

MENA

by
Gary Spinelli

Based on true events

EXT. STRIP MALL - NIGHT

Backwater, USA. Weeds pop out of asphalt. Several payphones bookend the boarded-up and abandoned strip mall.

BARRY SEAL (40ish) wheels a Cadillac Seville into the parking lot. Dark circles hang under his eyes and an extra thirty pounds hang on his waist, put on in the last year.

SUPER: "February 19, 1986, 6 p.m. - Mena, Arkansas"

He stubs out a Cuban cigar and drops a blanket over the backseat. His bed for the night.

THREE COLOMBIAN ASSASSINS armed with silencer-equipped MAC-10 and Uzi submachine guns appear out of the shadows.

Barry looks up, unsurprised by his guests. He slowly raises his hands and gives the assassins a great big smile:

BARRY
Evenin', fellas.

CUT TO BLACK:

BARRY (V.O.)
'Bout the only redeeming thing I
can say about the town of Mena,
it's a piece of history where you
least expect it.

INT. ROOM - DAY

Obscured in shadows. Light peeks through covered windows. Hard to make out too many details in here.

SUPER: "Yesterday"

Barry Seal plops down in a dusty chair. Part genius. Part good 'ol boy. His Louisiana accent can best be described as cultured hick. But behind his sparkling eyes and jovial expression lies many secrets -- his stock-in-trade.

A TAPE RECORDER is dropped on the table in front of him. Barry speaks to someone UNSEEN:

BARRY
You don't look too worried.
(expression turns serious)
That's a mistake. There could be
heavy hitters outside here right
now ready to turn you, me, this
room, into sawdust.
(beat)
(MORE)

BARRY (CONT'D)

And when word gets out this tape exists? Whew. A shitstorm's gonna rain down from high above. So, last chance...

(beat)

Are you sure you want the truth?

The question lingers before SOMEONE off-screen reaches out and hits RECORD.

INT. FACTORY - BATON ROUGE, LA - EARLY 1960S - DAY

An endless stream of CANDY moving across a conveyor belt.

BARRY (V.O.)

My daddy was a candy wholesaler in the Jim Crow south. While his competition only sold to whites, he was an equal opportunity businessman.

INT. CORNER MARKET - EARLY 1960S - DAY

African American kids buying candy after school.

BARRY (V.O.)

He beat all comers by selling to the Colored and Mexican markets.

EXT. PARK - EARLY 1960S - DAY

Summer day. Kids of all nationalities eating candy.

BARRY (V.O.)

Every kid in town was hooked on his Lemonheads, Long Boys, and Gobstoppers...

INT. HOUSE - 1960 - DAY

Virgin Mary paintings, rosary beads, and ornamental crosses clutter the house. Barry's MOM -- a strict Catholic -- instructs YOUNG BARRY (15) on his daily chores.

BARRY (V.O.)

...every kid except for me. Candy wasn't allowed in our house. Neither was swearing, TV, music on the radio, shorts in the summer time, or staying up past sundown. My momma had a rule for every hour of the day--

EXT. FIELD - EARLY 1960S - DAY

Families on blankets. The famed BLUE ANGELS fly overhead.

BARRY (V.O.)
 --That is, 'til the Blue Angels
 came to town.

Young Barry sits with his PARENTS, mesmerized by the show.
 Love at first sight.

EXT. 5000 FT ABOVE BATON ROUGE - EARLY 1960S - DAY

Young Barry flies a Cessna, just big enough to see over the
 instrument panel.

BARRY (V.O.)
 Turns out, I was what they call a
 prodigy. It didn't take long
 before I got my wings -- and
 brought home enough cash spreading
 the word on "Geritol" that momma
 couldn't afford to keep me under
 lock and key.

Tailwinds flap a "GERITOL" banner attached to the Cessna.
 Young Barry does an aerial stunt, whirling through the air
 with grace and ease.

BARRY (V.O.)
 The only rules at five thousand
 feet were the ones I made up
 myself.

CLOSE ON: Barry's "BATON ROUGE AIR FIELD" pilot's cap.

INT. NIGHT CLUB - BATON ROUGE - NIGHT

MATCH CUT: Barry, now in his early 30s, wears a "TWA"
 captain's cap.

SUPER: "1976 - Baton Rouge, LA"

A cavernous, Casablanca-like nightclub. Home to a Rogue's
 gallery of local politicians, party girls, and Cuban exiles.

Barry drinks with his TWO CO-PILOTS, all wearing sharp-
 looking TWA uniforms. You can tell they're the rock stars of
 the room by the gravitational pull of women around them.

Barry's thirty pounds lighter than when we first met him, in
 the prime of his life, full of piss and vinegar.

Five CUBANS enter the club. One of the men hand a SATCHEL to
 coat check.

ROOKIE CO-PILOT
What's with the brown brigade?

BARRY
Exiles. Don't mention Castro in here, you'll get your head blown off.

A PARTY GIRL plops down in Barry's lap.

PARTY GIRL
Hiya, Capt'n!

BARRY
Sorry, pussycat, this dance's taken.

Barry fishes a WEDDING BAND from his pocket.

PARTY GIRL
Why dontcha' keep that ring on your finger then?

BARRY
Wouldn't know what I was missin' if I did...
(throws money on the table, stands)
C'mon, boys. Time to get a move on.

CO-PILOT #1
Where we going? It's only ten.

BARRY
I put us on the roster tonight. Red eye to Dallas in ninety minutes.

ROOKIE CO-PILOT
Wait, we're flying?
(growing panic)
Tonight?! We're smashed!

CO-PILOT #1
Don't worry, Barry will cover for us.

ROOKIE CO-PILOT
Cover for us?! He's had more to drink than you and me put together!

Clear-eyed Barry leads them out of the club. Alcohol has no effect on the man.

On his way out, he grabs the Cuban's SATCHEL at coat check.

INT. TWA 727 - NIGHT

Barry in mid-flight. The Cuban's satchel sits by his side. He rubs his temples, fighting boredom.

BARRY (V.O.)
Every kid dreams of flying for TWA,
but it's a lot like long haul
trucking. You push tin all day
long, doing laps from one end of
the country to the other.

INT. DALLAS FORT WORTH AIRPORT - MORNING

He carries the Cubans' SATCHEL off the plane -- veers into the bathroom -- leaves the satchel in a stall -- walks out.

BARRY (V.O.)
Six years flying in circles is
enough to crush the soul outta any
man. So every now and then I had
to check to see if I still had a
pulse.

INT. NIGHT CLUB - BATON ROUGE - NIGHT

Same club as before. Smaller crowd. A Spanish GUITARIST hammers out Latin chords from a stool.

Barry drinks alone. A SATCHEL is dropped in front of him.

STRANGER (V.O.)
Thought I'd save you a trip to coat
check.

A stranger plops down at Barry's table. 30s. Hawaiian shirt, linen pants. Hustler? Player? Definitely a man on the make. This is MONTY SCHAFER.

BARRY
'Scuse me?

SCHAFER
You've got a drop-off and delivery
service here every Thursday night,
am I wrong?

BARRY
(squints)
I never laid eyes on that satchel
before in my life.

Barry sizes Schafer up. Plays it cool. The waiter brings Barry's drink over -- Yoohoo and bourbon.

BARRY (CONT'D)

You staying?
(off Schafer's nod)
Then you're drinking--

SCHAFER

Not tonight.

BARRY

Nobody stays at my table without a
drink in their hand.
(to the waiter)
Bring my man a scotch and here's an
extra \$20 to get that guitarist to
stop that goddamn noise.

Once the waiter's gone, Schafer opens the satchel and pushes it forward -- A HUNDRED CUBAN CIGARS.

SCHAFER

Cuban exiles been scheming of ways
to get to Castro for three decades
now. The latest plan is to use
homegrown contraband to fund their
very own *la revolucion*.

(beat)

You don't look much like a
revolutionary to me, Barry.

BARRY

I'm a TWA captain. Why in god's
green earth would I have a thing to
do with this?

SCHAFER

What I been asking myself. These
stogies are worth maybe two, three
grand on the black market.
Peanuts.

BARRY

And that's what the CIA's
interested in these days? Peanuts?

SCHAFER

What makes you think I'm CIA?

BARRY

FBI only cares about Cubans
enterin', not leaving the country.
(MORE)

BARRY (CONT'D)

That watch on your wrist is worth a mortgage payment, so that rules out DEA. And Army men don't wear linen.

Schafer smiles appreciatively. Barry's got him pegged. Not the last time that'll happen.

SCHAFER

My turn. You were the best pilot anyone'd laid eyes on before you sold out to TWA. Six years later, your god-given is wasting away, and you're bored silly -- so you come into a club like this to rub elbows with outlaws. What's life without a little risk? Delivering these stogies is just dangerous enough to make all those laps across the fifty states bearable.

BARRY

What if all that was true?

SCHAFER

Then I'd say tonight's your lucky night, kid.

BARRY

Aw hell, and here I was thinking my luck had ended.

FREEZE-FRAME on them both in mid-swig.

BARRY (V.O.)

He offered me a job. And just like that, on July 2nd, 1976, two days before the Bicentennial...

(beat)

I went to work for the CIA.

INT. WAREHOUSE - BATON ROUGE - NIGHT

A rundown warehouse on the edge of town. Bicentennial fireworks bloom in the windows. Schafer hands Barry a brick of CASH and a FILE. A giant tarp covers something enormous behind them.

BARRY

What's this, a signing bonus?

SCHAFER

Start-up money.

BARRY
(reading the file)
Independent Aviation Consultants.

SCHAFER
Your day job.

BARRY
Cover work?
(off Schafer's nod)
So what's the main attraction?

Schafer yanks the tarp away, revealing a BEECHCRAFT twin-engine plane.

SCHAFER
Intelligence collecting.

The cockpit's filled with state-of-the-art equipment.

SCHAFER (CONT'D)
You won't find a faster twin-engine
in the western hemisphere.

Barry runs a hand along the smooth wing of the plane -- a kid with a new toy on Christmas morning. He can barely contain his excitement.

BARRY
Who exactly am I collecting
intelligence on?

SCHAFER
A few friends south of the border
and north of the equator.

CUT TO:

BARRY'S TWA UNIFORM

A dainty, feminine hand entwined with masking tape carefully brushes lint off the shoulders of the jacket.

WIDER REVEALS:

INT. BARRY'S HOUSE - MORNING

An upscale home in an upscale neighborhood. Fitting for a TWA pilot. Barry's wife, LUCY, 20s, former homecoming queen turned doting homemaker -- cheerfully hangs the TWA jacket.

A newborn titters in the crib beside her. She folds brown construction paper over the pant legs of his uniform trousers and irons sharp creases into them.

Barry comes trotting downstairs in jeans and sneakers. Full of nervous energy. Excited for the first time in months.

LUCY
You're off today?

BARRY (V.O.)
The job was strictly undercover.
Not even my family could know what
I was up to.

BARRY
I quit, baby.

LUCY
You quit TWA? When?

BARRY
Last night. No more uniform. No
more ironing.
(takes the iron from her)
Put that down...

He swallows her up in a hug. The sound of GIGGLING. Barry squints--

BARRY (CONT'D)
Where's my little bean hiding?
Where is she?

Barry's eyes light up as his daughter, AVA (8) -- the love of his life -- appears from a hiding place behind the drapes.

She launches herself into his arms with great affection.

AVA
Plane ride, daddy, plane ride!

She lies flat in his grasp, and he "flies" her around the house. They land in the...

KITCHEN

...where Ava's homework is spread out on the table.

BARRY
How's it coming?

We think Barry means the homework, but he digs something out underneath -- a half-built MODEL PLANE.

BARRY (CONT'D)
Looking good, looking good.

AVA
The wings need more glue before the
tail goes on.

BARRY
Don't let your momma see this
before your homework's done.

Barry hides the model plane back under the homework as Lucy
appears. She gives him a hopeful look--

LUCY
Did Pan Am make an offer?

BARRY
No, not Pan Am...

LUCY
Someone else?

BARRY
I'm going into business with a
friend. New airline that caters to
the rich and famous. It's gonna be
great.

But Lucy's not so sure. He gives her a peck on the cheek.

OVERLAP: The sound of gunfire. RAT-TAT-TAT-TAT-TAT!

EXT. LATIN AMERICA - DAY

Barry's Beechcraft dodges anti-aircraft GUNS firing round
after round at him. His adrenaline sky-high. First time in
years. His face a picture of pure joy.

BARRY
Woooooohoooooooo!!!

BARRY (V.O.)
Back then anything north of
Guatemala was marijuana country.
Anything south was guerrilla
country. And I'm not talking about
the kinds in the mist, either.

A SPY CAMERA on the plane's belly snaps pictures of a
Guerrilla army base camp nestled in the Guatemala jungle.

BARRY (V.O.)
The CIA had a stake in a lot of
horses down there and the ones they
didn't, I had to keep an eye on.

EXT. AIRSTRIP - DAY

A third world airstrip somewhere in Honduras. An 8-seater plane skids to a landing. A second plane taxis for take-off on the SAME runway.

BARRY (V.O.)

My cover story wasn't uninteresting work either. I went around to airstrips in Latin America and showed these yokels how to keep from crashing their goddamn planes into one another on take-off and landing.

The two planes COLLIDE. Smash!

BARRY (V.O.)

Apparently this was a major problem down there.

EXT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - BATON ROUGE - NIGHT

Summer of '77. Barry and Schafer eat on the patio. A line of kids wrapped around the block on the other side of the street.

BARRY

What's the commotion?

SCHAFER

Movie theater up the block. *Star* something. Looks like a hit.

BARRY

Never heard of it.

Barry passes Schafer photographs of a military base.

BARRY (CONT'D)

My best work yet.

SCHAFER

They're good. *Too* good.

(hands a fork to the waiter)

You got any chopsticks back there?

(back to the photos)

What was your altitude, thousand feet? Christ, Barry, they can read the serial number off the plane you're that low.

BARRY

Not if you're inverted.

Barry holds up the palm of his hand to show he was flying upside down. Schafer re-examines the photos--

SCHAFER

What'd you do -- mount the camera
to the hood?

Schafer chuckles. Barry's got some pair of balls.

SCHAFER (CONT'D)

I need you in Panama tomorrow.

BARRY

More photographs?

SCHAFER

Not that kinda mission.

He hands Barry an envelope.

INT. BALLROOM - PANAMA CITY, PANAMA - NIGHT

Barry works the room like a politician, charming the hell out of several PANAMANIAN GENERALS decked out in dress greens.

BARRY (V.O.)

I was on bag man duty. Nice work
if you can get it.

Barry shakes hands with a young, pit-faced COLONEL. Tells him a quick joke. The colonel laughs as they move to a corridor for privacy.

BARRY (V.O.)

The CIA's point man in Central
America was Manuel Noriega, at that
time just a low-level colonel
feeding intel once a month to
Schafer.

Barry deftly slips Schafer's envelope to the colonel, now known as MANUEL NORIEGA.

INT. BARRY'S HOUSE - BATON ROUGE - NIGHT

Barry throws clothes into a suitcase. Another mission awaits. Lucy, holding their son (now 3 years old), hands him a stack of BILLS. Most marked PAST DUE.

BARRY (V.O.)

Clandestine operations might be a
helluva rush, but they don't pay
for shit. I was still living like
a TWA pilot without the TWA salary.

He plays off the bills by giving Lucy a reassuring look -- everything's going to be fine.

INT. REGIONAL SAVINGS - DAY

A small regional bank. Barry sits across from an officious BANK MANAGER in a cheap suit.

BARRY

Isn't there some financial voodoo we can play with here? Move around some numbers? Refinance!

BANK MANAGER

I'm sorry, Mr. Seal. We don't refinance second mortgages.

BARRY

How 'bout I get a third one? Use it to pay down the first two--

BANK MANAGER

It doesn't work that way. Thirty days is the best I can offer.

BARRY

Thirty days and then what? You gonna kick me out of my own home?

BANK MANAGER

Mr. Seal, you haven't made a payment in six months. Thirty days is more than generous.

BARRY

So I've fallen behind a little. Not sure you noticed, there's a recession on.

BANK MANAGER

Yes there is. And we all feel it.

The Bank Manager rises. This meeting's over.

BANK MANAGER (CONT'D)

Good day, sir.

BARRY

Well, that's the politest "fuck you" I ever heard.

INT. BARRY'S HOME - DAY

Delivery guys wheel in a top-of-the-line 32" RCA. Barry enters behind them, just back from the bank, alarmed at the new purchase.

BARRY
Whoa, whoa...
(calls out)
Honey?

He finds Lucy in the kitchen, signing for the delivery.

BARRY (CONT'D)
What's with the armoire?

LUCY
It's the new RCA we talked about.

BARRY
(sighs)
Alright. But baby, after this, we
gotta tighten our belts awhile.

LUCY
Is everything ok?

BARRY (V.O.)
Lucy and I had a terrific marriage
in those days. She thought I was
god's gift to creation, and I never
told her otherwise.

Barry masks his concern with a wink--

BARRY
We tighten our belts a bit
everything's gonna be fine.

Ava comes bouncing into the kitchen, now 11. Still Daddy's girl. Barry brightens. He digs in his pocket--

LUCY
Don't give her candy.

BARRY
No candy here, momma.

Barry fists a handful of candy behind his back. Ava grabs it when her mom isn't looking -- shoots Barry a private grin.

AVA
Love you, daddy. Bye, mom.

And she's out the door to play with friends.

EXT. CENTRAL AMERICA JUNGLE - DAY

Steam rises from the jungle floor. Barry sweating his balls off in the back of an old Jeep. A COLOMBIAN DRIVER up front.

BARRY (V.O.)
Around this time, my cover work
brought me to Colombia.

Barry checks his watch, fogged over from the humidity, then taps the driver on the shoulder.

BARRY
Hey, buddy? Fifteen minutos paseo
en coche?

DRIVER
Cinco minutos más.

BARRY
You said that twenty minutes ago,
partner.

BARRY (V.O.)
I thought the driver was lost. But
he wasn't. He knew where he was
taking me, and it wasn't the
airstrip.

The JEEP turns off the main road. It DIPS and HOPS across ungraded terrain. Then halts, REVEALING:

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

THREE COLOMBIANS sit on a dilapidated wrap-around porch. A rattan ceiling fan moves humid air around their sweaty faces.

COLOMBIAN #1
Hola, Mr. Seal. Welcome.

BARRY
Welcome? Where the hell am I? I'm
supposed to be at the Carta-Ginny
airstrip.

The Colombians laugh at Barry's mispronunciation.

COLOMBIAN #2
Cartagena. Don't worry. We go for
a walk, then we go to the airstrip.
Come...

They seem harmless, even the third who has yet to speak.

COLOMBIAN #1

My ancestors lived and died
scraping and clawing these hills.
The government forced my
grandfather to torch most of his
crops to keep the price of exports
high. The following summer there
was a drought -- profits fell --
and my grandfather hanged himself
from this oak.

Barry looks up at a looming oak tree.

COLOMBIAN #1 (CONT'D)

But now -- now God above has
blessed our land with riches.

BARRY

Congratulations. So, fellas,
again, the day's wasting, it's hot
as a wildfire out here, and I got a
schedule to keep--

The Colombian opens a barn door--

INT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

TEN PEASANTS working an assembly line, turning cocoa beans
into COCAINE. A hundred kilos of powder in here.

