

s e l f / l e s s

by

Alex Pastor & David Pastor

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davidpastor10@yahoo.com
alexpastor81@yahoo.com

FADE IN:

AN EXTREME CLOSE-UP OF A MAN in his late 60s.

His face enters frame, as the bed he lies onto is pushed into frame. The loud, mechanical noises that surround us suggest that we're inside an MRI MACHINE.

The man's name, we'll soon find out, is DAMIAN HAYES.

MATCH CUT TO:

ANOTHER CLOSE-UP OF DAMIAN. Now we're somewhere else. He seems distracted, until...

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
He's here.

Damian snaps out of it. As we PULL BACK, we realize we're in the UPSCALE RESTAURANT OF A GRAND NEW YORK CITY HOTEL. Damian sits at a table next to MARTIN LEARY (50s). They both wear expensive, perfectly tailored suits, that fit right in with the lunch hour power crowd.

Both rise to welcome the man joining them for lunch. He's crossing the restaurant now. CARL BALDWIN (30s). Young, cocky, a shark's smile as he shakes their hands.

MARTIN
Carl.

CARL
Martin.
(shaking Damian's hand)
Mr. Hayes. "The man who changed the face of New York." What an honor.

MARTIN
Sit, please.
(off-handedly)
And congratulations. On getting the downtown contract.

Carl stops for a split second before sitting, a little thrown off by the remark. But he keeps the smile in place.

CARL
Thank you, I... I didn't know the word was out yet.

MARTIN
Hard to keep the word in on a two hundred million contract. I hear your bid was very solid.
(MORE)

MARTIN (CONT'D)

That you wined and dined Councilman
Clark pretty hard.

CARL

I'm not sure about "pretty hard."
Steak dinner, but not much more.

MARTIN

Clark says you lobbied him pretty
hard.

Carl's starting to feel uneasy, both for the direction the conversation's taking and the fact that Damian Hayes watches him intently but hasn't said a word.

CARL

If he says so.

MARTIN

You told him the Hayes Group
wouldn't be up to the task of
completing the downtown job because
of "doubts about the long-term
stability of its management."

Now Carl's starting to sweat, suspects he's walked into an ambush.

CARL

Not sure that those were my exact
words...

MARTIN

No, your exact words were "The old
man won't be around for long." Now
that could be interpreted as
speculation about Mr. Hayes's
health--

CARL

It's not.

MARTIN

That's what I told Councilman Clark
when he called me this morning.

CARL

He called you.

By now, Carl's smile is gone, as his defeat dawns on him:

CARL (CONT'D)

You're getting the contract, aren't
you?

And then, Damian speaks for the first time. His voice is coarse, his words measured.

DAMIAN

I don't want the contract.

Carl gives him a quizzical look.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)

What I want is your head on a platter.

(beat)

I spoke to Miller and Schwartz.
That's seven seats on your board
they control.

CARL

They support me.

DAMIAN

They did. Until I offered them the downtown contract.

MARTIN

They'll vote you out at the next board meeting.

Carl trembles with rage and impotence.

DAMIAN

You didn't think you were worth two hundred million, did you?

Carl doesn't even look at Martin. His attention is focused on Damian, the man in charge.

CARL

You son of a bitch, you'll be dead in a year and you still hold on to all this... shit.

And this last word is loud enough that other patrons turn and stare. Carl gets up in a rush, knocking over a glass, and storms out of the room before he loses it.

Damian and Martin watch him go.

DAMIAN

He's right, you know.

MARTIN

He's done.

DAMIAN
Still, the best oncologist in New
York agrees with him.

Martin turns to him. He realizes it's serious.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
It's metastasized. Lungs and liver.
This morning the bastard started
talking to me about palliative
therapy.

MARTIN
I'm sorry.

But Damian brushes the pity off.

DAMIAN
Don't. What you and Judy went
through, losing a child... that's a
tragedy. An old man dying, that's
just life.

There's a moment of silence between the two friends.

MARTIN
Have you told Claire?

DAMIAN
Haven't had the chance.

MARTIN
Jesus, Damian, she--

DAMIAN
(cutting him off)
How's Judy? Still upstate?

Martin nods. Gives up.

MARTIN
She likes it there.

A WAITER appears with two plates and places them before them, but Damian takes a look at his salad and stops him.

DAMIAN
I ordered mine without peanuts.

The waiter hurries to take it away.

WAITER
I'm sorry about that.

DAMIAN

(to Martin)

Cancer's eating me up and I worry
about my allergies. Maybe I should
just eat a PB&J sandwich, take the
easy way out.

Martin can't help but laugh.

EXT. GRAND OLD HOTEL - DAY

As Damian and Martin exit the hotel, there's a BLACK SEDAN
waiting at the curb. RAOUL (40s), the driver, holds the back
door open.

Before getting in, Damian turns and takes in the imposing
BEAUX-ARTS FACADE OF THE HOTEL. A smile appears on his face.

DAMIAN

You know thirty years ago I tried
to tear this bastard down to build
condos?

MARTIN

What about now? Would you still do
it?

Damian takes another look at the facade.

DAMIAN

I couldn't. It's a landmark now.

Martin chuckles: way to dodge the question. Damian gets in
the car. Raoul is closing the door behind him when Damian
impulsively hold it open with his hand.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)

Martin.

(Martin stops)

Have you heard about something
called "shedding"?

MARTIN

Shedding? You mean like a snake?

Damian shakes his head, waves the whole thing off.

DAMIAN

No. Forget it. It's nothing.
Just... something I was reading
about.

Damian grabs the handle and closes the door himself.

When the black sedan takes off down the busy avenue, Martin watches it go.

INT. SEDAN - DAY

Damian rides in the back seat of the sedan. He nervously taps what seems to be a BUSINESS CARD on the armrest on the door. He looks out the window: his mind is somewhere else...

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Grafted from prime DNA and
harvested to maturity.

INT. DARK CHAMBER - FLASHBACK

A dark windowless room. We don't know where or "when" we are.

Damian stands in front of an IRON TANK. A porthole reveals what's inside: a MURKY LIQUID conceals a TRANSLUCENT BAG and, inside of the bag, a VAGUELY HUMAN FIGURE.

Suddenly, the shape inside the bag JERKS and startles him.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
A reflex movement.

Someone's behind Damian, talking to him, but he remains out-of-focus. His voice is authoritative, fastidiously polite.

DAMIAN
Is it alive?

MAN'S VOICE
Only in the most basic sense of the world. But you're asking yourself the wrong question.

DAMIAN
What's the right question?

INT. DAMIAN'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

A vast, luxurious penthouse. Classical taste applied to a modern space. Floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking the city: New York is at our feet.

This is the home of a man to be envied, if it wasn't for... well, you know.

Damian's at the liquor cabinet in the ample living room.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Have people started telling you
about your buildings? How they're
your legacy. How you'll leave them
behind and they'll make you
immortal?

While he pours himself a scotch, Damian's gaze wanders across the FRAMED PHOTOGRAPHS on the cabinet: A GROUP PHOTO OF YOUNG MEN HOLDING THE SIGN "HARVARD BOXING TEAM 1964", A PICTURE OF A YOUNGER DAMIAN WITH A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN IN MOSCOW'S SAINT PETER SQUARE, BLISSFULLY IN LOVE... The story of a life...

DAMIAN (O.S.)

Yes.

Then his eyes rest on a picture of Damian in his 30s, playing with a LITTLE GIRL. Is this Claire?

INT. DAMIAN'S PENTHOUSE - LATER (FLASHBACK)

Damian sips his scotch, standing in front of one of the large windows. Watching the magnificent skyline of New York City.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Ask yourself: do you feel immortal?

INT. SEDAN - DAY (BACK TO THE PRESENT)

The car door suddenly opens, making Damian snap out of his reverie. They've arrived.

INT. THE HAYES GROUP - DAY

Damian exits an elevator that leads to the ample, bright lobby of his company, THE HAYES GROUP. Here we find again floor-to-ceiling windows offering a magnificent vista of Midtown: capitalism at its most vertical.

Damian heads towards the--

RECEPTION--

--with an unsteady walk. A young RECEPTIONIST immediately stands up and comes around her desk, ready to help him.

RECEPTIONIST

Mr. Hayes.

But Damian hands her his COAT instead, as a way to fend her off.

DAMIAN
Thanks.

INT. DAMIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

A GROUP OF UNDERLINGS are arguing heatedly.

UNDERLING 1
Look, I'm no fan of that community board, either, but if we want a chance at rezoning, we need them on our side.

UNDERLING 2
As long as it's just a photo-op, as long as we aren't actually committing to anything...

But Damian isn't listening. He's completely engrossed in his computer screen.

We see that he's sifting through NEWS ARTICLES. They're all about one subject: a DR. FRANCIS JENSEN.

"NEUROLOGIST AWARDED NIH GRANT", "A NEW FRONTIER IN MEMORY STORAGE", "UNTANGLING THE NEURAL NETWORK"...

The pictures show a bookish man in his 50s. And then, an OBIT:

"PROMINENT NEUROLOGIST DIES IN CAR CRASH"

A snippet of text reveals: "Dr. Francis Jensen had been diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis in 1995, but had kept working until the week before his death."

In that same article, Damian finds an embedded VIDEO CLIP. He plays it: it's video footage of DR. JENSEN giving a lecture. Talking to his students. Drawing a rudimentary nerve cell on a blackboard. Rubbing his earlobe...

Damian hits PAUSE, freezing Jensen in that GESTURE, when...

Suddenly, BLOOD SPRAYS the KEYBOARD.

It's Damian's. He's COUGHING. A FIT. It's bad, and getting WORSE.

The Underlings stop arguing and turn to Damian. They rush to help him, but before they can, DAMIAN COLLAPSES on the floor.

CUT TO:

EXT. AMBULANCE - DAY

LIGHTS FLASHING and SIREN BLARING as the ambulance races across town.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DUSK

Damian lies in bed, unconscious, accompanied by the rhythmic sounds of the HEART MONITOR and the RESPIRATOR that he's hooked to.

For the first time he looks truly sick.

When Damian opens his eyes and the room comes into focus, he spots MARTIN, sitting on a bedside chair.

MARTIN

He's awake.

Who is he talking to? And then he sees her: a YOUNG WOMAN IN HER LATE 20s, standing in a corner, watching him anxiously.

DAMIAN

(weakly, through the
inhalator)

Claire...

Claire walks up to the bed. Her voice wavers, almost cracks:

CLAIRE

Jesus, dad, why didn't you tell me?

Damian takes off the inhalator. Martin tries to stop him, but Damian is forcefully adamant.

DAMIAN

I was... I was afraid you wouldn't
care.

Claire shakes her head, fighting back the tears.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)

How's work?

CLAIRE

It's fine, I... I teach on the
Upper West now.

DAMIAN

I know.

CLAIRE

Keeping tabs on me, dad?

Damian attempts a smile.

CLAIRe (CONT'D)
There's one thing you may not know.

Her hand instinctively reaches for her abdomen. Damian's gaze follows and he notices her belly's slightly swollen.

CLAIRe (CONT'D)
I'm due in May.

Damian, speechless, manages to raise his hand and touch her belly. It's clear he didn't know.

CLAIRe (CONT'D)
I guess we're both good at keeping secrets.

Damian takes Claire's HAND.

DAMIAN
My Lapushka... That's what your mother used to call you, you know, when you were little.

Claire's eyes well up. Martin approaches her from behind.

MARTIN
We should let your father get some rest.

Claire nods, kisses Damian on the cheek and lets Martin lead her out of the room.

Alone, Damian notices through the window the setting sun dipping behind the buildings. As the light of day dies, darkness creeps across the room.

CLOSE ON DAMIAN, a decision to be made... And then--

He searches for his wallet on the bedside table. Inside, he finds the BUSINESS CARD we saw before. Now, we can read it. On one side, someone's scribbled "THEY CAN HELP YOU".

On the other, there's a PHONE NUMBER.

Damian reaches for the bedside phone and DIALS THE NUMBER. After a couple of rings...

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Albright.

DAMIAN
I don't. Feel immortal.

ALBRIGHT
Mr. Hayes...

Damian tries to sound as authoritative as possible:

DAMIAN
I have one condition. I will
liquidate all my assets and place
them into a dummy account. You will
get the access code to that account
after the procedure. Only then.
This condition is non-negotiable.
Call it my insurance policy.
(beat)
Do we have a deal?

Silence on the other end of the line. Seemingly forever.
Finally:

ALBRIGHT (O.S.)
You're aware that, the moment I say
yes, there'll be no turning back?

DAMIAN
(wavering)
I am.

Beat.

ALBRIGHT (O.S.)
Be ready in five days.

And he hangs up. For a moment, he stares at the phone in
disbelief: he's done it. What, we don't know yet.

But he immediately gets moving and DIALS another number.

DAMIAN
Geoff? It's Damian. Are you still
interested in taking the Hayes
Group off my hands?
(beat)
No, an all-cash deal, but it's a
bargain.

CUT TO:

INT. DAMIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Damian, still weak and breathing from an oxygen tank, sits at
his desk surrounded by LAWYERS as he puts his SIGNATURE on a
piece of paper.

Making an effort, Damian stands up and shakes hands with a BUSINESSMAN across the desk.

INT. DAMIAN'S PENTHOUSE - STUDY - DAY

Damian, feeling stronger, no oxygen tank, stands behind his desk. He's opening a wall-mounted SAFE.

After punching in the combination, he opens the safe and reaches inside...

EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - AFTERNOON

CLAIRE, watching over her SIX YEAR-OLD STUDENTS as they play. We see her through the CHAIN-LINK FENCE that surrounds the playground, because...

Damian, sitting in the back of his car, WATCHES HER from across the street. Love, regret... His expression is hard to read.

Damian turns to the driver.

DAMIAN

Let's go.

We see that he's holding something on his lap: AN OLD TIN BOX.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK WEST - DUSK

The sedan stops by an ENTRANCE TO THE PARK. The driver steps out to open Damian's door and help him out of the car.

Damian takes frail steps towards the PARK, carrying the tin box. The driver remains by the car and watches Damian disappear into Central Park.

LATER--

It's already DARK. The Driver's inside the car, listening to SPORTS TALK RADIO, when a HAND KNOCKS ON THE WINDOW.

It's Damian. As he gets into the car, we may notice that he's not carrying the tin box anymore.

INT. UPSCALE RESTAURANT - DAY

Damian and Martin sit across a table, having lunch. Two Arnold Palmers constantly refilled. An empty plate in front of Martin. Damian has barely touched his.

MARTIN

I have to say, I was surprised I had to hear it from legal.

DAMIAN

I knew you'd try to talk me out of it.

Damian glances at his CELLPHONE, which is sitting on the table.

MARTIN

You're damn right I would've.

DAMIAN

Are you going to stay? Geoff wants you to.

MARTIN

What, at Hayes without Hayes? No, time to cash out, spend more time upstate. Judy's going to love you for this, you know.

But Damian seems more interested in his phone, which he keeps glancing at, than in the conversation.

A WAITER shows up and clears their plates. Martin gets up.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Excuse me...

(to the waiter)

The restroom?

The Waiter points at the far end of the restaurant and Martin walks away.

Left alone, Damian checks his cellphone again. He tinkers with it, rising the volume of the ringer, when...

The Waiter places A CUP OF ESPRESSO on the table, right next to the phone.

Damian grabs the Waiter's sleeve before he leaves.

DAMIAN

I didn't order this.

WAITER
Compliments of Mr. Albright.

DAMIAN
Excuse me?

WAITER
You should drink it. Before your friend comes back.

Damian studies the Waiter, for the first time really looking at him. Who is this guy?

The Waiter frees himself from Damian's grip and heads towards the kitchen. Damian watches him disappear through the KITCHEN DOORS and then spots--

MARTIN... coming back to the table.

Damian inspects the coffee: it looks just like regular espresso, thick and creamy. He smells it. Nothing...

Martin's crossing the room. He's almost there.

Damian looks at the espresso again, a decision waiting to be made...

And he DOWNS IT, right as Martin arrives at the table.

Damian waits for a beat. What now?

MARTIN
(sitting down)
Sorry about that. I'm not getting any younger.

Suddenly, Damian feels it: his heart starts to race. He's sweating, he has difficulty breathing... He loosens his collar, but it's not enough: he can barely breath.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
Damian? You OK?

He's not. He gasps for air. He feels like he's having a HEART ATTACK.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
Your epipen. Do you have it with you?

Damian tries to stand up, but as he leans on the table, he slips and COLLAPSES on the floor, silverware and glasses crashing all around him.

Everyone at the restaurant turns. Someone SCREAMS. Martin rushes to his side and unbuttons his shirt...

MARTIN (CONT'D)
Someone call 911!

...while ANOTHER GUEST pulls out his phone.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
Damian...

Then, A SIREN BLARES. Martin looks up:

It's an AMBULANCE, screeching to a halt in front of the restaurant. That was surprisingly quick.

Two EMTs rush into the restaurant, carrying a GURNEY and pushing people aside.

EMT
Make a hole, make a hole!

CUT TO:

EXT. RESTAURANT - MOMENTS LATER

Damian is now strapped to the gurney. One of the EMTs wheels him towards the ambulance, while the other pumps a manual VENTILATOR. They are quick, efficient, know what they're doing...

We stay on MARTIN, who comes out of the restaurant just in time to see Damian disappear into the ambulance.

The EMT closes the doors and soon the ambulance takes off, lights flashing...

INT. AMBULANCE - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON DAMIAN, scared, immobilized on the gurney as the ambulance races across the city. He tries to look around him from his limited vantage point:

He catches a glimpse of a man sitting in the passenger seat. Wait, is that the Waiter? Yes, he is. And he's talking on a WALKIE TALKIE:

WAITER
We're on our way. ETA is five minutes.

