don't have to kill him. Just knock him out. And we'll make a run for it.

VERITEK
It's not...It's not that easy. I do that, my best friend will die. People will come after me. I can't just run away.

CAROLINE

I don't know him, but I promise you: your best friend is a piece of shit who deserves death. Listen... If you help me, me and my husband...we can protect you. We know people. We have a house we keep in Peru for this kind of thing. We could get you there...

Veritek stops pacing, looks down at her.

CAROLINE

It's easy to disappear. Trust me. I did it as a kid. All it takes is the right motivation. Like your step dad trying to pour Drano down your throat. Or your best friend throwing you to the wolves.

VERITEK

I need to think about this, okay?

CAROLINE

There's no time to think, Goddamn it! You have to get your fuckin' head out of your ass and--

--Veritek puts the duct tape back over her mouth.

VERITEK

Just let me think, okay? Sorry. I...I just need time to think.

EXT. TAT SPECTOR'S MANSION/BACKYARD - DAY

Oates. Amid the massive backyard party. Searching for Tat. Then, quite suddenly, Oates freezes in place.

The first HRT OPERATOR he sees is at the far end of the yard, near the tennis court. Oates knows where the others will be. Seven more of them. Hidden behind bushes and trees. Arrayed in a tactical perimeter. A semi-circle of trained, expert killers drawn across the unpopulated outskirts of the yard.

Oates knows they don't see him yet. So he pulls his pistol. Partially draping his coat over it. Takes subtle aim at the HRT operator near the tennis court. About to fire...

TRAXLE

EVERYONE DOWN!! DOWN! DOWN! DOWN!

Some partygoers mumble confused. Most don't seem to care.

Oates turns, just his head, sees Traxle and his team, maybe 25 meters away, speeding at him, in SLOW MOTION, close to the house, guns up. They have no shot. Too many people in the way.

Oates locks eyes with Traxle, while still aiming at the HRT Operator. Oates grins and--

--THWAP!

No-look shot. HITS HRT #1. In the neck.
Body spasm. Involuntary trigger squeeze.
Sub-machinegun SPRAAAAAAAAAY! THUNDER-BOOM LOUD.
BLASTING FISTFULS OF STUCCO OFF THE HOUSE FACADE.
BLASTING PALM LEAVES TO AIRBORNE MULCH.

BLASTING BYSTANDERS TO PIECES.

Partygoers SCREAM. Scatter. Tat's Bodyguards aiming platinum-plated AK-47s through the chaos. Seeing nothing. FIRING at everything.

Oates throws his aim over to Traxle and his team. UNLOADS. BULLET-SMASHES one team member, two fleeing party people, and an air-conditioning unit.

Oates runs/reloads. Traxle and his team charge out from behind cover. In full pursuit.

Oates kicks through a patio door, enters the house. Traxle and his team follow, into the--

KITCHEN

Oates has vanished.

TRAXLE
Spread out.

The FBI unit splits into TWO SEARCH TEAMS.

INT. TAT SPECTOR'S MANSION/STUDY- THAT MOMENT

Stray gunfire from the backyard PUNCHES OUT WHOLE WINDOWS.

Tat pops just his eyes above a couch back, like a hippo about to surface for air. His bodyguards crouch beside him.

Charlie peeks over a couch, five feet away from Tat's. Underhill and Tori Miles crouch beside him.

TAT SPECTOR
Decker, don't move! We're gonna
smoke these motherfuckers and then
we're gonna save your--

--VWAP! BULLETS SLASH ACROSS TAT'S COUCH.
OBLITERATING HIM AND HIS FIVE BODYGUARDS.
OBLITERATING A SALT WATER FISH TANK BUILT FLAT INTO THE WALL

TORI MILES SCREAMS. RUNS, FLAILING, OUT OF THE ROOM.

Charlie and Underhill are alone. A wave of saltwater fish washes around their knees. Colorful mouths gasping. An OCTOPUS slither-slides right into Charlie's knee. He stares at it, transfixed amid the chaos. Then looks up, at the BLACK PORSCHE SUITCASE on the coffee table, between the two couches.

Charlie dashes. Grabs the case. Bullets ZWINGING like Amazon insects. He and Underhill sprint out of the Study. Zoom through a maze of rooms. They enter a LONG HALLWAY LINED WITH DOORS, they round a corner and see--

Traxle and an FBI agent. Coming at them. Traxle's face drops into shock. He SHOUTS INTO HIS RADIO.

TRAXLE
Decker's here! Charlie Decker is
Here!! He is--

--Charlie and Underhill 180, back around the corner, only to see a MAN IN A LONG GREY DUSTER COAT, 15 feet before them, a gun-wielding BARRICADE in the narrow corridor of doors.

Ward Oates' eyes flash like Hiroshima.

OATES
Decker.

Oates raises his pistol and--

--Traxle and his men enter the hall, behind Charlie and Underhill. Oates blinks. Traxle blinks.

Charlie and Underhill BARGE THROUGH THE NEAREST DOOR. TUMBLE DOWN A CARPETED FLIGHT OF STAIRS.

Mimi, two FBI agents, plus two HRT Operators swing into the hallway behind Oates. Sights zeroed on the rogue agent.

Oates feels time freeze, sandwiched between all those armed agents. Traxle snorts a laugh at him.

TRAXLE
Smoke him.

Oates LUNGE-DIVES at the nearest door. BASHES through. BULLETS SEARING air at his feet, CHEWING the doorway to bits.

Oates lands, rolling. He's in a--

GAME ROOM

He runs, past a pool table, through another door, entering a--

HOME THEATER

Massive wall screen. Four rows of chairs. No more doors. No windows. No escape.

BASEMENT

Charlie and Underhill lie in a tangled heap at the bottom of the stairs.

They get to their feet. Charlie grabbing the suitcase. Just as THE M84 STUN GRENADE comes bouncing down the steps.

Charlie and Underhill run, deeper into the basement. PULSE WAVE OF MAGNESIUM-WHITE CRASHING OVER THEIR BACKS. Then, from out of the ringing flash-- TWO HRT OPERATORS, BARRELING DOWN THE STAIRS.