BARRY (V.O.)

And that's when my three new
friends introduced themselves.

...Colombian #1.

BARRY (V.O.)

Jorge Ochoa...

...Colombian #2.

BARRY (V.O.)

Carlos Lehder...

...Colombian #3.

BARRY (V.O.)

...and Pablo Escobar.

They each shake Barry's hand.

BARRY (V.O.)

A hundred million dollars from now,
they'd be known as the Medellin
cartel.

(MORE)

BARRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
But back then, they were just three
farmers without a fuckin' clue how
to get their new product to the
public.

Barry scratches his head, unsure what to make of this
operation.

BARRY (V.O.)
And me? Hell, I wasn't even sure
what I was lookin' at.

BARRY
I take it ya'll aren't making pizza
pies back here.

The farmers laugh. Ochoa slaps Barry on the back.

OCHOA
You've flown all over Central
America, no?

Barry gives them a "how'd you know that?" look.

OCHOA (CONT'D)
We may be farmers, but we're not
fools.

LEHDER
Exactly how big is this plane of
yours?

BARRY
Uh-huh. I can see the direction
we're headin' here, so let me save
some time. My smugglin' days ended
when I left TWA--

OCHOA
We'll pay you five thousand
American dollars, per pound.

Barry's demeanor shifts on a dime. Numbers dance through his
head. His expression turns jovial.

BARRY (V.O.)
Nine little words that could keep a
roof over my family's head for the
next quarter-century. Who'd say no
to that?

INT. CUSTOMS GATE - EL PASO, TX - DAY

Two "mules" pass through customs at the El Paso border.

BARRY (V.O.)
The Colombians had been bringing
this stuff into the states by the
handful, and still losin' half of
it before they left the airport.

Customs Agents surround the "mules" with drug-sniffing DOGS.

EXT. GULF OF MEXICO - DAY

A Coast Guard vessel chases after a BOAT loaded with coke.

BARRY (V.O.)
Boats were no better. The Coast
Guard and Customs had been kickin'
the crap outta Latin American
contraband for a decade.

EXT. LAX - DAY

An Avianca plane (Colombian airline) touches down.

BARRY (V.O.)
I mean, these guys were using a
Third World playbook against First
World law enforcement.

Six Broncos stuffed with CUSTOM AGENTS speed toward the
Avianca gate. Drug-sniffing dogs hang out the windows,
enjoying the rush of air on their faces.

BARRY (V.O.)
But after three years running spy
ops, I knew all the holes in the
system and had just the plane to
exploit every last one of 'em.

INT. DINER - BATON ROUGE - DAY

Monty Schafer on his third coffee. Waiting for Barry.
Checks his watch, looks out the window. No sign of him.

EXT. COLOMBIA - AIRSTRIP - DAY

A JEEP pulls into the tiny strip. Ochoa, Lehder, Escobar,
and Barry climb out. Ochoa's four-year-old BOY sits on his
shoulders. The men converse as they walk the dirt runway.

BARRY
One run, half a million dollars.
That's a take it or leave it offer.
I'll pack my plane with enough
powder to get you up and running in
the States and then...I'm out.

The Colombians nod, they're agreeable to that.

OCHOA

Can you get into the US without alerting law enforcement?

BARRY

I got the fastest plane in these skies. Law enforcement ain't a problem. Making it from the jungle to the US border on a single tank of gas, is.

LEHDER

We can find places to refuel in Mexico.

BARRY

Take it from someone who's spent the last four years avoiding just that -- Mexico's about as fucked as a daytime hooker. Between the army, guerillas, and banditos you got a fifty-fifty chance of being shot down, robbed, or arrested.

OCHOA

You have a place in mind then?

BARRY

Maybe. But it's gonna cost you boys extra.

Escobar, who has remained silent up till now, speaks:

ESCOBAR

How much do you want?

BARRY

Not a question how much *I* want, amigo.

EXT. PANAMA - MILITARY BASE - NIGHT

Barry walks with Manuel Noriega.

BARRY (V.O.)

My old friend Noriega had recently been promoted to the PDF's intelligence unit, which gave him control over every out-of-the-way steeped in shit landing strip in Panama.

Barry hands over a satchel of cash.

BARRY (V.O.)
He wasn't about to pass up \$250,000
for a twenty-minute pit stop in one
of his air fields.

INT. HANGAR - BEEHCRAFT - DAY

Barry sits quietly on the floor of the plane. His gaze paces the interior.

BARRY (V.O.)
Panama cut the distance problem,
but other hurdles remained.

He tilts his head. Suddenly hit with a moment of inspiration. Almost *divine*.

He bites off the cap of a MAGIC MARKER. Takes the marker to the floor. We can't see what he's writing. We only hear the "squeak, squeak" of the marker.

INT. BARRY'S BEEHCRAFT - ONE WEEK LATER - DAY

The Colombians climb aboard. Barry's already inside waiting for them. Their eyes light up at all the high-tech equipment.

OCHOA
This is all very impressive, Barry,
but do you have a place to land in
America without being discovered?

BARRY
Sure, the airport.

LEHDER
Airport? They have *dogs*, pendejo.

BARRY
And those dogs will be lickin'
their asses 'cause the contraband
will be long gone.

Barry KICKS a lever and yanks open a custom-built CARGO DOOR.

QUICK FLASHBACK: Barry's inspired moment with the magic marker. He falls to his knees and draws the outline of a cargo door on the floor of the plane.

BACK TO THE SCENE: the Colombians are ecstatic.

BARRY (V.O.)
They got it right away. This was a
million-dollar door.
(MORE)

BARRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Without it, Noriega, the fast
plane, the navigation equipment,
none of it would matter.

INT. COLOMBIAN AIRSTRIp - DAY

Colombian PEASANTS loading the Beechcraft with foil-wrapped
bricks of cocaine.

BARRY (V.O.)
See, I loaded in Colombia...

EXT. PANAMA FIELD - DAY

A gas truck pulls alongside Barry's Beechcraft.

BARRY (V.O.)
Stopped to refuel in Panama...

EXT. GULF OF MEXICO - DAY

The Beechcraft flies over the serene body of water.

BARRY (V.O.)
...then cut across the Gulf. The
DEA had increased air patrols and
radar coverage in these waters...

Barry flies toward OFFSHORE OIL PLATFORMS.

BARRY (V.O.)
...so I needed cover to reach the
shoreline. And Shell Oil, god
bless 'em, came to the rescue.

Relays of HELICOPTERS head to the coastline like migrating
birds. Barry drops his speed and altitude, using the
choppers as radar camouflage.

BARRY (V.O.)
They serviced their rigs by
chopper. No radar operator in the
world could distinguish my
Beechcraft from Shell's Hueys.

EXT. TEXAS - DAY

High desert north of Austin. Desolate. Barren.

BARRY (V.O.)
When I'd reached the southern US
coast...

INT. BEECHCRAFT - SAME TIME

Barry opens the cargo door. Shoves out FIFTY KILOS.

BARRY (V.O.)
...I simply opened the door mid-air
and pushed out the contraband.

THREE FLATBED TRUCKS haul ass through the rocky desert. Tiny from this distance. The kilos land with a dusty THUD. Several MEN quickly load them onto the flatbeds.

Barry checks the radar. No law enforcement in sight. He quickly scrubs the floor of the cargo hold with bleach while doing a little celebration dance.

EXT. BATON ROUGE REGIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

The Beechcraft comes in for a landing...

BARRY (V.O.)
My Beechcraft landed at Baton Rouge
regional as squeaky clean as the
Virgin Mary herself.

EXT. RANCH - COLOMBIA - DAY

Barry pulls up in a Jeep. The Colombians approach with smiles and open arms. Lehder holds a bag stuffed with cash.

LEHDER
Outstanding work, my friend!

BARRY
Piece a cake.

LEHDER
"Piece of cake"? Is that an
American saying?

BARRY
American as apple pie. That bag
for me?

Barry paws through his \$500k. A big grin cuts across his face. His money troubles solved.

BARRY (CONT'D)
Pleasure doing business with you
boys. Wish ya the best of luck in
the future...

Suddenly all hell breaks loose. SIRENS erupt. Four Colombian ARMY TRUCKS skid to a stop in the mud! ARMED SOLDIERS dismount and circle Barry and his accomplices.

INT. COLOMBIAN JAIL - NIGHT

Barry's huddled in a dank, brick cell. Alone. Covered in sweat, mosquito bites, and three-day stubble.

BARRY

Phone call! *Llamada telefónica?!*

The only response is the echo of guards CHUCKLING down the hall. A THROAT clears behind Barry...

He spins: Monty Schafer stands on the other side of the bars. How long has he been there?

BARRY (CONT'D)

Schafer! Christ a'mighty. What took you so long? They found my plane. They know I'm CIA. Locked me up in here.

SCHAFER

That's not why you're locked up.
(ominous beat)
You used classified government property to commit, I don't know, a dozen crimes.

BARRY

That's a giant pile of donkey shit!

Schafer pulls out surveillance photos of Barry and the Colombians loading his Beechcraft with bricks of cocaine.

SCHAFER

These came out better than my wedding photos.

BARRY

Ok, look, ok. Get me out of this dungeon, we can discuss this. I'm hearing stories. Things they do to gringos--

SCHAFER

I could make a call. Have you transferred stateside--

BARRY

Make the call!

SCHAFER

--where you'll be charged with trafficking and sent away for ten to twenty in Marion.

Barry slumps. He's fucked in or out of here.

SCHAFER (CONT'D)
Or we could figure something else out.

BARRY
Hit me.

SCHAFER
I have them release you into my custody, and you continue to work with the Colombians.

Schafer aims a thumb down the hall at Lehder, Ochoa, and Escobar as they are being escorted out of their cells.

Barry is thrown at first. Then begins to laugh as he realizes what's happened--

BARRY
You put those farmers on to me in the first place, didn't you?
(wry smile)
Goddamn you're good. Why's the CIA wanna get into bed with those boys?

SCHAFER
Their operation has the potential to fund *other* operations.

BARRY
That almost sounds like you're not asking me to commit felonies on a regular basis.

SCHAFER
It's not a felony if you're doing it for the good guys.

BARRY
Words for the next CIA recruitin' poster.

SCHAFER
You moved more powder across the border in one run than what's come across in the last decade combined.

BARRY
No one had my plane.

SCHAFER
No one had *you*, Seal. You were born for this work.

Barry considers his third world pit of hell surroundings.

BARRY
I wasn't born to be no dope
smuggler.

SCHAFFER
No?

A beat of dead air.

SCHAFFER (CONT'D)
Guess I got the wrong man then.

Schafer starts off--

BARRY
...But I wasn't born for this cell
neither.
(Schafer turns)
Get me outta here, I'll haul
whatever the hell you want me to.

Schafer says something in Spanish to the guards. They unlock Barry cell. Lehder, Ochoa, and Escobar are already signing their release papers down the hall.

BARRY (V.O.)
The Colombians now had national
sponsorship.

INT. DARK ROOM - 1986 - NIGHT

Back to 1986. Barry in the dusty, shadow-filled room. Tape recorder still running.

BARRY
Their mom and pop enterprise was
about to go supernova.

He looks over at someone OFF-SCREEN:

BARRY (CONT'D)
You think I'm full of shit.

Before Off-Screen can answer, Barry cuts him off--

BARRY (CONT'D)
We can stop now if ya want. Cause,
believe me, it only gets crazier
from here.

Barry pushes the tape recorder forward. Hold. It's pushed right back in front of him. Barry's got his answer.

BARRY (CONT'D)
Alrighty. I'll keep going...

INT. REGIONAL SAVINGS - BATON ROUGE - DAY

Barry back at the bank, waiting in a cubicle. Carefree smile. Hands clasped behind his head. The officious Bank Manager he met earlier appears with a handful of paperwork.

BANK MANAGER
(breathless)
Mr. Seal. Glad you didn't make this transition difficult. I just need your signature here and here--

BARRY
Actually...

Barry hefts a gym bag of cash -- the 500K for his initial drug run -- onto the desk between them.

BARRY (CONT'D)
...those signatures won't be necessary.

He builds a stack of \$100's on the desk.

BARRY (CONT'D)
You tell me how high I need to make this pile before the mortgage's paid off. Next pile we'll put in a safety deposit box, ok?

The Bank Manager, slack-jawed, just nods.

INT. HANGAR - BATON ROUGE - DAY

Barry, gear bag thrown over his shoulder, walks to his Beechcraft with Schafer, who hands him a FILE--

SCHAFER
Instructions going forward. We added some extra drops to your next run.

Barry glances at the file, confused.

BARRY
Schafer, buddy, I'd nosedive into the jungle if I tried to smuggle half enough powder to fill these drops.

SCHAFER
 (already walking away)
 Then you better get some help.

BARRY (V.O.)
 I didn't need a couple extra pilots
 to fill Schafer's drops, I needed a
 damn air platoon.

EXT. BATON ROUGE AIRPORT - DAY

A shambling collection of SIX rag-tag BUSH PILOTS walk toward
 a hangar, gear thrown over their shoulders.

BARRY (V.O.)
 I called 'em my Snowbirds. No one
 would confuse these boys with The
 Right Stuff, but they'd get the job
 done.

INT. BATON ROUGE REGIONAL AIRPORT - SAME TIME

An AIRPORT COP flirting with a flight attendant at the gate.
 He notices something out the window -- Barry's snowbirds --
 passing the window, one by one.

The cop picks up a WALKIE-TALKIE.

INT. BATON ROUGE REGIONAL AIRPORT - HANGAR - SAME TIME

Barry leads the pilots into his hangar to find -- it's EMPTY.
 Barry scratches his head.

EXT. THE LUCKY SPOON DINER - BATON ROUGE - NIGHT

Schafer sips coffee while doing a crossword puzzle. Barry
 sidles into his booth, worried.

BARRY
 I don't know how to put this
 exactly but the hangars were
 cleared out...
 (beat)
 Maybe someone stole the planes?

Schafer looks up from his puzzle.

SCHAFER
 Local cops were tipped day of
 delivery last week. We're moving
 the operation.

Barry's just learning this now?

BARRY
Where to, boss?

SCHAFER
Someplace sufficiently out of the
way. You'll be leaving tonight.

Barry gives Schafer a look -- it's almost midnight.

SCHAFER (CONT'D)
Baton Rouge PD will be on your
porch six a.m. sharp to ass-bang
you with a warrant. I'd be on the
road before then.

INT. BARRY'S HOME - LATE NIGHT

Lucy sleeping. The light flicks on. Barry appears--

BARRY
Honey, wake up.

LUCY
(shies from the light)
Barry, no.

Their THIRD BORN -- ten months old -- wobbles unsteadily on
his feet in a crib.

BARRY
Hey champ -- he -- holy shit --
he's walking??
(crushed)
When'd this happen?

LUCY
Yesterday.

Barry scoops up his son--

BARRY
There'll be a lot more room to roam
where we're going, little man.
(to his wife)
Get packed, hon, we're moving.

LUCY
Right now?!

Barry opens the blinds -- TWO MOVING VANS idle in the
driveway.

LUCY (CONT'D)
Jesus, Barry, it's 1 in the a.m.

Ava sleepily pads into the room. Barry grabs her--

BARRY
(sings)
*She used me, I used her, neither
one cared. Night moves! Workin'
on our night moves!*

Barry reaches for Lucy's hand, lifts her out of bed--

BARRY (CONT'D)
C'mon, sing with me, babe.

Barry dances with his half-asleep wife and daughter. They both laugh, despite themselves.

BARRY (CONT'D)
*Little too tall, coulda' used a few
pounds...*

LUCY
You're crazy, you know that?

AVA
Where are we moving to, daddy?

CUT TO:

EXT. MENA, ARKANSAS - DAY

The backwater town from our opening scene. Stoplights bookend two main strips of small-town living.

SUPER: "Mena, Arkansas 1981"

Ronald Reagan's 1981 inaugural address begins to play over the scene--

RONALD REAGAN (V.O., PRE-LAP)
*We have every right to dream heroic
dreams...*

In the distance, several ranch houses scattered around hilly backwoods. Barry's two moving vans appear on the horizon.

REAGAN (V.O., ARCHIVAL)
*Those who say that we are in a time
when there are no heroes just don't
know where to look.*

INT. MOVING VAN #1 - SAME TIME

Lucy, in the trailing van with the kids, gazes out at the ranches, not exactly thrilled by the surroundings.

REAGAN (V.O., ARCHIVAL)
You can see heroes every day...

INT. MOVING VAN #2 - SAME TIME

Barry, riding in the lead van, pays no mind to the town. Instead, he's sketching cargo doors onto various plane schematics in a small notepad.

REAGAN (V.O., ARCHIVAL)
*Entrepreneurs with faith in
 themselves and faith in an idea who
 create new jobs, new wealth and
 opportunity.*

INT. POLICE STATION - TRAILER - MENA - DAY

A hollowed out double-wide on concrete blocks. 350 sq ft of law enforcement. Sheriff JOE DOWNING (26) -- too young and ambitious for this job -- is on the phone. Behind him, a portable TV plays Reagan's 1981 inauguration speech.

DOWNING (ON PHONE)
 I'd throw 'em in jail if we had a jail, Lenny. But all we got is a porta-potty out back and that'd be cruel and unusual punishment. I'll be sure to give 'em a good what for on Monday though.

REAGAN (V.O., ARCHIVAL)
*With God's help, we can and
 will resolve the problems
 which now confront us. We
 are Americans. God bless
 you, and thank you.*

Rapturous applause on the TV. Downing hangs up the phone. His dutiful wife and secretary, JUDY, (22) removes the sheriff's star from his shirt and slips a tie over his head.

JUDY
 You're already late.

An OLD LADY enters the trailer--

OLD LADY
 Sheriff Downing, those Jenkins' dogs were on my--

DOWNING
 I'm off duty, Mrs. Pine, my wife will take down the complaint--

OLD LADY
 Judy's your deputy now?

JUDY
 County can't afford a deputy. I'm still just the wife.

Judy gives Downing a kiss as he tucks an FBI field manual under his arm--

DOWNING
(whispers)
Wife to a Special Agent after I ace
this exam.

JUDY
Now I 'member why I said "I do."

--and he's out of the trailer.

OLD LADY
Where's he going in such a hurry?

EXT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

Downing peels the "Mena PD" decal off his pickup truck and quickly pulls out of the dirt lot.

He blows through a stop sign -- shit -- SLAMS the brakes -- just avoiding a t-boning at the hands of...

BARRY SEAL'S MOVING VAN

Barry sticks his head out of the window--

BARRY
Slow down, asshole!

DOWNING
Sorry!

INT. FBI HEADQUARTERS - TEST ROOM - LITTLE ROCK - DAY

A dozen FBI APPLICANTS at desks. An ADMINISTRATOR handing out pencils and test booklets. Downing tumbles into the test room. Out of breath. Sweating.

ADMINISTRATOR
Nick of time, Mr. Downing. Have a
seat.

MOVE off Downing to a couple FEDERAL AGENTS walking briskly through the outer--

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The first agent, CRAIG MCCALL (late 30s, African American), carries himself with the shaky confidence of a man knocked down by life and recently back on his feet.

He walks with SPECIAL AGENT GREGS, his direct superior.

GREGS

All signs point to a *new* player.
Someone big. The DEA's up to their
elbows in fresh narcotics.

