

THE LIONHUNTERS

by
WILL BEALL

RED WHITE AND BLACK WARNER BROS LOGO CIRCA 1980

EXT. HOLLYWOOD SIGN - NIGHT

Moonlight. A **MULE DEER** steps daintily through grass, silhouetted by **LOS ANGELES**, shimmering like a mirage. Her ears twitch. SOMETHING else out there in the grass. Tan SHOULDERS and HAUNCHES moving like a shark through water. A **MOUNTAIN LION** crouches, and prepares to--

--A LIGHT BRIGHTER THAN MORNING FILLS THE WORLD. THE DEER BOUNDS AWAY AND THE LION ROARS HIS ANGER AT THE SKY, HIS ROAR SWALLOWED BY THE ROTORS OF THE LAPD BELL 206 JET RANGER HOWLING OVERHEARD, TAKING US WITH IT OVER THE HOLLYWOOD SIGN. JUST ABOVE THE TREES, a ROLLER COASTER through THE HOLLYWOOD HILLS. Pastel CREDITS flying with us to The Crusader's Street Life as we bank over...

EXT. HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD - NIGHT

Nothing like Christmas in LA. Colored lights around palm trees. Blow-mold Santas. A fifty-foot cone of lights on the Capitol Records Building. Bedazzled jean jackets and big Bon Jovi hair. PROSTITUTES in Santa hats. Holdout breakdance crews. Jheri curl. Parachute pants.

Los Angeles, 1987

Our LAPD helicopter now HANDING US OFF to... A **T-TOP PONTIAC FIREBIRD TRANS AM** roaring through Hollywood. Behind the wheel is **SAM BRADEN** (27). Handsome. Fu-manchu. Twenty years we'll call that a mullet. 1987, they call it a haircut. Tough as a rodeo cowboy. Urban swashbuckler. Reagan's in The White House. Gates is Chief. And Braden's got the best job in the world, LAPD UNDERCOVER NARCOTICS.

EXT. THROUGH THE HOLLYWOOD HILLS - CONTINUOUS

Traveling up the long DRIVEWAY to a MANSION the size of Rhode Island. Two **HENCHMEN**, matching PONYTAILS, pat Braden down and UNZIP his DUFFLE. It's packed with CASH.

INT. HUGE SUNKEN LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Blue light ripples over every surface of the room, waves refracted from the WALL of the million gallon **SHARK TANK**. A **FIGURE** silhouetted by the tank, James Mason at the window of the Nautilus in *20,000 Leagues Under The Sea*.

CONTINUED:

GARZA

Everybody dies. But in our business, nobody sees it coming.

The FIGURE now turns to face us through waves of blue light. **DIOGENES GARZA** (40): Ex-Guardia. Somoza's CIA-trained death squad. Fled the *Sandinistas*. Coke dealer. White linen jacket. Polyester shirt. Sans-a-belt pants.

GOMEZ

But if you knew it was coming, knew your death was inevitable, how would you prefer to die?

BRADEN

Easy. Fucked to death by the Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders.

GARZA

Everybody says that. Say the cheerleaders weren't an option.

BRADEN

Bullet, I guess.

GARZA

Exactly why I never shoot mine. A bullet is nothing. Polite. A parting gift, like the *Family Feud* Home Game. Thank you for playing.

Braden's eyes flick to Garza's HENCHMEN (mullets, tuxedo shirts, bolo ties and **ASSAULT WEAPONS**) around the room.

GARZA (CONT'D)

Forgive me. The holidays can be such a stressful time. And I've just learned there's a policeman inside my organization.

BRADEN

And you want me to kill him, right? As a test of my loyalty. Make sure I'm not a cop. Pretty standard deal. Fine. Bring him in here. Let's get it over with.

GARZA

No, I don't need you to kill him. I just need to look at your face when you watch this man die.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

And that's when a MAN SINKS to the bottom of the SHARK TANK, Detective **BILL 'GONZO' GOMEZ** (36) Braden's partner and mentor, *but we don't know that yet. Gomez's ANKLES chained to a CINDER BLOCK. Sharks swooping through the water. Bull sharks. Sand Tigers. Blues. And a monster 10-foot **HAMMERHEAD**. Garza and his henchman watching Braden very closely. Braden's eyes darting to his DUFFLE BAG.

GARZA (CONT'D)

I don't go in the ocean anymore.
Because of fucking *Jaws*. Never
swam again after that movie. The
fear of being eaten, that's
primal. Nothing else comes close.

The sharks circling closer, becoming more agitated. Gomez struggling at the center of the maelstrom, his hair and clothes flowing in their current. Gomez's eyes pleading.

BRADEN

They say you got a better chance
of being struck by lightning.

Braden's eyes flick to his duffle again. One of Garza's HENCHMEN catches it, walks over to search the bag, clearing away the first layer of cash to-- **BANG!** The **DYE PACK** inside the duffle **EXPLODES**, staggering him long enough for Braden to use him as a HUMAN SHIELD as he WRENCHES the man's GUN ARM toward the TANK and **BOOM!**

The tank **SHATTERS**, the glass turning milky around the bullet holes, SPRAYING water. Everyone in the office watches the cracks SPREADING, joining each other, but the glass still holds together for a pregnant moment...

BRADEN (CONT'D)

Then again...