WHILE UPSTAIRS, IN THE HOME THEATER

Oates slam-locks the door leading to the game room. Aims at it, crouching behind a row of oxblood leather chairs. There is a TOUCH SCREEN REMOTE laying on an arm rest. Oates punches buttons. The room lights dim. A cool, radium-blue STAR FIELD twinkles across the ceiling. Oates mashes more buttons. A 4K digital projector blinks on. A WALL PANEL SWINGS OPEN, exposing a shelf of AV components. Oates stares into the LITTLE CLOSET. Thinks...thinks... Crawls to it.

MEANWHILE, IN THE BASEMENT

Charlie and Underhill race through a series of rooms:

A room with a cave-like swimming pool.

A room that looks like a 1950s hamburger stand. A gym with a rock climbing wall and half a basketball court. A room with nothing but beer kegs stacked to the ceiling. A two lane firing range. And, finally--

A LAUNDRY ROOM

It is a dead end. No more rooms to run to.

THE TWO HRT OPERATORS

are hot on their trail, stalking through the hamburger stand.

IN THE LAUNDRY ROOM

Charlie is standing on one of five washing machines. Looking out a basement window. The front yard is green and quiet.

The window is covered with bars. He gives them a two-handed YANK. Then another. No use. He turns to Underhill. Face a twisted nerve. They talk in adrenaline-soaked whispers:

UNDERHILL
Can we smash 'em off?

CHARLIE
With what?

Charlie eye scans. He jumps off the washer. Over to the wall. To the ELECTRIC DUMBWAITER built into it. He pulls a laundry basket out. Says to Underhill,

CHARLIE
Come here.

UPSTAIRS, IN THE GAME ROOM

Traxle and his team flank the locked door which leads to the home theater. Mimi aiming a SHOTGUN at the top door hinge. SHE BLOWS IT OFF. THEN THE LOWER ONE. THEN THE KNOB.

The door falls FLAT FORWARD.
FIVE FBI AGENTS STORM OVER IT, into--

THE HOME THEATER

Splinter-shafts of light from the 4K digital projector blip through gun smoke a metallic hinge dust.

There's a movie playing. Something with a zombie, a zombie who is underwater, battling an actual shark.

Traxle and his team sweep the room. No sign of Oates, until, out of the corner of his eye, Traxle sees a scrap of DUSTER COAT, caught in the almost imperceptible door of the AV component closet, hanging like a flag on a windless day.

Traxle stops, thinks, no time to think, no time to signal a warning, so he whirls, UNLOADING, into the AV closet. His team follows suit. CAPPING ENDLESS ROUNDS INTO THE DOOR.

The zombie movie GLITCHES. STOPS.
THE MASSIVE WALL SCREEN WASHES PURE WHITE.

Big silence.

An electric motor HUMS. The wall screen OPENS UPWARD. LIKE A GARAGE DOOR. The alcove behind it is just big enough to hide two Wilson Audio X-2 speakers. A WATCH Dog subwoofer. And Ward Oates.

He has the touch screen remote in one hand, .45 in the other.

He steps into the room through clouds of shimmering white particle matter.

Traxle and his team look at the AV closet, beyond the thinning smoke. There is but a LONG, GREY DUSTER COAT amid a pile of wood and blasted chunks of electronics.

Traxle and his team truly unloaded into that closet. The slides on their pistols are all snapped back into the empty position. Oates snorts a laugh at Traxle.

OATES
Nice shooting.

Oates FIRES, so fast it sounds like a machinegun. The agents EXPLODE BLOOD. SPLATTERING the 4K projector lens. Plunging the room into a glowing realm of the DEEPEST RED.

The slide on Oates' pistol SNAPS BACK. Empty. One agent remains standing and un-shot: Dale Traxle.

He and Oates stare, frozen, each at the other's waist. They both have FULL AMMO CLIPS ATTACHED TO THEIR BELTS, BESIDE THEIR HIP HOLSTERS.

In the center of the Universe, the clock spring tightens. The clock spring strains. The clock spring BREAKS.

Oates and Traxle POP into motion.

Simultaneous clip grabbing. Simultaneous pistol loading. Simultaneous KLACKING-- gun slides SNAPPING FORWARD.

BANG!

HIGH-VELOCITY SPLASH OF BLOOD. Hits the wall. Behind Oates. Who falls back. Dropping his gun. Shoulder oozing.

Traxle towers over him. Beaming in triumph. In relief.

In joy.

Traxle lowers his aim for the head shot. His face WARPS INTO A DUNGEON OF PAIN. He drops his gun. Too heavy. He teeters back. Equilibrium a sloshing, punctured yolk sac.

Traxle clutches his side, below the armpit. The part the Kevlar vest does not cover. BLOOD HOSES between his fingers. Pumping out in double-thump cardiac spurts. He falls to his knees. Folding onto his side.

The wound on Oates' shoulder is a muscle hit. Clean through. He stands. Grabbing his gun off the floor.

Tendril of smoke curling from the homemade silencer. Puff of air from his mouth. Scatters it invisible.

Traxle lays dying on the floor. Groaning and squirming.

Oates walks past him. Oates does not break stride. Oates aims his .45 pointblank and BLOWS TRAXLE'S HEAD OFF.

Oates walks out of the home theater, then out of the game room, and into--

THE HALL

He's almost running when he goes down the basement stairway.

IN THE BASEMENT

Charlie and Underhill climb into the DUMBWAITER. They climb on top of the plastic suitcase, which is already situated flat inside. They look like a pair of canned fetuses.

Charlie reaches out to a panel of buttons in the wall: 1st Floor; 2nd Floor; 3rd floor. Charlie hits the button for the 3rd floor. And the dumbwaiter car ascends. Just as the HRT OPERATORS ENTER THE LAUNDRY ROOM. Everyone's eyes meet, nanoseconds before the car disappears up into the wall.