MCCALL

And the cash is bound to follow.
Get me back in the game, coach.

GREGS

You aren't making that easy.

MCCALL

When have I ever made things easy?

GREGS

I'm serious. Standing in front of
a room full of junkies and calling
yourself an addict?

MCCALL

It's AA. There are no secrets in
those meetings.

GREGS

But there *are* in the bureau. And
you know that.

Gregs stops McCall short before they enter the Field
Director's office.

GREGS (CONT'D)

Look: clean, not clean. That math
isn't part of the equation. You go
to the Field Director with *this*,
AA? Recovered addict? Clean eight
weeks--

MCCALL

--*Nine*. Nine weeks.

GREGS

He'll chalk up the pills to burn
out. An "addict" in "AA"...? That
takes it to a different place.

MCCALL

So "burn out" gets me back in? But
"AA" puts me on the street?

The only path to reinstatement is to deny his recovery.
McCall's disgusted. Gregs opens the door.

McCall meets the FIELD DIRECTOR'S inquisitive look with his best political smile.

CUT TO:

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - MENA, AK - DAY

A heavily wooded neighborhood on a lone stretch of moss-covered road. Barry's two moving vans stop in front of his new home. Lucy and the kids climb out.

The house is small, faded. A windowsill sags from rot. Barry trots after them--

BARRY

Hey, babe...?

Lucy silently takes in the exterior of the house. Then:

LUCY

A long time ago I fell in love with a TWA pilot. He had life by the balls. Wasn't a thing in this world could keep him down. What happened to that guy?

BARRY

Lucy, you got it all wrong--

LUCY

This is a shack in the middle of nowhere!

BARRY

Baby, calm down--

LUCY

Don't tell me to calm down! This place--

BARRY

--ain't our house!
(turns around and points)
That's our house.

Nestled behind a canopy of oaks, a six-bedroom mini-mansion with small columns and galleries like an old southern-style plantation. Double the size of their old home.

Lucy is speechless.

AVA

Daddy, does it have a pool?

BARRY

Not yet.

Barry drops a wad of hundreds into his wife's hand.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Should be enough there for one a
them slides too.

Lucy showers him with kisses.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Got yourself all worked up for
nothing...

LUCY

Just ignore me when I do that.

An unmarked sedan pulls up behind them. Barry nods to the
DRIVER--

BARRY

(to Lucy and the kids)
Ya'll start unpacking. I got a
quick meeting, be back by dinner.

Lucy watches him go. A moment's hesitation in her eyes.
Then she considers the cash. Stuffs it in her pocket and
excitedly throws her arms around her babies.

LUCY

Let's go check out our new home!

EXT. BACKWOODS ROAD - MENA, AK - NIGHT

A CIA MAN drives Barry along a twisting trail. Soon Barry
finds himself staring down a brigade of U-HAULS parked in a
clearing where Schafer awaits. Barry hops out of the car.

BARRY

You weren't kidding when you said
secluded.

SCHAFER

Our new base camp.

Barry squints into the darkness beyond them.

BARRY

How much camp we talking about?

Schafer whistles to his DRIVERS. A dozen U-Haul headlights
turn on, illuminating 100 acres of valley below them.

More bivouac than camp. Several ARMY TENTS and the beginnings of an ELECTRIC fence have been raised.

BARRY (CONT'D)
You're just full of surprises.

Barry peeks into a U-Haul. Finds a cache of MACHINE GUNS. Russian inscriptions on the side of the hardware.

BARRY (CONT'D)
Something tells me these weren't
Made in the USA.

SCHAFER
They're Soviet-made, for the PLO--
(off Barry's look)
Palestine Liberation Organization.

BARRY
Russians arming the Palestinians to
take out Israel?

SCHAFER
Except these were *captured* by the
Israelis, who secretly sold them to
us.

BARRY (V.O.)
And that's how Operation Black
Eagle began. One twisted, big 'ol
Cold War clusterfuck.

INT. MENA REGIONAL - HANGAR - SAME TIME

Barry and his Snowbirds climb into their planes. Each loaded with the Russian arms.

BARRY (V.O.)
The Soviets were gettin' cushy with
the Sandinista government of
Nicaragua.

The planes exit the hangar one by one.

INT. U.S. CAPITOL BUILDING - WASHINGTON DC - DAY

ARCHIVAL C-SPAN NEWS FOOTAGE: The CIA Director, WILLIAM CASEY, stands before Congress.

BARRY (V.O.)
Director Casey went to Congress to
fund a coup, but the goddamn
politicians turned him down flat
with that Boland Amendment.
(MORE)

BARRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
So the CIA had to resort to
alternative means of fundraising...

EXT. FARM - COLOMBIA - DAY

Ochoa's crew load up Barry's Beechcraft. They hand a bag of cash to Barry.

BARRY (V.O.)
They did this by taking a cut from
the Colombians, in exchange for
operational intelligence and my
smuggling services.

Armed COLOMBIANS patrol the grounds of the ranch.

INT. WAREHOUSE - SOMEWHERE IN LOUISIANA - DAY

Pickup trucks loaded with tarp-covered cocaine pull into a warehouse.

BARRY (V.O.)
Then they took a second cut from
the American wholesalers once the
contraband hit US soil.

CIA MEN enter through a back door -- exchange nods with the WHOLESALERS -- scoop up gym bags of cash -- and walk right out another door.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

A deal going down in a warehouse without windows. CIA men hand over suitcases of cash. ARMS DEALERS hand over keys to trucks filled with PLO artillery.

BARRY (V.O.)
...and used all that cash to buy
the PLO arms.

EXT. TEN THOUSAND FEET ABOVE CENTRAL AMERICA - DAY

The Snowbirds weave in and out of the clouds.

BARRY (V.O.)
I was the glue kept the operation
together. On my way to pick up the
narcotics in Colombia, I armed the
hell outta' a couple Nicaraguan
exile groups -- y'know, *Contras* --
one in Honduras...

The Snowbirds dive eight thousand feet over the island of Honduras. Cargo doors open in unison. A dozen wooden crates drop out of the planes. Parachutes bloom.

BARRY (V.O.)
...the other in Costa Rica, with
that PLO artillery.

EXT. COSTA RICAN JUNGLE - DAY

One of the air drops is caught in a tree. FREEDOM FIGHTERS
bat open the crate with sticks -- machine guns and rocket
launchers drop out like candy from a pinata.

BARRY (V.O.)
These exiles were gonna take their
country back from the Sandinistas
and kick the Soviets out on their
asses.

EXT. FARM - MENA - NIGHT

Local TEENS drinking and tipping cows in a field. A dozen
4x4 TRUCKS drive right past them in the tall weeds without
their lights on.

BARRY (V.O.)
We moved the contraband in by day,
the PLO weapons out by night. More
arms passed through this tiny hick
town than the Ho Chi Minh trail.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - MENA - NIGHT

Barry on a catwalk, lording over a huge warehouse stuffed
with contraband. On one side, Israeli arms; the other, kilos
and kilos of coke.

He takes in everything. Leans forward. Devious smile.

BARRY (V.O.)
Like any other business, we had
surplus. A lot of surplus...

The warehouse doors open with a whoosh. SEVERAL TRUCKS roll
inside. A rainbow of out-of-state plates.

BARRY (V.O.)
Enough to build a goddamn American
dream with.

EXT. RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL - NIGHT

A WHITE-PANEL VAN pulls to a stop in the Favela ghetto. The
back doors fly open, contraband arms are quickly unloaded.

BARRY (V.O.)
Way I saw it, if the CIA was gonna
turn me into a criminal, I sure as
hell was going to get paid like
one.

FLASH ON: Weapons quickly sold off in back alleys.

BARRY (V.O.)
So maybe a handful of the arms got
accidentally shipped to places like
Bolivia, Argentina, Peru, and
Brazil...

INT. BARRY'S WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Another night. Barry loading cocaine into a REFRIGERATED
TRUCK filled with lobster and shell fish.

BARRY (V.O.)
...and maybe a couple handfuls of
narcotics found their way into New
York, Chicago, Detroit, St. Louis,
and other cities on the Eastern
Seaboard...

INT. BARRY'S HOME - SHED - DAY

Barry opens his old shed. Hinges whine. He tosses a satchel
of cash atop a huge pile of satchels.

BARRY (V.O.)
Pretty soon, I had enough cash in
my backyard to buy the Dallas
Cowboys.

Barry snaps a two-dollar padlock on the shed door. Ava
watches from her bedroom window, wondering what her father's
up to.

BARRY (V.O.)
But the thing about "fuck you"
money in this business -- it tends
to fuck you.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY BLOCK - LITTLE ROCK, AK - MORNING

An unmarked FBI surveillance van parked in a vacant lot.

INT. FBI VAN - SAME TIME

Our FBI agent, Craig McCall, listening to a wiretap. He glances at the shield on his belt. Pleased to be back in the field, but still raw about how it went down.

A SECOND AGENT spies a warehouse down the block with binoculars.

VOICE ON WIRE #1
We golden?

VOICE ON WIRE #2
Fourteen karat, motherfucker.

McCall presses the headphones to his ear:

VOICE #1	VOICE #2
DEA! Hands up high!	ATF! Drop the gun, asshole!

MCCALL
No...c'mon!

SECOND AGENT
What happened?

MCCALL
Circle jerk. They're both under.

McCall PUNCHES open the back door of the FBI van and jogs to the warehouse. KIDS on bikes peel away down the block, making gang signs to unseen accomplices.

INT. WAREHOUSE - LITTLE ROCK, AK - MORNING

McCall strides through the abandoned warehouse. A blur of shouting voices echo.

He comes upon several DEA and ATF agents, at the center of which two undercover men, one in a PARKA, the other in a LEATHER JACKET.

The arguing hits a crescendo until -- CLANG! McCall yanks a piece of scrap metal, causing the whole pile to come tumbling down. He's got their attention:

MCCALL
(flashes his badge)
Craig McCall, FBI. I've been sitting on this warehouse for a week. Every pipsqueak in the neighborhood can hear you bitching about jurisdiction for blocks.

Parka and Leather Jacket start to go at it again--

MCCALL (CONT'D)

Blah. Blah. Blah. Who, what, where, why -- all our operations are blown here. But that doesn't mean we can't use this clusterfuck to our advantage.

(beat)

There's new blood in Arkansas and I have a feeling we're all holding a piece of this mystery man's pie.

He unfurls a ROAD MAP OF THE US.

MCCALL (CONT'D)

So let's start connecting the dots.

Chuckles from agents on all sides. No way they're giving away vital intel.

LEATHER JACKET

Share my CIs with the bureau? Is that some sort of joke?

MCCALL

Parka?

PARKA

Sorry, buddy, DEA's put too much into this case to turn it into an FBI special.

The agents all turn to leave. Then:

MCCALL

(loudly)

I've been following dirty cash swimming upstream like a river of shit, from here to here...

Parka and Leather Jacket give surprised looks over their shoulders. McCall draws a LINE on the map.

MCCALL (CONT'D)

No one wants the FBI stepping on their cases, I get it. But maybe you guys can use this.

Parka, intrigued, moves closer, studying McCall's map.

PARKA

There to there?

McCall nods. Parka thinks. Draws a second line on the map.

PARKA (CONT'D)
My powder connect tracks back to
here.

Now Leather Jacket's interest is piqued. He adds a third line.

LEATHER JACKET
So much as we know, guns and ammo
pipeline runs along here.

McCall cocks his head at the map, not what he was expecting.

MCCALL
This on the level?

Parka and Leather Jacket both nod.

All three lines come to a head in rural West Arkansas. Not exactly a known hotbed for criminal activity.

CUT TO:

INT. BARRY'S HOUSE - DAY

The front door opens and DOUGH BOY (early 20s) appears. A pudgy, goofy kid with a receding hairline.

BARRY (V.O.)
With business booming, I needed
help. So I brought in someone I
could trust: my wife's brother, JJ,
who everyone called Dough Boy.

Ava (now 13) affectionately swallows her favorite uncle in a hug. Dough Boy hides a gift behind his back.

AVA
What's that behind your back?

DOUGH BOY
Where? Huh? I don't see anything.

He teasingly holds it out of reach before she grabs it -- an Atari video game.

AVA
Cool! Thanks, Uncle JJ!

INT. BARRY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Ava and Dough Boy are playing 1942 on her Atari.

BARRY (V.O.)
Dough Boy was, bar none, Ava's
favorite person in the world.

AVA
Save your ammo for the Blackhawks.

DOUGH BOY
You can save your ammo, kid, I'm
taking this sucker out right now!

Dough Boy misses his target, takes return fire -- his plane
crashes and burns.

Barry and Lucy watch them from the kitchen.

LUCY
(low, re: Dough Boy)
Maybe he'll stick around a while
this time.

BARRY
He oughta'. I set him up with a
job at the airline.

LUCY
Oh, honey, that'll be so good for
him.
(gives him a peck on the
cheek)
You're the best, you know that?

She heads upstairs with the baby. Barry approaches Ava and
Dough Boy--

BARRY
(to Ava)
You wanna go flying tomorrow?

AVA
Yes!

BARRY
Then help your momma with the boys
upstairs.

AVA
(turns off the game)
Bye, Uncle JJ.

DOUGH BOY
Bye, gorgeous.

Ava races upstairs. Barry calls out to Lucy:

BARRY
Headin' out back for a cigar!

Barry leads his brother-in-law to the backyard--

EXT. BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

As they move across the porch, Dough Boy gets his hand caught in hanging flypaper.

BARRY (V.O.)
The kid was a space cadet, but he
made up for it in heart. He'd
sooner stick his head in a gator's
mouth than steal from me.

DOUGH BOY
...I hate cigars, Barry.

BARRY
Ain't no cigars, boy.

Barry unlocks the shed...

BARRY (CONT'D)
...Just green.

Dough Boy pushes the sticky fly paper off his arm with his foot. Looks up. Gulps at the sight of all that cash.

INT. MENA BANK - DAY

A one-teller regional bank. AC unit in the window works hard. Dough Boy pushes through the double doors with two suitcases on rollers.

TELLER
May I help you, sir?

Dough Boy unzips the suitcases. About a million in small bills. The BANK MANAGER'S eyes light up like he just hit a pick-six. He ushers Dough Boy into a private back room.

BARRY (V.O.)
I sent Dough Boy to a dozen
regional banks. No one asked where
the money came from and he wasn't
tellin'.

The giddy manager dumps the cash out onto a counting table.

INT. ANOTHER BANK - DAY

Dough Boy enters another bank with two more suitcases.

BARRY (V.O.)

This was the summer of '82. The recession had knocked the entire state of Arkansas on its ass. Banks were closing shop daily. So when my suitcases showed up -- lord have mercy -- it was Christmas in July.

The bank manager hustles Dough Boy into a back room.

INT. ANOTHER BANK - COUNT ROOM - DAY

New bank EMPLOYEES, some wearing shorts and T-shirts, are counting Barry's money.

BARRY (V.O.)

I was a one-man job-creatin' stimulus package. Must've put a thousand tellers to work by the end of that year.

An assembly line of criminal activity: Money counters shuffle through hundred dollar bills...

...Another row of counters shuffle through CASHIER'S CHECKS.

...Several TELLERS stuff the cashier's checks into envelopes.

At the end of line, Dough Boy stuffs the envelopes into a satchel, like a mailman's bag.

EXT. MENA - DAY

A SIGN -- *SEAL ENTERPRISES* -- is raised atop a rundown brick building on the outskirts of town surrounded by tall weeds.

BARRY (V.O.)

Was I as careful as I should've been? Probably not.

(beat)

'Course, "careful" isn't a priority when you have the express consent of the US government to do a rain dance on every law enforcement agency in the land.

INT. SEAL ENTERPRISES - MORNING

Barry's newly-minted FRONT MAN, a small-town local who moves awkwardly in a new JCPenney suit, signs documents.

BARRY (V.O.)

I opened front shops in a dozen states...

FLASH ON: A second FRONT MAN makes paper airplanes in an windowless office.

BARRY (V.O.)
Royale Sports.

FLASH ON: Another FRONT MAN watches TV in an office.

BARRY (V.O.)
Royale Television Studios.

FLASH ON: Several P.O. boxes flash across the screen...

BARRY (V.O.)
Royale Liquor, Royale
Pharmaceuticals, Royale Horses,
Royale Seafood, Royale Security,
and Royale Resorts.

FLASH ON: Stacks of hundred dollar bills being pressed at the US Treasury.

BARRY (V.O.)
Soon my operation was raining
crispy clean, on the books, cash.

CUT TO:

The sleek NOSE of a JET fills the screen.

BARRY (V.O.)
My Colombian friends used their
wealth to build palaces. Me? I
built my own air force.

WIDER REVEALS:

INT. SAUDI ARABIA - HANGAR - DAY

Barry and a SAUDI PRINCE circle a LEAR JET.

BARRY
C'mon, Prince. Let me take this
gal off your hands.

SAUDI PRINCE
Gaddafi is offering me four
million.

BARRY
To do what with it? Drop more TNT
on your cousins? You sell this
Lear to an American ya never have
to worry 'bout us droppin' anything
on your people.

INT. HANGAR - DAY

An aircraft auction. Barry among several bidders watch planes roll past like show ponies. An enormous C-123 CARGO PLANE appears.

BARRY (V.O.)

The crown jewel of my fleet was the C-123. They used this bad boy to haul armies to war.

EXT. COLOMBIA AIR FIELD - DAY

Barry, wearing a silly birthday cone hat, is surrounded by his Colombian friends. They're no longer weary farmers. Designer suits hang on shoulders, gold chains disappear into hairy chests.

Ochoa snaps to a couple UNDERLINGS, who grab handfuls of tarp and yank it off a multi-million dollar BEECHCRAFT KING AIR 200 with a giant birthday BOW on the nose. Everyone claps.

BARRY

You boys shouldn't have.

Three Colombian ARMY TRUCKS pull up to them! Just like the last time Barry was arrested here. A dozen SOLDIERS dismount. Barry reacts. Ochoa laughs.

OCHOA

Mellow out, my friend. Give yourself a *ataque del corazón*.

The soldiers stand at attention with machine guns, but they aren't here to arrest anyone.

OCHOA (CONT'D)

The army works for *us* now.

EXT. SEAL ENTERPRISES - MENA - DAY

Barry's "front" EMPLOYEES -- all clueless local citizens -- stare out the window: Armed GUARDS patrol the grounds as Barry's fleet of planes are towed into his private hangar.

INT. BARRY'S HOUSE - DAY

Christmas morning. Several presents around the modest tree. Barry cuddled with Lucy as his children rip into gifts.

BARRY (V.O.)

Only place I didn't go hog wild was my home. We lived just well enough my wife didn't ask too many questions.

Ava opens a present: PILOT'S HEADPHONES. Her eyes light up. She throws them on her head--

AVA
This is Ava Seal to mission
control!

LUCY
(nudges Barry)
That wasn't on Santa's list.

BARRY
Tell Santa, not me.

Ava smothers her father with kisses.

INT. CIA HEADQUARTERS - LANGLEY - OPERATIONS CENTER - DAY

A small war room. Several AGENTS managing the guerilla war in Central America with prehistoric computers, teletypes, and shortwave radios.

Schafer circles the room with an overworked DEPUTY CHIEF.