The EMT riding with him in the back grabs his wrist and feels his pulse.

EMT
Mr. Hayes?

Damian turns to him. The EMT points a small FLASHLIGHT into his eyes as he speaks:

EMT (CONT'D)
Mr. Hayes, I have good news and bad news for you. Good news is you're not going into anaphylactic shock. You just felt like you were. A high dose of laderol will do that to you. Bad news is your body has to arrive D.O.A. at New York Presbyterian in about fifteen minutes, so we need to hurry.

Where are they going? He catches a piece of the sky on the small windows on the sides of the vehicle, but not much more.

Under the siren, he manages to hear:

The WHEEL hitting a POTHOLE...

...the AMBULANCE driving over a series of METAL GRATES... A BRIDGE, perhaps?

And then, the piece of sky out the window disappears, replaced by concrete and artificial lights: THE AMBULANCE HAS GONE UNDERGROUND.

The vehicle comes to a sudden stop and the BACK DOORS are pulled open.

Damian's wheeled outside, onto:

A LOADING DOCK. The METAL GATE has been shut behind the ambulance, so there's no way of knowing where we are.

There's MEDICAL PERSONNEL waiting. They hurry to PUSH THE GURNEY through a SWINGING DOOR and into...

A LONG HALLWAY--

White walls. Fluorescent lights. No windows. A MEDICAL COMPLEX somewhere. But where?

Strapped to the gurney, Damian tries to see what's going on as they RUSH HIM down the hallway. He catches glimpses of the medical personnel...

UNDRESSING HIM.

TAKING OFF HIS WATCH AND A RING.

Suddenly, a DOCTOR, 40s, appears by the gurney and walks next to it.

DOCTOR
Open your mouth, please.

Damian obeys. The Doctor examines the inside of his mouth with another small flashlight.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Any fillings?

Damian shakes his head no.

As he walks, the Doctor examines a FOLDER.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
According to your medical history,
you've had no implants. Is that
correct?

Damian nods.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Metal plates, orthopedic screws,
anything made out of metal...

Damian shakes his head.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Now this is very important. There
can be no metal in the machine. Any
piece of metal in your body could
disrupt the procedure. Your
consciousness could vanish. Are you
sure we're not missing anything?

Damian nods.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
OK.
(looks up at someone
Damian can't see)
We're good.

The gurney blasts through another SWINGING DOOR and Damian finds himself in a--

CIRCULAR CHAMBER--

At its center, there's a LARGE MACHINE that looks like a DUAL MRI MACHINE: that is, two MRI beds, one grey and one white, connected to a central hub.

Damian spots A YOUNG MAN (late 20s) watching over the whole operation from behind the window of some sort of CONTROL ROOM. In spite of his youth, he wears a conservative, perfectly tailored suit (tie pin and all) and seems to be in charge. Albright, perhaps?

Only a small nervous tic betrays some concern: the man RUBS HIS EARLOBE.

A Male and a Female TECHNICIANS lift Damian from the gurney and place him carefully on one of the "MRI" beds, securing him with STRAPS made of rubber. Looking to his right, Damian catches a glimpse of something else:

ANOTHER BODY, lying on the second bed. Only its lower half is visible, because the upper half is already inside the other "MRI".

Suddenly, THE MACHINE COMES TO LIFE: its movable parts start spinning, first slowly, then faster, and VERY LOUDLY.

The Technician pulls out a JET INJECTOR, presses it against Damian's arm and shoots him up.

DAMIAN
What's that?

The bed starts to SLIDE INTO THE MRI. The Technician answers something, but it's too loud inside to hear him.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
What?!

TECHNICIAN
I said it's something to stop your heart!

WTF?! Before Damian can reply, he STARTS TO CONVULSE. Now he is going into cardiac arrest. He tries to scream, but it's hard to know if he's screaming or not, the machine is so loud...

We are now in DAMIAN'S POV, seeing everything spin around us...

Until there's a weird, little VISUAL GLITCH, after which everything remains the same, but slightly different:

He's still inside the "MRI" and the machine begins to slow down.

The bed slides out of the machine. Still from DAMIAN'S POV, we see the Technicians looming over him, over US, as we emerge from the machine.

TECHNICIAN (CONT'D)

How are you feeling?

DAMIAN (O.S.)

Didn't work...

His VOICE sounds strange, muddled. Is he mumbling?

TECHNICIAN

Can you repeat that for me?

DAMIAN (O.S.)

I said I didn't work.

But then, he sees something: the other MRI-like machine, which should be to his right, but is now to his left.

There's a body on it. Two Technicians are lifting it back to the gurney. But that body is different now: frail, wrinkled. A SICK OLD MAN.

And when we catch a glimpse of the face, we see that the body is actually DAMIAN.

And then the camera PULLS OUT, the POV turning into a REFLECTION on someone's EYE. And the camera keeps pulling back, to reveal the face of the body Damian now inhabits:

A MAN in his early 30s, handsome, hair cropped very short.

It did work. Damian's consciousness has been transferred into this younger body.

Damian's first reaction: vertigo, nausea. He leans over the edge of the bed and throws up...

UP IN THE CONTROL ROOM, Albright watches as the Technician wraps Damian in a robe. Albright doesn't bat an eyelid: it's all going as it should.

INT. RECOVERY ROOM - LATER

DAMIAN lies in bed at the center of what looks like a sparse, high-end hospital room, except there are no windows. A series of PANELS on the wall try to create the illusion of daylight.

Damian sips liquid food from a BOTTLE with the help of a NURSE. Damian has difficulty moving and speaking, not unlike a stroke survivor.

Albright stands in the corner, holding a briefcase and watching him.

ALBRIGHT

It gets easier. It'll take a few days, but you'll break it in.

DAMIAN

Has. That. New. Body. Smell.

Albright smiles. Damian watches him, when something strange happens. Some sort of GLITCH: for a split second, the background behind Albright changes. It changes to a RUSTIC LIVING ROOM, but it only lasts a moment and then it's gone.

Damian flinches.

ALBRIGHT

Are you OK?

DAMIAN

Migraine.

ALBRIGHT

A by-product of being dead.

As he says this, Albright places a manila FOLDER on the overbed table and opens it.

ALBRIGHT (CONT'D)

The paper of record.

Inside, a New York Times OBIT reads: "DAMIAN HAYES, MASTER BUILDER, DIES AT 68." It's accompanied by a picture of Damian in his 50s. Of course now he looks nothing like him.

But there's something UNDERNEATH. With some effort, Damian manages to push the obit aside, revealing SNAPSHOTS taken at a BURIAL. HIS. We spot Claire, clad in black and wearing sunglasses to conceal she's been crying. There's also Martin and other business associates.

ALBRIGHT (CONT'D)

Your daughter gave a beautiful eulogy. We can arrange a visit to the plot, in a few months, if it holds any significance for you.

(beat)

And now... There's one thing we should get over with.

Albright opens the briefcase on the overbed table: a LAPTOP COMPUTER. The webpage of a BANK appears onscreen...

Waiting for a PASSWORD.

This is the cue for the Nurse to leave the room. Damian reaches for the keyboard, but then stops. He hesitates, his curled fingers hovering over the keys.

DAMIAN

I...

Damian closes his eyes. Albright tightens, getting nervous. Has he forgotten?

A long beat...

Until Damian's hand slowly types the password. He looks at Albright, a semblance of a smile appearing on his lips.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
(with difficulty)
Wanted. To. See. You. Sweat. For a
change.

On screen, a message appears: ACCESS GRANTED.

ALBRIGHT
Funny.

Albright closes the computer and takes it with him.

ALBRIGHT (CONT'D)
Get some rest now. Tomorrow's when
the real work begins.

Albright exits and Damian is left alone. He watches this strange new environment, when something catches his eye: HIS REFLECTION, distorted on the surface of a stainless steel tray.

With difficulty, Damian raises his hand and pushes the tray aside... until it CRASHES ON THE FLOOR with a LOUD BANG.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE: THE PROCESS OF ADJUSTING TO THE NEW BODY.

A series of scenes similar to the rehab process after a stroke or a severe accident. Supervised by PHYSICAL THERAPISTS, they all take place in a series of WINDOW-LESS ROOMS, their look somewhere between a hospital and a high-end spa:

-Sitting in a wheelchair, Damian struggles to make a fist.

-Two therapists help Damian up from his wheelchair. He grabs a set of PARALLEL BARS and manages to take a few steps...

-Damian sits in front of an upright PING-PONG TABLE, playing against himself. Or trying, anyway. His hand-brain coordination is still not good enough to return his own volleys.

-Damian swims against the current in a "swimmer's treadmill."

-While Damian showers in a handicapped-ready shower, we see that he's placed a TOWEL OVER THE BATHROOM MIRROR, blocking it.

-ANOTHER WINDOW-LESS OFFICE--

Damian sits on a couch, opposite DOCTOR ANN MILLER, 40s, kind and reassuring.

DOCTOR MILLER
So how are you feeling?

DAMIAN
(with a slight slur)
Not bad. I can almost eat without
spilling food all over myself.

Doctor Miller chuckles.

DOCTOR MILLER
A sense of humor's good. It's
important to fend off despair any
way you can.

DAMIAN
Is that why I only get plastic
knives?

DOCTOR MILLER
Suicidal thoughts are not that
rare. The idea of inhabiting a body
the mind considers alien, a body
grown in a lab, can sometimes
become intolerable.

As she says this, Doctor Miller pulls out a BOTTLE OF PILLS
and places it on the COFFEE TABLE between them.

DAMIAN
Prozac?

DOCTOR MILLER
Among other things.

DAMIAN
What else?

DOCTOR MILLER
A mild antipsychotic.

DAMIAN
Jesus...

DOCTOR MILLER
Those "glitches" you've described to me, that's your mind adjusting to the new neural structure. The two need to click, and this will help. Just think of it as the anti-rejection drug you'd take after any transplant.

Damian, still distrustful, looks at the bottle.

DAMIAN
What if I don't take them? What does "rejection" look like?

DOCTOR MILLER
Migraine, nausea, disorientation...
Finally, your consciousness...
disintegrates. Disappears.

DAMIAN
Why don't I ever read the fine print?

DOCTOR MILLER
It will never get to that. You take them and keep them with you at all time.

A beat. Then, when Damian reaches for the bottle, he catches a GLIMPSE of something on the table. Movement: his reflection on a HAND-MIRROR.

Having caught a glimpse of HIMSELF, he instinctively backs away. Doctor Miller watches him intently.

DOCTOR MILLER (CONT'D)
Do you want to take a look?

Damian, disturbed, shakes his head "no".

DAMIAN (O.S.)
I was born on September 20th, 1980
in Phoenix, Arizona.

THE MONTAGE CONTINUES:

-Damian swims, this time faster.

DAMIAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
My parents and my older sister were
killed in a car crash when I was
ten years old.

-Damian, struggling on the parallel bars, almost falls. The Physical Therapist tries to help him up, but Damian rejects him and pulls himself up.

DAMIAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I had stayed home because of a
bellyache after I sneaked in the
kitchen and ate a whole tub of
chocolate ice cream.

-Damian plays ping-pong. Faster and faster.

DAMIAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I haven't eaten chocolate since.

-Damian READS from a document into a MICROPHONE. We realize that this is the V.O. we've been hearing. The slur is gone.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
My uncle Frank raised me in
Chicago.

-Damian on a TREADMILL, now running. He wears HEADPHONES and listens to himself read his NEW BIOGRAPHY.

DAMIAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I went to Northwestern, where I
majored in Computer Science.

-Damian in the shower, now standing. As he showers, he studies this new body: a hand that is and isn't his.

DAMIAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I have never married. I have no
children.

-Damian finally PULLS THE TOWEL that covers the mirror. For the first time, he takes a good look at his new face.

DAMIAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
My name is Edward Grey.

He's ready.

END OF MONTAGE.

INT. HALLWAY

Damian, wearing a smart suit, no tie, follows Doctor Miller down the window-less hallway of The Complex.

They're headed towards a door. When she opens it, it reveals...

THE LOADING DOCK--

Damian stops. The gate is closed. No way of knowing where they are.

In the middle of the room, A LIMO awaits for him, door open. Albright stands by.

ALBRIGHT

Ready?

INT. LIMO - MOMENTS LATER

Damian sits inside the limo, opposite Albright. When he closes the door, Damian notices that the windows are not just tinted: they're COMPLETELY OPAQUE.

The car starts: Damian can feel the pull, he can hear the gate opening, but he can't see anything.

Albright catches Damian's look of frustration.

ALBRIGHT

You could say we're nothing if not consistent.

Albright pulls out a case and places it on the table between them.

ALBRIGHT (CONT'D)

This is your graduation present.

Albright opens the case. Inside there are a series of ITEMS: cellphone, driver's license, Social Security Card, credit card, keys...

Damian starts examining the items.

ALBRIGHT (CONT'D)
One last time: You run into someone
you know...

DAMIAN
I keep walking. I don't say
anything, I don't look back.

Damian pockets the cellphone, the keys, the credit cards...

ALBRIGHT
Good. Damian Hayes is dead. That's
something that can't be undone.

Hearing this, Damian remembers something...

DAMIAN
I did some research. Before. I came
across a Doctor Francis Jensen.
Neurologist. Died in a car crash
ten years after he was diagnosed
with multiple sclerosis.

Albright tightens ever so slightly, but he doesn't say
anything. Just holds Damian's gaze.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
If he did die. Brilliant mind
trapped in a failing body... Seems
like the kind of person who could
come up with something like
shedding.

Albright rubs his earlobe. That nervous tic again.

ALBRIGHT
Why are you telling me this?

DAMIAN
(pointing at the tic)
You two would've been terrible
poker players.

Albright stops rubbing his ear, embarrassed. He reaches into
his jacket and hands Damian another BOTTLE OF PILLS.

But when Damian opens it, he sees inside there are only...

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
Seven.

ALBRIGHT
You'll get your refills when you
see Doctor Miller on Tuesdays.

DAMIAN

What happens if I run out?

ALBRIGHT

You won't. Not if you see Doctor
Miller every week.

Damian doesn't like the sound of this, but before he can reply, the car comes to a stop.

ALBRIGHT (CONT'D)

We're here.

When Albright opens the door, it reveals a LEAFY, UPSCALE STREET IN GREENWICH VILLAGE. It must be early morning, because the street is deserted.

Damian steps out of the car, finding himself in front of a stately, beautifully preserved TOWN HOUSE.

ALBRIGHT (CONT'D)

(from inside the car)

In a few months we can talk about a job, if there's anything you want to do. For now, relax, have fun. You're a seventy year-old man. I'd say you've earned it.

Albright closes the door and the limo drives off.

After a beat, Damian turns his attention back to the house.

The house key he got from Albright slides smoothly into the lock. He turns it.

INT. TOWNHOUSE - FOYER - CONTINUOUS

The interior is grand, but completely different from the façade's classicism. It's been renovated and turned into a sleek, modern bachelor pad. The decor is tasteful, yet a bit bland.

Damian examines some FRAMED PHOTOS on the wall: a series of pictures that have been photoshopped to add his new self. Vacations, graduations... an unreal life.

INT. TOWNHOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

A modern, spotless kitchen. Damian opens the WINDOW that leads to the back yard, when...

Suddenly, ANOTHER GLITCH: Out the window, he suddenly sees an EXPANSIVE VIEW OF THE OCEAN, a PIER jutting into it.

After a second, the glitch is gone and Damian is left facing again a manicured, but unremarkable back yard.

Dizzy, he holds on the kitchen counter for support, while his other hand reaches into his pocket and finds his PILLS.

INT. TOWNHOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Damian opens the door to the bedroom. The king-sized bed's been made. Everything's impeccable. As if the world's neatest person lived in this place.

Damian walks to the huge walk-in closet. Inside, he finds row after row of expensive suits, shirts and pants in assorted styles and colors.

And hanging from a hook, a pair of BOXING GLOVES. Someone found out about his old sport of choice.

Damian walks back and sits on the bed. He looks around him.

Now what...?

SMASH CUT TO:

A PAIR OF GLOVED FISTS, DELIVERING A SERIES OF BLOWS.

CUT WIDER TO:

INT. GYM - DAY

The RING at the center of the gym. Two fighters wearing protective gear SPAR on the ring, dancing around one another...

As we get closer, we see that one of the fighters is Damian, sparing with a TOUGH GUY in his late 30s.

The punches are timid at first, until the tough guy throws a right hook that gets Damian by surprise. Damian stumbles, takes a couple of steps back. He's a bit dazed, but not upset. Instead...

He GRINS, revealing his mouth-guard. He relishes the challenge. A real fight. Bring it on.

Damian counterattacks. Bang, bang. Left, right, left, right. His new body is strong and fast. Faster than his opponent, who can barely keep up.

The tough guy has given up trying to get to Damian. Now he's just trying to protect his own ass.

Damian delivers a series of punishing BODY BLOWS. The tough guy lowers his guard to protect his abdomen, a moment that Damian uses to hit him in the face and...

THE TOUGH GUY FALLS ON THE MAT.

Damian stops. Panting heavily. Towering over his opponent, who raises his hand, meaning "I'm done."

INT. GYM - SHOWERS - DAY

Damian closes his eyes under an invigorating shower. His body is sore, but it also feels good.

INT. GYM - LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Damian opens his locker: the MEDICINE BOTTLE awaits inside. He grabs it and pops a PILL.

LATER--

Damian carries his bag and heads for the exit, when he notices...