INSIDE THE DUMBWAITER CAR

Pitch dark. Cables ECHO-TWANG in the metal shaft. Charlie and Underhill breath panic.

BASEMENT

An HRT operator jams his gun into the dumbwaiter shaft. EMPTIES A 30 ROUND CLIP INTO THE ASCENDING CAR.

IN THE BASEMENT FIRING RANGE

Oates, snooping around, hears this. Head SNAPPING ALERT like a deer in the woods.

WHILE INSIDE THE DUMBWAITER CAR

Charlie and Underhill SCREAM. HELL STORM OF BULLETS BOUNCING OFF THE HARD-SHELL SUITCASE BENEATH THEM.

THE 3rd FLOOR ATTIC

is a vast, open space. Vaulted ceiling. Furniture covered with sheets. BIG WINDOWS WITH NO BARS.

The dumbwaiter car arrives. Charlie and Underhill scramble out of it. Gunfire still exploding up the shaft.

Charlie and Underhill are a heap on the floor.

They wobble to their feet. They see the dumbwaiter car. Suitcase still inside. GOING DOWN.

Charlie HAYWIRES to the dumbwaiter. Just as the car dips out of sight. Charlie hits buttons. Nothing. Grabs steel cables. They SHRED through his hand.

CHARLIE
Help me! Help!

Underhill grabs cables too. They yank till their palms bleed. And then yank more. No use. The suitcase is gone.

Charlie punches the cable. Punches the wall. Kicks the wall. CRYING OUT:

CHARLIE
GOD-FUCKING-DAMN IT!!
(then, softly, to himself)
I left it in...how could I leave it
in there...she's dead...she's
dead... Because of me. I'm sorry.
I'm so sorry...I'm--

UNDERHILL (O.S.)
--Charlie.

Charlie turns. Underhill is already chest deep in the dumbwaiter shaft. Jacket wrapped around his hand. Holding the cable like a kid on a rope swing.

UNDERHILL
You owe me a bag of Jolly Ranchers.

Before Charlie can utter a sound, Underhill SLIDES DOWN.

IN THE LAUNDRY ROOM

HRT #1 presses the dumbwaiter button again. Like he's waiting for a stubborn elevator. HRT #2 beside him. They hear strange noises in the shaft. HRT #1 clicks on his flashlight. Sticks it and his head into the wall hole.

IN THE SHAFT, ABOVE THE CAR

Underhill ZIPS down the cable. So fast he looses his grip. Falls. Five feet. CRASH-LANDS. On top of the car. CABLES SNAP. THE CAR PLUMMETS.

IN THE LAUNDRY ROOM

HRT #1. Head still in the shaft. Hears a metallic SWOOOOSH! Right before the car strikes like a guillotine.

SMASH-WEDGING HIS HEAD DOWN INTO THE WALL.

AIRBURST OF PLASTER. Underhill TUMBLE-FLIES OUT OF THE WALL HOLE. Smack into HRT #2. Sprawls him. Underhill punches. Blindly. Spastic. Howling like a mad animal. Hitting helmet. Kevlar chest. Soft face. FIVE SOLID FIST BASHES IN ROW. Knocks him out.

Underhill retrieves the suitcase. Grabs a sub-machinegun off the floor. Aims it at the window. BLOWS OFF BARS. EVAPORATES GLASS.

Heaves the suitcase through the smoldering window frame. Jumps, onto a washing machine. Wiggles himself through the window. Clothes snagging glass shards.

When Oates enters the laundry room, the first things he sees is a pair of rapidly kicking feet. High on the wall, sticking out the window.

He barely considers whose feet these could be. He FIRES. SHEARS OFF UNDERHILL'S LITTLE TOE. Underhill SHRIEKS. Propels himself, arms swimming, onto the--

FRONT LAWN

Grabs the suitcase. Limp-runs, across the driveway. Diving behind a beat-up Chevy Nova, part of Tat's famous car museum.

CHARLIE

Climbs out the attic window, onto a little tile roof below. Shimmies down a palm tree. Moves around to the front of the house. Sirens rising in the distance.

Charlie comes around a corner. There's Underhill. 30 feet away. Crouched behind the Chevy Nova. Suitcase beside him. Charlie smiles. Astonished. Almost laughing with relief.

CHARLIE
Johnny!

Underhill turns. Sees Charlie smiling in amazement. He smiles back.

That's when the first bullet SKIPS UNDER THE NOVA, TAKES OUT UNDERHILL'S ANKLE, causing him to topple. As his head hits the ground, the second skipping bullet leaps to greet it.

Ward Oates re-aims, arm sticking out of that basement window now. Fires a third skipping shot. Gas tank HIT. Gas tank DETONATION. A BLAZING FUNNEL CLOUD SWALLOWS UNDERHILL AND THE SUITCASE.

Charlie reels. FIREBALL CRUSH WAVE flattening him to the grass. Looks up. Sees Oates. Through rippling air. Slithering out of the basement window. BLASTING at him now.

Charlie rolls, behind another car museum piece, an old Goodhew AMBULANCE. Bullets skipping underneath it. Charlie leaps. On to the rear bumper. Then inside, through the rear door.

Oates' gun clicks dry. He's halfway out of the basement window. He reloads. Fully climbs out. Gets to his feet. Realizes an AMBULANCE IS ROCKETING AT HIM.

Oates dives. Face in the dirt.

Charlie LEAPS OUT OF THE AMBULANCE'S REAR DOOR. TRIPS. COMES UP RUNNING. STRAIGHT FOR THE STONE WALL.

The ambulance HITS THE HOUSE. Inches beside Oates. Half caves in a wall. Stops. Wheels spinning at burnout speed. Launching clumps of grass and dirt into orbit.

Oates gets up. Brushing house debris off his head. Rips open the ambulance's driver's door. No Charlie. Only a crude hot wire job. And a SWISS ARMY KNIFE, jammed into the gas pedal. Pinning it flat down. Oates yanks the knife out. The inscription on the handle nearly burns out his retinas: **Charlie T. Decker.**

EXT. TAT SPECTOR'S MANSION/STREET - DAY

Charlie lands on the other side of the stone wall. Sprints to the Aston Martin. Jumps in. *Peeeels* away.