DEPUTY CHIEF
You see this?

He smacks Schafer in the chest with a newspaper: *"Reagan declares 'War on Drugs.'"*

Super: "CIA Headquarters. October 14, 1982."

SCHAFER
It's nothing to worry about.

DEPUTY CHIEF
A truck in Wichita was found with a dozen PLO AKs. Wichita. Know the strings I have to pull outta my ass to make that go away?

SCHAFER
It appears Seal's been wholesaling on the side.

DEPUTY CHIEF
Guy's a fuckin' loose cannon.
(leans over a radio man)
Can we get the intel on those Nicaraguan tanks already? That's twice I asked, Phil.
(back to Schafer)
How many more messes I have to clean up after your boy, Schafer?

SCHAFER

The day we stop mopping up after
Barry Seal is the day this war
stops being funded.

DEPUTY CHIEF

No one's that irreplaceable.

SCHAFER

Do you know another world class
pilot who can fly circles around
the DEA, handle the Medellin
cartel, and broker our operations
in Mena? When you find that man,
I'll cut Seal loose.

INT. BREAKFAST DINER - LITTLE ROCK - MORNING

Special Agent McCall, wearing his FBI shield and suit, has
breakfast with his AA SPONSOR, an ex-biker covered in
tattoos.

MCCALL

Downed a handful of Seconal in a
dream the other night. Woke up, I
was buzzing.

AA SPONSOR

That's your mind playing tricks on
you. Addiction will tempt ya 'til
hell would have it, my man.

(beat)

Cold sweats still bothering you?

MCCALL

Every once in a while. Less
lately.

The sound of SCREECHING brakes outside. A gorgeous brand-new
PORSCHÉ pulling into an EMPTY bank parking lot across the
street.

AA SPONSOR

That's one sweet ride.

The driver pops out of the Porsche -- nice suit, Rolex
glinting on his wrist -- and unlocks the bank. It's clear
he's the manager here.

McCall's eyes shift from the bank manager to his Porsche. A
nugget of an idea forming. The AA Sponsor waves a hand in
front of his face--

AA SPONSOR (CONT'D)

Yoohoo? Still there?

MCCALL
(distracted)
Hey, I gotta go.

AA SPONSOR
Everything ok otherwise?

MCCALL
Yeah, yeah...all good.

AA SPONSOR
(looks McCall in the eye)
Remember what we talked about?
Don't get too caught up chasing bad
guys. The hours and stress will
lead you right back into old
habits.
(waves him forward)
Bring it on in, partner.

The two men, who couldn't be more different, hug. Glances from the other diners.

INT. FBI FIELD OFFICE - LITTLE ROCK - DAY

McCall at his desk. An AGENT approaches with paperwork.

AGENT #1
Those bank financials you asked
for?

McCall takes the file. Checks out the financials.

MCCALL
(whistles)
Profits this quarter and last are
through the roof...

AGENT #1
Yeah, so?

MCCALL
Last I heard we were in the middle
of a nasty recession.

McCall, onto something now, jumps on the jumbo-size IBM computer in front of him.

MCCALL (CONT'D)
I want to expand the search to the
entire state. Can we do that here?

AGENT #1
Every bank in Arkansas? Computer
will need a day or two for that.

EXT. MENA POLICE STATION - TRAILER - DAY

A TOY MACHINE GUN. In the lap of Sheriff Joe Downing's eldest SON (8), who's playing soldier with his wheel-chair bound BROTHER (6). A buzzing noise from above. Judy, planting flowers nearby, looks skyward:

Barry in a twin-engine performing aerial stunts.

INT. MENA POLICE STATION - TRAILER - DAY

Downing flips through mail. Stops on an envelope. FBI letterhead -- his application notice has arrived.

He squints at the envelope -- takes a deep breath -- rips it open like a band-aid off a wound.

Disappointment blooms on his face. He balls up the letter. He didn't get into the FBI. The trailer begins to shake...

SFFLIT!

A long blade of steel pierces the roof of the station like a javelin. The sound of a larger CRASH outside.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Downing hurries outside--

 DOWNING
 Anyone hurt?

Judy and his sons are ok. However...

Barry Seal's PLANE has crashed in the field nearby.

 DOWNING (CONT'D)
 Call an ambulance!

EXT. FIELD - CONTINUOUS

Smoke billows. Downing sprints to the mangled plane. Barry Seal in the cockpit. Not a scratch on him.

 BARRY
 I'm all right!

 DOWNING
 You're one lucky S.O.B., mister.

 BARRY
 Story of my life.

Downing helps Barry out of the smoking plane.

BARRY (CONT'D)
 Guy I bought 'er from told me she
 was tiptop. She look tiptop to
 you?

Before Downing can answer, Barry pumps his hand--

BARRY (CONT'D)
 Barry Seal.

DOWNING
 Joe Downing.

Barry nods at the star on Downing's shirt, impressed--

BARRY
Sheriff Downing...
(nods to the boys)
 Your kids ok?

Judy jogs over, eyeing Barry with anger and suspicion.

JUDY
 --By the grace of God! It's a
 miracle you didn't crash sooner.
 Twisting and turning like a bat
 outta hell up there.

BARRY
 Sorry, ma'am. Sometimes I get
 carried away and just don't know
 when to quit.

JUDY
 Hope ya got insurance. Your
 propeller landed on our station.

BARRY
(eyes the ruined trailer)
 The double-wide?

Barry laughs. Judy simmers.

BARRY (CONT'D)
 I can fix that.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. MENA POLICE STATION - DAY

Couple days later. Around the clock CONSTRUCTION WORKERS
 building a brand-new state-of-the-art police station in front
 of the trailer.

Barry walks with an excited Sheriff Downing around the site. They're already fast friends.

BARRY (V.O.)
Donating the new police station
made me citizen number one in Mena.

DOWNING
Above and beyond, Barry, above and
beyond.

BARRY
Hell's bells. I already feel safer
knowing we got a brick and mortar
jail to keep the bad guys locked up
in.

Downing's oblivious as one of Barry's drug trucks ROARS by on the highway.

BARRY (CONT'D)
Still on for Little Rock, Sunday?
Get away from the wives, watch the
races, and tie on a few?

DOWNING
Man with a plan!

They shake hands. Barry hops in his Cadillac Seville, peels away. Judy pulls up in a Pinto, looks after him.

JUDY
Where's your new best friend off
to?

DOWNING
Barry's good people, Judy.

JUDY
Mmmhmm. Said he came from money.
(raises her eyebrows)
No one that comes from money spends
it like he does. And they
definitely don't spend it in Mena.

DOWNING
What's got you all riled up today,
sweetie?

JUDY
Dreamin' of escape. You hear from
the FBI yet?

DOWNING
(lies)
No, uh, not yet.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

FEDERAL AGENTS haul two sketchy-looking DRUG TRAFFICKERS into court.

BARRY (V.O.)
The "War on Drugs" hit the ground
running in '83.

INT. STASH HOUSE - NIGHT

DEA AGENTS raid a house. DEALERS dive for cover. Arrested.
Drugs found packed into the walls.

BARRY (V.O.)
The DEA took down several of the
biggest traffickers in the
Northeast...

EXT. SKY - DAY

DEA PLANES pull alongside a DRUG PLANE.

BARRY (V.O.)
...And arrested a dozen pilots in
Florida alone.

EXT. BARRY'S HANGAR - DAY

The Snowbirds playing poker, having a good time.

BARRY (V.O.)
Of course, me and my Snowbirds
remained untouchable.

EXT. SKY - DAY

TWO DEA PLANES in hot pursuit of Barry's Beechcraft.

BARRY (V.O.)
Law enforcement hired the table
scraps not good enough to fly for
me, so they sure as hell didn't
stand a chance in catching us.

Barry careens toward a mountain range. His radio crackles:

DEA PILOT (VIA RADIO)
This is the DEA. I order you to
land this plane.

BARRY (ON RADIO)
Or what, you'll throw a tantrum?
You boys are far too slow to be
givin' orders.
(jabs the throttle)
...Over and out.

He threads a tight rock formation. The DEA pilots pull back.
No way they can follow him through that narrow passageway.

INT. BANK - MENA - DAY

Barry is led through the back rooms of the bank by a MANAGER.

MANAGER
(excited)
I think you're going to appreciate
what we've done here, Mr. Seal.

He opens a heavy door to reveal--

INT. AUXILIARY VAULT - CONTINUOUS

Construction equipment everywhere. A saw BUZZES. Workers
nearly done building a new vault.

BARRY
What'd you fellas do, build me my
own vault?

MANAGER
Oh, no, no. We're using this
auxiliary for all our *other*
business.

He leads Barry into another vault across the hall--

INT. MAIN VAULT - CONTINUOUS

MANAGER
We gave you the main vault.

The biggest room in the bank. A maze of pallets, each
stacked with bricks of \$100s, ten feet high. Fifty million
dollars in this room easy.

Tellers wheel in new pallets. One of the pallets tumble into
the columns of cash, causing a falling domino effect, until
Barry is buried in a sea of \$100s.

BARRY (V.O.)
Imagine you discovered a money tree
in your backyard. Each morning you
picked it clean, and the next day
the bills grew right back.

He flaps his arms and legs in his fortune, as if making a snow angel.

BARRY (V.O.)

You'd keep pickin' no matter how much you already had. Why? Not 'cause you needed the money. But because it's the easiest thing in the world to pick bills off a money tree.

INT. MENA POLICE STATION - TRAILER - MORNING

Sunday morning. Crickets chirping. Sheriff Downing, in civvies, waits by his truck for Barry. Looks at his watch. Forty past the hour. He's been stood up.

INT. DOWNING HOUSE - FEW MINUTES LATER

A modest two-bedroom rancher. Downing returns home. Judy at an easel. Painting a still life. Her hobby.

JUDY

Thought you and Mr. Moneybags were going to the races?

DOWNING

I cancelled. Not feeling too hot.

JUDY

Really? 'Cause this just came--

She holds up a small package with a bow it--

JUDY (CONT'D)

(reads to card)

"Can't make it today, got caught up in Baton Rouge on business. Razorbacks soon? -- Barry"

Downing opens the package -- two pairs of season tickets to the University of Arkansas football team. Judy smirks.

JUDY (CONT'D)

Box seats to the Razorbacks. We all know where you'll be this fall.

DOWNING

You got something to say?

(she smirks)

Out with it, c'mon.

JUDY

How much property has Seal bought up since he moved to town?

DOWNING
Fifty, sixty acres? So?

JUDY
So maybe there's something going on
out there he'd rather you're not
around so much to see? Then again,
those tickets could just be a
straight-out bribe to look the
other way.

The thought repels Downing. Judy returns to her painting.
He continues to stew over her words.

EXT. MENA - SEAL ENTERPRISES - DAY

Later that day. Offices are closed. Downing circles the
building in his truck. Checking things out. Nothing out of
the ordinary. He's about to leave when...

He steps on something. Scrap metal. The remnants of a small
aircraft wing. Scratched up by weeds and branches.

He takes a few more steps and finds another wing. This field
is a junkyard of scrap airplane parts.

He examines a discarded dash panel -- faint traces of
scratched-out serial numbers under what appears to be altered
new numbers.

Something catches his eye in the distance -- a CESSNA coming
in for a landing at the Mena airfield a few miles away.

EXT. AIRFIELD - MOMENTS LATER

Downing's truck is obscured by tall weeds a quarter mile
outside the airfield.

The Cessna plane, now on the ground, rolls into a hangar.

Downing brings up a pair of binoculars: The pilot -- one of
Barry's snowbirds -- is greeted by Dough Boy.

The two men load several SUITCASES into Dough Boy's trunk.

JUDY (O.S.)
Where are you?

EXT. PAYPHONE - LATER - SUNSET

Downing, now on a roadside payphone across the street from a
motel. His wife on the line--

DOWNING (INTO PHONE)
First ever stakeout.

JUDY (V.O., VIA PHONE)
I knew Seal was up to something!

DOWNING
Did I say that? I'm just followin'
where things take me.

JUDY
When you gonna be home?

DOWNING
When things finish taking me
somewhere.

Downing hangs up. Looks across the highway at the motel:
Dough Boy's car parked in front of a room.

EXT. ACROSS THE HIGHWAY FROM THE MOTEL - MORNING

Downing snoring in his pickup. Pulled an all-nighter. He awakens with a start. Dough Boy's on the move, loading his car with the suitcases from the plane.

EXT. MENA BANK - PARKING LOT - FEW MOMENTS LATER

Dough Boy's car bounces into the lot. He pops the trunk and removes the suitcases.

DOWNING (O.S.)
Need a hand with that?

Downing striding over to him. Dough Boy freezes, startled at the sight of the sheriff.

DOUGH BOY
No, no, I'm ok...

The bank manager, watching from the window, shuts the blinds. Downing grabs one of the suitcases, strains with the weight--

DOWNING
Heavier than my La-Z-Boy. What's
in here?

DOUGH BOY
Nothin'. It's uh, it's uh...

Dough Boy panics. A suitcase slips from his grasp. Cash spills out onto the parking lot. A gust of wind sends the loose bills swirling.

Dough Boy BOLTS. Fast as he can, which isn't very fast. He trips over a parking pylon. Downing ambles after him.

DOWNING
Kid, if you weren't sure, you got
the right to remain silent...

INT. DOWNING HOUSE - NIGHT

Dinner time. Downing, Judy, and his sons are having dinner.
He writes up a report on today's arrest while he eats.

JUDY
Elbows off the table.

DOWNING
(to his son, without
looking up)
Listen to your momma...

JUDY
I meant you, Joe.

DOWNING
Gotta finish this arrest report--

JUDY
First you have to finish this
meatloaf I spent two hours on.

DOWNING
I should try Barry again.

JUDY
You called him three times. My
guess, he's already skipped town.

A knock at the back door. Barry Seal. Downing and Judy
exchange a surprised look.

DOWNING
Barry. C'mon in...

Downing drops a hand on his sons' shoulders--

DOWNING (CONT'D)
Go on to your room, guys. The
adults need to talk.

The kids leave. Barry sets a bottle of whiskey and two
glasses on the table. Pours shots.

DOWNING (CONT'D)
I'm guessing you heard the news?

Barry nods, slides a whiskey over to Downing. Judy grabs it
before it reaches her husband. Downs the glass.

BARRY

Boy came to stay with us after
getting into a fix in Louisiana.
God knows what he's into now.

JUDY

--About a million two in cash.
Picked up in your hangar.

Downing shoots Judy a look -- let me do the talking.

BARRY

(appalled)

Jesus H. My hangar? I stuck my
neck way out for that kid. No good
deed, huh?

DOWNING

He'll be arraigned in the morning.

BARRY

He deserves whatever's coming to
'im. Anything you need from me,
you got--

JUDY

Ever see him with money before?

DOWNING

Judy, please. Let me ask the
questions.

(to Barry)

Didja' see him with money before?

BARRY

Can't say I have. Truth be told,
I've got fourteen some-odd hangars
across the state.

(good-natured shrug)

Some rich assholes like to race
cars, other assholes collect boats.
Me? I'm the asshole likes to fly
planes.

(reaches into his pocket)

'Fore I forget, picked this up in
Tucson.

He sets a BATTERY PACK on the table.

BARRY (CONT'D)

New battery for your boy's chair.
It's rechargeable so you don't have
to keep replacin' them.

DOWNING

That's awful kind of you, Barry.

(stands)

Come down to the station tomorrow,
give an official statement.

BARRY

Will do. And thank you, Joe.

Barry shakes Downing's hand earnestly. Downing seems to be looking straight through him.

DOWNING

...For?

BARRY

Not sweeping this under the rug on
account of our friendship. That
boy needs to be taught a lesson.

Once Barry's gone, Judy peers over the battery. Softens.
Maybe she was wrong about him? But Downing knows better--

DOWNING

Man was lying through his teeth.

He takes the battery from her, tosses it in the trash.

DOWNING (CONT'D)

You were dead right, hon. He
played me for a fool.

INT. TV ROOM - LATER

Downing in his recliner. Beer in hand. Stewing over Barry while he watches *60 Minutes*:

DEA authorities arrest a pilot in South Florida, his plane packed with drugs. Law enforcement huddled around CB radios, eavesdropping on drug traffickers.

Downing grabs a pencil and starts taking notes.

INT. BARRY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The house is still. Everyone asleep. Barry quietly enters.

AVA (O.S.)

Where's Uncle JJ?

Barry whirls. Ava sits at the bottom of the stairs. Now 16, a lovely, smart young lady.

BARRY
He went on a little vacation...but
he'll be back soon.
(beat)
Time for bed.

Barry mops her hair before moving up the stairs.

INT. BARRY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lucy smokes by the window. She overheard his conversation with Ava--

LUCY
My brother's on vacation?

BARRY
He's off with some girl, ok?

LUCY
Without his clothes, or even a
phone call?

BARRY
Kid's in love, what are you gonna
do? They went to Hollywood to see
some sights.

Lucy spies outside: a late-model LINCOLN with tinted windows.

LUCY
That car's been parked across the
street all night.

Barry glances at the car and closes the blinds, hiding his concern. He kisses his wife's neck--

BARRY
So how do you like your new
necklace?

He runs a finger along the 14-karat necklace draped on her collar bone.

LUCY
It's lovely...

BARRY
Now you got the bracelet to match--

A diamond-studded bracelet appears in Barry's hand. His wife forces an appreciative smile, but he can see the gift's made her uncomfortable.

BARRY (CONT'D)
 Something wrong?

LUCY
 We weren't living *half* this well
 when you were at TWA.

She opens a drawer filled with several pieces of expensive jewelry -- all gifts from Barry.

BARRY
 That's why I'm not at TWA anymore.

LUCY
 I got eyes. I see things. Where's
 it all coming from, Barry?
 (locks eyes with him)
 Level with me, baby.

BARRY
 We didn't ride those lean years for
 the fun of it. We were building a
 business. And now it's built.

LUCY
 The private airline...for the rich
 and famous?

BARRY
 Might've exaggerated on the famous
 part, but our clients have plenty
 of places to be and plenty of money
 to get 'em there in style.

He devours her neck. She lets go of any lingering doubt.
 For now.

EXT. MENA - STREET - DAY

Barry drives through town. The Lincoln that was parked
 outside his house last night is now following him.

BARRY (V.O.)
 Dough Boy's arrest put a lot of
 eyeballs on Mena. There were cars
 in my rearview that had no business
 being there...

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Barry strides to a bank of payphones with a paper bag full of
 quarters. A surveillance van halts down the street.

A TECH stumbles out of the van and quickly scales the
 telephone pole.

BARRY (V.O.)
For every booth the state police
tapped, the CIA had Ma Bell install
three fresh ones.

By the time he makes it to the box, Barry hangs up.

INT. MENA - DAY

An army of payphones dot the landscape of the city. AT&T
WORKERS install three new phone booths outside a strip mall.

BARRY (V.O.)
Pretty soon, we had ourselves a
telephone arms race.

EXT. AIRFIELD - COLOMBIA - NIGHT

Barry stands behind Ochoa, Lehder, and GENERAL AQUINO -- a
Sandinista four-star general -- as they fire machine guns at
scarecrow targets.

Barry motions for his partners to stop shooting. He eyes
Aquino, the outsider.

BARRY
Can we go somewhere and talk?

OCHOA
General, give us a moment.