THE TOUGH GUY, sitting by a locker, getting dressed.

Damian stops. After a moment's hesitation, he walks up to him.

DAMIAN

Sorry about that. I think I got a little carried away.

TOUGH GUY

That's OK. I get worse bruises from my girls.

He speaks with a quite strong RUSSIAN ACCENT. The Tough Guy pulls out his wallet and shows Damian a PHOTO of two cute 7 year-old girls eating birthday cake.

TOUGH GUY (CONT'D)

Sacha and Lara

DAMIAN
(IN RUSSIAN)
They're beautiful.

After a beat, surprised that Damian speaks the language...

TOUGH GUY
(in Russian)
Thank you. They live with their
mother.

The Tough Guy offers his hand...

TOUGH GUY (CONT'D)
Anton.

Damian shakes his hand.

DAMIAN
Edward. Ed.

ANTON
(in Russian)
Hard to find people who speak
Russian these days.

DAMIAN
(in Russian)
My wi--
(catches himself)
I had a Russian girlfriend.

ANTON
(in Russian)
My condolences.

Damian smiles. He's about to walk away, when...

ANTON (CONT'D)
Listen.

Damian stops and turns.

ANTON (CONT'D)
I'm meeting these girls tonight.
Fun girls. For drinks. Maybe you
want to join us?

DAMIAN
I don't know, I...

ANTON
Come on, I'm not that young. I
don't think I can handle both.

Damian considers this...

CUT TO:

INT. DOWNTOWN CLUB - NIGHT

We follow Damian, sharply dressed, as he walks into a TRENDY DOWNTOWN SPOT. The lights strobe and the music pulses as he makes his way through the young, stylish crowd, a crowd he belongs to only outwardly.

ANTON (O.S.)
Ed! Over here!

Damian sees Anton's at the bar, waving at him. As he makes his way to the bar, he finds him in the company of two SPECTACULAR GIRLS. They're in their twenties and dressed to kill. Anton makes the introductions.

ANTON (CONT'D)
Ed, these are Leah and Andrea. This is Ed...

DAMIAN
Grey.

LEAH
Pleasure to meet you, Ed.

ANTON
The girls were asking me what you do. I told them I had no idea.

DAMIAN
Me? I do nothing.

ANDREA
What do you mean nothing?

Damian enjoys the confusion he creates.

DAMIAN
I'm retired.

LEAH
Wait, how old are you?

Beat, as Damian considers how to answer such question...

DAMIAN
I was born on September 20th, 1980.

LEAH

Wow, that's... weirdly specific.

DAMIAN

I had a company, but I sold it.

ANTON

What? To Google?

DAMIAN

Something like that.

(to Leah)

Can I get you something to drink?

Leah nods, with hungry eyes and a flirty smile.

CUT TO:

INT. CAB - NIGHT

Damian and Leah make out in the back of the cab. Damian's caressing Leah's perfect thigh, when the song "DAYDREAMING" comes on the radio and she leans toward to the cab driver.

LEAH

Hey, turn that up!
(turns to Damian)
I love Lupe Fiasco.

DAMIAN

Yeah, she's great.

Leah gives him a confused look, and when the song kicks in, it becomes clear to Damian that...

DAMIAN (CONT'D)

(cringing)

He's a guy, isn't he?

Leah laughs: she finds him adorable.

EXT. TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

The cab stops in front of Damian's house and out of the vehicle stumble Damian and Leah.

INT. TOWNHOUSE - FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Leah follows Damian inside his place. She stops for a moment, to take in the magnificent interior of Damian's place.

LEAH

Oh, wow...

INT. TOWNHOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Damian walks into the kitchen and opens the stainless-steel fridge. He grabs a couple of beers and closes the door...

DAMIAN

Another one?

...revealing Leah, standing in the doorway... just as she DROPS HER DRESS to the floor.

If you thought she looked hot with that dress on, you should see her without it.

Damian just stands there, beers in hand, speechless.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)

Can I quote you and say... Wow...

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. TOWNHOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Damian and Leah blast into the bedroom, making out ferociously. She unbuttons his shirt and pushes him on the bed. Leah straddles Damian and proceeds to kiss his chest, when he stops her:

DAMIAN

Wait, I... Look, I haven't done this in a long time.

LEAH

(smiles)

You're kidding me.

Damian shakes his head no.

LEAH (CONT'D)

Well, it's like riding a bike. And in this case, I'll do the riding.

Leah dives in. She's good. She's amazing, actually, and Damian loses himself in a torrent of unadulterated pleasure, until we...

FLASH TO:

Suddenly, we find ourselves somewhere else. Inside a RUSTIC HOUSE. DAYLIGHT streams through the windows and floods the place.

We are in SOMEONE'S POV, as we walk towards an open doors that leads...

OUTSIDE--

The OCEAN appears at our feet, wide and majestic. It's a clear, beautiful day. And down by the shore, there's a LONG PIER that goes into the water. It's the same image from his glitch...

As WE APPROACH, a figure appears at the end of the pier, amidst the glares on the water surface...

IT'S A WOMAN.

We walk towards her. She wears a summer dress and looks at the ocean, her back against us.

We're almost there and she's about to turn, when we...

CUT TO:

INT. TOWNHOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Damian's eyes POP OPEN, waking up from a dream. He breathes heavily.

When he turns, he finds the other half of the bed empty. Leah's gone. But among the crumpled sheets, he finds her lacy thong.

And then he can't help it: the memory of the night before comes back and he chuckles. Sun streams through the window. It's a beautiful day. And he's alive...

CUT TO:

DAMIAN'S SNEAKERS, HITTING THE ASPHALT

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY (MONTAGE)

It's a crisp spring day in the park. And Damian jogs. Fast. Young and healthy, he barely breaks a sweat.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY (MONTAGE)

The vastness of the sea, interrupted only by a SAILBOAT cutting across its shimmering surface. A TANNED MAN pilots the yacht, a gorgeous girl at his side, while Damian and Anton chat with two other beauties.

EXT. SAILBOAT - DAY (MONTAGE)

The boat is now anchored.

Anton watches, amused, as a GORGEOUS GIRL jokingly pulls Damian towards the edge of the boat. Damian resists, he doesn't want to get wet, but he trips...

...and they both plunge in the water.

After a moment underwater, the two of them break the surface. She looks at him teasingly, splashes some water on him and starts swimming backwards, away from him. Damian takes the bait and swims after her...

INT. SAILBOAT - DAY (MONTAGE)

The girl leads Damian down the steps into the boat's cabin. In the semi-darkness of the cabin, she starts to unbutton his soaked shirt...

EXT. MARINA - DAY (MONTAGE)

Damian is tying up the boat to the dock, when he notices the TANNED MAN watching him from the boat.

DAMIAN
(re: the knot)
Did I screw up?

The Man jumps on the dock and pulls the knot: rock solid.

TANNED MAN
No. It's great.

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - DAY (MONTAGE)

Damian sits with Doctor Miller for their weekly meeting. The office has windows: it's not the same as the one in "The Complex."

Doctor Miller slides a new bottle of pills across the coffee table. Damian takes it.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY (MONTAGE)

Damian keeps jogging. Faster now. Pushing himself. His breathing quickens. The trees zoom by.

INT. TOWNHOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT (MONTAGE)

Damian opens the bottle and swallows his daily pill.

INT. SUPERMARKET - CHECK-OUT - DAY (MONTAGE)

A CASHIER (20s) glances at Damian with suspicion...

...because she's scanning JAR AFTER JAR OF PEANUT BUTTER. Damian seems to be buying a decade's worth of supply.

DAMIAN
(off her look)
I haven't had it since 1952.

EXT. ROOFTOP - DUSK (MONTAGE)

Damian sits at the very edge of the rooftop, feet dangling over the void.

Damian watches the sun dip behind the Hudson, a fiery orange orb, while he eats spoonful after spoonful of PEANUT BUTTER straight from a jar. He closes his eyes, relishing in such a simple pleasure...

I/E. RACECAR / RACETRACK - DAY (MONTAGE)

Damian, behind the wheels of a stock racecar. He's right behind another car, trying to pass it, but the other driver cuts him off.

We see that Anton is the one driving the other car. Left, right... Every time Damian finds a hole, Anton blocks it.

When we CUT TO A MUCH WIDER SHOT, it reveals...

THE EMPTY RACETRACK. They've rented it out and they have it all to themselves.

Damian sees the CURVE coming up. He switches gears and guns the engine, darting towards the inside of the curve. A space that shrinks more and more as Anton veers left...

...about to cut him off...

But Damian manages to squeak through, with barely an inch to spare...

...coming out of the curve in first place...

...and crossing the finishing line ahead of Anton.

INT. TRENDY CLUB - NIGHT (MONTAGE)

A beat, deep and infectious, is pulsing, as Damian dances with a SEXY BRUNETTE.

EXT. TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT (MONTAGE)

A cab drops Damian and the Sexy Brunette in front of Damian's house. But as he leads her to his place, we notice something:

We're watching them through a windshield, through somebody's POV.

SOMEONE'S SPYING ON DAMIAN FROM A PARKED CAR.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY (MONTAGE)

Damian's now running as fast as he can. Even his new body can't take this much longer. With his lungs about to burst, Damian comes to a stop. He leans against a tree, gasping for air.

Damian touches his neck and feels his HEARTBEAT PULSE. THUMP-THUMP-THUMP. Blood pumping. Life.

When suddenly, he sees something that makes EVERYTHING SLOW DOWN, including his heartbeat, which is the only thing we can hear now:

A woman. Walking briskly across the park...

CLAIRE. His daughter.

Her belly has swollen considerably. Now she's visibly pregnant.

Claire passes Damian by without a second glance. Of course she doesn't recognize him. Damian is dumbfounded. Can't take her eyes off her, until we...

CUT TO:

A RIGHT HOOK THAT CONNECTS WITH DAMIAN'S FACE.

INT. GYM - DAY (END OF MONTAGE)

Damian lands on the mat. Anton, his sparring partner, walks to him and helps him get up.

ANTON

You OK?

Damian nods, but he's still groggy.

ANTON (CONT'D)

(in Russian)

Where's your head today?

DAMIAN

I don't know. Somewhere.

And he gets off the ring. Anton watches him take his gloves off and walk away.

INT. TOWNHOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Damian turns in bed, eyes wide open: he can't sleep.

EXT. STREET CORNER - DAY

Damian stands on a street corner, leaning on a traffic light as he sips from a cup of coffee.

A REVERSE ANGLE shows us what he's watching:

Across the street, there's CLAIRE. She's chatting with a COLLEAGUE at the entrance of her SCHOOL.

Damian SMILES: he'll get to see his grandchild after all...

Behind Damian, we spot a BATTERED SEDAN parked on the side street. Inside the car, someone's watching the watcher. But who?

Then, the Driver kicks the sedan into drive and pulls out, driving towards Damian...

But Damian is oblivious to this. He watches his daughter as she says goodbye to her friend and walks to the sidewalk...

...the sedan getting close to Damian...

...when a BIKE MESSENGER jumps the light and CLIPS CLAIRE right as she was about to cross the street. She falls.

Damian's reaction is instinctive and immediate: he drops the coffee and runs to her...

...prompting the sedan to swerve away and drive off.

Damian reaches Claire, who's on her knees, and HELPS HER UP.

DAMIAN
Are you OK?

CLAIREE
(shaken)
I'm fine, I think.

Damian watches the Bike Messenger pedal away without even looking back.

DAMIAN
That pinhead.

Claire chuckles.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
What?

CLAIREE
Nothing. Pinhead. I... I hadn't heard that word in a while. But thank you.

Claire is about to walk away and Damian knows that he should let her go. He knows it. And yet, he can't help it...

DAMIAN
Wait, are you...? You're Claire Hayes, aren't you?

CLAIREE
(wary)
Yeah...

DAMIAN
I... I used to work for your father.

CLAIREE
Well, sorry about that...

Damian misses, or decides to miss, the barb.

DAMIAN
I missed his funeral. I couldn't make it, but I heard you gave a beautiful eulogy.

CLAIRe

Yes, I guess I did...

Claire is uncomfortable. She doesn't want to talk about this. She just wants to go, but Damian can't see it.

DAMIAN

Listen, would you like to grab a cup of coffee or something? I just spilled mine.

CLAIRe

What for?

DAMIAN

I don't know. To talk...

CLAIRe

About my father? About the great man?

The bitterness in her voice takes Damian aback. Beat.

CLAIRe (CONT'D)

Have you read that book? That memoir someone wrote for him?

DAMIAN

"The Man who built New York", yes.

CLAIRe

When I got home from the funeral, I went through it. And I realized all the stories I told in my eulogy, I learned from reading that book.

DAMIAN

But--

CLAIRe

I didn't really know my father. After the divorce, he was never there. You want to talk about him? You should talk to his ghostwriter. Now if you'll excuse me...

And Claire walks away, leaving Damian standing there, heartbroken.

EXT. MIDTOWN OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Establishing shot of a MODERN OFFICE BUILDING in Midtown. Damian walks in.

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - DAY

Close on Damian, FIDGETING WITH A NEW BOTTLE OF PILLS.

DOCTOR MILLER (O.S.)
And you've been going out? Enjoying
yourself?

Damian NODS halfheartedly. He sits on the couch across from DOCTOR MILLER, who's on an armchair.

DOCTOR MILLER (CONT'D)
What about the dream?

DAMIAN
What dream?

DOCTOR MILLER
You know, the pier, the woman...
Have you managed to see her face?

Damian shakes his head no.

DOCTOR MILLER (CONT'D)
You're not very talkative today.

DAMIAN
I guess not.

DOCTOR MILLER
Could it have something to do with
this?

Doctor Miller slides a MANILA ENVELOPE across the coffee table. Intrigued, Damian reaches for it and opens it...

Inside, he finds TELEPHOTO PICTURES of DAMIAN HELPING CLAIRE UP, of DAMIAN AND CLAIRE TALKING...

DOCTOR MILLER (CONT'D)
The rules were very simple.

DAMIAN
Keep walking, don't say anything,
don't look back, I know.

DOCTOR MILLER
And yet--

DAMIAN
Look, it won't happen again.

DOCTOR MILLER
You went looking for her...

DAMIAN
I said it won't happen again.

DOCTOR MILLER
For her own sake, let's hope not.

Beat. Damian sits up.

DAMIAN
What's that supposed to mean?

DOCTOR MILLER
Mr. Grey...

DAMIAN
Is that a threat? Are you
threatening my daughter?

DOCTOR MILLER
How can I? You don't have a
daughter.

Touché. Damian sinks in the couch.

INT. DARK ROOM - SAME TIME

A VIDEO MONITOR shows Damian and Doctor Miller, recorded with a hidden camera somewhere in the office.

We're in a DARKENED, WINDOW-LESS ROOM, where ALBRIGHT studies Damian on the monitor, very intently.

ALBRIGHT
Do you think we have a problem?

The CAMERA MOVES to reveal another man standing next to Albright: it's ANTON! He shakes his head.

ANTON
He loves her. He'll listen.

Albright ponders this as he studies the monitor.

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Doctor Miller places another, smaller envelope on the table.

DAMIAN
More pictures?

DOCTOR MILLER

No. We feel a trip will do you good. Change of scenery. Just for a few weeks.

Inside the envelope, Damian finds a PLANE TICKET.

DAMIAN

You didn't give me a passport.

DOCTOR MILLER

It's to Hawaii.

Right. Damian pockets the ticket and stands up.

EXT. TOWNHOUSE - THE NEXT MORNING

A YELLOW CAB's parked in front of Damian's house. The CABBY HONKS a couple of times and Damian emerges from inside, carrying a SMALL SUITCASE.

The Cabby opens the trunk and takes the suitcase from Damian, who hasn't noticed that someone has stepped out of the BATTERED SEDAN, parked behind the cab...

WOMAN (O.S.)

Mark?

Damian turns: there's a WOMAN (late 20s, beautiful in a strong, self-reliant sort of way) standing on the sidewalk, a few feet away from him. She seems deeply shaken.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Mark...

Damian looks around: there's nobody else, so she must be talking to him.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Jesus, Mark, what did you?

DAMIAN

I'm sorry, I... I think you're mistaking me for someone else.

The Cabby gets in the vehicle: whatever's going on between these two, it's not his problem.

WOMAN

I'm what?

DAMIAN

Look, madam--

WOMAN

Madam? Why are you doing this?!

DAMIAN

I'm not doing anything. I just
don't know you.

Damian opens the cab door and tries to get in, but she blocks him, putting a hand on his chest.

WOMAN

(angry)

If you don't know me, why is my
name tattooed on your fucking
chest?

Beat. Damian doesn't answer. Slowly, she removes her hand. She's letting him go. He gets in the cab, but before he can close the door...

WOMAN (CONT'D)

If you want to do the right thing,
I'm at the Peninsula. Room 410.

(beat)

I'm not going anywhere.

Damian finally manages to shut the door.

INT. YELLOW CAB - CONTINUOUS

The cab pulls out. Damian, disturbed by the encounter, sees the Woman get smaller and smaller in the REARVIEW MIRROR, watching the cab drive away.

Distraught, he instinctively places a hand on his chest.

EXT. JFK AIRPORT - DAY

The cab arrives at the busy curb of the Departures Area.

INT. AIRPORT RESTROOM - DAY

Damian stands in front of the MIRROR. When the TRAVELER next to him finishes washing up and leaves, Damian unbuttons his shirt and EXAMINES HIS CHEST in the mirror...

Nothing...

PA SYSTEM (O.S.)
Last call for passengers on flight
Delta 92 to Honolulu. Please
proceed to gate 8.