EXT. TAT SPECTOR'S MANSION/DRIVEWAY - DAY

Oates is behind the wheel of the ambulance. He backs it up. He speeds down the driveway, toward the front gate. He activates the sirens when the first police cars zoom through. They make way. He hits the street doing 60 and careens out of sight.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. SAFE HOUSE - DAY

Farallon stands before the open rear hatch of the Range Rover, packing his heat-vision goggles into a carrying case which sits in the car's way-back area. This case contains dozens of foam-packed .40mm grenade shells, a disassembled UMP45 machinegun, ammo clips, knives, a grappling hook...

INT. SAFE HOUSE - THAT MOMENT

Veritek stands in the foyer, peeking through a little window beside the front door, watching Farallon. Veritek steps back and hides beyond the edge the door frame. Wipes his palms on his jeans. He is holding a CRKT folding knife, 3.5-inch blade extended and locked into place. He raises it. Ready to SKULL STAB Farallon the moment he enters the house.

Caroline on the floor, hog-tied with two sets of handcuffs, eyes huge with dread. Veritek tries to give her a reassuring nod, heart hammers pounding in his throat. She shuts her eyes, as if to avoid the worst scene in a horror movie.

EXT. SAFE HOUSE - THAT MOMENT

Farallon grabs a MASSIVE CAN OF GASOLINE from the back of the Range Rover. Slams the hatch shut. Walks to the front door. Opens it and steps--

INSIDE THE HOUSE

He walks through the foyer and into the living room, without even noticing Veritek: a giant frozen in fear, hiding beside the door frame, knife poised in suspended animation.

Farallon begins drenching the living room walls with gasoline. He turns toward Veritek, who quickly hides the knife behind his back. Farallon is startled to see him there. He pauses, then says,

FARALLON
Get ready. We are leaving.

Veritek nods. Farallon continues gas drenching the living room. Veritek sort of follows him, grip tightening on the knife behind his back.

Farallon walks through a swinging door, into the kitchen, begins gas splashing the walls and counter tops.

Veritek stops on the living room side of the door. Watches Farallon, in increasingly brief glimpses, until the door stops swinging and stays closed. He stares into the white slab of wood, inches from his face.

VERITEK
(to himself)
Fuck. This.

Veritek folds his knife away. Runs to Caroline, sliding up to her on his knees. Pulls a HANDCUFF KEY from his pocket.

Caroline's eyes ask, *what the fuck?*

VERITEK
We're making a run for it.

He leans over her, about to jam the key in a handcuff. She squeals thinly into her gag.

Veritek doesn't even have to turn. He knows why she's squealing. He can feel Farallon's face, rising over his shoulder like a dead sun.

FARALLON
What do you think you're doing?

Veritek swallows. Then SHOOTS HIS WHOLE BODY STRAIGHT UP. PISTON FORCE. TOP OF HIS HEAD PULVERIZING FARALLON BELOW THE CHIN. SENDING THE OLD MAN SOARING.

Farallon lands on his ass. Titanium pistol already coming out. Veritek charging. Front kick MOTION BLURRING. STRIKING Farallon's pistol as the muzzle blooms pale yellow. The gun goes flying. So does a bullet. Into a wall SOAKED WITH GASOLINE. Fire spreads in a hissing blue wave.

Caroline rolls away from a burning wall. Stops. Double blinks. The HANDCUFF KEY is on the floor, a foot in front of her nose. Her hands are bound to her back. So she rolls.

VERITEK

ensnares Farallon in a Jujitsu HEADLOCK. Begins SLAMMING HIS KNEE INTO THE CROWN OF FARALLON'S SKULL.

Farallon mashes his face into Veritek's stomach. AND BITES. Blood pools around his mouth. Veritek HOWLS.

Smoke alarms SCREEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!

CAROLINE

Fingers brushing the handcuff key. Fingers PINCHING THE HANDCUFF KEY.

FARALLON

is a PARASITIC SUCKER FISH, MOUTH ATTACHED TO VERITEK'S ABDOMEN.

Veritek grabs Farallon's head with both hands. Punches. Twists. No good.

Veritek HURLS himself and Farallon across the room in a tumbling melee--

--BASHING INTO CAROLINE. She drops the key. Gag screams. Two animals on top of her. Fighting to the death.

Veritek THUMB HOOKS Farallon's EYES. Starts to GOUGE THEM OUT.

The old man comes loose, scraps of shirt and skin hanging from a lunatic maw. Two-inch blade WHISPER SNAPPING out of the tip of his cowboy boot. KICKING. SINKING IT INTO VERITEK'S KNEE. RUPTURING A NERVE CLUSTER. DROPS HIM.

A glint of black metal. GRENADE LAUNCHER coming up. Veritek grabs it.

BWAHHHHAM!

SPREAD SHOT. INTO THE CEILING. RAGGED HOLES. SUNLIGHT THROUGH SMOKE SWIRLS.

Farallon kicks again. Toe blade STABBING INTO Veritek's sternum. THE BOOT STICKS THERE. Farallon's leg along with it.

Veritek CLUTCHES THE BOOT. HAMMER KICKS back. LAUNCHING Farallon, out of his bladed boot, across the room, slamming into a wall of fire.

CAROLINE

pivots, eyes searching for the dropped handcuff key. Finds it. In the middle of a floor AIR CONDITIONING VENT. Teetering on the mesh pattern like a shiny little seesaw.

VERITEK

has a boot stuck in his chest. Just hanging there. He pulls it out. Throws it.

Farallon on his knees. Back on fire.

Veritek charging at him.

Farallon yanks off his flaming coat. Wields it like a FIRE WHIP. Barely keeping Veritek at a distance with it.

CAROLINE

ever so delicately, inches her fingers toward the teetering handcuff key.