Aquino, puffing a cigar, walks off.

BARRY
(smiles)
Does the general know your
product's funding rebels in his
country?

OCHOA
Now we fund his side too. He's
offering our new Florida operations
a better landing strip in Managua.

BARRY
(chuckles)
That probably falls under the
category of information I shouldn't
have, Jorge.

OCHOA
You're no more CIA than we are. I
trust you, Barry.

BARRY

That's good to hear, cuz' I got
some bad news.

(beat)

My brother-in-law was arrested with
some dirty laundry.

Ochoa and Lehder exchange mild looks.

OCHOA

Local police or federal?

BARRY

Local. For now.

LEHDER

Would you like us to handle it?

BARRY

Naw. I got this dog by its tail.

OCHOA

Easiest way to get bit, Senor
Barry.

The Colombians turn back to their targets: *rat-tat-tat-tat...*

INT. HANGAR - MENA - NIGHT

Barry steers his plane into the hangar. Hops down.
Stretches his legs after a long flight.

A match is struck in the corner of the room. Schafer emerges
from the shadows, cigarette in hand--

SCHAFER

How nervous were the Colombians
when you told them Dough Boy's
looking at ten years?

BARRY

About half as nervous as you guys,
I'd imagine.

(beat)

Don't worry, he won't talk.

SCHAFER

I need more than your word, Barry.
You've done well with the rope
we've given you here. Make sure
you don't hang yourself with it.

BARRY

It's funny. Six years we've worked together, and I still can't decide if you're an angel on my shoulder or monkey on my back.

INT. DARK ROOM - 1986 - NIGHT

BACK WITH THE INTERVIEW -- Barry in the dusty, shadow-filled room. Tape recorder still running.

BARRY

The CIA wanted Dough Boy in the ground. And they wanted me to put him there.

Barry looks off. Some pain and a lot of regret in his eyes.

BARRY (CONT'D)

So I did what I had to do.

EXT. LITTLE ROCK COURTHOUSE - DAY

The next day. Barry outside the courthouse in his idling Caddy. A satchel beside him. His expression distant, troubled behind aviator sunglasses.

He reaches into the glove box, takes out a .38 HANDGUN. Sets it inside the satchel.

Dough Boy exits the courthouse. Out on bail. Barry rolls down the window--

BARRY

Spilled a coffee up here. Hop in the backseat.

INT. BARRY'S CADDY - MOMENTS LATER

Barry drives through traffic. Dough Boy in the backseat, relieved to be out of jail, but on edge just the same.

DOUGH BOY

Wasn't so bad in lockup. Got my own cell and every morning they served gravy and biscuits--

BARRY

It wasn't so bad 'cause I threw enough green at your jailer to keep things comfortable.

DOUGH BOY

I was wondering why they were so nice to me.

BARRY

That's not the only reason they
were nice.

Barry gives him a knowing look in the rearview mirror.

DOUGH BOY

I told 'em to go to hell. They
offered me the moon for a name,
Barry. But I told them to go to
hell.

BARRY

Of course you did.

Barry takes a turn-off--

DOUGH BOY

We're not heading back to Mena?

Barry ominously shakes his head, no.

DOUGH BOY (CONT'D)

(getting worried)

I didn't say nothing to them.
Swear to God. You know I wouldn't!

Barry's face is inscrutable. He turns onto a dirt road--

EXT. DIRT ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Dough Boy looks ahead -- a lone car waits for them. The
DRIVER stands outside, smoking a cigarette. Dough Boy's
heart begins to race. Barry takes off his sunglasses.

BARRY

They'll give you ten years if you
don't talk. That's ten years
people got to worry you will.

DOUGH BOY

Barry, you know me. Please. I
wouldn't -- we're family! My
sister!

Barry takes the hand gun out of the satchel.

BARRY

She was heartbroken when I told her
you weren't coming home.

DOUGH BOY

I didn't give 'em nothing, Barry!

Barry points the gun at Dough Boy--

DOUGH BOY (CONT'D)
Don't kill me! Don't kill me...

Barry's finger tenses on the trigger. Is he gonna do it?

Suddenly, he flips the gun around, hands the butt to a stunned Dough Boy.

BARRY
I pulled the trigger, hear? The
bullet went right through your
skull. Dough Boy is dead and gone.

Barry gives him the satchel--

BARRY (CONT'D)
Inside, you'll find a passport,
first-class ticket to Bora Bora,
and a million five in cash.
(points to the driver)
That man will drive you to Dallas
Fort Worth airport and nowhere
else. Anyone stops you between
here and there...
(holds up the gun)
...use this.

DOUGH BOY
Can I say goodbye to Lucy or Ava
before I go?

BARRY
You already did. I wrote them a
letter this morning.
(beat)
If you ever come home, three
Colombians are going to pull your
tongue through your neck and
there's not a thing I can do to
stop 'em.

Tears stream down Dough Boy's cheeks as he learns his fate.

BARRY (CONT'D)
Enough in that bag to make a good
life for yourself, ya hear?

DOUGH BOY
Thank you, Barry, thank you...

BARRY
Get goin' now.

Dough Boy ducks into the other car. Barry puts his Caddy in reverse. Dough Boy looks back for one final goodbye.

Then...

KABOOM!!!!

Car bomb. Dough Boy's car is BLOWN SKY HIGH.

Barry can't believe his eyes. He sits watching the flaming wreckage. Stunned. Trembling.

EXT. BLUFF - HUNDRED YARDS FROM THE EXPLOSION - SAME TIME

Monty Schafer watches the fireball down below from a parked car. A DETONATOR on the seat beside him. He puts his foot on the gas and drives away.

FADE OUT.

INT. BARRY'S HOME - GARAGE - NIGHT

An hour later. Barry catatonic in his parked car. Forehead leaned against the wheel, shaken to his soul.

INT. BARRY'S HOME - MOMENTS LATER

He walks inside, barely keeping it together. He makes a beeline to the bedroom, but Lucy and Ava look up from a LETTER in the kitchen.

LUCY

It's from JJ.

Barry clears his throat, feigns surprise--

BARRY

Oh yeah? When's he coming back?

LUCY

He's not. Says he's taking a new job out west.

AVA

(hurt)

He didn't even say goodbye.

Barry holds a tidal wave of emotion at bay. He pats his daughter on the shoulder--

BARRY

I'm sure he'll call or write as soon as he gets settled in, sweetheart.

Ava, still hurt, leaves the room. Lucy looks Barry over, something about this doesn't sit right with her.

LUCY

Did he say anything to you about
this job?

BARRY

...No. Not a word. Didn't even
give me notice.

(beat)

Boy's always been a wild card,
Lucy, we both know that.

Lucy gives him a dubious look but doesn't press the matter.
A washer/dryer BUZZES in the other room. She leaves to
gather the laundry.

Now alone, emotion floods Barry's face. He leans over the
kitchen sink and fights back tears. His body heaving as he
silently weeps.

CUT TO:

EXT. MENA - DAY

A rental car whooshes past the "Welcome to Mena, Pop. 907"
city limits sign. Special Agent McCall behind the wheel.

INT./EXT. MENA POLICE STATION - TRAILER - DAY

Sheriff Downing at his desk, fiddling with an ancient, rusty
CB radio trying to pick up "drug chatter" in the area like he
saw the DEA do on *60 Minutes*.

McCall's rental car parks amidst the construction crew still
building the new station. He enters the trailer.

Downing looks up from the CB, startled by the black man in a
suit and tie--

DOWNING

Help you?

MCCALL

(holds out his badge)
Afternoon, sheriff. Craig McCall,
FBI.

DOWNING

(glances out the window)
No government plates on your car.

MCCALL

I'm not here on official business.

Downing examines his FBI badge with a twinge of envy.

MCCALL (CONT'D)

There's a few airfields in the back country I'd like to check out--

DOWNING

Unofficially?

MCCALL

That's right...

DOWNING

So you thought you'd just waltz into my station, off-duty, flash a badge and get me to play tour guide? No phone call? No notice?

MCCALL

(smiles)

General idea, yeah.

DOWNING

Well, I'm damn busy with my *own* investigations.

The trailer is devoid of any paperwork, pictures, or investigation files. Just the old CB radio.

MCCALL

Is that what you're doing with the CB? Investigating?

DOWNING

No...

MCCALL

You won't pick up any chatter on that relic.

DOWNING

(lying)

Wasn't trying to.

MCCALL

Alright, crime fighter, sorry to bother. I'll let you get back to it then.

McCall edges around the propeller still splitting the trailer in half -- and heads out. Downing looks after him. Already regretting his silly tantrum--

DOWNING

What're you investigating -- the drug running or the money laundering?

The hair on the back of McCall's neck stands tall.

MCCALL

There's cartel activity like that
in the area?

DOWNING

Cartels aren't active here. It's
one guy running things.

MCCALL

Who?

DOWNING

The man who put that propeller
through my station. Barry Seal.

MCCALL

Never heard of him.

DOWNING

He's the same guy who's building
the new police station out front.
(off McCall's confused
look)

Ever hear the expression digging
your own grave? Barry's building
his own jail cell, far as I'm
concerned.

(picks up his keys)

Let's go for a drive.

INT. DOWNING'S TRUCK - BACK ROAD - DAY

Downing keeps one eye on the road, the other stealing glances
at McCall. His first up close and personal time with a real-
life FBI agent.

DOWNING

Tell me about yourself, McCall.
You like the bureau?

MCCALL

More than my ex-wife.
(smiles)
Less than my daughter...

McCall notes several dog-eared paperbacks on the floorboards
of Downing's truck -- *FBI Profiles*, *Life in the FBI*, *The
Hoover Years*.

MCCALL (CONT'D)

...and you from the looks of it.
Such a big fan of the bureau, why
don't you apply?

DOWNING
Who says I didn't?

MCCALL
They turned you down? Well, don't
feel bad, that exam is no cake
walk.

DOWNING
--Aced it.

MCCALL
You go to school around these
parts?

DOWNING
Four years at East-Ozark Cowshit
College...
(beat)
I had two boys before I was 20.
Harvard Law wasn't in the cards.

MCCALL
Harvard was out of my league too.

DOWNING
So where'd you go?

MCCALL
...Princeton.

And that's why McCall's in the FBI and Downing isn't.

INT. DIVE BAR - DAY

A few BARFLIES scattered about. Barry rip-roaring drunk in a
corner booth. Schafer sits across from him.

SCHAFER
What'd you think, you'd just show
your ass to every law enforcement
agency in the state and there
wouldn't be consequences when they
came after you?

BARRY
I coulda' sent that boy to the ends
of the earth! No one would've
found him. He didn't have to die.

SCHAFER
You're the golden goose, kid. They
were never gonna take a chance he
talked in open court--

BARRY
Who wouldn't?

SCHAFER
The Colombians. Who else?

Barry knows Schafer's full of shit. He holds up his drink.

BARRY
I'm done. With all of it.
Consider this my goodbye toast.

SCHAFER
You might not touch the narcotics
you're peddling, but you're still a
junkie. Not a lot of *highs* to be
had shuttling commuters to Tulsa.
How long can you last without a
fix?

BARRY
We'll have to find out, won't we?

SCHAFER
No, we won't.

Someone turns the volume up on the tv in the bar. JESSE
JACKSON on ABC's *Nightline*:

JESSE JACKSON
(archival footage)
*You heard me right. The CIA is
selling cocaine to inner-city
communities -- right now, today,
this is going on -- to fund a bunch
Central American civil wars...*

Ted Koppel gives Jesse Jackson a look like he's insane.

BACK TO BARRY AND SCHAFER--

SCHAFER
(leans forward)
There's a revolution happening --
I'm talking hearts and minds --
nation-building -- because of the
work you're doing, Barry. We're
liberators. A whole fuckin'
continent of people. That's bigger
than you or I or whatever crisis of
conscience eating you up inside.
So you'll wake up tomorrow and
continue to fund this liberation
and make a fortune for yourself in
the process.

BARRY

Or what? I'll find two pounds of C-4 on my ignition the hard way?

Schafer looks off. More regret than menace:

SCHAFER

Or Lucy would. There's no telling what could happen if you turned off the spigot.

A replay of Dough Boy's death plays through Barry's mind. He can't walk away from this without more people dying.

Schafer slides over a manila envelope.

SCHAFER (CONT'D)

There's a buyer from Miami coming up to Little Rock this weekend. Details inside.

Schafer leaves. Barry sits staring at the envelope.

EXT. MENA AIRFIELD - DAY - SAME TIME

Downing and McCall traverse the grounds outside Barry's hangar, now empty.

DOWNING

The twin-engines were parked inside. Three of 'em. Wings all chewed up with grass and weeds.

MCCALL

Landing in a Central American jungle will do that.

DOWNING

Junkyard nearby filled with spare plane parts and dashboards with the serial numbers all monkeyed with.

McCall's attention moves to the surrounding field. He steps forward a few paces--

MCCALL

...Something out there.

Downing sees nothing but tall weeds.

DOWNING

How can you tell?

MCCALL

Sun don't reflect off weeds.

EXT. TRAIL - CONTINUOUS

Downing follows McCall into the tall weeds. They spot a rust-covered, deserted FARMHOUSE. Four cars parked out front. They head toward it.

McCall trips over something. A long extension cord snaking through the grass. They follow the cord to a BIG GENERATOR outside the farmhouse. Downing knocks on a side door.

DOWNING

Anyone home? Car broke down, need
some water for the carburetor.

INT. FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Downing enters--

CLICK.

A gun to his head. THREE STATE POLICE OFFICERS surround him.

OFFICER #1

Hands up high.

MCCALL

Ease up. FBI.

McCall flashes a badge. Downing recognizes the officer--

DOWNING

Willie, put that gun away.

WILLIE -- pure country, ten-year vet of the state police -- holsters his weapon.

WILLIE

What in Sam Hill are you doing out
here, Downing?

DOWNING

Me? What's the state police doing
in my county without a head's up?

DANA SIBOTA (O.S.)

The holy fuck is all this
conversation?

DANA SIBOTA appears. Beautiful. Foul-mouthed. Attorney General of Arkansas.

DANA SIBOTA (CONT'D)

Who are these two?

Behind her, SIX STATE POLICE DETECTIVES are running a surveillance operation on Barry Seal. Dozens of photos and intel tacked on the walls. A bank of CCTV monitors offer grainy, B/W images of Barry's private hangars.

TECH

We got movement!

Everyone crowds around a monitor. The image rolls.

DANA SIBOTA

Can we get a clean picture here?!

WILLIE

You gotta hit it--

Sibota smacks the monitor. The rolling images steadies for a nanosecond, then rolls again.

DANA SIBOTA

This is hopeless.

(wheels to Downing and
McCall)

Why are you here?

DOWNING

Same reason you are, ma'am. Catch
Barry Seal.

DANA SIBOTA

(to McCall)

Feds have anything useful?

MCCALL

There's more action in these parts
than you can imagine.

DANA SIBOTA

My imagination's about...

(holds her hands out)

...yay big. So why don't you try
me?

MCCALL

Two-thirds of the Colombian white
powder smuggled into the US is
going through these parts.

Sibota gives a "we've got a live one" look to Willie.

MCCALL (CONT'D)

Ground zero for the US drug trade
isn't in New York, LA, or Miami.
It's right here in west Arkansas.

DANA SIBOTA

Any proof to back that up?

McCall hands her a file filled with bank financials.

MCCALL

Bank failure rate in the state is 30% the last two years. One's that aren't going under are barely hanging on. Except for the twelve regionals within two hundred square miles of Mena. These banks have seen an *increase* in their deposits.

WILLIE

(looking over Sibota's
shoulder)

How big a increase?

MCCALL

Twenty thousand percent. Each.

WILLIE

So there's money coming in.
Thought you said it was powder?

MCCALL

With one comes the other.
(to Sibota)
You got anything on this Seal
character?

DANA SIBOTA

Goose egg. I've spent six weeks in this swamp and we're no closer to nabbing him than we were the day before I first heard his name. We bug two phones, he goes to a third. We wire his car, he uses a truck.

DOWNING

I arrested his brother-in-law with a suitcase full of dirty cash, but now he's MIA too.

DANA SIBOTA

Seal's the saltiest dog I've ever come across.

MCCALL

Maybe not that salty. I've got a line on a Miami buyer heading to Arkansas this weekend. If Seal's our man, I know his next move.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

A Peterbilt roars down the highway at 90mph. Barry takes a hit on a flask of booze as he drives. His expression somber, but focused.

BARRY (V.O.)

The Colombians were moving into
pharmaceuticals in a big way.
Schafer set them up with a buyer
outta Miami and sent me to
personally close the deal.

SUPER: "January 6th, 1984. Little Rock, AK"

EXT. NANCY'S PRIDE TRUCK STOP - NIGHT

A huge truck stop diner/general store sits in the donut hole of a enormous lot packed with columns of big rigs and trailers.

INT. KENWORTH RIG - COMMAND POST - NIGHT

Inside the cavernous container. Tech equipment everywhere. Dana Sibota and her team of state police -- along with McCall's FBI TEAM -- filling a valise with marked bills.

FRANK LUCHETTI -- a well-tanned Miami dealer by way of the Bronx -- is getting WIRED up under his leisure suit.

McCall, also in a leisure suit, is getting wired as well.

LUCHETTI

I deliver your hillbilly, I walk on
the Dade County beef.

MCCALL

You make good, we make good.
That's how it works.

INT. DOWNING'S HOUSE - MENA - NIGHT

Sheriff Downing sits alone, fuming. Staring out the window and working on his third whiskey of the night.

The reflection of a waving hand in the window -- his six-year-old. The boy smiles, trying to cheer his dad up.

JUDY (O.S.)

Quit pouting!

Judy enters the room--

JUDY (CONT'D)
 Star on your shirt says Mena, not
 Little Rock.

DOWNING
 This was *my* bust. Seal's my
 suspect. I was onto him before any
 a those ass--
 (catches himself)
 -- a-holes.

His boy giggles at his dad's cursing. The phone rings.
 Downing reaches for it--

DOWNING (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)
 Downing!
 (listening)
 Sure it wasn't just a few hunters
 up from Hot Springs?
 (listening)
 Ok, then. Be there in twenty.
 (hangs up)
 Edgar Nance out in Ouachita heard
 some automatic gunfire.

JUDY
 Probably boar hunters--

DOWNING
 Shit ending to a shit day! Spend
 the night writing out gun permit
 citations...

He grabs his hat and sheriff's star, gives his sons a hug.

DOWNING (CONT'D)
 Take care of your momma while I'm
 out.

Judy stops him at the front door.

JUDY
 There'll be plenty of Barry Seals
 to take down once you got that FBI
 badge.

It'd break her heart if she knew the truth.

DOWNING
 I sure do love you.

EXT. NANCY'S PRIDE TRUCK STOP - SAME TIME - NIGHT

Three semis pull in at once. A State Police SPOTTER hiding
 behind the diner--

SPOTTER (INTO WALKIE)
He just pulled in. I think.

SIBOTA (V.O., VIA WALKIE)
Well, did he or didn't he?

SPOTTER
Three rigs comin' in at once.
Can't tell...

The rigs disappear into the maze of 18-wheelers.

INT. RIG - COMMAND POST - SAME TIME

Sibota paces. The BEEPER on Luchetti's hip comes to life: Barry Seal. The room explodes with frantic activity.