But wait. There is something. Upon closer inspection, Damian discovers a SLIGHT DECOLORATION across the left side of his chest, right where the woman placed her hand. The faint scar of a tattoo that's been removed.

Damian looks at himself in the eye: she was right.

He STORMS out of the restroom, leaving his suitcase behind.

INT. AIRPORT - CONTINUOUS

Damian crosses the terminal. He pulls out his CELLPHONE and is about to dial a number... but he stops.

Damian searches the terminal around him, until he spots A PAYPHONE and pockets his cell.

MOMENTS LATER--

Damian sits at the PAYPHONE, holding the receiver.

DAMIAN
New York. 477 Amsterdam Avenue,
apartment 2D.
(beat)
And transfer me, please.

While he waits, Damian scans the people around him: men, women, families... Dragging luggage, talking on cellphones. Are any of them watching him? He can't be sure.

Then, someone answers the phone.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
Yes, hi. This is going to sound
strange, but I'm trying to reach
your neighbor. She's in 2C. Her
name's Claire. There must be
something wrong with her phone,
cause I can't get through.
(beat)
I know, I know. But it's an
emergency. If you could go get her,
I really need to speak to her.

Beat. Damian closes his eyes, waiting for an answer...
Until...

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
(relieved)
Thank you.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. NEIGHBOR'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

We stay on the RECEIVER, laying on a living room table. We see the NEIGHBOR in the background, leading Claire into the room. She walks to the phone and picks up, clearly confused.

CLAIRES
Hello?

DAMIAN
Claire?

CLAIRES
Who is this?

DAMIAN
Claire, this is a friend of your father's. We met yesterday, outside your school.

Claire's uneasy. This guy again...

CLAIRES
What do you want? Wait, how did you get this number?

DAMIAN
Look, yesterday was not a coincidence. Right before he died, your father asked me to keep an eye on you.

CLAIRES
My father asked you--

DAMIAN
He got in bed with some dangerous people. He was afraid they'd target you.

CLAIRES
Look, I had nothing to do with my father's business.

DAMIAN

They don't care about that, these people could hurt you. Claire, I need you to go away for a while.

CLAIRe

Wait, what?

The neighbor watches Claire with a mixture of curiosity and worry.

DAMIAN

Go to your cousin's. Just for a few days. I'll come and get you as soon as this thing blows over.

CLAIRe

Are you insane?

DAMIAN

Claire--

CLAIRe

You expect me to do what some wackjob tells me over the phone?

Beat. Damian breathes deeply.

DAMIAN

Claire... Claire, you have no reason to believe me when I tell you this, but your father loved you and he made me promise I'd take care of you. You were his Lapushka. Do you know what that means?

This word hits Claire. She's overwhelmed by emotion...

CLAIRe

His little paw...

DAMIAN

Please, Claire, do what I ask you to.

CLAIRe

I...

DAMIAN

Please.

About to cry, Claire hangs up.

Damian stares at the phone, no way of knowing if Claire will do what he asked her to.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - DAY

We follow Damian down a hotel hallway. He walks fast, determined.

When he reaches a door, it's room 410. He knocks.

A few seconds later, the door opens...

WOMAN
(sarcastic)
Well, good of you to--

Damian pushes it open all the way...

WOMAN (CONT'D)
Hey!

...and storms into the...

HOTEL ROOM--

Damian looks around, always on the move.

DAMIAN
You need to go.

WOMAN
What?

DAMIAN
You need to pack and go. Where are your things?

Damian opens a CLOSET. Inside there are clothes on hangers and a SUITCASE on the floor.

WOMAN
What do you think you're doing?

Damian throws the suitcase on the bed and opens it. He grabs the clothes from the hangers and throws them inside the suitcase.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
Stop!

The woman grabs his arm...

WOMAN (CONT'D)
I said STOP!

Damian does, indeed, stop. After a beat:

DAMIAN
If you don't want me to do it, you
do it, but you need to leave. Now.

WOMAN
Mark, what are you talking about?

DAMIAN
Look, I don't have time to explain.
All I can tell you is you're not
safe. Not if you stay. You need to
go back to wherever you came
from...

WOMAN
Wherever I--?

DAMIAN
...and never contact me again.

Beat.

WOMAN
If you think I'll just pack and go
back to Oregon, you don't know me
at all.

An impasse.

The woman looks at Damian and, for a moment, her exasperation turns into tenderness. She reaches for Damian's face, and the moment she touches him, we...

FLASH CUT to DAMIAN'S DREAM: the WOMAN at the end of the pier, turning towards us. We can almost see her face. Are they the same person...?

Damian recoils from her touch, disturbed.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
(puzzled)
Mark, what's--

KNOCK, KNOCK.

There's someone at the door. They go quiet.

DAMIAN
Stay here.

Damian walks to door and looks out the peephole:

Standing in the hallway there's ANTON. It takes Damian half a second to put two and two together: Anton works for Albright.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
Shit.

Anton's about to knock again, when Damian slowly opens the door...

ANTON
Hello, Ed.

Now Damian can see that Anton is flanked by two dangerous-looking MERCENARIES. Their civilian clothes can't quite conceal they're military types.

ANTON (CONT'D)
Albright's waiting for you down the hallway.

Anton opens his jacket just enough to reveal A GUN WITH A SILENCER.

ANTON (CONT'D)
You should go.

Or else. The threat is unmistakable. Damian walks out of the room, but stops for a beat:

DAMIAN
Anton. Is that even your real name?

ANTON
(nods)
Anton Rublev.

DAMIAN
And your kids?

ANTON
(in Russian)
I have no kids.

Damian shakes his head in disgust and continues. Anton doesn't give a shit. He barks an ORDER IN RUSSIAN to Mercenary 1, who escorts Damian down the hallway.

Anton and the other Mercenary enter the woman's room.

INT. HOTEL - ROOM 416 - CONTINUOUS

Mercenary 1 opens the door to another, larger room and leads Damian inside. Albright sits in an armchair, with a third MERCENARY standing by.

ALBRIGHT

You were supposed to be on a plane
right now.

DAMIAN

(angry)

Is that how you really want to
start this conversation?

ALBRIGHT

No. You're right. You deserve an
apology.

DAMIAN

You think?

ALBRIGHT

She shouldn't be here. We're still
trying to figure out how she found
you.

Damian paces the room.

DAMIAN

She... Who is she? Better yet, who
is this?

Damian points at himself. When Albright speaks, he does so
carefully and deliberately.

ALBRIGHT

Her name's Madeleine Russell. She
and her husband have a daughter,
Anna. Two years ago, when she was
four, she was diagnosed with a
congenital heart defect. The
procedure that could save her, the
insurance wouldn't pay for it. They
deemed it "experimental." The
Russells could have gone to court,
but they didn't have the time.

ON DAMIAN, listening, as the truth about his new body dawns
on him. He understands now:

DAMIAN

How much did you pay him?

ALBRIGHT

Two million dollars. In the form of
life insurance after he went
missing at sea.

Damian sits on the bed, devastated. Albright stands and approaches him.

ALBRIGHT (CONT'D)

When patients knew the truth, the
adjustment process became so much
harder. Some people killed
themselves, they couldn't take it.

DAMIAN

You lied to me.

ALBRIGHT

I told you what you wanted to hear.
When I showed you those bodies,
deep inside, wasn't there a truth
you suspected but refused to
confront?

Damian doesn't answer. Maybe there's some truth to that.

ALBRIGHT (CONT'D)

Look, I provide a valuable service.

DAMIAN

You're a guy who saved his own ass
and now's rationalizing.

ALBRIGHT

Tell that to Anton. He got his legs
blown off in Chechnya and now he
can walk. Anna is alive because of
you.

DAMIAN

I could have given them the money.

ALBRIGHT

Yeah, but would you have?

Touché. Beat. Damian stands up. He's feeling sick.

DAMIAN

This is insane.

ALBRIGHT

Now maybe. Five years from now it
will be legal.

DAMIAN

You are insane, if you believe
that.

ALBRIGHT

Where do you think your money goes?
A third of Congress is where it is
thanks to us. Half will be two
years from now. What do you think
will happen when they come
knocking, hat in hand, and we
reveal to them what we do? We are
already one of the biggest lobbies
in Washington. They will pass
legislation or they will lose. And
then, there'll be no more hiding.

The walls seem to spin around Damian. This is a nightmare.
Worse than a nightmare. He backs against a wall for support.

DAMIAN

And now-- what?

ALBRIGHT

Now you go back to being Ed Grey
and we clean up the mess.

DAMIAN

How?

ALBRIGHT

Don't worry. You can't run an
operation like this without buying
yourself a few friends in law
enforcement.

DAMIAN

What about the woman?

ALBRIGHT

Madeleine?

DAMIAN

What will happen to her?

Beat.

ALBRIGHT

She's seen a dead man.

DAMIAN

You're not going to kill her...

Albright shakes his head no.

ALBRIGHT

We have a quadriplegic client.
Diving accident. She's a perfect
match for her.

(beat)

If it's any consolation, the
process for the donor is completely
painless.

Now Damian really feels sick. He retches and stumbles into
the BATHROOM. Albright looks at Mercenary 1 and nods towards
the bathroom: go with him.

INT. HOTEL - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

The Mercenary closes the bathroom door. Damian is hugging the
toilet. A contemptuous smirk appears on the Mercenary's face:
he has no sympathy for Damian.

Damian flushes the toilet and manages to stand up. He turns
on the faucet and lets the cool water run over his face...

When he looks up, he comes face to face with HIS REFLECTION
IN THE MIRROR.

Himself. Or more precisely, the face of the man whose life he
stole.

A long beat, as Damian searches for his own soul in the eyes
of another man...

FLASH CUT TO THE DREAM: The WOMAN at the end of the pier
finishes her turn. We can finally see her face. She's
MADELEINE. Smiling. Tenderly. Beautiful.

Then, a steely resolution appears in Damian's eyes: He can't
allow this to happen.

His right hand reaches for the hand towel, but actually grabs
the METAL ROD that holds it.

Damian takes one deep breath...

...and spins, swinging the rod at the Mercenary.

BAAAM! The swing is fast and the Mercenary can barely block
it.

IN THE ROOM OUTSIDE- Albright jumps, while Mercenary 3
immediately reaches for his gun.

IN THE BATHROOM- A brutal hand-to-hand fight is taking place.

Mercenary 1 fights back. He punches Damian in the belly. Once, Twice. But Damian throws a right hook that sends the Mercenary flying against the mirror, shattering it in a thousand pieces. Looks like all the boxing practice is paying off.

Bloodied, the Mercenary charges against Damian and throws him against the shower...

But Damian manages to put his feet against the shower wall and pushes back...

...sending the two of them across the room and smashing the cabinet on the other end.

Enough is enough: the Mercenary reaches for his GUN and DRAWS.

Damian grabs the Mercenary's wrist, trying to divert the gun. The two men are very close... When the Mercenary pulls the trigger... POP! The bullet misses Damian's side by a hair.

Damian pushes the Mercenary's arm more and more...

...until it starts bending in an unnatural way...

...and the barrel of the gun hovers somewhere between his chin and the Mercenary's...

...and Damian places his finger right on top of the Mercenary's finger and PULLS THE TRIGGER right as we...

CUT TO:

THE ROOM OUTSIDE--

POP, POP, POP!

Albright and Mercenary 3 hear the SILENCED SHOTS coming from behind the bathroom door... And then nothing... Silence...

They exchange nervous glances.

ALBRIGHT
Whoever comes out that door, shoot.

Albright sneaks out of the room, leaving his man alone, facing that CLOSED DOOR...

Mercenary 3 keeps the gun aimed at the door, unnerved. From inside the bathroom, not a sound. Could they both be dead?

He takes cautious steps towards the door, never lowering his weapon...

...reaches for the doorknob with his left hand...

...turns it and...

POP, POP, POP!

BULLETS PIERCE THE DOOR and hit him right in the chest.

The Mercenary stumbles for a moment and then crumples to the floor.

The door swings open and reveals DAMIAN, holding the smoking gun in one hand and clutching his side with the other. He's wounded.

For a moment, he stares at the gun in his hand, amazed that he was capable of doing what he just did.

But there's no time to lose. Damian steps over the Mercenary and heads for the door. Gun raised. Not knowing what awaits him around the corner.

He's almost at the door, when SOMEONE appears. Damian's about to shoot...

...but it turns out to be just a couple of MIDDLE-AGED TOURISTS. Judging by what they wear, they're coming back from a matinee of "Wicked".

The tourists freeze, their worst fears about New York City coming true, until...

DAMIAN
Enjoy your stay.

...Damian pulls the gun from their faces and runs towards Room 410.

We follow him, down the hallway...

...as he reaches Madeleine's room, the door ajar...

...pushes it open, gun always ready...

And finds that the ROOM IS EMPTY. She's gone, the suitcase's gone. Just an unmade bed.

Damian bursts back into the hallway and runs, runs, runs...

...TURNS A CORNER...

Just in time to see the DOORS OF A SERVICE ELEVATOR CLOSE at the far end of this new hallway. Inside the elevator, he catches a glimpse of ANTON AND MERCENARY 2 HOLDING MADELEINE.

Damian runs towards the elevator: the screen above the door indicates THEY'RE GOING DOWN. 4, 3, 2...

So Damian BLASTS THROUGH THE EMERGENCY EXIT to reach...

A STAIRCASE--

SIRENS BLARE the moment Damian opens that door and RACES down the stairs, four or five steps at a time.

THIRD FLOOR, SECOND FLOOR...

When he reaches the FIRST FLOOR he runs out of the staircase and into the--

LOBBY--

Guests turn and gawk at the frantic, disheveled man coming out of the staircase. Damian rushes to hide his gun under the jacket and faces the elevator...

But the SCREEN on the elevator shows they're skipping the first floor. They're going to the PARKING GARAGE!

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL - PARKING GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Damian storms out of the staircase and reaches the garage. At the far end of the garage, he spots THE MERCENARY JUMPING BEHIND THE WHEEL OF A NONDESCRIPT VAN...

...while ANTON DRAGS MADELEINE INTO THE BACK.

Damian pulls up the gun and aims...

But he cannot get a clean shot. Madeleine's in the way. Shit.

The van takes off before the back door has even been shut and heads for the ramp.

Time to run again.

INT. HOTEL - LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Damian sprints across the lobby. This time he doesn't even bother to pretend. We follow him out the revolving doors...

EXT. HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Outside, a GUEST is handing the CAR KEYS to the VALET, when Damian charges between them, SNATCHING THE KEYS.

VALET

Hey!

But Damian slides across the hood of the car, a brand-new AUDI A4, and jumps behind the wheel. The DOOR SLAMS and a second later, he BURNS RUBBER OUT OF THERE.

I/E. AUDI - CONTINUOUS

Damian steps on the gas, startled guest and valet receding in the rearview mirror.

He's about to make a right on the next street, hoping to intercept the van...

But just as he reaches the intersection, he sees the VAN has already exited the garage and is passing that block.

It's too late, so he SWERVES LEFT to stay on the avenue and...

HOOOOOOOOOOONK!!!

A BUS almost rear ends him from the left. God, that was close.

Now Damian really floors it. He changes lanes, passing cars, missing them by inches. This is suicide...

ONE BLOCK, TWO BLOCKS... At each intersection, he sees the van driving up the next avenue. He's catching up.

Then, THE LIGHT AHEAD TURNS RED!

Fuck it. Damian JUMPS THE RED LIGHT and makes a sharp right.

The OTHER CARS SCREECH TO A HALT and barely miss him, as Damian speeds along the side street, headed towards...

THE INTERSECTION, where a moment later THE VAN APPEARS.

This is split-second decision-making. Damian doesn't slow down. Instead, he ACCELERATES and heads straight for the van!

Mercenary 2 sees him, but only a fraction of a second before:

THE AUDI RAMS AGAINST THE DRIVER'S DOOR.

BLAAAAAAAAAAAAM!

The impact is brutal. METAL TWISTS. GLASS FLIES EVERYWHERE. THE AIRBAG DEPLOYS and pushes Damian against the seat.

After a few seconds, Damian opens his eyes. Still groggy, he manages to push the door open and stumble out of the car.

EXT. INTERSECTION - CONTINUOUS

The Audi is a wreck, its hood crumpled against the van. The front of the van is wedged between the car and the traffic light that stopped it on the other side.

Damian takes tentative steps towards the van, gun ready, but as he walks past the smoke he realizes that THE MERCENARY HAS BEEN KILLED INSTANTLY.

On the passenger seat, Anton is still alive, but barely: a METAL ROD PIERCES HIS ABDOMEN. He looks at Damian, helpless. He tries to talk, but can't. He doesn't have long.

Damian rushes to the back of the van, as PEOPLE start to gather around the scene of the accident.

Damian pulls the back door open: he finds MADELEINE, bruised but alive. Her wrists bound, her mouth gagged.

DAMIAN
(removing the gag)
Are you alright?

Madeleine nods, too shocked to talk.

Damian proceeds to untie her wrists. He can hear a POLICE SIREN, getting closer and closer.

Damian pulls Madeleine out of the van...

MADELEINE
(still in a daze)
Wait...

...and drags her through the SMALL CROWD that's already forming. Out the corner of his eye, Damian spots the POLICE CAR approaching.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)
Where are we going?

DAMIAN
I'll explain. Let's go.

The two turn a corner right as the cops arrive.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - MOMENTS LATER

The magnificent view of the skyline on Central Park South in the distance. Closer, at ground level, we find Damian and Madeleine.

He's leading her into the RAMBLE, the more heavily wooded area of the park. But the leading turns to dragging as Madeleine recovers.