FARALLON

backs up, through the swinging door, into the--

KITCHEN

his fire whip LASHING out at Veritek, who follows, eyes roving for an attack opening.

Farallon backs into the GAS CAN, sitting in the middle of the kitchen floor. He nudge-kicks it with his heel. The can slides. Stopping inches from a flaming breakfast nook.

And that's when Veritek moves. Arm swinging up and under Farallon's whip arm. Getting leverage and--

PANCAKE SMASHING THE OLD MAN TO THE FLOOR.

Veritek straddles him. Knees pinning his arms flat down. UNLEASHING AN ARMADA OF PUNCHES. CRUSHING FARALLON'S FACE.

Farallon SCREAMS. PSYCHOTIC. BLOOD GURGLING OUT OF HIS MOUTH IN PARANORMAL GASPS.

Veritek vice-grips his neck. *SQUEEEEEEZES*. The gurgling gasps stop. Farallon's face BULGES. Eyes purple-black.

BOOOOOOM!

The FLASH BLINDS. The house QUAKES.

CAROLINE

reaching for the handcuff key, rocks forward. Key flying up and off the vent, landing on the floor in front of her. She must roll her body again.

IN THE KITCHEN

We realize the GAS CAN Farallon kicked toward the fire just EXPLODED.

SPRAAAAAYING LIQUID FLAMES. Engulfing Veritek's head and shoulders. He thrashes. A dumb behemoth. Bumping into counters. Fire eating him alive.

Farallon bats a few flames off his legs. Catches breath. Rises. Slow. Fire everywhere. Drawing the GERBER MARK II FIGHTING KNIFE from a sheath at the small of his back.

Veritek tears off his flaming shirt. Swats his head with it. Dousing flames. Hair crispy, spewing smoke. He opens his eyes.

The kitchen is a BLAST FURNACE. Air writing. Farallon's dagger *ARCING* through the distortion field. *SLASHING* Veritek's throat.

Veritek crashes to his knees. Hands cupping his neck, trying to hold in all the blood. Farallon behind him now. Blade *SLICING*. TWICE. PARALLEL INCISIONS, FROM HAIRLINE TO JAWLINE, DOWN EITHER SIDE OF THE FACE, INTERSECTING THE HORIZONTAL THROAT SLASH, LIKE A BLOOD-DRAWN CHINSTRAP.

Veritek catches his own reflection in the black glass of an oven door. Just as Farallon reaches into his throat wound, gets a firm grip...and YANKS UPWARD, screaming....

FARALLON

Oh my God! Close your eyes, my darling! Close your *EYEEEEEEES*!

IN THE LIVING ROOM, MOMENTS LATER

Farallon enters, kicking through a swinging door of fire.

VERITEK'S FACE IN HIS HAND.

He stops cold. Caroline is gone. Handcuffs strewn across the floor. Farallon drops the face. It hits the floor with a Jell-O SMACK.

EXT. SAFE HOUSE - DAY

Caroline SPRINTS down the hill. Bare feet pounding brush. Farallon barges out of the burning house. Pistol up. Bullets *CAROOOOM* past Caroline.

She skids. Behind the assassins' red utility van. Still at the hill's base. Engine still running. Key in the ignition.

She ducks in. Puts it in drive. Covertly jumps back out. Uses the idling van as moving cover as she goes a little farther down the hillside.

Farallon loads a FRAG SHELL into his grenade launcher. Unfolds the ladder sight. Targets the van he thinks Caroline is driving and...

BLOOP!

...BLOWS IT APART.

Caroline lies hidden beneath an oleander bush. Smoldering van chunks everywhere. She doesn't move until Farallon's Range Rover rumbles past and roars around the bend.

CUT TO BLACK.

EXT. DESERT TRUCK STOP - DAY

The Aston Martin swerves into a Truck Stop lot. Parks.

INT. ASTON MARTIN (PARKED) - DAY

Charlie kills the engine. And just sits there. Staring off into space. Face a pit of blood and grime, drying tears and inhuman exhaustion.

MEMORY FLASH:

3 years ago, in Charlie's living room. Caroline showing off her disguise for the big safe-grab caper. She pulls the black wig off her head. Puts it on Underhill, backwards. Everyone laughing. There is no sound.

INT. GALVAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Galvan dials his phone. Gets Veritek's voicemail.

GALVAN

Kenny, what the fuck? What's going on? I need to know. Call me back.

He hangs up. He fidgets. He picks up the phone. Dials *67. Hears three BEEPS followed by a solid tone. Dials a number.

INT. RANGE ROVER (MOVING) - DAY

Farallon drives. Sucking a self-rolled cigarette. Smoke seeping from his battle-mangled head. His cell rings. Caller ID: unknown.

INTERCUT - Galvan

phone pressed hard against his face, listening to rings, and then...click...Farallon answers without saying a word.

Galvan's heart floods with cement. In an instant he knows Veritek is dead. All his plans have failed. He slumps, eyes clenched, listening to Farallon's steady breathing until...

FARALLON
Francis.

Galvan's eyes SNAP OPEN WIDE: *He can't know it's me.*

FARALLON
Francis.

He knows.

GALVAN
Oh, hey...Thought I had a wrong number for a second. How's every--

FARALLON
--Francis.
(then)
Pray...for...death.

Click. Farallon's gone. Galvan sits shock still. Then dials his phone once more. One of his underlings must have answered, because Galvan says...

GALVAN
Fuel the jet.

EXT. STRIP MALL - DAY

Caroline wanders into a strip mall on the fringes of some town. Barefoot and soot covered. She looks like refugee from a bombed out city.

A MINUTE LATER

She is dialing a pay phone in front of Von's.

INT. TRUCK STOP - DAY

Charlie takes a large bottle of Arrowhead water from a wall cooler. Chugs half of it. Right there in the aisle.

His cell rings. He pulls it from his pocket. He doesn't recognize the number. He flips it open to answer. And the thing simply BREAKS IN TWO. Stops ringing.

He turns the battered pieces over in his hand. Thoroughly fucked by the day's endless brutalities.