SIBOTA
Get in position. Go. Go. Go.
(into walkie)
Which one of those rigs is Seal?

SPOTTER (V.O., VIA WALKIE)
...I lost them.

SIBOTA (INTO WALKIE)
You got sixty seconds to put eyes
on that cracker's truck or you're
hitchhiking back to Mena!

McCall grabs the cash and leads Luchetti out of the container.

EXT. OUACHITA NATIONAL FOREST - SAME TIME - NIGHT

On the outskirts of the dense forest. EDGAR NANCE -- a furtive, bespectacled forest ranger on horseback -- pulls up short as Sheriff Downing climbs out of his pickup.

SUPER: "Ouachita National Forest, twenty miles outside Mena"

EDGAR
Heard the gunfire out yonder.
Found these after I called you...

Edgar tosses over a bag of shell casings--

DOWNING
20-millimeters...
(puzzled)
You found 'em out here?

EDGAR
Right over 'chair. Why?

DOWNING
Only firearm can handle this
caliber of bullet is military-
grade.

EDGAR
(cocks an eyebrow)
That might explain this...

Edgar moves into the forest. Downing follows.

EDGAR (CONT'D)
Didn't wanna touch it.
Fingerprints, y'know?

They weave around a couple trees to find a MACHINE GUN lying
on the ground. Downing runs his flashlight over it.

DOWNING
Ingram Model 10. Folding butt and
suppressor. Ten inches of kill
power capable of firing eleven-
hundred rounds a minute.

EDGAR
Sure do know your guns.

DOWNING
I was raised in Texas, Edgar.

The sound of a QUICK BURST OF MACHINE GUN FIRE deeper in the
forest, startling them. Downing draws his six-shooter.

EDGAR
(spooked)
So, Sheriff, I've been off duty
'bout an hour now. Wife's got
dinner going. Shrimp and grits...

Downing's attention is on the forest.

DOWNING
Yeah, get on home.

EDGAR
County property ends here. Why
dontcha' call this business in from
my place? Let the state police
handle it.

No way Downing's calling this in.

DOWNING
You better get going now, Edgar.

The park ranger hightails it out of there. Downing throws the Ingram over his shoulder, heads into the woods on foot.

EXT. NANCY'S PRIDE TRUCK STOP - SAME TIME - NIGHT

McCall and Luchetti move into position behind the diner. Luchetti walks stiffly.

MCCALL

Loosen up--

LUCHETTI

Five pounds of wire attached to my nutsack, this's what ya get...

(points)

Said to meet back here.

The thundering blast of a truck's airhorn spikes the air as a PETERBILT behind them suddenly comes alive, hydraulics HISSING. McCall spins -- headlights sweep over him.

The Peterbilt lumbers forward, hissing and rumbling. They squint into the headlights. Barry Seal sticks his head out of the truck, looking down at the two men--

BARRY

Who's your friend eye-bangin' me, Miami?

Barry revs the engine loudly, drowning out Luchetti's response--

BARRY (CONT'D)

Who? Speak up!

LUCHETTI

(loud)

I said, he's my partner.

BARRY

(suspicious)

First I'm hearing about a partner.

LUCHETTI

You wanna open a pharmacy in South Beach, this is the guy in the know.

BARRY

Is that right? He some kinda medicine man?

MCCALL

I'm the fuckin' witch doctor, what's it to you? Open the back so we can check out the stock.

Barry looks out a side mirror -- shadows loom in the column behind him. Something's amiss. But Barry plays along, hits a button to pop the container lock--

BARRY
You got it, medicine man.

EXT. PETERBILT CONTAINER - CONTINUOUS

McCall raises the slatted metal door. It retracts along the ceiling with a noisy rattle. Hundreds of Spanish-labeled pharmaceuticals in the cavernous interior.

MCCALL
We're in business.

INT. RIG - COMMAND CENTER - SAME TIME

Sibota -- listening to the wire -- pumps her fists!

SIBOTA
We got this sonofabitch!

Everyone grabs their sidearms and explode out of the container.

EXT. OUACHITA NATIONAL FOREST - SAME TIME - NIGHT

Downing moves through the dark forest with his flashlight. More GUNFIRE suddenly crackles. He spins around, trying to place it...

Several more ammo BURSTS. The gunfire's seemingly all around him. As if he's been dropped in the middle of a war zone.

He drops the flashlight in a panic. Breaks out in a sprint.

Branches and bushes scratch his face and arms in the total darkness.

He stumbles to a clearing, falls to his knees -- looks up -- eyes reflecting nearby floodlights.

Dozens of SOLDIERS in camouflage gear. Some American, most Latin. The Americans are training GUERILLA SOLDIERS.

Downing's stumbled onto a covert CIA contra training ground.

To the right of the training ground a...

MAKESHIFT GRAVEL AIRSTRIP

A drug plane takes off down the runway in total darkness.

Downing takes it all in: this entire area is ground zero for the CIA's and Barry Seal's gun-drug-contra trade with Central America.

The SECURITY GUARDS patrolling the airstrip swing a SPOTLIGHT over the sheriff.

Downing ducks into the darkness a second too late -- he's been spotted. The guards take off on foot after him.

EXT. BARRY'S PETERBILT - SAME TIME - NIGHT

Barry continues to rev the engine. Knows he's about to go down hard. Scheming for a way out. More shadows have merged in the row behind him.

McCall and Luchetti climb into the truck with the valise of cash.

BARRY

Guessing you liked what you found
back there?

MCCALL

We're good to go--

This pleases Barry for some reason. McCall hands him the valise.

BARRY

I need to count this?

LUCHETTI

It's all there.

BARRY

Then we got a deal, Miami.

Barry reaches into his breast pocket. Several ARRESTING OFFICERS appear on either side of the truck.

STATE POLICE

Hands off the wheel. In the air!

BARRY

(not surprised)
You boys didn't tell me you brought
company.

MCCALL

(pulls out his badge)
Put 'er in park, Seal. Step out
like they asked.

EXT. PETERBILT - CONTINUOUS

Barry climbs down. The state police pounce on him. He's thrown to the ground and cuffed. Sibota approaches--

SIBOTA
Mr. Seal, you're under arrest for
the illegal transport and sale--

BARRY
Illegal?

SIBOTA
--of methaqualone.

BARRY
Metha-what?

MCCALL
Quaaludes, Mr Seal.

BARRY
Quaaludes? Me? I got a rig fulla'
aspirin, you assholes.

Two FEDS pull cases of the pharmaceuticals from the container.

FED #1
(reading the labels)
Neo-melubrina.

FED #2
...Mexican aspirin.

BARRY
Like I said. Got a bill of sale in
my pocket was about to hand over to
your undercover man before ya'll
body-slammed me.

They take the bill of sale from his pocket. Sibota looks it over, throws a suspicious glare at Barry--

SIBOTA
Three million in aspirin for a bag
of cash at a truck stop?

BARRY
Cash, check, credit. Long as it's
legal tender, what do I care? As
for the time and place, that was
Miami's call.

The officers trade worried looks. Sibota thinks.

FED #1
(calls out)
There's no contraband in here.

McCall jumps back inside the container. He desperately searches through the stacks of aspirin boxes. Sibota frets. This operation is fucked.

SIBOTA
Take those goddamn cuffs off him.

Barry's uncuffed, but he now has a worried eye on McCall--

BARRY
Mind gettin' your fed off my
property?

INT. CONTAINER - CONTINUOUS

McCall's attention shifts to the interior wall of the container itself.

SIBOTA
McCall, get the fuck down from
there. Let's wrap this up...

McCall suddenly pulls out his FIREARM. Plugs a single SHOT into the interior wall of the rig.

Everyone reacts.

Then...

BLUE PILLS tumble out of the hole like gumballs.

McCall is ankle-deep in QUAALUDES. He shudders. An ex-addict's worst nightmare. He stays strong. Turns the gun on Barry--

MCCALL
Back on the ground and put your
hands behind your head!

Barry senses McCall's weakness amongst the pills.

BARRY
You look like a pig in shit,
Special Agent.

EXT. HIGHWAY - MENA - SAME TIME - NIGHT

Downing, now behind the wheel of his truck, hauling ass down the highway. Covered in sweat. Taking huge panic breaths.

Swerves off the highway looking for cars in the rearview...

EXT. MENA POLICE STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Downing skids into the parking lot -- kicking up plumes of dust. He bolts from his truck -- the Ingram machine gun over his shoulder -- CHARGES into the trailer.

INT. TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

He tosses a chair into the gun cabinet. Shakes shattered glass off a lone SHOTGUN. He feeds shells into the gun and quickly dials a number on the rotary phone--

 DOWNING (INTO PHONE)
 This is Sheriff Downing out in
 Mena. Real emergency on my hands
 here. I need as many men--

DIAL TONE. Shit. The power suddenly DIES.

Downing senses an imminent attack. He dives under his tanker desk with guns on either shoulder as...

RAT-TAT-TAT-TAT-TAT!

A barrage of bullets suddenly pour into the station, turning the tiny trailer into swiss cheese.

Downing takes one to the calf. Flesh wound. The assault suddenly ends. Precious seconds before reload.

The bullets have opened a chasm in the floor of the trailer. He snakes through it--

EXT. POLICE TRAILER - MENA - NIGHT

--tumbling under the trailer. Several pairs of LEGS stand out front of his station.

He props up the Ingram machine gun. OPENS FIRE--

Heavy duty rounds obliterate the legs. Downing keeps firing until his clip is spent.

He crawls out from under the trailer...

The air heavy with gun smoke. Six men on the ground, all dead, their lower halves chewed apart with bullets.

Movement behind him...

He whirls the shotgun -- an off-road 4x4 on the highway, approaching the station, carrying two more security guards.

KABOOM!

He blows a hole through the windshield. The truck crashes into the construction site.

Downing surveys the scene. Surrounded by dead bodies. Out of ammo. All is quiet.

The sound of FOOTSTEPS over broken glass BEHIND HIM.

Downing turns -- a gritty boot appears in the trailer doorway...

One final GUARD. Holding an Ingram Model-10 of his own. Full clip in the butt.

Downing knows his life is about to end. A silent beat. The guard snaps his trigger finger--

A round of bullets pummel Downing's body. He's blown off his feet. Killed instantly.

INT. LITTLE ROCK FEDERAL BLDG - INTERROGATION ROOM - SAME TIME

Barry is cuffed to a chair. He seems oddly unworried about his predicament. McCall and Sibota across from him. Several more FEDS watch from a monitoring room next door.

BARRY

Gotta hand it to you, McCall.
You're the first lawman to ever put
iron on my wrists.

MCCALL

How long they stay on depends
entirely on you. Right now, you're
looking at thirty years. You give
us some names, those years start to
go down in number.

BARRY

What kind of car do you drive?

MCCALL

Oldsmobile.

BARRY

Man drives an Oldsmobile for one
reason and one reason only -- he
can't afford a Caddy.

MCCALL

Let's get back on point here--

BARRY

--I'm a Caddy man, myself. Big, powerful engine, lots of leg room in the front and back, whole dash cased in cherry wood, nice leather seats, firm but with some give, and then there's the best part: trunk space. Caddies got more trunk space than any other car in the world.

(leans forward)

Enough to fit practically *anything* you want inside. So maybe you'd like to trade that Olds in for a Caddy?

McCall and Sibota laugh. Barry does too.

BARRY (CONT'D)

I could have one -- two in fact, one for each of you -- parked outside here by midnight, filled with whatever you'd like inside that big 'ol trunk.

McCall and Sibota exchange a look -- is this guy for real?

MCCALL

I thought you wanted to *knock off* years, Seal, not add another twenty for bribery.

BARRY

A bribe involves "give" and "receive." This isn't that. I was just offering the Caddies for your trouble.

MCCALL

What trouble?

BARRY

Time wasted bringing me down here, for one.

MCCALL

Maybe you don't fully realize the situation you're in.

SIBOTA

The State of Arkansas is gonna rip the bark off you, boy.

Barry chuckles, completely unworried. The phone RINGS. Barry motions -- you better answer that. Sibota does.

SIBOTA (CONT'D)

Yes?

She listens. Her face starts to contort. McCall keeps his eyes on Barry.

SIBOTA (CONT'D)

But...

(beat)

Yes...

(beat)

Yes, sir...

Sibota hangs up. Barry puts his cuffed hands forward.

Sibota rises, stone-faced with anger, walks out without a word. AGENTS enter.

BARRY

Ninety-one minutes. That's how long your irons lasted. And you were right, it *did* depend entirely on me.

MCCALL

Fuck is happening here?

BARRY

Should've taken that Caddy, Special Agent.

The agents UNCUFF Barry and escort him out of the room--

EXT. ARKANSAS FEDERAL BUILDING - NIGHT

Barry is led to an idling Town Car behind the building.

BARRY (V.O.)

It occurred to me somewhere between the truck stop and the federal building, an arrest was the best way to get out from under Schafer's thumb. So my one phone call went to Frank Mullen, head of the DEA. Hour later, I was on a private plane to D.C.

EXT. LITTLE ROCK REGIONAL AIRPORT - NIGHT

A small JET takes off...

EXT. WASHINGTON D.C. - NIGHT

...and lands at Dulles.

INT. DEA HEADQUARTERS - WASHINGTON D.C. - MORNING

Coffee stained cubicles and flickering fluorescents. Top level DEA ADMINISTRATORS enter a cramped boardroom.

BARRY (V.O.)

They put me up at the Ritz, comped a tasty continental breakfast, and whisked me in for a debrief first thing in the morning.

Barry is brought in by TWO DEA AGENTS. He shakes hands with the head of the DEA:

FRANK MULLEN -- a thin, refined Washington egghead in his late 40s with salt and pepper hair.

BARRY (V.O.)

And for the next three hours, I spilled my goddamn guts.

TIME CUT - LATER

Barry standing at a big wall map, pointing out pickups and drops.

BARRY (V.O.)

I told 'em about Ochoa, Escobar, Noriega, flight patterns, all the millions I made in the narcotics trade, where my Colombian friends and I parked our cash, the whole enchilada.

The DEA brass -- his pupils -- take notes.

MULLEN

Were you ever approached by any U.S. officials in Central America?

BARRY

Me personally? Never.

BARRY (V.O.)

I wasn't suicidal enough to tell them about the CIA's involvement. But I did give 'em a nugget I thought would put some distance between myself and Schafer. At the time, I didn't realize how big a nugget it was.

Mullen puts his hands together tee-pee style, ponders whatever Barry's just told him.

INT. TOWN CAR - WASHINGTON D.C. - DAY

Hard rain pounds the capital. Barry squeezed into the backseat between Mullen and a DEA SUPERVISOR.

BARRY (V.O.)
Next thing I knew we were headed up
K Street, to 1600 Pennsylvania
Avenue.

The White House dead ahead...

INT. WHITE HOUSE - WEST WING OFFICE - DAY

Barry is shuffled into a small office. Just him, Mullen, and two White House officials--

BARRY (V.O.)
They brought me before George
Bush's Vice Presidential Task Force
on Drugs.

LT. COLONEL OLIVER NORTH (early 40s) well-manicured, stiff, not one for nonsense. He gets right to the point:

OLIVER NORTH
You work for the Medellin cartel?

BARRY
That's one way to look at.

OLIVER NORTH
There's another?

BARRY
Sure. They work for me.

MULLEN
Tell him what you told me.

BARRY
Medellin has gone into business
with the Sandinistas. Hefty cut of
drug profits in exchange for the
use of an airfield in Managua as a
trans-shipment point for narcotics.

It takes a moment for North to digest this.

OLIVER NORTH
Will you excuse us a moment, Barry?

Barry is escorted out of the room.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

He waits in the hall. A TEXAN in his mid 30s wearing an ill-fitting suit also waits out here.

TEXAN
Got any Skoal?

BARRY
Stopped chewing a while back.

TEXAN
I sneak it every now and then when
the wife's not looking.

The Texan points to a small tattoo of an airplane on Barry's wrist.

TEXAN (CONT'D)
You a pilot?

BARRY
I been known to do some flying.

TEXAN
Me too. Air National Guard '68,
'69.

A door down the hall opens. VICE PRESIDENT GEORGE H.W. BUSH steps out--

VICE PRESIDENT BUSH
Junior, come on in.

We realize the Texan is GEORGE W. BUSH, age 36.

W
See ya around, flyboy.

W shoots Barry a wink and heads into his old man's office.

VICE PRESIDENT BUSH
What's this I hear about baseball--

The door closes, cutting off the conversation. Another office opens. Mullen and Oliver North appear.

OLIVER NORTH
Welcome to the team, Barry.

North pumps Barry's hand and strides down the hall into the Vice President's office.

INT. GEORGE H.W. BUSH'S OFFICE - LATER - DAY

North leans over Vice President Bush's desk, whispering details of the Barry Seal meeting. Bush nods and nods.

BARRY (V.O.)

The White House had a hard-on for Nicaragua. They were friendly with Castro and the Russians, which was a Cold War double whammy.

INT. TOWN CAR - WASHINGTON DC - DAY

Barry rides back to the DEA headquarters with Mullen.

MULLEN

You'll come back in a week with a game plan.

BARRY

Game plan for what?

MULLEN

I want Medellin. North wants the Sandinistas. Get them in a room together and your Quaaludes charges disappear permanently.

INT. FBI WAREHOUSE - DAY

McCall watches FBI AGENTS tear down Barry Seal's truck full of Quaaludes. The contraband packed away in evidence boxes.

AGENT #1

We sure could have some fun here.

McCall glares silently. The agent clears his throat--

AGENT #1 (CONT'D)

Whole office is talking, Craig.

(low, direct)

The hell went down last night?

McCall is not sure himself. Offers:

MCCALL

Whatever the rules are for the rest of us mere mortals, they don't apply to Barry Seal.

With that, McCall leaves the warehouse.

INT. BARRY'S HOUSE - MENA, ARKANSAS - DAY

Late afternoon. Barry enters with an overnight bag.

BARRY

Lucy? I'm back, babe...

He steps into the hall to find his house RANSACKED. Pillows and couches torn apart, walls ripped up, bookshelves emptied.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Honey...?

(growing dread)

Ava?! Where are you?!

He skids down the hall to find -- Lucy standing in the bedroom doorway, suitcases in either hand, their two boys (now 6 and 7 yrs old) flanking her. They're all ok.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Where's Ava?

Ava stands in her bedroom doorway, visibly upset.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Thank god, c'mere--

He gives her a hug. She doesn't hug back. He turns to his boys and gives them hugs too.

LUCY

This happened while we were out today. I didn't call the cops because I was worried what that would mean for you.

BARRY

Lucy, just stop--

Meaning, don't say that in front of Ava.

LUCY

She has a right to know who her father is. I'd love to tell her, but I don't have a clue myself.

(off Barry's sigh)

Whoever did this was after something you're involved in, something that got my brother killed, that much I'm sure of.

Ava is devastated by her mother's words--

AVA

Daddy?

BARRY

It's not true, Ava. Don't listen to that. None of it's true.

LUCY
No? Then tell us the truth.

BARRY
Truth about what? Look around, we
got robbed.

LUCY
Robbed? Really? Guess these
bandits were blind then.

She kicks over an open drawer filled with her jewelry.

LUCY (CONT'D)
They missed the couple hundred
thousand in diamonds.
(beat)
Tell us one truth, Barry. Just
one. Before we go.