MADELEINE

Stop, stop... STOP!

Madeleine frees herself and refuses to keep going. Damian scans their surroundings, looking for Albright's men.

DAMIAN

Madeleine...

MADELEINE

Madeleine? Since when? What happened to Maddie?

DAMIAN

Maddie. We have to keep moving. You saw those guys, we're not safe.

MADELEINE

Those guys, who are those guys?

(beat)

Rangers? You know them from Afghanistan?

She wants answers. Damian realizes he's going to have to give her something if he wants her to keep moving.

DAMIAN

Yes.

(Improvise, improvise!)

We needed money. For Anna. These people, they... found out and offered me a deal. They'd give us the money we needed if I... faked my own death and did... things for them.

MADELEINE

What kind of things?

DAMIAN

Illegal things, things a "dead man" can get away with. That's why I was supposed to be dead and you were never supposed to find out. You could not know. But now you do, and you're in danger, and so is Anna.

(beat)

That's why we need to keep moving.

MADELEINE

Anna...

DAMIAN

Where is she? Home?

MADELEINE

No, I left her in Pittsburgh with Sally and Fred.

DAMIAN

We have to get her.

MADELEINE

How?

CUT TO:

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - THE RAMBLE - LATER

The dense, unkept woods of the Ramble. One of the trees sports a STAR-SHAPED MARK that's been carved on its bark...

...and right under this tree, Damian and Madeleine are digging with their bare hands.

They dig and dig, until they hit something buried in the dirt... A bright-colored object... It's THE TIN BOX we saw Damian carry around before.

When he OPENS it, we finally understand what it was: inside there are WADS OF CASH, A BLACK POUCH and A KEY.

Like a time capsule, this is stuff Damian left for himself in case something went wrong. Smart guy.

CUT TO:

THE KEY FITS INTO A LOCK AND A ROLL-UP DOOR GOES UP, revealing...

A CORVETTE STING RAY. Classic. And in mint condition.

We realize that Damian and Madeleine have just opened an OUTDOOR STORAGE UNIT. Madeleine's confused. She eyes other stuff in the storage unit: pictures and mementos belonging to one Damian Hayes.

MADELEINE
Whose car is this?

DAMIAN
A guy I know. He wanted to keep it away from the IRS.

And he gets into the car.

EXT. STORAGE SPACE - AFTERNOON

The Corvette speeds out of the storage unit.

INT. DARK ROOM - SAME TIME

Albright paces furiously, while an image of Damian appears frozen on the video monitors. Doctor Miller watches him.

ALBRIGHT
How come we didn't know Hayes had combat training?

DOCTOR MILLER
He doesn't.

Albright catches an ever-so-slightly emphasis on the first word. He doesn't? Doctor Miller hands him a folder.

DOCTOR MILLER (CONT'D)
Mark Russell served two tours of duty in Afghanistan. Army Ranger.

Albright goes over the donor's file.

ALBRIGHT
But the donor's dormant.

DOCTOR MILLER
As long as he takes his meds. Even then...

ALBRIGHT
What?

DOCTOR MILLER

There's a primal aspect, a part
that's so ingrained in the instinct
for survival that it may kick in
when the patient feels threatened.

ALBRIGHT

Jesus...

Albright pulls out his CELL as he turns to the video monitor.

ALBRIGHT (CONT'D)

Get a hold of the daughter. We need
to get a twenty on this guy.

On screen, Damian's face seems to stare back at him.

EXT. GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE - AFTERNOON

The Corvette drives over the GW Bridge, leaving Manhattan
behind, the setting sun ahead of them.

EXT. VARIOUS ROADS - DUSK

The Corvette races along the freeway, across New Jersey and
into Pennsylvania. Urban becomes suburban. Suburban becomes
rural.

INT. CORVETTE - DUSK

While Damian drives, Madeleine pulls out a CELLPHONE and
starts dialing. Damian immediately reaches out to close the
cell.

DAMIAN

Don't. They may be listening.

By reaching out, Damian offers a glimpse of the BLOODY
SHIRT under his jacket.

Madeleine sees it and, alarmed, pulls the jacket aside...

MADELEINE

God, Mark.

DAMIAN

I know.

MADELEINE

We've got to stop.

Damian shakes his head no.

DAMIAN

We keep driving, we can be there by morning.

MADELEINE

We don't stop, you won't make it till morning.

Damian looks at Madeleine: she's not kidding.

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

A seedy motel where no one would like to spend more than one night at.

The Corvette pulls up to the parking lot.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

A thin-walled room, all kinds of noises coming from the adjoining rooms.

Damian, sitting on the bed, struggles to take off his jacket, while Madeleine returns from the bathroom carrying a few TOWELS.

Madeleine helps him unbutton his shirt. She pauses for a moment when she notices the TATOO IS GONE, but she says nothing, because the WOUND in his side claims her attention.

She examines it and it looks like she knows what she's doing.

MADELEINE

The bullet went through. I think I can handle it.

DAMIAN

You can handle it?

MADELEINE

Don't flatter yourself. When you get down to it, you're not that different from a cow. Not that I treat many cows for bullet wounds.

So she's a veterinarian? Damian has to conceal his surprise.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

I saw a drugstore by the freeway. I'm going to need a few things.

Madeleine presses one of the towels against the wound and then puts Damian's hand on the towel.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)
You keep pressing this. I'll be
back in ten minutes. Keys?

Damian reaches into the jacket and hands her the car keys.

INT. DRUGSTORE - NIGHT

We follow MADELEINE down the starkly bright aisles of the drugstore, as she grabs PAINKILLERS...

...RUBBING ALCOHOL...

...GAUZE...

...BANDAGES...

INT. DRUGSTORE - CHECKOUT - NIGHT

The CASHIER is an overweight woman in her mid-20s who's just finished scanning all the items.

CASHIER
It'll be twenty-four fifty.

Madeleine opens her wallet. She just has a twenty in there. So she pulls out a CREDIT CARD and hands it to the cashier.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Damian holds the towel with one hand and uses the other to dig into his pocket and pull out the BOTTLE OF PILLS.

With some difficulty, he manages to pop it open: inside, there are only about six pills.

Damian swallows one, when he catches movement out the window: Madeleine's coming back.

He hurries to put the cap back on the bottle and slides it into his pocket, right as the door opens and Madeleine enters.

MADELEINE
Hey.

CUT TO:

LATER--

Madeleine's carefully cleaning up Damian's wound.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)
Two tours in Afghanistan without a
scratch and you go and get shot in
New York City.

Madeleine pads alcohol on the wound. Damian FLINCHES.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)
You big baby.

Madeleine proceeds to tape GAUZE over the entry wound.

DAMIAN
You still haven't told me how you
found me.

Madeleine looks into Damian's eyes for a moment, before she continues dressing his wounds.

MADELEINE
They said the yard hit you. They
said you were out on the boat and
the yard must've been unsecured and
it knocked you over board.

(beat)
Mark, you've never left an
unsecured yard in your life. When
it comes to sailing, you're the
most anal person I know.

DAMIAN
Right.

MADELEINE
And then this check comes in, from
a life insurance I didn't even know
you had. And they pay up, just like
that. There's no body, but they pay
up without a peep. After Anna, we
both know insurance companies will
do just about anything to get out
of paying. It just didn't feel
right.

Madeleine prepares another bandage.

DAMIAN
So what did you do?

MADELEINE

I followed the money. The check came from New York, so I dropped Anna with Fred and Sally and looked up the address. All I found was an empty office. Locked, nobody in. But I waited. And waited. Until a guy showed up to pick up the mail. I followed him to another building, some place with doctor's offices. Well, you know the place, because I staked it out and I waited some more and one day who do I see but my dead husband walking in.

Madeleine makes him turn around to take care of the exit wound. Now he's facing away from her.

DAMIAN

Maddie...

This time she just POURS the alcohol on the wound. Ouch. That shuts him up fast.

MADELEINE

My dead husband, alive. Not just alive, but making out with some twenty year old dressed like a hooker.

Madeleine slaps him in the back of the head.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

If you weren't hurt I'd make you sleep on the floor.

But she cannot stay mad for long. She puts her arms around him and rests her head against his. In spite of everything, it feels good to have him back.

A physical proximity that's normal for Madeleine, but very awkward for Damian, who doesn't know what to do...

INT. MOTEL ROOM - LATE NIGHT

PUSH IN ON MADELEINE, sound asleep on one side of the bed.

Her cellphone rests on the night stand... when a HAND enters frame and grabs it.

INT. MOTEL ROOM BATHROOM - LATE NIGHT

Damian sits on the bathroom floor, back against the wall. He holds Madeleine's cellphone as he goes over the PHOTOS stored in it. He sees:

MARK, ASLEEP ON A HAMMOCK...

MARK, SMILING PROUDLY IN HIS SERVICE UNIFORM...

MARK HOLDING A LITTLE GIRL, ANNA, BOTH OF THEM LAUGHING...

MARK AND MADELEINE ON A SAILBOAT, MUGGING FOR THE CAMERA...

Happy moments... For Damian, it's unreal to see his own face on somebody else's life, a life he stole...

Then, he notices something on the cellphone screen: A VIDEO FILE named "B-Day". He plays it:

The VIDEO ON THE CELLPHONE shows--

A pixelated image of a DARKENED DOORWAY... until someone comes out of the dark, carrying a BIRTHDAY CAKE.

VOICES OFF-SCREEN
 Happy birthday to you, happy
 birthday to you, happy birthday
 dear Anna...

The person holding the cake is Mark: for the first time, Damian sees him come to life. The light from the BIRTHDAY CANDLES makes him look like an apparition.

We realize that we're in a HOSPITAL ROOM when Mark places the cake on an overbed table, in front of Anna. She looks ill, but she musters enough strength to blow out the candles. The GUESTS clap.

MADELEINE
 (off screen: she's
 recording the scene)
 Did you make a wish, button?

ANNA
 I want Dad to teach me how to swim.

The camera finds Mark. For a moment, his face darkens: does he already know he won't be around much longer?

DICKISH COUSIN
 You were not supposed to say! Now
 it won't come true!

ANNA
(worried)
Dad! Is that true?

MARK
Of course not. I'll teach you. As
soon as you get better, we'll go
down to the point and I'll teach
you all the strokes.

Mark does his best to sound cheery and cover his sadness.

We STAY ON DAMIAN, watching the scene as the birthday party
keeps playing off screen...

For the first time, the full weight of what he's done comes
crashing down on him.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - SAME TIME

Madeleine, now awake, watches the sliver of light coming from
under the bathroom door...

FADE TO BLACK.

Slowly, the darkness breaks. The SUN is rising.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAWN

Sunlight filters through the curtains, falling on...

DAMIAN, fast asleep. But the light seems to bother him and,
after a twist and a turn, he finally OPENS HIS EYES.

He finds the other half of the bed EMPTY and immediately
SPRINGS FORWARD, alarmed. Where's Madeleine?!

Suddenly, THE DOORKNOB TURNS, the door opens and...

MADELEINE WALKS INTO THE ROOM, carrying two cups of coffee.

DAMIAN
Shit, what time is it? Why didn't
you wake me up?

MADELEINE
You got shot, remember? You needed
some rest. Vet's orders.

Madeleine puts one of the cups on the night table, by
Damian's side.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)
Black. Two sugars.

Damian smiles, unsure, and sits on the edge of the bed. He grabs his SHIRT. He tries to put it on but the gunshot wound sends a sharp PANG OF PAIN through his body.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)
Easy there.

Madeleine carefully helps him with it. She kneels in front of him and tenderly BUTTONS IT UP for him.

The action is INTIMATE, their faces very close to each other. When she reaches the top button, Madeleine looks Damian straight into his eyes and smiles, making him UNCOMFORTABLE.

After a silent beat, Damian breaks the intimacy of the moment.

DAMIAN
We should go.

CUT TO:

The racing ASPHALT disappearing under the car.

INT. MUSCLE CAR - DAY

Damian's hands are tight around the driving wheel as he speeds through the highway.

On the passenger seat, Madeleine fidgets with the RADIO dial, changing stations. The result is an ANNOYING CACOPHONY.

That, added to the pain on his side every time he shifts gears, is giving Damian a headache.

DAMIAN
What are you doing?

MADELEINE
Looking for something, something about yesterday.

DAMIAN
You won't find anything.

MADELEINE
A shooting like that... Maybe they arrested someone.

DAMIAN

Forget it. They're too good at
covering their tracks.

MADELEINE

Who are these people?

Suddenly, Damian raises his finger. A gesture for silence.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

What?

Damian turns the radio off and LISTENS CAREFULLY. Madeleine, confused, listens too.

DAMIAN

Can you hear that?

Yes, she can. Under the rumble of the engine, A DISTANT BEATING NOISE, ominous in its implications.

Damian looks up through the windshield and SCANS THE SKY until...

There it is, A HELICOPTER in the distance, a small dot beyond the tree line.

MADELEINE

Maybe it's nothing. A traffic helicopter.

DAMIAN

Wouldn't bet on it.

(beat)

Have you been using your cell?

MADELEINE

No.

DAMIAN

Did you call your parents, even from a pay phone?

MADELEINE

No!

DAMIAN

What about credit cards?

Madeleine doesn't answer. Yes, she did. At the pharmacy.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)

Shit. Ok. It's ok. It's gonna be fine.

(MORE)

DAMIAN (CONT'D)

(beat)

They know the car now. We have to
lose them. Switch cars.

MADELEINE

Over there.

Madeleine points at a HUGE SHOPPING MALL rapidly approaching.

Damian abruptly TURNS RIGHT, cutting in front of an SUV. Caught by surprise, the car HONKS in a panic and violently BREAKS, causing a chain reaction of cars swerving and skidding.

Damian rapidly takes the NEXT EXIT to the mall, leaving the near accident behind.

As they exit the highway, Madeleine looks at the HELICOPTER hovering over the road through the rear window.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

Who are these people?

EXT. MALL - DAY

Damian's car makes its way through the outdoors parking lot around the mall, dodging cars and shoppers, when...

Madeleine spots a CAR. It looks normal except for its suspicious TINTED WINDOWS.

Then she spots another one, different model, same windows. And another one. And another one. They're closing in...

Damian drives the car into the...

INT. MALL - UNDERGROUND PARKING GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

The Corvette rushes through the parking garage and parks. Immediately, the doors open and they step out of the car.

She's ready to leave when she notices Damian taking one last look at the car.

MADELEINE

Mark...

Damian puts his hand on the hood...

DAMIAN

Shit, I'll miss you, boy.

...when, suddenly, the sound of RUBBER TIRES SCREECHING catches their attention. The TINTED WINDOW CARS are driving down the different ramps, blocking the exits.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
Let's go.

Damian grabs Madeleine by the hand and they run towards the escalators.

INT. MALL - DAY

The two of them emerge in the middle of the CROWDED mall. MUZZAK fills the antiseptic building as shoppers flow in streams.

Damian pulls Madeleine into the crowd. Keeping their heads down and walking at regular pace, they BLEND IN as two regular shoppers.

Suddenly, Madeleine SQUEEZES HIS HAND and shoots a look at the gallery above their heads:

Leaning on the rail, there's a NORMAL LOOKING GUY in his 30s, plaid shirt, khakis... But something gives him away. He's wearing an EARPIECE!

Damian and Madeleine make a sharp right, away from the MERCENARY, and into another hall of stores.

Damian shoots quick glances over his shoulder. There they are, scattered among the crowd, MERCENARIES in civilian clothes, spreading, discreetly SEARCHING THE MALL.

He spots ANOTHER ONE, BLOCKING THEIR WAY. He hasn't seen them yet, but he's walking straight towards them.

Damian yanks Madeleine to the left and into the...

FOOD COURT--

Loud and busy, the food court is crowded with parents, children and obnoxious teenagers chewing on their favorite fast food as they holler at each other from separate tables.

Damian and Madeleine quicken their pace across the room when a VOICE calls their attention.

VOICE (O.S.)
Stop it, Jason. Stop it!

It belongs to a FATHER, a broken and exhausted man with a BAWLING TODDLER on his lap and an a not too happy 6 YEAR OLD BOY sitting across the table. Between them, a battlefield of half eaten fries, chicken fingers and puddles of ketchup.

FATHER
Put the fries down and eat the chicken.

SON
I hate chicken!

FATHER
What?! Who hates chi--? You had it last week!

SON
(louder)
I hate chicken! It's gross!

The Father picks up a chicken finger...

FATHER
It's not gross! See, I'm eating it.
I'm eating it! Mmmmmhhh... so good...

...and nibbles at it with a FORCED SMILE.

DAMIAN (O.S.)
Do you mind if I sit?

The Father looks up to see Damian and Madeleine standing in front of him.

FATHER
Excuse me?

Damian takes a chair from a nearby table, right when a TEENAGER with a tray is about to sit...

TEENAGER
Dude!

...and takes a seat.

DAMIAN
I saw you across the room and I thought, that's a man in the need of a break, if I ever saw one. Would you mind answering me a question for a hundred dollars? No strings attached.

Damian puts a CRISP HUNDRED DOLLARS BILL on the table. The Father's eyes widen.

FATHER

S--sure...

DAMIAN

Is your car parked outside?

FATHER

What?

DAMIAN

Outside, on the street. It's a yes or no question.

FATHER

Y-- yes...

DAMIAN

Good.

(beat)

Now, what would you say if I offered you fifty thousand dollars for it?

As he says this, Damian reaches in his inside pocket and produces a FAT ENVELOPE overflowing with BILLS. It's not only the Father who is dumbfounded, but MADELEINE AS WELL, seeing that thick wad of cash on the table.

FATHER

Yes?