EXT. STRIP MALL - DAY

Caroline, on the pay phone, listens to Charlie's voicemail, after which she cups the mouthpiece and speaks softly, voice quivering...

CAROLINE

...Charlie...where are you....?
Whatever's happening...I got away.
I'm safe. I got away. Whatever
you do, don't go to that graveyard
in the desert. They are going to
kill you. Ohh, where are you...?

INT. TRUCK STOP - DAY

Charlie stands at the truck stop's register counter. There is a WIRY OLD MAN behind it.

CHARLIE

Do you know where El Mirage
Cemetery is?

The old man nods, unfolds a map on the counter.

OLD MAN

Lots of twists and turns.

He thumb-clicks a green pen from his breast pocket. Draws the route. As he does, Charlie's eyes wander, then stop, then narrow, then ZOOM IN ON a box of EMERGENCY ROAD FLARES, behind the counter.

OLD MAN

Here you go. Buck and a quarter
for the water. Map's on me, on
account I scribbled all over it.
Can I get anything else for you?

CHARLIE

Road flares.

INT. VON'S PARKING GARAGE - DAY

Caroline walks through Von's underground parking garage. Spots an old, 1989 Toyota Camry, parked in a distant corner. She swivels her gaze. It stops on a FIRE EXTINGUISHER, attached to a wall and encased in breakaway glass.

INT. TOYOTA CAMRY - DAY

A FIRE EXTINGUISHER *SMASHES THROUGH THE PASSENGER WINDOW*. Caroline reaches in. Unlocks the door. Wiggles herself, head first, beneath the steering wheel. Yanks out wires.

EXT. VON'S PARKING LOT- DAY

A 1989 Camry *VROOOOMS* up and out of the underground garage. Caroline behind the wheel. *SPEEDING AWAY*.

EXT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Perimeter of crime scene tape, strung tree to tree. Two cop cars in the driveway, next to Caroline's Barracuda. Caroline slows, stops the stolen Camry in front of her house.

INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Caroline walks through the front door. Hears sounds. She follows them, into--

THE KITCHEN

where she sees a UNIFORMED COP, back facing her, standing over a little desk area, flipping through her address book.

She breaks down crying. Collapsing on the floor, like a marathon runner falling across the finish line.

The cop kneels beside her. Hand on her shoulder.

CAROLINE

Please...you have to help me...
Charlie...I know he didn't do
anything...but...they are going to
kill him...you have to get help...I
know where he's going but--

--The hand on her shoulder TIGHTENS LIKE A HYDRAULIC CLAW.

Caroline looks up into Ward Oates' homemade silencer. His eyes wild beneath the brim of his new policeman's hat.

Caroline sees a pair of bare, bloody feet, poking out from behind an island counter. There are THREE COPS BODIES stacked behind it. One stripped of its uniform.

Caroline PUNCHES Oates in the face. Knocking his hat off. Oates laughs. Oates SLAMS HIS FIST INTO HER SOLAR PLEXUS. KNOCKING HER WIND OUT. She doubles over, wheezing.

OATES
Let's go help your husband.

CONVERGENCE MONTAGE:

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - DAY

The Aston Martin pounds through desert air. Charlie squinting into an unfurling planetscape of alkali dunes.

EXT. SKY - DAY

A Gulfstream 550 jet streaks through the clouds.

INT. GULFSTREAM JET - THAT MOMENT

Galvan and SIX HENCHMEN fill the cabin. The Henchmen sip drinks and play cards. Galvan sits silently, gnawing the inside of his cheek, staring out a window.

INT. RANGER ROVER (MOVING) - DAY

Farallon steers with his knee, as he finishes rolling a cigarette, pops it in his mouth, lights it with a Zippo.

EXT. 10 FREEWAY - DAY

A 1971 Plymouth Barracuda BARRELS east on the San Bernardino Freeway.

INT. BARRACUDA (MOVING) - THAT MOMENT

Oates drives. One hand on the wheel. The other languidly aiming a pistol at Caroline, who is slumped next to him, hands cuffed behind her back.

THE SCREEN SPLITS, FOUR WAYS:

showing all of the above mentioned vehicles, each in its own screen section, hurtling right at us, faster and faster, until they hit us head on with a NUCLEAR POW.

CUT TO BLACK.

EXT. EL MIRAGE CEMETERY - SUNDOWN

El Mirage Cemetery lies roughly ten feet below the flat dry-lake surrounding it, within a sunken, bowl-shaped acre of Earth, thought to be a prehistoric asteroid crater.

Angel statues and obelisks. Time-savaged. Loom cracked and crumbling in the last ribbons of light.

The Aston Martin turns off a dirt road and rolls down a sloping access path, into the cemetery proper. Charlie exits. Wind warbling between stones. He is all alone.

He opens the Aston Martin's trunk. Luggage inside. Belonging to Tori Miles and her husband Nigel. Charlie lifts out the smallest suitcase. It's carry-on size and hot pink.

Charlie walks to the center of the graveyard. Waits. Turns when he hears the rumbling...

TWO DODGE DURANGOS, moving down the sloped entrance path. Aiming headlights at Charlie. Stopping. Doors opening. Headlights staying on. Francis Galvan exiting. Along with SIX ARMED HENCHMEN. They slowly advance on Charlie.

CHARLIE
Where's my wife?

GALVAN
Close.

CHARLIE
How close?

GALVAN
Where's my skull?

Charlie raises the pink suitcase a little.

GALVAN
Open it. Let's see it.

CHARLIE
Let's see Caroline.

Galvan and his men are about ten feet from Charlie now.

GALVAN
Open it for him.

A Henchman moves on Charlie. Charlie steps back. Lets his jacket fall open, revealing TEN STICKS OF DYNAMITE* TAPED ACROSS HIS CHEST, WIRED THROUGH HIS SLEEVE, TO A DETONATOR** IN HIS HAND.

CHARLIE
Don't take another step, asshole.

The Henchman takes several steps...backwards.

CHARLIE
Any of you wanna orbit Pluto...