BARRY
You want the truth?

LUCY
I want one truth. Just one. And
we'll start from there.

BARRY
I work for the CIA. Have been for
several years now.

There. He said it. Lucy shakes her head in frustration.

LUCY
Couldn't even give us one, could
you?

BARRY
(mumbles, to himself)
It's the truth, I swear.

Barry looks pleadingly to Ava. She gives him one final look -
- half-anger, half-pity -- before she's gone.

Barry's attention sways to the TV playing in the den...

*A special report from Mena, Arkansas. Headline: "Local
sheriff Joe Downing gunned down in drug slaying." Footage of
a body bag being taken away.*

His face fills with growing dread.

INT. DARK ROOM - 1986 - NIGHT

BACK WITH THE INTERVIEW -- the tape recorder suddenly STOPS. A hand removes the tape and labels it "3" -- then inserts a fresh tape and presses RECORD.

BARRY
You wanna know how I feel about
Downing?

Barry fidgets, shaking off emotion with a quick smile. He's at a loss for words.

VOICES (PRE-LAP)
Happy birthday to you...
Happy birthday to you...

INT. MONTY SCHAFER'S HOUSE - BATON ROUGE - NIGHT

A child's birthday party. Several KIDS and PARENTS. Monty Schafer holding a cake. His young SON blows out the candles. A rap on the back screen door. Schafer looks over--

Barry Seal standing in his backyard. Shaken. Angry.

SCHAFER'S SON
Who's that man, daddy?

SCHAFER
(quickly covering)
Friend from work. Only take a
moment--
(strides to the door)
Richie! Hey, buddy.

INT. SCHAFER'S HOME OFFICE - SECONDS LATER

Schafer leads Barry inside, closes the door behind them, muffling the din of the party. His friendly smile morphs into something more menacing.

SCHAFER
Showing up at a covert agent's
residence is considered an act of
treason, Barry.

BARRY
You killed Downing.

SCHAFER
Who?

BARRY
The sheriff. He was a good man --
an honest man--

SCHAFER

I saw that on the news. Apparently he had ties to some unsavory characters in the drug trade.

BARRY

Your men killed him.

SCHAFER

The only armed "men" in Ouachita are on your payroll. I'd say that makes them more yours than mine. So...point of fact, you killed Downing.

That's the awful truth and Barry knows it.

SCHAFER (CONT'D)

An outlaw's life is fun and games until things get messy.

BARRY

Put a line through my name, I'm done.

SCHAFER

Because you've got new powerful friends in DC?

(laughs)

All you did was trade one master for another.

BARRY

At least now I don't have to hold my breath every time I start my car.

SCHAFER

They want the Sandinistas and Medellin. You're gonna bring down the entire Colombian cartel single-handedly?

Barry heads for the door.

BARRY

Don't ever contact me again.

SCHAFER

That almost sounds like a threat.

BARRY

I see your face again, I'll have a lot more to offer DC than just Medellin.

SCHAFER

You want to take on the CIA next?

(beat)

Good luck with that.

EXT. GRAVE SITE - MENA - DAY

Sheriff Downing's funeral. Just ending. The crowd of mourners disperse. Judy Downing walks her boys to the car. All three faces tear-streaked. They find--

INT. PINTO - CONTINUOUS

A DUFFEL BAG on the passenger seat. Judy looks inside, it's filled with two million dollars in cash. She zips up the bag, knows exactly where this came from.

EXT. PARKING LOT - SECONDS LATER

Judy's Pinto pulls out of the lot. The duffel bag now lying on the ground. Not a penny was taken.

EXT. APARTMENT - BATON ROUGE - DAY

Lucy trudges through a courtyard with a bag of groceries. Barry waits below the stairs of her new apartment. Dark circles under his eyes, unshaven face.

LUCY

You look like shit, Barry.

BARRY

Haven't slept in days. What do you expect?

(flashes her a smile)

But it's nice to know you still care...

She shies away from him. He follows her up the stairs.

BARRY (CONT'D)

How come you keep refusing the money I send?

LUCY

You spent five years putting diamonds around my neck to keep me quiet.

BARRY

And you gladly took every one of 'em.

LUCY
Believe me, I'm as ashamed of
myself as I am of you.

BARRY
That cash I sent is legit.

Ava watches the argument from the window.

LUCY
Right...
(rolls her eyes)
The C.I.A.

BARRY
I don't work for them anymore.

LUCY
No, what happened? Not glamorous
enough for you?

BARRY
I'm working for the White House
now.

She laughs -- full of pity, for both of them.

LUCY
I'm the biggest fool on the face of
the earth for ever believing in
you.

BARRY
We can get through this, Lucy.
Just bring my family home.

LUCY
We had four walls under a roof of
lies, Barry, that's not a family or
a home.

She closes the door in his face. Ava still at the window.
He gives her a small wave. She doesn't wave back.

EXT. MISSISSIPPI RIVER - DAY

Coast Guard FAST BOATS motor to a 95-foot converted FISHING
BOAT anchored north of the Gulf.

BARRY (V.O.)
Downing's death put the entire
state of Arkansas straight up my
ass. Before I could even get
started on my work for DC, several
fires needed to be put out.

INT. FISHING BOAT - MOMENTS LATER

COAST GUARD, FEDS and POLICE board the boat, guns poised. Led by Craig McCall. They arrest several COLOMBIANS above deck, find hundreds of KILOS OF COKE below deck.

AGENT #1

We sure this is Seal's boat?

MCCALL

It's been traced from a dummy corp
back to his name...

McCall wanders out to a HELIPAD on the boat. Lots of chopper flights in and out of here. An AGENT approaches with a mammoth cellular phone housed in the body of a briefcase.

MCCALL (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)

McCall.

DEA AGENT (V.O., VIA PHONE)

This is Carver, DC DEA. We've been
told you've found several hundred
kilos aboard a certain fishing boat
in the Mississippi?

MCCALL

News travels fast. You're welcome,
by the way.

DEA AGENT (V.O., VIA PHONE)

Yeah, it won't wash. The boat's
part of a new sting operation.

MCCALL

Whose operation is that?

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - ARKANSAS - DAY

Rural backwoods. All is quiet. The front door is suddenly BLOWN off its hinges. STATE POLICE raid the house.

No one's home but the place is filled with advanced, high-tech COMMUNICATIONS gear: a dozen phone lines, radar equipment, CB radios, listening devices, wire-tape capabilities, etc.

Dana Sibota follows the police inside--

SIBOTA

I'm assuming he didn't buy this
equipment at Radio Shack.

DETECTIVE #1

He didn't buy it anywhere. This is covert equipment.

(low)

Special ops, CIA probably...

SIBOTA

(undeterred)

Could you reach Latin America with this set up?

DETECTIVE #2

Hell, you could reach *Mars* with all this shit.

SIBOTA

I want everything cleared outta here. All of it.

Police start dismantling the equipment.

INT. STATE POLICE BUILDING - LITTLE ROCK - DAY

Sibota and her team labeling Seal's raided equipment in an evidence room. An officer hands her a phone--

VOICE (V.O.)

This is Vance Rokker, with the DEA. We've been informed you've raided a house belonging to Barry Seal?

SIBOTA

And how.

ROKKER (V.O.)

We're gonna need you to put everything back.

SIBOTA

I'm not in the habit of saying this to men I don't know intimately, but come again?

ROKKER (V.O.)

The gear in that house is part of a sting operation Barry Seal's directing on behalf of the DEA.

SIBOTA

Really? What kinda sting?

ROKKER (V.O., VIA PHONE)

Just put the equipment back in the house. Thank you.

Dial tone at the other end. Sibota slams the phone down!

INT. ARKANSAS STATE CIRCUIT COURT - JUDGE'S CHAMBERS - DAY

A closed room, SEALED hearing. Sibota, McCall, Frank Mullen, and a White House NSC AGENT (National Security Council) stand before JUDGE LINKLETTER.

SUPER: "Arkansas State Circuit Court. April 17th, 1984"

MULLEN

I've got fifty high-level officials, all ready to testify about the invaluable contributions Barry Seal has made to the crusade against narcotics.

SIBOTA

I've got twice as many federal and state officials that say the opposite is true.

NSC MAN

Everything Seal's doing is part of an ongoing joint operation between the NSC and the DEA--

MCCALL

--Everything? Including the murder of Joe Downing? How can we have a "War On Drugs" when the biggest enemy of the state is protected by our side?

SIBOTA

These claims by the DEA are fatuous on their face, since the DEA has no agents on the scene to monitor Barry's activities in this state, and has not informed the FBI or local police that any such sting operations were underway. And I believe Mr. Seal's activities represented are in fact Mr. Seal's own, designed to keep the DEA and, most likely his prior benefactor, the CIA, on a string.

MULLEN

That's pure speculation, Sibota, without a shred of evidence.

SIBOTA

So's the rumor you know your ass
from your elbow, Mullen...without a
shred of evidence.

Things are about to escalate further when Judge Linkletter
ends the argument by striking his gavel.

EXT. ARKANSAS STATE CIRCUIT COURT - FRONT STEPS - LATER

The big doors open. The hearing is over. People exiting.
McCall and Sibota are livid. Mullen and the NSC Man smile
smugly. Clearly the judge ruled in their favor.

BARRY (V.O.)

The White House wanted a smoking
gun implicating the Sandinistas.
The DEA wanted Medellin's head on a
platter. I figured out a way to
give 'em both.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - WEST WING BOARDROOM - DAY

Several high-level DEA and NSC brass huddled around Barry.
Oliver North at the head of the table, watching over all.

BARRY

Operation Fat Lady.

Looks around the table.

BARRY (CONT'D)

One run, three thousand kilos.

NORTH

Three thousand?

MULLEN

That's more than came into the US
all of last year--

BARRY

Last two years. Street value's two
hundred and fifty million.

NORTH

You want us to sign off on the
largest shipment of cocaine in the
history of -- what are we talking
here?

MULLEN

--World. For sure.

BARRY

Only way to get all the big boys
into one room is to sell 'em on a
deal of a lifetime.

NORTH

The Colombians are already in?

BARRY

Soon as they heard the plane I was
using.

NORTH

And what plane is that?

INT. BARKSDALE AIR FORCE BASE - HANGAR - DAY

Barry's enormous C-123 cargo plane rolls into the hangar,
blocking out the silhouetted sun in the background.

BARRY (V.O.)

My C-123, which Ochoa liked to call
"The Fat Lady."

INT. HANGAR - LATER

Barry walks around the plane (the shell of which has been
disassembled) with Mullen as a DOZEN DEA TECHS install tiny
hidden cameras on the exterior and interior of the plane.

SUPER: "June 23. One day before Operation Fat Lady."

MULLEN

We got the entire three-hundred-and-
sixty-degree area inside and
outside the plane covered.

Barry moves slowly. His face sweaty and flushed.

MULLEN (CONT'D)

Everything ok, Seal? You look like
death warmed over.

BARRY

Just a head cold, I'll be alright.
(coughs)
How many cameras we talking about
here?

MULLEN

Hundred and eighty-seven.

BARRY

(flash of concern)

That's a hundred and eighty-seven chances I could be caught. Make sure you hide every goddamn one of 'em awfully good.

An AGENT hands Barry a pair of BOOTS.

MULLEN

We rigged a remote in the sole of the left boot that's synced to every camera aboard. Tap your big toe twice to snap a photo.

(takes him aside)

These cameras can only hold an eight-picture film load, so make each one count, right?

EXT. GULF OF MEXICO - TEN THOUSAND FEET - NIGHT

Barry's Fat Lady navigates rough turbulence, a churning black sky, and blinding rain.

BARRY (V.O.)

The mission started shitty and swirled the bowl from there. To avoid the coast guard, I had to fly straight through the worse hurricane to batter Mexico in a decade.

INT. FAT LADY - SAME TIME

Barry is thrown around the cockpit, shivering with the flu. The turbulence suddenly ends. The skies clear. Nicaragua below.

BARRY (V.O.)

Once I cleared the storm, things got even bleaker.

Two second-hand Vietnam-era FIGHTER JETS appear on either side of him. His CB crackles with VOICES speaking Spanish--

BARRY (V.O.)

They ordered me to land at Los Brasiles airport in Managua, which was most definitely not on the agenda. I could've outrun them in my Beechcraft, but the Fat Lady was as slow as her namesake.

EXT. LOS BRASILES AIRPORT - MANAGUA, NICARAGUA - NIGHT

The Fat Lady touches down on a remote landing strip.

SUPER: "Los Brasiles Airport in Managua. June 24, 1984"

Armed GUARDS in beat-up Toyotas guide the C-123 toward a well-lit hangar.

BARRY (V.O.)
I thought maybe the guerillas had
taken over the country in a
midnight coup while I was in-
flight, but these boys weren't
rebels.

INT. HANGAR - CONTINUOUS

Barry climbs unsteadily off the plane, wracked by fever.

General Aquino -- the Sandinista general Barry met earlier
with the Colombians on the firing range -- strides over to
him with a phalanx of BODYGUARDS.

GENERAL AQUINO
Mr. Seal. Our mutual friends are
waiting for you inside.

He points to a SIDE DOOR.

BARRY (V.O.)
We were way off protocol now. I
hadn't a clue what awaited me on
the other side of that door.

The door opens ominously. Several armed soldiers close in
around Barry. He has no choice but to enter--

INT. WINDOWLESS ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A bare bulb dangling from a string offers the only light in
the small room. A rotary fan pushes the bulb back and forth,
briefly illuminating faces before leaving them in darkness.

BARRY (V.O.)
They were all there. Lined up like
a firing squad.

Barry stands before Escobar, Ochoa, and Lehder. A fourth
well-groomed COLOMBIAN in a dark suit beside them.

BARRY (V.O.)
These guys spent the last five
years squeezing every last ounce of
pain from informants.
(MORE)

BARRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I knew if I showed even a hint of
fear, I'd never walk out of this
room alive.

Barry shoves his shivering hands into his pockets. A fresh
sheen of perspiration on his forehead. His face contorts
into something resembling a smile--

BARRY
I thought we were meeting in Leon?

OCHOA
Sorry, Barry. Change of plans.

The Colombians maintain neutral expressions, except for the
fourth man -- who looks at Barry *hard*.

BARRY
Where's the product? This hangar
should be knee-deep in powder.

LEHDER
We'll get to that.

BARRY (V.O.)
Right about now, Vegas odds would
put a "Don't Pass" bet on my
surviving this conversation.

OCHOA
How long have we been in business,
Barry?

BARRY
Five years. Give or take.

OCHOA
Have we been good to you in that
time?

BARRY
I think we've been good to each
other, Jorge. Real good.

Lehder leans forward:

LEHDER
Did you cut a deal with the
American government?

BARRY
(without missing a beat)
Now where would you come up with an
idea like that?

Lehder turns to the man in the dark suit--

LEHDER

Barry, this is Nestor. Nestor,
Barry.

NESTOR

(points to Barry, hisses:)
The American is working for the
DEA.

Barry shifts a brick. Covers with a hearty laugh.

NESTOR (CONT'D)

He is here to set up everyone in
this room.

BARRY

Where'd you dig up this clown?

OCHOA

This man is Nestor Alghora. He is
no clown. He spent six years on
the Supreme Court of Colombia.
He's a special aide to the
President of our country, in charge
of joint-operations between
Colombia and the United States on
their newly minted "war on drugs".
This is a man who would know
things, wouldn't you say?

The bare bulb sways back and forth between them.

BARRY

Not in this case, he don't.

NESTOR

(points at Barry again)
He is an informant.

BARRY

Stick that finger in my face again,
buddy, you're gonna lose it.

But all eyes fix on Barry. Ochoa smiles, impossible to read,
which makes him scary as hell--

OCHOA

There's lots of ways to deal with
an informant. One way that *sounds*
better than in actual practice --
and we learned this the hard way --
feeding them to pigs.

(MORE)

OCHOA (CONT'D)

The problem you run into, there's no proof of the act. You have to go looking through pig shit to find any remains -- and then you only find teeth.

BARRY

Listen, fellas, you know me--

Ochoa silences him with a polite gesture.

OCHOA

Putting the fear of god into people is much easier when there's an actual body they can see with their own two eyes. A symbol that identifies both the informant and the punisher.

Ochoa picks up a MACHETE leaning against the table. Barry's heart begins to race. He stands, mustering every last bit of strength in his soul. RIPS his shirt off--

BARRY

You think I'm wired up?! You think the DEA flipped me? I been running circles around those assholes for years. They can't touch me!
(pulls down his pants)
Wanna inspect my balls? Look up the crack of my ass?! I'm clean--

Ochoa wields the machete. He swings it forward with amazing power -- but NOT at Barry.

Instead, the blade strikes the neckline of Nestor Alghora.

Nestor tumbles out of his chair, holding his neck as if it were a lifeline.

Blood squirts between his fingers. His feet begin kicking at air -- a death rattle as he quickly bleeds out.

Barry is horrified, but also elated to be alive.

OCHOA

This *pedazo de mierda* made up a story about you to throw suspicion off himself. He's got an army division waiting in Medellin for our return. So now we must make an example of this man--

Escobar reaches into the dead man's sliced open throat and PULLS HIS TONGUE OUT -- giving him a Colombian necktie.

LEHDER

Tomorrow morning, when the sun
rises over the president's bedroom,
he'll open his window, and Nestor
Alghora will be hanging from the
front gate of his palace. And then
the people will know who we are.

Barry -- covered with specks of Alghora's blood -- shakes off
the moment. Refocuses himself. Gets back on point--

BARRY

Can we get to business now?

Ochoa throws a friendly arm around him.

OCHOA

Let's go see the fat lady.

CUT TO:

INT. CIA HEADQUARTERS - LANGLEY - OPERATIONS CENTER - DAY

The Central America contra war room. An overworked DEPUTY
CHIEF is shutting down the room with several other agents.
Papers are boxed up, computers put into bubble wrap.

Schafer sticks his head inside--

SCHAFER

Any news?

DEPUTY CHIEF

It's over.

SCHAFER

Seal's dead?

DEPUTY CHIEF

On the contrary. Your boy put
Black Eagle out of business.

SCHAFER

Don't these assholes know they just
cut off the funding to their own
fucking operation? Get the
director to call the White House.

The chief leans back and folds his hands behind his head.

DEPUTY CHIEF

...And tell them what? Medellin's
working for us? Congress would
shut the whole goddamn agency down
in a second.

Schafer walks to a map of Costa Rica, disturbed:

SCHAFER

I've got ten thousand freedom fighters. On the ground. *Right now.* Without our support they're gonna get slaughtered.

DEPUTY CHIEF

Unless you got an extra hundred mill lying around, those boys are up shit's creek.

CUT TO:

A series of documentary-style B/W STILL PHOTOS--

--Sandinista soldiers loading bales and bales of cocaine onto the C-123.

--Barry standing in front of the plane with the Medellin cartel.

--Ochoa, Escobar, and Lehder shaking hands with the Sandinistas' General Aquino.

CUT TO:

EXT. MENA AIRFIELD - DAY

Barry's C-123 cargo plane touches down. It skids along the runway for a hundred yards, and slows right into--

INT. BARRY'S HANGAR - CONTINUOUS

Two dozen DEA and NSC AGENTS await, all clapping and high-fiving as Barry climbs down the plane. He is mobbed with a hero's welcome. Champagne corks pop.