With a smile, Damian puts his hand out.

DAMIAN

It's a deal, then.

After a beat, the Father gets it and fumbles in his pocket, putting the CAR KEYS on his hand. Damian immediately pockets them and STORMS OUT with Madeleine.

The Father rushes to open the envelope and check if he's been conned. Nope, it's real...

FATHER

Hey, man! Thanks!

INT. MALL - DAY

Damian and Madeleine rush past a CLOTHING STORE when Madeleine stops and pulls him inside.

INT. MALL - CLOTHING STORE - CONTINUOUS

It's a two-floor CHAIN STORE for the hip and the young, where jeans are sold next to fake vintage T-shirts and Japanese inspired toys.

Madeleine grabs a BASEBALL HAT and tosses it to Damian. She tries another hat on herself.

SUNGLASSES. They take a pair each from a rack and look themselves in the mirror. They look unrecognizable enough...

Suddenly, Damian spots something in the reflection: A Mercenary entering the store. He hasn't seen them yet. Damian nods towards him, warning Madeleine of his presence.

With their exit blocked, they have to walk deeper into the store. They make their way through wades of costumers, moving briskly but not fast enough to attract attention.

But the Mercenary, scanning faces as he walks, slowly CLOSES IN ON THEM.

Damian and Madeleine soon find that the only way to keep going is THE FITTING ROOM. On their way, Madeleine snatches A COUPLE OF RAINCOATS.

INT. MALL - CLOTHING STORE - FITTING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

In front of them, two rows of CHANGING BOOTHS on both sides.

And, at the end of the corridor, A DOOR WITH A SIGN that reads: "EMPLOYEES ONLY". Bingo...

INT. MALL - STORAGE ROOM - DAY

The DOOR BLASTS OPEN and Damian and Madeleine storm into the storage room. There are boxes all around them and just one way out: A LOCKED DOOR.

DAMIAN
(rattling the knob)
Shit.

INT. MALL - CLOTHING STORE - FITTING ROOM - AT THE SAME TIME

The Mercenary walks into the fitting room. Empty. No movement, except...

CLICK. The storage room door just closing. Gotcha.

INT. MALL - STORAGE ROOM - AT THE SAME TIME

Meanwhile, Damian has found a SERVICE ELEVATOR and presses insistently its BUTTON to call it...

DAMIAN
Comeoncomeoncomeon...

...when he hears a noise: THE DOOR BEING OPENED. Damian and Madeleine freeze. SOMEONE IS CREEPING IN.

Damian pushes Madeleine against a corner.

The Mercenary carefully pulls out A GUN WITH SILENCER and stealthily walks towards them.

Damian puts a hand over Madeleine's mouth as the Mercenary closes in... CLICK, CLACK, CLICK, CLACK... the footsteps approaching...

He's almost on them now, about to turn the corner, when...

CLANK! The SERVICE ELEVATOR lands loudly on their floor.

The sudden noise makes the Mercenary turn...

...and Damian takes this opportunity to JUMP ON HIM, grabbing his arm and twisting it...

MERCENARY
Aaaarghhh!

...until THE GUN FALLS on the ground.

The Mercenary immediately pulls his arm, throwing Damian violently against a wall.

A FRENETIC HAND TO HAND COMBAT ensues. Both men fight with PROFESSIONAL SKILL and LIGHTNING REFLEXES.

They fall on the ground, the Mercenary on top, HIS HANDS AROUND DAMIAN'S NECK, pressing, chocking.

MADELEINE (O.S.)
Stop it!

The Mercenary looks up to find Madeleine, HOLDING THE GUN IN HER TREMBLING HANDS.

The Mercenary SMILES, pressing even harder. She can't shoot...

MADELEINE (CONT'D)
I said stop it!

And POP! She squeezes the trigger and A BULLET GRAZES THE MAN'S EAR.

MERCENARY

Fuck!

The Man falls back, with his hands on his BLEEDING EAR. Damian TAKES THE GUN from Madeleine and points it at the Man.

DAMIAN

Stand up.

The Man complies, with an eerily COCKY SMILE, letting the blood drip from his ear.

Damian takes the RADIO from him, and holds it in front of the mercenary's face.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)

Tell them we're leaving through the south exit.

MERCENARY

Attention, all units. The targets are headed for the south exit.

There's something familiar in his voice. THE RUSSIAN ACCENT! Could he be...

DAMIAN

Anton...

Behind those new eyes, there's the cold stare of the Russian.

ANTON

First time I take it out for a spin and I already got a scratch.

MADELEINE

You know him?

ANTON

It's a nice face, don't you think? It has... character. Never quite liked the other one.

DAMIAN

But how? It takes weeks to even...

ANTON

First time's the hardest. But it gets easier. After a couple of transfers, you're up on your feet in no time.

MADELEINE

Mark, what is-- what is he talking about?

Anton LAUGHS as it dawns on him:

ANTON

(to Damian)

Of course. You haven't told her.

MADELEINE

Tell me what?

ANTON

Maybe you should ask your *husband* when's your daughter's birthday.

DAMIAN

Shut up.

ANTON

Or where did you two love birds got marr--

Damian HITS ANTON IN THE FACE with the butt of the gun.

DAMIAN

Shut up!

As Anton doubles up in pain, Damian buries his hand into Anton's jacket and produces...

...a BOTTLE OF BLUE PILLS.

Immediately, Damian PUSHES ANTON INSIDE THE SERVICE ELEVATOR and presses the button, sending the elevator downstairs.

POP! Damian SHOOTS THE CONTROLS, leaving the elevator stuck between floors.

Damian sees Madeleine's distrustful look, but there's no time to lose.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)

Let's go.

CUT TO:

THE BLADES OF A HELICOPTER FURIOUSLY SPINNING.

EXT. MALL - DAY

The CHOPPER HOVERS over the mall, scanning the area.

Below it, we see streams of shoppers walking in and out of the mall. Nothing suspicious when seen from above.

But from the ground, WE RECOGNIZE TWO FIGURES: Damian and Madeleine walk out of the building, disguised with their hats, sunglasses and raincoats.

DAMIAN
Don't look up.

As they approach the cars parked by the curb, Damian discretely produces the CAR KEYS and presses the UNLOCK BUTTON.

No response...

Damian tries again and again, never raising the arm, never stopping, until...

Finally, a MINIVAN FLASHES ITS LIGHTS. Their new ride... Damian and Madeleine get inside the vehicle and, with the DOOR SLAM, we...

CUT TO:

THE MINIVAN FLYING BY on the highway.

INT. MINIVAN - DAY

It's a mess in there: toys, children's music CDs, used tissues, cheese puffs in the ashtrays... There's a baby car seat in the back and the mandatory car DVD player.

Madeleine scans the sky looking for the helicopter...

DAMIAN
See anything?

MADELEINE
We lost it.

Damian nods, relieved, when he notices that the GAS TANK LIGHT IS ON.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

The minivan pulls into a gas station.

INT. MINIVAN - CONTINUOUS

Damian unbuckles the seat belt and he's about to take the CAR KEY when...

Madeleine YANKS IT FROM THE IGNITION first. They won't move until they have a talk. It takes an AWKWARD SILENT BEAT for Madeleine to find the courage to ask.

MADELEINE

That man... What was he talking about?

Damian is too ashamed to respond, but she won't let it go.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

Anna's birthday... When is it?

Damian can't answer that. He looks away, averting her gaze.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

Where did we get married?

DAMIAN

Maddie...

Madeleine SNAPS, furious.

MADELEINE

Don't you Maddie me! Don't you dare! No more lies. Who are those people? Who--

(She stops. Quieter now)
Who are you?

Damian takes a beat to think. It's time to tell the truth.

DAMIAN

My name is Damian Hayes...

CUT TO:

EXT. GAS STATION - CONTINUOUS

We witness the conversation from OUTSIDE THE CAR.

Although we can't hear Damian explaining, we see Madeleine going from disbelief...

...to outrage...

And, finally, grief.

Damian reaches to touch Madeleine, but she immediately RECOILS, repulsed by him, and STORMS OUT OF THE CAR.

MADELEINE

Don't you touch me, you son of a bitch.

Damian follows. An ATTENDANT (20s) watches them argue from the inside of the GAS STATION.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

Stay away from me!

DAMIAN

You can hate me all you want. God knows I deserve it. But these people, they won't stop. They'll do anything to cover it up.

MADELEINE

You killed Mark!

Madeleine SLAPS Damian. Hard.

DAMIAN

Maybe... But I'm the only one who can help you now. I can protect you.

(beat)

I can protect Anna.

Suddenly, DING-DING, the Gas Station Attendant steps outside.

GAS STATION ATTENDANT

Is everything OK, Ma'am? Is this man bothering you?

Madeleine hesitates. She looks at Damian, unsure. Can he trust the man hiding behind his husband's face?

Damian tries to read her eyes. What will she say?

Finally, after a long beat, she speaks...

MADELEINE

I'm... I'm fine, thank you.

The Gas Station looks at her bloodshot eyes, the tears running down her cheeks. He's not convinced.

GAS STATION ATTENDANT

Are you sure?

MADELEINE
(nodding)
I'm sure. The bastard forgot our
anniversary, that's all.

Finally, the Attendant nods and walks back inside.

Madeleine walks past Damian, not even looking at him, and gets inside the car. With the ANGRY DOOR SLAM we...

CUT TO:

The MINIVAN WIPING FRAME, revealing a magnificent bridge crossing the DELAWARE RIVER. Welcome to Pennsylvania.

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBOURHOOD - DAY

The minivan drives through a suburban area nearby Pittsburgh. Cookie-cutter houses and manicured lawns fly by, one after the other.

MADELEINE (O.S.)
It's here. Pull over.

The car comes to a halt in front of a unremarkable house.

INT. MINIVAN - CONTINUOUS

Madeleine and Damian sit in silence for a long tense beat.

Madeleine looks at the path that will take her to the door and the daughter that waits beyond. She takes a deep breath and...

MADELEINE
Wait here. I'll speak to her first.

Damian nods, agreeing, but Madeleine is already stepping out of the car. She was not asking for his approval.

Damian wraps his hands tightly around the driving wheel as he watches Madeleine disappear into the house. He fidgets on his seat, unsure if he's up to what will come next.

Restless, Damian finally exits the car.

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBOURHOOD - CONTINUOUS

A beautiful afternoon outside. A MAN IN SHORTS waters his garden. A BOY practices his skills on the skateboard.

A WOMAN sunbathes, reading a paperback novel. Normal people living normal lives. How quaint and removed they look from his own.

Damian leans on the car and looks at the dreaded house. The house looks back, silently, inscrutable.

And then, a MOVEMENT behind the window. The CURTAIN opens, revealing the radiant wide-eyed face of a girl. ANNA.

She looks at him in wonderment. Could that really be her dad?

Having been caught off guard, it takes a second for Damian to PUT ON HIS BEST SMILE.

But when he does, Anna immediately disappears from the window and DARTS OUT OF THE HOUSE.

ANNA

Dad!

Incredibly happy, the little girl jumps on his arms. Damian can't do anything but catch her and HUG HER, UNCOMFORTABLE. Anna buries her face in his chest.

ANNA (CONT'D)

I missed you so much, Dad.

Damian looks up to find MADELEINE watching him from the threshold. If looks could kill...

DAMIAN

I missed you too, button.

CUT TO:

THE MINIVAN'S DOOR SLIDING OPEN, revealing...

INT. MINIVAN - MOMENTS LATER

...Anna looking inside the car, puzzled.

ANNA

Whose car is this?

MADELEINE

Ours. Dad got us a new one. See?
Much bigger. Don't you like it?

Madeleine helps Anna climb into the car, but Anna is still not convinced. Seeing the BABY SEAT...

ANNA
But I'm too old for a baby's chair!

Madeleine shoots a look to Damian, who is putting Anna's luggage in the trunk, and sits her by the baby seat.

MADELEINE
I know, button. Dad's been a little
silly lately.

Madeleine fastens Anna's seat belt, closes the sliding door and takes the passenger's seat. Damian takes the driver seats and STARTS THE CAR.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)
(anger bubbling)
So, where to now?

Damian drives off as he talks.

DAMIAN
Well, they know where you--
(noticing Anna)
Where we live. So that's out of the
question.

Madeleine picks up a pair of HEADPHONES lying between the seats and turns to Anna.

MADELEINE
Why don't we watch a movie, huh,
honey?

ANNA
But I wanna know what you're
talking about!

MADELEINE
It's grown up talk, Anna. Time for
a movie.

Anna rolls her eyes, annoyed, but Madeleine puts the headphones on her anyway and PRESSES PLAY.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)
(curbing his anger)
What's the plan then?

DAMIAN
Well... I have this friend in
Upstate New York. His name's
Martin. Very rich man. He owns a
private jet and could sneak us out
of the country.

MADELEINE

Out of the country?! Are you
insane?

DAMIAN

Here, sooner or later, we'll slip,
we'll make a mistake, and they'll
find us. They won't stop,
Madeleine.

Madeleine knows he's right. As the reality of their situation sinks in, Madeleine's eyes fill with TEARS.

MADELEINE

For how long?

Beat.

DAMIAN

I don't know.

Suddenly, ANNA NOTICES HER MOM'S TEARS and takes off the headphones.

ANNA

Why are you crying, Mom?

Madeleine turns to her daughter and puts on her best smile, as she wipes her tears.

MADELEINE

It's nothing, button. Just happy to
see your father, that's all.

CUT TO:

The CAR ZOOMS BY the empty highway as the SUN SETS behind it.

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

The NEON SIGN of the motel buzzes and flickers in the dark.

Damian, standing on the BALCONY, outside their room, scans the road and the empty parking lot, looking for anything suspicious.

Damian turns and sees, inside, Madeleine help Anna into the bed and tuck her in.

MADELEINE

So, what's it going to be tonight?
"Cat in the hat" or "Green eggs and ham"?

ANNA

"Cat in the hat"! But I want dad to
read it to me.

MADELEINE

Not tonight, button. Dad is very
tired from all the driving.

Damian, uncomfortable, turns to the darkness and leans on the rail, as Madeleine STARTS READING.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

(reading)

The sun did not shine. It was too
wet to play. So we sat in the house
all that cold, cold, wet day...

Nothing moves. Are they really safe? If so, for how long?

Damian produces ANTON'S PILLS and SWALLows ONE.

CUT TO:

RIIIIIIIIIING! A doorbell.

EXT. MARTIN'S COUNTRY HOME - DAY

Damian and Madeleine wait in front of an IRON GATE. Beyond it, past the lawn, the pool and the rose garden, a beautiful and luxurious COUNTRY HOME stands.

Anna waits in the minivan, behind them.

MADELEINE

He'll think you're a nutjob.

DAMIAN

We'll see.

Finally, the intercom crackles.

MARTIN (O.S.)

Hello?

DAMIAN

Mr. Leary?

MARTIN (O.S.)

Yes?

DAMIAN

I have a message for you, from a common friend. Damian Hayes.

CUT TO:

A GLASS filling up with SCOTCH.

INT. MARTIN'S COUNTRY HOME - OFFICE - DAY

Martin pours his drink and deliberately adds a couple of ice cubes. By him, JUDY (50) sits, elegant and beautiful. The years have been kind to her but SHE LOOKS WORRIED.

At the other end of the room, Damian and Madeleine wait expectantly. She takes a quick look through the half open door. Beyond it, Anna waits, sitting in front of a glass of milk and a plate of cookies.

Finally, Martin takes a sip and turns to them.

MARTIN

I saw him die, you know? With my own eyes.

DAMIAN

You saw what they wanted you to see. Trust me, I know how insane all this sounds. And I wouldn't have come to you if we had any other option, but...

MARTIN

(growingly angry)

But you expect me give up my plane to some strangers with a wild story.

DAMIAN

I'm not a stranger. It's me, Damian.

MARTIN

Stop it! Damian's dead.

MADELEINE

Let's go. This is pointless.

DAMIAN

I've known you for 25 years. Fresh out of law school.

MARTIN
I said stop it!

Judy suddenly stands up and REACHES FOR THE PHONE.

JUDY
I'm calling the police.

DAMIAN
Wait! Wait.

Judy stops, the receiver already in her hand.

Damian struggles to find something to say. One chance. Don't screw it up.

Finally, he speaks...

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
One night, nine years ago, Martin showed up at my door, stinking drunk. "It's over", he said. All those years trying to get pregnant, they'd taken its toll and... that was it. Time to file for a divorce.

(beat)
I did the only sensible thing a friend could do. I got drunk with him.

Judy slowly hangs up the phone.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
A couple of bottles of Scotch later, we were watching the sun rise. And the phone rang. It was you. You just found out you were pregnant. Impossible but true. Martin cried. He said it was a miracle.

Judy finally breaks down and her eyes fill with tears.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
I never forgot that night.

Martin rushes to his wife and HUGS HER. She lets go and sobs.

JUDY
My baby... my baby...

Martin looks Damian straight in the eye.

MARTIN
You'll fly out tonight.

DAMIAN
Thank you.

MARTIN
Give us a moment now, please.

Damian nods, grateful.

INT. MARTIN'S COUNTRY HOME - DINING ROOM - DAY

Damian closes the office's door behind him when Madeleine notices the EMPTY CHAIR. The leftovers of the milk and cookies lie on the table, but...

MADELEINE
Anna?

...ANNA IS GONE.

Damian looks out the window and smiles. There she is, standing by the outdoors SWIMMING POOL.

EXT. MARTIN'S COUNTRY HOME - SWIMMING POOL - DAY

Damian slowly approaches Anna from behind. She stands by the pool's edge, watching its shimmering surface longingly.