GALVAN
Take it easy, Decker.

CHARLIE
Fuck easy. Where's my wife?

GALVAN
Listen, Decker...
(pause)
How'd you like a job?

CHARLIE
...?

GALVAN
Come work for me. Have you seen
the news today? You're gonna need
help laying low. And I need people
like you right now.

CHARLIE
Who the fuck are you?

GALVAN
I'm Francis Galvan.

*Actually road flares.

**Actually a tire pressure gauge.

CHARLIE
No thanks. If I wanted to watch a
monkey shit himself, I would have
been a zookeeper.

GALVAN
The fuck does that mean?

CHARLIE
It means where's my wi--

BLOOP!

The .40mm SMOKE GRENADE hits the ground bouncing. BILLOWING
chemical clouds. Slowly swallowing Charlie, Galvan, and the
henchmen.

GALVAN
Farallon.

The henchmen scramble, using gravestones as cover, aiming
machineguns, guarding Galvan.

Charlie spins, confused. Trying to see where the shot came
from. *BLOOP!* Ducks down. *BLOOP!* Two more grenades. The
world PHASES INTO A DIMENSION OF SOLID WHITE.

EXTREME CLOSE UP: Farallon's eyes.

HEAT VISION GOGGLES SNAP DOWN OVER THEM.

HEAT VISION POV: descending into the graveyard crater. Advancing on the humanoid color blobs. They are frantic. Smoke blinded.

The ice-blue GRENADE LAUNCHER rises into FRAME.

BWAAAAAAAAM!

Spread shot. Like a Sci-fi PARTICLE BEAM CANNON. SHREDS TWO HENCHMEN. INTO SPECKS OF ELECTRIC DUST.

The remaining four henchmen OPEN FIRE. Every direction. Machinegun bullets are laser bolts.

Farallon reloads the GLOWING RED launcher. Aims....

HIGH ABOVE THE CEMETERY, LOOKING DOWN, WE SEE:

Stroboscopic FLASHES through a puffy Nimbus storm cloud.

BWAAAAAAAAM!

BLOOD SHOWERS OUT, SPLATTERS THE DESERT LIKE DRIVING RAIN.

BACK TO HEAT VISION POV:

Farallon reloads.

Last two henchmen. Crouching behind a gravestone. Blind firing photon streams.

BWAAAAAAAAM!

Even the gravestone atomizes.

BACK TO OUR NORMAL, OPTICAL SPECTRUM:

CHARLIE

is flat on the ground. The smoke is thinning. Spiraling like a phantom galaxy. Then, somewhere, nearby...

SCREAMS. RISING. STRETCHING OUT INTO A DELIRIUM BEYOND SOUND. ECHOES OF DOOM. RIPPING INTO SILENCE.

The smoke churns. Charlie sees a man materialize out of it, head broken and twisted, towering over him. This man holds Francis Galvan's dripping face in his hand. This man's eyes are black rifts.

FARALLON
Charlie Decker.

Charlie's brain circuits crossfire. Synaptic meltdown.

Farallon tosses the disembodied face. Kneels. Grabs Tori Miles' pink suitcase. Opens it. Stares into it. Turns it upside-down. Spilling its contents across the ground: approximately THIRTY POUNDS OF DILDOS. Every shape and size.

INT. BARRACUDA (MOVING) - THAT MOMENT

Oates drives up to the sunken graveyard. Sees nothing but the faint glow of headlights through smoke. So he stops the car. Cuffs Caroline's hands to the steering wheel. Exits.

Caroline watches him walk off. And when he is adequately obscured in the smoke, she inverts her body, so that her head is in the driver's footwell. There is a plastic panel below the steering wheel. She bites at it. Catches a front tooth on a release latch. POPS IT OFF. Exposing a nest of wires.

EXT. EL MIRAGE CEMETERY - THAT MOMENT

Farallon tosses the pink suitcase aside.

Charlie has scramble-crawled away from him. Grabbing a machinegun off a henchmen's corpse. Aiming it up at Farallon. Hitting the trigger. *CLICK*. Empty.

Charlie crawls back more. Toward another dropped gun.

Farallon walks toward Charlie, casually opens the breach of his grenade launcher. Plucks out a spent shell.

Charlie aims-- *CLICK*.

FARALLON
Why don't you tell me where the
skull is, right now?
(then)
Road flares will not save you this
time.

Farallon jams a fresh SPREAD SHELL into his launcher. Charlie, crawling back, picking up another machinegun. Farallon, flipping his launcher closed with a hollow *THUNK*. Charlie hits the trigger-- *CLICK*. Farallon aims his launcher down at Charlie.

Charlie grabs A FOURTH DROPPED GUN. AIMS-- *CLICK*. Hits the trigger again-- *CLICK!* And a third time-- CRYING OUT:

CHARLIE
GODDAMN--

--*THWAP!* The grenade launcher goes PINWHEELING out of Farallon's hand.

Farallon reflex grabs for his hip holster, gets a hand on the pistol grip, but can't draw it, because--

Ward Oates, emerging from the smoke, has him bullseye locked.

OATES

What an excellent night for a showdown.

(then)

Decker, get your ass up. You're coming with me.

FARALLON

No he isn't.

OATES

Now, Decker.

FARALLON

He is staying.

OATES

Sorry. But I've had a certain kind of day. And there's no way in fuck I'm leaving without that kid strapped to the hood of my car.

Oates, about to fire into Farallon's forehead, notices--

--Farallon's hand, still on his holstered titanium pistol--subtly rotating it, upward on his belt, so that the barrel, though holstered, is now aiming at Oates' stomach.

OATES

Take your hand off the gun.

FARALLON

You should drop yours.

OATES

Or what? You wound me in the gut? I'll blow your fuckin' head off, old man.

FARALLON

I don't wound things.

Silence, eons worth, compacted into this thin sliver of time.

BANG!

Charlie has finally found a loaded firearm. A hideaway revolver from a henchmen's ankle holster. First shot was a warning. Charlie is kneeling behind a stone Cherub, several feet behind Farallon, at an angle where no one can get a fast shot off on him. He swivels his aim between the two men.