MULLEN

You're a goddamn genius, Seal!

INT. WHITE HOUSE - WEST WING BOARDROOM - DAY

Barry sits with Mullen, another DEA AGENT, and an excited Oliver North. Barry's B/W photos scattered on the table.

NORTH

We'd like to take this public on Monday.

MULLEN

...Monday?

(exchanges a look with the other DEA agent)

(MORE)

MULLEN (CONT'D)

We have all the evidence in the world to implicate Medellin -- but we still need time to make an arrest.

(looks over at Barry)

Barry's setting up another meet in Mexico, where Lehder, Ochoa, and Escobar will be apprehended--

NORTH

When?

MULLEN

End of September.

NORTH

That's four months from now. Won't Medellin know something's amiss when their three thousand kilos never make it to the street in the meantime?

MULLEN

We *already* put it on the street.

NORTH

(mildly surprised)

All three thousand?

MULLEN

If we didn't -- like you said -- Medellin would know something was amiss.

NORTH

Move up the meet date. I can't sit on this until September. August 1st is the best I can do.

North walks out of the meeting. Mullen turns to Barry--

MULLEN

We'll need to keep your operations in Mena up until the meet.

BARRY

That wasn't part of the deal. I'm done trafficking.

MULLEN

You can't take your foot off the gas now. We're almost home here.

BARRY

And I got FBI and state police
coming out of my dick in Mena.

MULLEN

Let us worry about those assholes.
Just keep things rolling.

Barry can't believe what he's hearing.

EXT. SCHOOLYARD - BATON ROUGE - DAY

Lunch time. High school kids crowd the outdoor benches,
eating lunch. Ava eats alone. New school. She's an
outsider here.

BARRY (O.S.)

Ava. Ava!

Barry on the other side of a fence ten yards away. Ava
ignores him for a beat.

BARRY (CONT'D)

C'mon, bean, gimme five minutes...

Finally, she goes over to the fence.

AVA

Nobody calls me "bean" anymore.

He tries to touch her through the fence, but she steps away.

BARRY

I have a plan, y'know. The five of
us are goin' on a vacation,
anywhere in the world you want,
first class all the way--

AVA

(warming to the idea)
Paris?

BARRY

That's the first place we'll go!

AVA

When?

BARRY

Soon, baby. I have to go back to
Mena until the end of summer.

AVA

How come?

Barry can't tell her the truth.

BARRY

My work.

AVA

You're lying...

BARRY

Baby, there's things you're just too young to understand. Adult things. I told you lies, but I was never dishonest. There's a difference.

AVA

No, there isn't.

(beat)

I saw it, you know.

Barry gives her a look - saw what?

AVA (CONT'D)

The shed. I saw you bring Uncle JJ out there.

(beat)

I saw what was inside.

BARRY

I'm sorry, Ava. I love you more than anything in the world.

AVA

Who keeps their whole life from someone they love?

She turns and leaves.

EXT. HIGHWAY - MENA - NIGHT

Two dozen cars, big rigs, and vans appear on the horizon. A carnival on the move. They pass the "Welcome to Mena, Pop. 907" sign.

Barry drives the lead van. Miserable look on his face. He sips from a flask.

A parked car in the middle of the highway ahead. Special Agent McCall standing in front of the vehicle.

Barry stops -- climbs out -- and moves toward him.

MCCALL

All roads lead to Mena, huh Seal?

BARRY
What brings you back, Special Agent?

MCCALL
Eight hundred and fourteen.

BARRY
Pardon?

MCCALL
Number of people OD'd this week alone on the poison you're peddling.
(beat)
Three-hundred and twenty-two. People dead in cocaine-related violence this month.
(beat)
And then there's the new stuff, crack. Hear about it? It'll fuck you up real good.

Barry bites his tongue. In no mood for a lecture.

BARRY
You're blocking the road. Do I need to call someone to have you removed?

MCCALL
Who would that be? CIA? DEA? The Vice President of the United States?

Barry's eyes flick with annoyance.

MCCALL (CONT'D)
You can't stop, can you?

McCall sees he's hit a nerve. Barry retreats to his van.

MCCALL (CONT'D)
Even if you wanted out. There is no out. They won't let you quit.

McCall spits out laughter. Barry keeps walking.

INT. BANK VAULT - MENA - DAY

Barry sits alone inside his personal vault. Surrounded by fifty million in cash. He finds the silence here comforting.

A cigar smolders between his lips. He snaps off a lone \$100 bill. Examines it with disgust.

He uses the cigar to light the bill on fire. Barry watches it burn in his hand. Dark thoughts running through his head.

He touches the fire to a brick of cash, which quickly ignites. The fire suddenly jumps onto a pallet.

Instead of stomping out the burn, Barry lets it grow. Flames begin streaking through the stacks of bills, jumping from pallet to pallet.

Barry is a sea of calm in the swirling inferno. Millions disintegrating before his eyes.

INT. BANK - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

"Ehh! Ehh! Ehh!" Fire alarm.

The bank manager races toward the vault with a security guard. Keys jangling in hand. Rolex on his wrist. He quickly opens the vault door--

Barry is NOT inside, but most of the pallets have been reduced to ash. Coughing behind him. The manager whirls -- Barry sits on the floor. Face covered in soot.

MANAGER

Jesus, Mr. Seal! Are you ok? What happened?

SECURITY GUARDS appear down the hall, unaware of the vault fire, wheeling in new pallets of Seal's cash.

Barry chuckles sickly at the sight of the money. No matter how much he destroys, *there's always more coming in.*

INT. BARRY'S BEECHCRAFT - DAY

Crystal-clear day. Mid-flight over the city of New Orleans. Five thousand feet. The cockpit is EMPTY! A bottle of Jack Daniels sloshes in the captain's seat.

Barry staggers around the belly of the plane, shitfaced. The only thing that keeps the pain at bay. A big VHS camera propped on his shoulder.

BARRY

(narrating)

This is the firssst daylight
cocaine drop in his-hisstory...

Barry opens the cargo door with his free hand. Wind-drag shoots into the plane. He records himself pushing several DUFFEL BAGS of cocaine out of the open cargo door--

EXT. SUBURBIA - SAME TIME

A duffel bag CRASHES onto the roof of a suburban New Orleans home.

EXT. POLICE STATION - SECONDS LATER

Another duffel SMASHES into a POLICE STATION. The bag explodes. The station turns into a blizzard of white powder!

BARRY (V.O.)
While I was busy falling apart, my
Snowbirds began droppin' like
flies.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Arresting OFFICERS lead a grizzled old BUSH PILOT into the station.

BARRY (V.O.)
One was caught with a kilo under
the seat of his Maserati.

INT. ALLEY - MIAMI BEACH - NIGHT

A young hotshot PILOT is hauling ass down a dark alley.

BARRY (V.O.)
Another was gunned down in Miami
Beach for ripping off a dealer for
god knows what.

Muzzle flash sparks in the darkness. The hotshot pilot tumbles into trash cans.

EXT. BOCA RATON SUBDIVISION - FLORIDA - DAY

A subdivision of mega homes for the rich and famous.

BARRY (V.O.)
And a third Snowbird OD'd...

A drug plane suddenly falls out of the sky -- CRASHES into an INFINITY POOL on a multi-million-dollar estate.

BARRY (V.O.)
..over Boca Raton.

EXT. FUNERAL - DAY

Barry shows up at a funeral for the OD'd pilot. The man's WIFE strides over to him--

WIFE

Get the fuck outta here! Go! You
did this to him!

She punches Barry's chest. He cowers and leaves.

EXT. ANOTHER FUNERAL - DAY

Family only. The hotshot pilot -- no more than 25 years old --
-- is lowered into a grave. Barry watches from a distance.
The pilot's FATHER grieves--

FATHER

Kid pissed his whole goddamn life
away -- Air Force, Pan Am -- to get
involved in that mess...

INT. BARRY'S HOME - NIGHT

A sofa TUMBLES over on its side. Barry spills onto the
floor, blind drunk. His gut growing even bigger now.

A TV -- on for days -- plays offscreen. Barry's eyes flicker
open to see--

Director Mullen looming over him. Flanked by TWO DEA AGENTS.

MULLEN

Get him up.

The agents prop Barry into a La-Z-boy. Mullen raps him on
the cheeks a few times--

MULLEN (CONT'D)

Barry. You there? Wake up.
(to the agents)
I saw coffee in the kitchen.

They bring him over a cold cup.

MULLEN (CONT'D)

Drink it.

Barry sips the coffee. Spits it out. But he's awake now.

BARRY

What brings you down to these
parts, Mullen?

MULLEN

We were supposed to meet three
hours ago.

BARRY

That was today?

Mullen gives him a disappointed look--

MULLEN

Get it together, Seal. We're right at the fucking goal line. *This* close, kid. We take out Medellin, we end the cocaine trade in the United States. You understand that?

BARRY

(parroting Schafer's words earlier)
I'm part of something bigger than myself here.

MULLEN

That's exactly right.

Barry laughs at the sick irony. A familiar VOICE emits from the TV. Everyone looks over--

President Ronald Reagan giving a prime-time speech from the oval office. ARCHIVAL NEWS FOOTAGE:

RONALD REAGAN (ON TV)

...We now have undeniable proof the Sandinista government of Nicaragua are drug smugglers, working with the Medellin cartel out of Colombia, corrupting American youth...

Barry instantly sobers up. The president's words seize him like a vice.

BARRY

Oh shit...

MULLEN

(turns to the agents, alarmed)
Get me North on the line. Now!

INT. PALACE - MEDELLIN - NIGHT

Jorge Ochoa, eating dinner with his family, watches the same Reagan speech playing in Barry's living room.

One of his SOLDIERS drops a WASHINGTON POST NEWSPAPER on the table -- Barry Seal's covert B/W pictures of Medellin and the Sandinistas loading The Fat Lady -- on the front page!

Ochoa's SOLID GOLD phone rings--

OCHOA
 (answering)
 Si?

ESCOBAR (V.O.)
 Estás viendo este?

OCHOA
 Si.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - WEST WING - OLIVER NORTH'S OFFICE - DAY

The next day. Oliver North stands at his desk, on the phone.

NORTH
 He needs to run that by my office,
 not Scotty's, and he needs--

Mullen bursts into the office ahead of North's SECRETARY
 trying to stop him--

SECRETARY
 ...Can't go in there, sir!

MULLEN
 Why'd you do it? Why?!

NORTH (INTO PHONE)
 I'll have to call you back.
 (hangs up)
 Jenny, it's ok, leave us.

The secretary leaves.

MULLEN
 We had a deal!

NORTH
 I'm sorry, Mullen, but I had no
 choice. Congress goes into lame
 duck soon.

MULLEN
 So it's politics!

NORTH
 It's reality. We make our case
 now, or that region goes to the
 dogs by Christmas.

MULLEN
 You blew our CI's cover!

NORTH
 It couldn't be avoided.

MULLEN

And what about Medellin? Because that sting's over--

NORTH

Drug dealers come and go. We can grab those bastards anytime we want.

MULLEN

Sir, you don't have any idea what you're talking about. Those "dealers" are going to put a fortune on Barry Seal's head--

NORTH

We'll protect Seal.

MULLEN

For the next fifty years? Because they won't stop coming for him. Ever.

INT. SKATING RINK - MIAMI BEACH - DAY

Light floods the dark arena. DEA AGENTS raid a backroom operation. Frog march several DEALERS across the roller rink.

BARRY (V.O.)

The DEA rounded up Medellin's top distributors in Miami, but the big fish, Ochoa, Escobar, and Lehder slipped away.

INT. CARTEL COMPOUND - COLOMBIA - DAY

Hard-looking HITMEN arm themselves as if preparing for war.

BARRY (V.O.)

They put twenty million on my head. There wasn't an assassin in the western hemisphere wouldn't kill their first born for an eight-figure payday...

CUT TO:

INT. BARRY'S CADDY - MENA - DAY

Parked in the middle of the woods. Barry unloads a duffel bag of supplies.

BARRY (V.O.)
So I became the wealthiest man in
the history of the world to move
into his car.

He puts a blanket and pillow down in the back seat.

EXT. APARTMENT - BATON ROUGE - NIGHT

Barry's family, seen from a window, having dinner. Barry
hides behind some bushes down the street watching them -- his
face etched with longing.

BARRY (V.O.)
Even so much as a "hello" could've
gotten them all killed.
(beat)
The choices we make aren't written
in pencil. They leave a stain, a
stain that don't come out.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. FBI FIELD OFFICE - CHICAGO - DAY

Several months later. Craig McCall at his desk. Going
through mail. A postcard from MENA, ARKANSAS. No return
address. Just a date and time on the back.

EXT. MENA - DAY

McCall pulls up to grounds of the old Mena police station
trailer. It's no longer there. The lot is abandoned except
for the half-built police station that was never finished.

SUPER: "February 18th, 1986"

INT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - CONTINUOUS

McCall enters. Scrap metal and wood everywhere. He finds
Barry Seal sitting on a bench. Overweight, ragged, living in
hiding for a while now.

MCCALL
Downing once told me you were
building your own jail cell here.

BARRY
Would've preferred that outcome to
his own.

The two men consider each other.

MCCALL

Why'd you bring me here? You want to confess your sins? It would hardly matter. Even if you shot Downing yourself, there's not a damn thing I could do about it. You're untouchable.

BARRY

Did you ever ask yourself why that is?

MCCALL

Only every goddamn day.

BARRY

We never did finish that interrogation back in Little Rock.

Barry opens the door to an--

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dirt floor. Lots of splayed wiring and scrap wood. This is the room where Barry's been giving his confessional throughout the story.

TIME CUT - LATER

Barry's finished his confession. McCall turns off the tape recorder.

MCCALL

Helluva story.

BARRY

Look on your face says maybe you didn't believe most of it.

MCCALL

I believe you believe that's how it went down.

BARRY

I can't change the things I've done. All I got left is the good, bad, and the ugly. This country's scotch-taped together with secrets and lies. Ain't no place here for truths. Until that changes, nothing'll change. So send these tapes up the chain of command. When the buck is passed and they get lost in the bureaucracy?

(MORE)

BARRY (CONT'D)
You'll know what I told you was
gospel.

Barry rises to his feet. Walks out of the room.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - CONTINUOUS

Barry walks back to his car. He digs something out of his pocket -- a small RECORDING DEVICE.

He also recorded his entire confessional himself.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT (REPLAY OF OPENING SCENE)

Barry wheels his Cadillac Seville up to a bank of pay phones.

SUPER: "February 19, 1986, 6 p.m. - Mena, Arkansas"

He lays a blanket and pillow over his backseat. His bed for the night. He opens the car door as--

THREE COLOMBIAN ASSASSINS approach the driver's side, armed with silencer-equipped MAC-10 and Uzi submachine gun.

Barry throws up his hands. Face breaking out in a wry smile:

BARRY
Evenin', fellas.

HIGH ANGLE

The Colombians UNLOAD rounds of ammo into Barry's Caddy.

INT. FBI FIELD OFFICE - LITTLE ROCK - DAY

The next day. McCall knocks on a corner office door.

MCCALL
You wanted to see me, sir?

The FIELD DIRECTOR, 50s, salt and pepper handsome, inside.

FIELD DIRECTOR
Barry Seal was killed last night.

MCCALL
(nods to himself)
Surprised he lasted this long.

McCall waits for more. When nothing is forthcoming, he offers--

MCCALL (CONT'D)
Did you have a chance to listen to
those tapes?

FIELD DIRECTOR

I overnighted them to DC. They're out of our hands now, Craig. I'd put this whole Seal business out of mind.

McCall thinks back to what Barry told him.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - NORTH'S OFFICE - DAY

Monty Schafer, recently promoted to section chief, sits with a second CIA MAN and Oliver North. A row of new medals now adorns North's uniform.

OLIVER NORTH

Gentlemen, the president has seen fit to put me in charge of all Central American operations.

(beat)

Our policy of looking the other way while you boys do the dirty work down there is officially over.

SCHAFER

Yes, sir.

OLIVER NORTH

Director Casey spent the morning getting me up to speed on your operations.

(beat)

Eye-opening, to say the least. I admire the results if not the methods.

Schafer exchanges looks with his CIA counterpart.

OLIVER NORTH (CONT'D)

We're starting Black Eagle up again. This time without the Colombians.

North pulls down a map of the Middle East and points to Iran--

OLIVER NORTH (CONT'D)

Khamenei is starving for artillery and will pay top dollar for as much as he can get his hands on. We'll have your rebels armed in no time.

Schafer gives North a pleased look.

INT. APARTMENT - BATON ROUGE - DAY

Ava home alone doing homework. She looks over at a shelf -- the old dusty PILOT'S HEADPHONES Barry gave her for Christmas when she was a kid.

The doorbell rings -- she answers -- UPS man with a PACKAGE addressed to her. No return address. She opens it -- three numbered TAPES inside, with a small note: "Play Me".

EXT. PARKING LOT - MENA - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Back in on the night of Barry's death. The Cadillac is riddled with bullets. Barry's BODY BAG is loaded into the back of a HEARSE by THREE HIGHWAY PATROLMEN.

INT. APARTMENT - AVA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Ava lies in bed, puts on her old pilot's headphones, and begins listening to the tapes. It's Barry's confessional:

BARRY (V.O.)
*My daddy was a candy wholesaler in
 the Jim Crow south. While his
 competition only sold to whites, he
 was an equal opportunity
 businessman...*

EXT. HIGHWAY - MENA - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

The hearse is flanked by the highway patrol cars. They head to the outskirts of Mena.

BARRY (V.O.)
*He beat all comers by selling to
 the Colored and Mexican markets.*

INT. AVA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Ava continues to listen. Learning the truth about her father for the very first time. Her eyes begin to fill with tears.

BARRY (V.O.)
*Every kid in town was hooked on his
 Lemonheads, Long Boys, and
 Gobstoppers. Every kid except for
 me.*

EXT. STRIP MALL - MENA - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

The highway patrol cars and the hearse containing Barry's body pull into another parking lot.

FOUR BRAND NEW CADILLACS AWAIT THEM.

BARRY (V.O.)
*Candy wasn't allowed in our house.
 Neither was swearing, TV, music on
 the radio, shorts in the summer
 time, or staying up past sundown.*

The officers climb out of their vehicles. Each slide behind the wheel of a Caddy -- and simply drive away.

BARRY (V.O.)
*My momma had a rule for every hour
 of the day...*

HOLD on the hearse.

A steady wind picks up.

The vehicle ROCKS slightly.

Is it the wind or is there movement inside?

Holding. Holding...

CUT TO BLACK:

POSTSCRIPT

Barry's wife and three children left Baton Rouge shortly after his death in 1986. Their whereabouts are unknown.

The IRS forgave Barry Seal posthumously for \$186 million in known drug and arms profits between 1979 and 1985 when he was officially admitted to be employed by the government.

Not a penny of his fortune was ever found after his death.

Barry's C-123 Fat Lady was confiscated by the CIA and would entangle Oliver North and the Reagan White House in a scandal one year later that became known as Iran-Contra.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

SWOOPING down like a flyby on Barry's grave site -- twenty yards from the lapping banks of the Mississippi river -- moving in close on an epitaph:

"A rebel adventurer the likes of whom in previous days made America great."

THE END