DAMIAN
What's wrong, button? You forgot
your swimsuit?

ANNA
(without turning)
It's not that.

DAMIAN
(understanding)
I never got around to teach you,
did I?

Anna, very serious, shakes her head no.

ANNA
You left before I got better.

DAMIAN
Right...

Damian doubts for a beat. Should he say it?

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
Well, you're better now, aren't
you?

Anna suddenly turns to Damian, EYES WIDE OPEN in excitement.

ANNA
I am!

Damian smiles at her reaction.

DAMIAN
What are you waiting for, then? Get
your swimsuit!

Anna immediately runs inside, almost tripping on the
doorstep.

ANNA
MOM!

CUT TO:

THE SUN LIGHT FILTERING THROUGH THE WATER SURFACE. We are
underwater.

Suddenly, SOMETHING BREAKS THE SURFACE and sinks. It's ANNA,
wearing a pink swimsuit and goggles, her cheeks full of air,
her nose pinched.

A PAIR OF HANDS lifts her to the surface. Damian.

This is the beginning of a MONTAGE:

We see Anna squeal, splash and laugh as DAMIAN TEACHES THE
GIRL TO SWIM. He holds her over the surface while the girl
practices her strokes and her breathing.

Sitting on a lawn chair, Madeleine watches them, uneasy at
first, but growingly ambivalent, until she can't help but
LAUGH AND CLAP when...

Damian lets go of Anna and SHE FINALLY TAKES HER FIRST
STROKES ON HER OWN. Anna swims across the pool while DAMIAN
AND MADELEINE CHEER.

For a moment, Damian's the father he never was to his own
daughter. For a moment, he's Mark and the family is whole
again.

From the second floor of the house, JUDY SULLENLY WATCHES THE
HAPPY SCENE. Martin walks to her and puts a comforting hand
on her shoulder.

INT. MARTIN'S COUNTRY HOME - LIVING ROOM - DUSK

Leaving a trail of wet footsteps, Anna runs upstairs, wrapped in a towel, taking two steps at a time. Madeleine appears at the bottom of the stairs.

MADELEINE

Hey, slow down, little lady! Do you want me to help you?

Reaching the second floor, Anna turns...

ANNA

I'm not a baby!

...and immediately takes off again, disappearing into a room.

MADELEINE

I know, I know...

Damian appears from behind, buttoning his shirt, his hair still wet. He looks out the window to find THE SUN SETTING behind the treeline.

DAMIAN

It's getting dark. All this... it will be over soon.

MADELEINE

Are you sure?

DAMIAN

I promise.

MADELEINE

But where are we gonna go?

DAMIAN

(trying to make the best out of it)

Wherever you want. Any place you ever dreamed living in.

Damian puts his hand in his pocket and produces the BLACK POUCH, the one he kept in the buried tin box.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)

Here. This should take care of everything you may need.

Madeleine looks inside the pouch. It's full of SPARKLING DIAMONDS. There's a fortune in there.

MADELEINE

Wait, you're not coming with us?

DAMIAN

I can't. I... I have a daughter.
She's in New York. It's not safe
for her there. I have to go back.

Madeleine nods, understanding. She would do anything for her daughter too.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)

Don't worry. Martin will take care
of you.

INT. MARTIN'S COUNTRY HOME - GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

Anna, now dressed, finishes to tie her shoes when...

A NOISE catches her attention: a BUZZING SOUND coming from outside the room.

INT. MARTIN'S COUNTRY HOME - 2ND FLOOR HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Anna steps out of the room, filled with curiosity.

ANNA

Hello?

The buzzing is now LOUDER, CLEARER. It comes from behind a door, at the other end of the dark hallway.

Anna slowly walks towards the door, and the light that comes from under it.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Hello?

Finally, Anna reaches the other end of the hallway, wraps her hand around the doorknob and pushes. The door opens with a CREAKING SOUND, and...

...what it reveals, we don't see yet.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Hi. I'm Anna. What's your name?

CUT TO:

DAMIAN's HANDS SPLASHING WATER ON HIS FACE.

INT. MARTIN'S COUNTRY HOME - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Damian dries his face with a towel when he notice something strange: Over the sink, THERE'S NO MIRROR. It's been removed.

This gives him pause. Why would anyone remove the mirror from the bathroom?

INT. MARTIN'S COUNTRY HOME - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Damian storms out of the bathroom and rushes through the hallway.

The first thing he notices is a big DARK SPOT on the wallpaper, like something was missing: ANOTHER MIRROR most likely.

DAMIAN
Madeleine?

Then he notices something else: On the wall, by the stairs, a constellation of TINY PICTURE FRAME HOOKS. The family pictures have been removed as well!

What the hell is going on?

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
Madeleine!

Madeleine comes out of the living room and stops dead when she sees Damian's concerned look.

MADELEINE
What's wrong?

DAMIAN
Where's Anna?

SMASH CUT TO:

THE GUEST BEDROOM DOORS BLASTING OPEN.

INT. MARTIN'S COUNTRY HOME - GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

MADELEINE
Anna!

But the bedroom is empty. Only the wet towel remains, lying on the floor.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)
ANNA!

Suddenly, Damian makes a gesture for SILENCE. A distant BUZZ catches their attention.

INT. MARTIN'S COUNTRY HOME - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Damian and Madeleine exit the room. Again, the mysterious buzzing sound seems to come from the other end of the hallway.

The two of them carefully approach the door and open it, revealing a...

PLAYROOM

Anna sits on the carpeted floor of a colorful room crowded with toys, board games and stuffed animals. Any kid's dream come true.

Sitting by her side, his back towards them, there's a MYSTERIOUS BOY (9). Anna and the boy are concentrated racing REMOTE CONTROL CARS, the source of the buzzing.

MADELEINE

Anna? Who is this?

Anna turns for a split second...

ANNA

His name's Tony. He lives here.

...but immediately goes back to the game.

DAMIAN

Anna, honey, say goodbye to your friend. It's time to go.

MADELEINE

What's wrong?

DAMIAN

He's Martin and Judy's son.

(to Anna)

You heard me. Time to go.

MADELEINE

So?

DAMIAN

He died a year ago.

CUT TO:

INT. MARTIN'S COUNTRY HOME - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

The door slowly opens revealing Damian. HE PULLS OUT HIS GUN as he steps out of the room. Madeleine follows, CARRYING ANNA in her arms.

As they carefully walk towards the stairs, Anna turns to see TONY STANDING BY THE PLAYROOM DOOR.

ANNA
(waving her hand)
Bye!

Tony WAVES BACK. He looks sad to be left alone once again.

Damian is taking the stairs when...

JUDY appears running at the bottom of the stairs.

JUDY
Tony!

Damian immediately raises the gun.

DAMIAN
Step back. Step back!

Judy complies, taking a couple of steps back.

Damian descends with his gun on Judy, closely followed by a terrified Madeleine.

INT. MARTIN'S COUNTRY HOME - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

As soon as they walk past Judy, the mother runs upstairs to her son.

Damian and Madeleine are rushing towards the exit, when...

MARTIN (O.S.)
Put that thing down, will you?

Damian immediately turns, POINTING HIS GUN AT MARTIN, who stands in a corner of the room.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
No need for it.

But Damian keeps the gun on him.

MADELEINE
What the hell did you do to your son?

MARTIN

I saved his life, like any other
father would've done.

MADELEINE

(horrified)

By turning him into a freak?
Shutting him away from the world?
Burning every photograph, breaking
every mirror?

MARTIN

(snapping)

He was our miracle, goddamit!

Martin takes a deep breath, regains control of himself.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Kids, they-- they endure. They
forget. One day, he won't even
remember what he looked like. He'll
just know he used to be a sick kid,
that's all.

DAMIAN

There's no plane waiting for us, is
there?

MARTIN

(sincere)

I'm afraid not, Damian. Sorry.

Damian moves the curtain to take a peak outside. NOT A
MOVEMENT in the garden. The pool eerily glows in the shadows.

DAMIAN

How much time do we have?

MARTIN

You have to understand, I owe them
everything. I---

Damian PRESSES THE BARREL OF HIS GUN against Martin's face.

DAMIAN

HOW MUCH TIME DO WE HAVE?!!!

Martin swallows hard, feeling the cold steel against his
cheek.

MARTIN

None. None at all. They're already
outside, waiting.

(MORE)

MARTIN (CONT'D)
As soon as we leave for the
airport, they'll fall on us.

Damian pulls his gun away.

DAMIAN
You son of a bitch.

MADELEINE
What are we gonna do?

Damian thinks for a beat.

DAMIAN
I'm going out.

MADELEINE
Out?

Damian nods.

DAMIAN
I'll take one of his cars. Blast
through those doors. When they come
after me, I want you to take Anna
and run.

MADELEINE
Run? Run where?

DAMIAN
Sneak out through the woods in the
back. Get to the road. Use the
diamonds and buy your way out the
country.

MADELEINE
I-- I can't.

Damian grabs her hands and looks her in the eye.

DAMIAN
Yes, you can. Of course, you can.

MARTIN
I'll take them. I'll get them
there.

Damian looks at his friend, the traitor, and considers him.
Can he really trust him?

Finally, Martin's contrite expression convinces him and
Damian NODS, accepting the offer.

MADELEINE

What about you?

DAMIAN

I'll... I'll find you. Wherever you are.

Madeleine realizes that he's lying. His chances of escaping are slim to none. Damian's sacrificing himself for them. And for a moment, despite how she feels about this man, SHE'S ACTUALLY MOVED.

MADELEINE

Thank you.

Damian SMILES for a second, but then turns to Martin, waving his gun.

DAMIAN

Come on. Let's go.

CUT TO:

A ROW OF LUXURY AND VINTAGE CARS OF ALL KINDS.

INT. MARTIN'S COUNTRY HOME - GARAGE - NIGHT

Damian examines the cars, followed by the Martin.

MARTIN

I had no choice, Damian. I--

DAMIAN

I don't want to hear it.

MARTIN

They own me. Hell, they own us all with those fucking pills.

Damian stops. He looks at Martin as something dawns on him...

DAMIAN

"They can help you..." It was you, wasn't it?

Beat.

MARTIN

I should've never send you that card. I'm sorry.

DAMIAN

I should've never said yes.

MARTIN

So much for the wisdom of old age.

They both chuckle. A reconciliation between old friends. But there's no time to lose.

Damian notices a car at the end of the row: AN SUV WITH TINTED WINDOWS.

DAMIAN

What about that one?

MARTIN

We tinted the windows for Tony, to keep the neighbors from talking.

DAMIAN

I'll take it.

EXT. MARTIN'S COUNTRY HOME - MOMENTS LATER

The GARAGE DOOR OPEN, revealing the BLINDING HEADLIGHTS of the SUV, its engine roaring.

INT. SUV - CONTINUOUS

Suddenly, Damian STEPS ON THE GAS, hard, and the car PEELS OFF.

The car gains speed as Damian recklessly drive it on the windy gravel path. He makes a sharp turn, the WHEELS SKIDDING OVER THE GRAVEL.

Suddenly, there it is: THE GATE RAPIDLY APPROACHING. Damian braces for the impact and...

BLAAAM! The whole car shakes as IT BLASTS THROUGH THE DOORS.

SMASH CUT TO:

TREES WIPING FRAME AT GREAT SPEED.

EXT. FOREST - AT THE SAME TIME

Madeleine and Anna run through the woods, following Martin, their breaths quickened.

The country house is now a receding island of light in the middle of the dark forest.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - AT THE SAME TIME

The SUV roars through the road when...

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! HEADLIGHTS TURN ON one after the other, piercing the darkness.

TWO BLACK CARS, hidden by the side of the road, peel off and GIVE CHASE TO DAMIAN'S CAR. Albright's men.

EXT. FOREST - AT THE SAME TIME

Suddenly, FLASHLIGHTS in the forest, cutting through the darkness.

Martin and Madeleine FREEZE. Martin immediately crouches, while Madeleine scoops Anna from the ground, pressing her body against a tree trunk, as she holds her daughter tight.

Hidden, Martin and Madeleine hold their breaths as they see the BEAMS OF LIGHT SCANNING THE WOODS.

Albright's men are closing in.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - AT THE SAME TIME

The two black cars are rapidly catching up to Damian.

One of them STARTS HITTING DAMIAN'S SUV, trying to push it off road.

EXT. FOREST - AT THE SAME TIME

Madeleine can hear the FOOTSTEPS growing louder.

The mercenaries, dark silhouettes in the night, are slowly closing in on her and her daughter.

Martin closes his eyes. Madeleine covers Anna's mouth to prevent her from screaming. But it's useless. They're on them. There's NO WAY OUT.

But, suddenly, one of the men's WALKIES BUZZES.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Attention. Targets located. They've been spotted driving away in a black SUV. All units head to I-87 immediately.

With this message, the mercenaries immediately TURN AROUND and vanish into the darkness.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - AT THE SAME TIME

The first black car keeps hitting the rear of the SUV while the second one places himself to Damian's right and...

...PUSHES THE SUV towards the STEEP SLOPE by the side of the road.

For a second, Damian's car skids and one of its REAR WHEELS SPINS OVER THE VOID!!!

But Damian regains control and takes a RIGHT, crashing the SUV against the car and getting back on the paved road.

When the first car gets ready to ram him again from behind...

...Damian STEPS ON THE BRAKES!!! And the two vehicles VIOLENTLY COLLIDE. A raw and brutal impact.

The stunned DRIVER looks up and sees Damian STEP ON THE GAS and DRAG THE BLACK CAR WITH HIM. Because of the collision, his FRONT BUMPER is now STUCK to the SUV's REAR BUMPER.

The Driver produces his GUN and BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! SHOOTS AT DAMIAN through the windshield.

Damian DUCKS as bullets and pieces of glass fly over his head.

And then, he starts SWERVING the SUV wildly, making, in turn, the attached car swerve too, MESSING WITH THE DRIVERS AIM, who now shoots randomly left and right.

But the second car is back, hitting from the right flank.

Suddenly, DAMIAN MAKES A SHARP RIGHT and the SUV SKIDS!!!

The car turns 180 degrees, making the black car turn with it. But it doesn't stop there! It just keeps skidding until...

The SECOND DRIVER sees the FIRST CAR LUNGING TOWARDS HIM SIDEWAYS.

SECOND DRIVER
AAAAAAHHH!!!

And, BOOOOM!!! BOTH BLACK CARS GO OUT IN A FIREBALL...

...as the SUV is released and DAMIAN DRIVES AWAY FROM THE EXPLOSION.

He looks at the EMPTY ROAD through the rearview mirror. No more pursuers. He's home free.

Damian smiles, satisfied, as he drives into the night.

Suddenly, he seems to SEE SOMETHING coming over a hill and straight to him. It's hard to tell in the dark but it seems to be MOVING FAST.

Could it be a CAR WITH THE HEADLIGHTS OFF?

Indeed. It's a BLACK CAR, rushing straight towards him!!!

Damian turns the wheel, hard, trying to avoid it, but...

Too late!!! THE BLACK CAR IS CHARGING SUICIDALLY AGAINST THE SUV and...

CRAAAAASH!!! THE TWO VEHICLES COLLIDE HEAD-ON!!!

There's a moment of silence as THE CLOUD OF DUST settles around the two completely wrecked vehicles.

Suddenly, the SUV's door opens and Damian CRAWLS out of it, bleeding and in pain.

From the black car, we see the driver stepping out: ANTON, also bruised and covered in blood.

Anton limps towards Damian and KICKS HIM in the stomach while he's down. Damian rolls on the ground.

Anton KICKS AGAIN, but...

Damian grabs Anton's leg and SINKS HIS FINGERS into an open wound. Anton FALLS on the ground, howling in pain. The two men roll on the dusty ground.

It's a SLOW AND BRUTISH FIGHT, where the two exhausted men, not ready to give up, throw clumsy punches at each other.

Anton SMASHES DAMIAN'S FACE against the ground, the dust mixing with his blood. Keeping him down, he produces his GUN and PRESSES IT AGAINST DAMIAN'S HEAD, ready to execute him.

With a sudden move, Damian ELBOWS ANTON'S ARM. The GUN FIRES but the bullet hits the ground.

Both men struggle for control of the gun. Damian twists Anton's arm towards him and BANG! A bullet PIERCES ANTON'S SHOULDER.

Anton falls back, still gripping the gun.

Suddenly, BIG CLOUDS OF DUST APPROACH. FAST. More company cars.

Damian crawls, as fast as he can, towards Anton, who lies on the ground semiconscious, and tries to reach the gun in time.

But, just as he grabs the weapon, he finds himself SURROUNDED BY CARS AND MERCENARIES aiming their guns at him.

MERCENARIES
Freeze! Don't move! DON'T MOVE!!!

Damian freezes. Still on his knees, HE RAISES HIS HANDS and lets the gun slip through his fingers. A MERCENARY twists Damian's arms behind his back and puts a pair of PLASTIC HANDCUFFS around his wrists.

ALBRIGHT steps out of one of the vehicles and walk towards the WRECKED SUV.

He opens the door but FINDS IT EMPTY.

ALBRIGHT
(to Damian, furious)
Where are they?! WHERE ARE THEY?!

Damian responds with a SHIT EATING GRIN.

ALBRIGHT (CONT'D)
Don't fool yourself. We'll find them.

Albright makes a GESTURE to his men and...

Suddenly, A BLACK HOOD FALLS ON DAMIAN'S HEAD.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST - DAWN

Finally, the darkness starts to dissolve. A new day is coming.

Madeleine spots a ROAD beyond the trees. They made it! As she rushes towards it, she takes one last look over her shoulder:

Martin stands there, watching them run to safety.

EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Madeleine emerges from the treeline, carrying Anna. With her free arm, she WAVES at the cars that zoom by...

MADELEINE
Hey! HEEEEY!!!

...until A SEMI-TRAILER TRUCK comes to a halt a few feet past them.

Madeleine runs to it as the PASSENGER'S DOOR POPS OPEN.

INT. SEMI-TRAILER TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Madeleine helps Anna climb into the truck and gets inside.

MADELEINE
Thank you.

As the vehicle starts moving, Madeleine looks out the window to see THE SUN RISING ABOVE THE TREELINE.

DRIVER (O.S.)
Where you going, Ma'am?

But Madeleine doesn't answer. She can only watch the sunrise and wonder what the future holds for her and her daughter.

DRIVER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Ma'am? Where are you going?

SMASH CUT TO:

THE BLACK HOOD IS PULLED OFF DAMIAN'S HEAD, and he finds himself in an...

ASEPTIC ROOM

Damian sits on a chair in the middle of a white room, sparsely furnished. A CURTAIN covers the only window in the room.

It's not hard to guess that he's been brought back to the HEADQUARTERS of the company.

Albright stares at him from the other end of the room.

ALBRIGHT
Do you know what disappoints me the most? How ungrateful you've turned out to be. People would kill for an opportunity like this.

Behind Damian, one of the mercenaries who pulled off the bag CUTS THE PLASTIC HANDCUFFS.

DAMIAN
I apparently did.

ALBRIGHT
Mr. Russell volunteered. But you
almost killed my best man.

Albright pulls the curtain, revealing an adjacent room.
Beyond the glass, ANTON LIES ON A HOSPITAL BED, intubated.

ALBRIGHT (CONT'D)
He's in a deep comma. But still
somewhere in there. Anton's a
strong man. He doesn't give up
easily.

A TEAM OF NURSES prepares Anton to be wheeled out of the room. At the same time, the men behind Damian take off his watch and his belt. Damian grows uneasy.

DAMIAN
What are you doing?

ALBRIGHT
Repossess the merchandise, give it
to who'll certainly appreciate my
gift.

It dawns on Damian: They're going to use Damian's body to save Anton's life.

DAMIAN
No, wait, you can't. This body is
MY property!

ALBRIGHT
We had a contract, Mr. Hayes. But
you broke it.

DAMIAN
Wait! WAIT! Let's write a new one,
then!

Suddenly, Damian slips through the men's fingers and JUMPS ON ALBRIGHT! In the face of Death, Damian is a desperate man.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
Let me buy it again. I have
contacts. I can get you so much
more money.

The two mercenaries immediately PULL HIM AWAY from his boss. Albright SMILES, satisfied, as he fixes his tie and jacket.

ALBRIGHT

See? Wouldn't you kill right now
just to live a little bit longer?
No one's ever ready to die, Mr.
Hayes.

(to his men)
Get him ready.

As his men start undressing Damian, Albright leaves the room.
He SLAMS the door behind and we...

SMASH CUT TO:

A SWINGING DOOR BLASTING OPEN.

INT. HALLWAY

A GURNEY is rushed down a long hallway by TWO NURSES. Damian twists and turns on it, fighting the STRAPS holding his arms and legs, as well the MOUTHPIECE that MUFFLES HIS SCREAMS.

The gurney blasts through another SWINGING DOOR, entering...

INT. CIRCULAR CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Like before, Damian is wheeled across the room to the MACHINE under Albright's supervision, watching from the control room.

Damian is lifted from the gurney and strapped again on one of the "MRI" beds.

But this time it's the OPPOSITE BED. Anton lies on the bed he occupied the first time, and Damian... he's on the receiving end. This time, he's the vessel.

THE MACHINE IS TURNED ON. As it starts humming, slowly building, growing louder, and its movable parts start spinning, DAMIAN'S BED SLIDES INTO THE MACHINE.

Inside, the machine is IMPOSSIBLY LOUD, roaring and hammering. Damian's BREATH QUICKENS, terrified, when...

Suddenly, HIS WHOLE BODY CONTORTS AND HIS BACK ARCHES, like he was struck by lightning and a 1000 VOLTS RAN THROUGH HIM.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Beyond the glass, Albright impassively watches Damian convulse.

THE MACHINE SPINS FASTER AND FASTER as its noise becomes DEAFENING.

MALE TECHNICIAN (O.S.)
Sir?! Sir! I think something's wrong!

Albright turns to a terrified MALE TECHNICIAN and notices what he's looking at with widened eyes:

The Technician's TIE IS FLOATING, as if it was being pulled. But it's actually the TIE PIN that it's being ATTRACTED BY AN INVISIBLE FORCE.

Suddenly, the pin is yanked from the tie and flies across the room, GETTING STUCK TO THE GLASS PARTITION.

ALBRIGHT
What the hell...

Albright reaches for the pin with his fingers and...

ALBRIGHT (CONT'D)
Shit!

...GETS SHOCKED when he touches it. The pin is electrically charged.

Soon, all the computer screens light up with ERROR MESSAGES. The Female Technician behind the keyboards turns to Albright.

FEMALE TECHNICIAN
Sir! We should stop the process!

ALBRIGHT
Too late for that! We have to let the cycle finish!

ALL THE EQUIPMENT around them, screens and huge CPU towers, start to GROAN AND TREMBLE, magnetically attracted to the machine.

One by one, all the small metallic objects in the room (pens, coins, wire-rimmed glasses...) dart across the room, SMASHING AGAINST THE GLASS like flies against a windshield.

Albright and the technicians DROP TO THE FLOOR as ALL THE ALARMS GO OFF and THE GLASS STARTS TO CRACK.

INT. CIRCULAR CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Inside the machine, DAMIAN SHAKES UNCONTROLLABLY, his teeth sinking hard into the mouth guard, his face almost a blur. It seems as if his body is about to split in two, when...

...suddenly, EVERYTHING STOPS. The machine has finished the cycle and it's turning itself off.

The only noise in the room now is a PROLONGED BEEP indicating that ANTON'S BODY HAS FLATLINED.

Albright and the two technicians rush into the room and slide Damian's bed out of the machine. The Female Technician takes the mouth guard off as Albright opens one of his eyelids and checks his pupils with a small flashlight.

ALBRIGHT

Can you hear me? Shake your head if you hear me.

Slowly, Damian moves his head. He can hear.

ALBRIGHT (CONT'D)

Good. Can you speak? What's your name?

Damian mumbles something unintelligible.

ALBRIGHT (CONT'D)

Can you tell me your name?

Finally, louder this time...

DAMIAN (?)

(a slight Russian accent)

Anton Rublev.

The process worked. Damian is gone, and Anton has taken over the body. But just to be sure...

ALBRIGHT

And what are you daughters names?

Anton replies something in Russian.

ALBRIGHT (CONT'D)

In English, please.

ANTON

I have no daughters.

Albright smiles, satisfied.

INT. RECOVERY ROOM - LATER

Anton lies in bed in the windowless room. Unable to sleep, his eyes are fixed on the milky overhead light.

Suddenly, there's a KNOCK, and the door opens. Albright.

ALBRIGHT

How are you feeling?

ANTON

Like a new man.

ALBRIGHT

I just wanted to let you know that they just brought in the woman. I'll tell one of your men to take care of her.

ANTON

No. I'll do it. I'm ready.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

Anton, now fully dressed, follows TWO OF HIS MEN down the hallway.

They walk past several doors (recovery rooms, storage rooms, offices...) until, finally, they stop at an unmarked door.

INT. HOLDING CELL - CONTINUOUS

Inside the cell, Anton finds a WOMAN tied to a chair, with A BAG OVER HER HEAD. Could it be Madeleine?

One of the men pulls the bag, revealing...

...CLAIRe, gagged and terrified.

She looks confused when she recognizes what used to be Damian's face. But she immediately reacts, GRUNTING FOR HELP.

CLAIRe

--ease, -e- -e -o!!!

Damian/Anton's face betrays no emotion. He extends his arm, and one of the mercenaries immediately puts A GUN WITH A SILENCER in his hand.

It dawns on Claire. He's not here to help her.

Claire CLOSES HER EYES, weeping, as Anton aims at Claire's head, cocks his gun and...

POP-POP. Two shots...

...but NOTHING HAPPENS. Claire opens her eyes, surprised to still be alive.

And then, THE TWO MERCENARIES CRUMBLE TO THE FLOOR. Anton has shot them!

Anton rushes to untie Claire.

CLAIRe (CONT'D)
What the hell is going on?

ANTON
I'm going to get you out of here,
ok? But I need you to do everything
I say. And no questions.

We realize that Anton's RUSSIAN ACCENT IS GONE. It's not Anton after all inside the body, but Damian.

How's that even possible? How did he survive the procedure?

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Damian moves swiftly but silently through the hallway, closely followed by Claire. He's retracing his steps, until he reaches...

...THE STORAGE ROOM he walked past before. They sneak in.

INT. STORAGE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The room is full of MEDICAL EQUIPMENT. Damian immediately springs into action.

One by one, he opens all the OXYGEN TANKS lined by the wall. Their content slowly hisses into the room.

Then, he grabs a couple of JUGS sitting on a shelf and POURS THEIR CHEMICAL CONTENT all over the room.

Finally, he STRIKES A MATCH and drops it on the floor. As the FLAMES SPREAD, Damian and Claire exit the room.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Damian and Claire walk away from the storage room as a WHIFF OF BLACK SMOKE starts to flow from under the door.

A MAN dressed in scrubs walk past by them, when he stops. HE LOOKS AT CLAIRE, suspicious. She shouldn't be there.

DOCTOR

Excuse me.

Suddenly, BOOOOOOM!!! A huge BALL OF FIRE makes the storage room door fly off its hinges.

RIIIIIIIIIIIING! The FIRE ALARM starts blaring as the SPRINKLERS RAIN on Damian and Claire.

The two of them walk away, without looking back, as CHAOS AND PANIC SPREADS IN THE HEADQUARTERS.

The workers run and scramble trying to contain the fire without noticing the two figures sneaking towards the exit.

Damian and Claire rush along the hallway, towards the EXIT DOOR he took earlier. Damian opens it.

INT. LOADING DOCK - CONTINUOUS

The two step on the loading dock where he once was dropped. Beyond the metal shutter at the other end of the room, there's the OUTSIDE WORLD.

Home free... Almost.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Anton?

Damian turns to find ALBRIGHT behind them, standing at the door. He looks puzzled, but...

...when he sees CLAIRE, Albright seems to understand. Damian immediately POINTS THE GUN AT HIM.

ALBRIGHT

How did you...?

Damian smiles as he produces something small from his pocket... It's Albright's TIE PIN.

CUT TO:

INT. ASEPTIC ROOM (FLASHBACK)

Once again, we see Damian slip through the men's fingers and jump on Albright.

DAMIAN

Let me buy it again. I have contacts. I can get you so much more money.

Albright's men immediately PULL HIM AWAY from his boss. But this time we notice that DAMIAN HAS GRABBED ALBRIGHT'S TIE PIN and hides it in HIS MOUTH.

INT. CIRCULAR CHAMBER - LATER (FLASHBACK)

Damian violently shakes inside the machine, as it GROANS AND SPINS out of control. All the ALARMS GO OFF.

The CAMERA rapidly approaches Damian's face until, in one of the ELECTRICAL FLASHES, like an X RAY, we see the TIE PIN HIDDEN UNDER HIS TONGUE, causing the machine to malfunction.

Damian has effectively nullified the procedure.

CUT TO:

The TIE PIN HITTING THE GROUND, taking us back to the...

LOADING DOCK

Albright doesn't look intimidated. He keeps his confident facade.

ALBRIGHT

You know you won't. You can't.

Slowly, Albright starts walking towards Damian and Claire.

ALBRIGHT (CONT'D)

How long will you last out there without us, Mr. Hayes?

The name doesn't go unnoticed to Claire.

ALBRIGHT (CONT'D)

How long until the pills run out? A week? Two? And then what?

Damian doesn't answer. He keeps pointing the gun at him, his face betraying no emotion.

ALBRIGHT (CONT'D)
I'll tell you what. Then...

Albright blows his fist, as he opens it. WHOOSH. GONE WITH THE WIND.

ALBRIGHT (CONT'D)
(smiling)
Put the gun down. You're a business man. I'm sure we can strike a dea--

POP! DAMIAN PULLS THE TRIGGER and Albright hits the ground, with A BULLET IN HIS HEAD. He won't be coming back.

CUT TO:

The METAL SHUTTERS OPENING.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - DAWN

Damian and Claire step out of the building, to realize it's an INDISTINCT WAREHOUSE in the middle of an unremarkable industrial area. THE SUN IS COMING UP.

Soaked to the bone, father and daughter walk away from the BURNING BUILDING, trying not to attract any attention.

Damian produces the GUN and throws it into a DUMPSTER when...

Suddenly, a couple of POLICE CARS, sirens blaring, DART PAST THEM in the opposite direction. After them, FIRE TRUCKS.

As the fire trucks gather around the warehouse and Damian and Claire get lost into the crowd, the CAMERA rises to reveal, past the black pillar of smoke...

...the MANHATTAN SKYLINE, looming in the background. The headquarters were in Queens all along.

EXT. CLAIRE'S BUILDING - DAY

A CAB stops by the curb, dropping Damian and Claire.

Claire takes a couple of steps up to stoop when she notices that Damian is staying on the sidewalk. He's not coming in.

CLAIRe
So this is goodbye?

DAMIAN
I guess so.

Claire thinks for a beat, not knowing how to ask.

CLAIRe

The name he... Hayes... How did--
how did you say you met my father
again?

Damian smiles.

DAMIAN

It was a long time ago.

CLAIRe

Yeah, but were you--? Are we rel--?

Claire stops, unsure how to ask, frustrated with herself.

CLAIRe (CONT'D)

Are you sure you have to go?

DAMIAN

I can't...

CLAIRe

But you two were close, right? I
mean, I'd just love if you could,
you know, tell me some more about
him...

Damian nods, understanding, and finally...

DAMIAN

He thought about you. All the time.
I think he regretted not getting to
know you better.

Claire nods, grateful. She knows that's all she'll get from
him.

CLAIRe

Thank you.

Damian looks at her for a long silent beat, until...

DAMIAN

Have a good life, OK?

He CARESSES CLAIRe'S CHEEK. She's is surprised by it, but
lets him do it. Somehow, it feels right.

Claire watches the mysterious man walk away and DISAPPEAR
INTO THE EARLY MORNING CROWD, unsuspecting that this was her
last encounter with her dead father.

The CAMERA turns to a STOREFRONT displaying half a dozen of FLAT SCREEN TVs. On all the screens, a NEWSCASTER reports in front of the ruins of a CHARRED BUILDING. It's the warehouse in Queens!

NEWSCASTER

...a surprising new development on the mysterious fire that broke out in Long Island City this morning. What seems to be an illegal clinic has been found in the building. Police are investigating...

As we PUSH IN on the Newscaster, we...

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

DAMIAN, eyes closed, sleeping.

Slowly, he wakes up, his head a little hazy, like he was coming out of the deepest sleep.

He looks confused when he sees where he is:

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

It's a warm and cozy bedroom kept in darkness by thick curtains.

Damian spots something on a desk: It's a LAPTOP. A post-it on its screen reads: "PLAY ME".

He slowly gets out of bed and walks to the computer. He presses the SPACE BAR and A VIDEO POPS UP onscreen.

Recorded in that same room, it shows DAMIAN HIMSELF. He wears the exact same clothes, but looks FRAZZLED AND ILL. Pale and covered in cold sweat, HE TALKS TO THE CAMERA.

DAMIAN (VIDEO)
Hello, Mark. My name is Damian,
Damian Hayes. We've never met, but
I'm the man who bought your body.

Shocked and confused, Damian, who we now realize it's actually MARK, TAKES A SEAT.

DAMIAN (VIDEO) (CONT'D)
Many things have happened while you
were gone. You'll find out in time.
(MORE)

DAMIAN (VIDEO) (CONT'D)
I just wanted to thank you for the
months you've given me. Now I
understand it's time for me to go.

Damian, on the screen, produces the BOTTLE OF PILLS and sadly smiles as he shows it to Mark.

DAMIAN (VIDEO) (CONT'D)
I've haven't taken one in a couple
of weeks, and I can already feel
you coming back. In the morning, I
won't be me.

Mark spots the BOTTLE lying next to the computer.

DAMIAN (VIDEO) (CONT'D)
Welcome back, Mark. And please,
take good care of Maddie and Anna.

THE SCREEN GOES BLACK.

Mark gets up from the computer and exits the bedroom.

INT. RUSTIC HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The house beyond the door is dark but strangely familiar.

Mark walks down the empty hallway and takes the stairs to the ground floor, also deserted.

He keeps walking, like in a dream, towards the door. He PUSHES IT OPEN, reveling.

EXT. RUSTIC HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

...a SPECTACULAR VISTA of the ocean. The sun shines. The water is impossibly blue.

Just like in Damian's dream, there's a PIER that goes into the water. And like in the dream, THERE'S A WOMAN at the end of the pier.

Mark walks to her. And when she turns...

It's MADELEINE.

When Madeleine sees him, she watches him approach, a little hesitant. Is he...?

MARK SMILES. Yes, it's him.

MADELEINE
Mark!

Madeleine runs to his arms and THE TWO EMBRACE.

Out of the ocean comes ANNA, in her swimsuit. And when she sees Mark...

ANNA
Daddy!!!

She runs to her father and jumps into his arms.

The CAMERA pulls back as we see the family finally reunited.

FADE TO BLACK.