CHARLIE

Both of you, shut the fuck up! Lie down and tell me where my wife is!

FARALLON

I have her. Shoot him and I'll take you to her.

OATES

You fuckin' liar! I have her. Shoot him and I'll--

FARALLON

--I have her.

OATES

This is insane. I have her.

FARALLON

No. I do.

OATES

Okay, you demented shit-cock, then where is she? Astonish me.

FARALLON

She is--

-VRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR OOOOOOOOM!

IN MID-AIR. RIGHT BEHIND OATES.

A STREAKING MASS OF DETROIT STEEL. BELLY FLOPPING OFF THE RIM OF THE CRATER. SQUASHING HIM FLAT INTO THE GROUND. BACK TIRES SPITTING HIM OUT IN WOOD CHIPPER CHUNKS.

THE BARRACUDA ROARS FORWARD. IMPACT-SHATTERING FARALLON'S HIP. VELOCITY STICKING HIM TO THE FRONT BUMPER. A GIANT HOOD ORNAMENT. CRASHING THROUGH ROWS OF HEADSTONES. SMASHING THEM TO DUST. FARALLON WIDE EYED. RAISING HIS GUN. AIMING INTO THE WINDSHIELD. INTO CAROLINE'S FACE.

Caroline STOMPS THE GAS. SLAMS HEADLONG INTO A TOWERING OBELISK. JOLTS TO A STOP. PINNING Farallon between the car and the stone monument.

Blood ERUPTS FROM HIS THROAT IN A SHOUT. His gun flies. Lands by the windshield wipers. He hyper-extends for it.

Caroline throws the car in reverse. Rear tires spinning in divots of sand. Zero traction.

Farallon's fingers brush the gun.

Caroline cuffed to the wheel. Wrist skin bunching purple-white. Trying to wrench free.

Farallon, gun in hand, getting a firing grip as...

Charlie steps beside the car, leveling the grenade launcher. Flush against Farallon's foaming red mouth. Charlie looks down at Caroline, says...

CHARLIE
Close your eyes.

She does. Tight. SHOCKBURST fluttering through the pink of her eyelids. Lee Farallon *EXPLODING FROM EXISTENCE*.

Caroline opens her eyes. Charlie floods through the driver's door. Engulfs her in his arms. Kissing her, all over her face. There is blood trickling from her lip.

CHARLIE
You're bleeding. Are you okay?

CAROLINE
I'm fine. I just had to hot wire
this car with my face.

She touches the flares on his chest.

CHARLIE
It's a fake bomb I made.

They look at each other. Study each other. As though discovering curious new life forms. They hold each other. And kiss each other. The way married couples always do after annihilating two hellbent psychopaths, then realizing they are finally safe and alone and at the bottom of a corpse-filled astroid crater.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. MEXICAN GAS STATION - DAY

A tiny gas station. Its signs hand-painted in Spanish. Endless scrub desert in every direction. Blazing white.

A PLYMOUTH BARRACUDA, caked with a thousand miles of wind-streaked filth, pulls to a stop alongside a pump.

Caroline exits the driver's seat, dressed in jeans and a Baja surfer poncho. Starts filling up the gas tank. Charlie exits the passenger side. Stretches, good and long.

CHARLIE
I've been thinking.

CAROLINE
About what?

CHARLIE
We should stop paying for gas.
We're getting low on cash. And
it's a long way to Peru.

CAROLINE
We're outlaws. Not petty gasoline
thieves.

CHARLIE
But the best thing about being
outlaws is we can just steal
whatever we want.

CAROLINE
No. Not all outlaws steal and
kill. Especially not wrongfully
accused ones like us.

CHARLIE
Uh...in the last couple days,
between the two of us, we've stolen
three cars, kidnapped a prostitute,
and killed two men.

CAROLINE
Okay, starting right now...no more
stealing. Definitely no more
killing.

CHARLIE
Starting right now?

She looks at her watch.

CAROLINE
Starting right... Now.

Charlie nods. Watches an old, desert-beaten pick-up truck
grumble into the gas station lot.

CAROLINE
You know what...there's a gas can
in the trunk. Let's fill it
up...just in case. Seems Mexicans
prefer about a billion miles of
road between each of their gas
stations.

Charlie opens the trunk. His jaw drops through the ground.

FLASH TO:

Ward Oates, standing outside TAT SPECTOR'S MANSION, just after Charlie escaped. EXPLODED CHEVY NOVA burning in the background. The one that took out Underhill and the case.

Fire DRIPS FROM ABOVE. Oates looks up. SOMETHING is caught in a palm tree. Something partially on fire. Oates aims up. Oates shoots at this something. It falls.

A BLACK, HARD-SHELL, PORSCHE SUITCASE LANDS AT OATES' FEET.

BACK TO GAS STATION

Charlie lifts the semi-charred suitcase out of the trunk. Shows it to Caroline, who is sitting half-in and half-out of the driver's door, waiting for the tank to fill.

CHARLIE

Where'd this come from?

Caroline shrugs, bewildered.

CAROLINE

He must have put it in there.

CHARLIE

You didn't notice?

CAROLINE

I was handcuffed and doubled over in pain from being punched in the stomach. Sorry.

(then)

What is it?

CHARLIE

It's the--

--BANG!

Charlie whirls. TWO MEXICAN BANDITS advancing on him. Bandanas masking their faces. Six-shooters up. Barking in Spanish. Their unmanned PICK-UP TRUCK rumbling behind them.

The Bandits motion to the suitcase: *throw it to us.*

CHARLIE

Okay...okay...relax...rela--

--BWAAAAAAAM!

The Bandits DISINTEGRATE INTO A BLIZZARD OF RED CONFETTI.

Charlie turns. Dumbstruck.

Caroline, arm extended over the roof of the Barracuda, is still aiming the SMOKING GRENADE LAUNCHER. She checks her watch.

CAROLINE
Starting right... now.

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END