Garza turns to run as the glass EXPLODES outward and a **TIDAL WAVE CRASHES** out into the room, toppling furniture, knocking men over. All the LIGHTS short out, plunging the room into darkness as the water sluices from the tank out into Garza's office. Men SCREAM and FIRE blindly into the water and their MUZZLE FLASHES strobe the room, SHOWING us dorsal FINS and crescent TAILS now slashing through the water. Chaos. Water filling the room to chest level, like a wave machine. Gomez is on higher ground and safe.

GOMEZ

(coughing)

What the hell took you so long?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BRADEN

Hair doesn't rat itself, you know.

Braden sloshes through the water, looking for his DUFFLE. He sees it just as a BULL SHARK makes a run at him. Braden GRABS a floating CHAIR, holds it like a lion tamer as the shark RAMS it, driving him back against the wall, biting the chair to splinters as Braden pushes off the wall, knifing through the water for his DUFFLE. He grabs it and OPENS the SECRET COMPARTMENT, drawing out his stainless steel Dan Wesson **.357 SUPERMAG**, LASER SCOPE mounted on the vent-rib barrel, a snarling WOLF carved into the revolver's ivory grip, his **RED LASER SIGHT** sweeping through the dark room as he searches for Garza among the gliding monsters. Another SHARK CHARGES. **BOOM!** Braden puts a hollow-point down its throat. The shark rolls, twitches, his blood billows, drawing the others.

BRADEN (CONT'D)

Where the fuck is he?

GOMEZ

I don't know. I can't see him.

Braden slogs carefully through the water, his LASER SIGHT sweeping the room. Suddenly, Garza SPRINGS from the water like a crocodile, his **DAGGER** arcing down at Braden--

--Braden just CATCHES Garza's WRIST, trying to bring his gun up, but Garza deflects the weapon as Braden **FIREs**. Bullets fizzing through the water as Braden and Garza struggle. The sharks drawn to the commotion.

A scythe-like caudal fin LASHES Braden's back as the big HAMMERHEAD passes right behind him. The dagger inches from Braden's throat, forcing him backward underwater, as the HAMMERHEAD banks like a fighter jet, coming around to CHARGE straight at him. Maw open, JAWS distending, white TEETH jutting from red gums...

Underwater, all of Garza's weight is behind the dagger now, trying to push the blade those final inches into Braden's throat. And at the last moment, Braden uses Garza's weight against him and SUPLEXES Garza right into the shark's open mouth! The hammerhead passes right over Braden, chomping away. Garza's SCREAMS die in gurgling red foam...

Braden hauls himself out of the water next to Gomez.

BRADEN

I don't think he saw that coming.

I/E. HOLLYWOOD STATION (ESTABLISHING) - LATER TONIGHT

FOLLOWING BRADEN and GOMEZ into the DETECTIVE'S BULLPEN, past a Christmas Tree decorated with HANDCUFFS and EVIDENCE TAGS. It's chaos in here, with DETECTIVES trying to interview VICTIMS and WITNESSES of every shade. These **COPS** wear their hair long, just this side of regulation, with thick sideburns. Marlboro moustaches. Cowboy boots. A lot of brown suits, five years behind the fashion curve. Everybody smokes. When they see Braden and Gomez, the cops break into sarcastic APPLAUSE. Somebody puts a ratty Santa Hat on Gomez as he walks past.

INT. LIEUTENANT DONIGER'S OFFICE - MINUTES LATER

Braden and Gomez sitting opposite **LIEUTENANT WADE DONIGER**, who was probably born wearing a suit and tie. Active in his church, scout leader. Decent guy.

DONIGER

Gomez, would you please take off the goddamned hat.

Gomez slowly removes his Santa hat. Doniger looks pissed.

DONIGER (CONT'D)

As is often the case with you two
I don't know whether to suspend
you or write you a commendation.

GOMEZ

You could always suspend him and
write me the commendation.

BRADEN

Commendation for what? Holding
your breath? No gratitude. None.

DONIGER

Shut the fuck up.

Doniger pulls a bottle of Bushmills from his drawer, pours a few fingers into three semi-clean coffee mugs.

DONIGER (CONT'D)

Merry Christmas.

They all raise their mugs, drink. Then Braden picks up the PET ROCK on Doniger's desk. Doniger looks at it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DONIGER (CONT'D)
 Pet rock. One simple idea made
 that son of a bitch a millionaire.
 He owns a bar up in Los Gatos now.

GOMEZ
 Not a lot of millionaires on this
 side of the badge, LT.

DONIGER
 That's why I got my security
 business going. We need extra
 bodies this time of year.

BRADEN
 I spend any more time away from
 home Karen's gonna divorce me.

INT. BRADEN'S HOUSE (SEAN'S ROOM)- LATER THAT NIGHT

Braden opens the door, a wedge of light from the hallway finds his son **SEAN**(5) in a molded plastic BATMOBILE bed. A poster of Fernando Valenzuela. *Masters of the Universe* figures and *Hot Wheels* on the floor. Sean doesn't stir.

BRADEN
 You know I'm a trained
 investigator, right?

Sean smiles. Opens his eyes. He was faking it.

SEAN
 Catch any bad guys today?

BRADEN
 What do you think?

Sean beams up at his father, his idol.

SEAN
 Shoot any?

BRADEN
 I'm not saying another word
 without my league rep present.

Braden tucks the comforter around Sean.

SEAN
 When I grow up and I'm a policeman
 I'll shoot a lot of bad guys.

CONTINUED:

BRADEN
You're hired.

SEAN
Will I get to drive the police
car?

BRADEN
Sure. Why not? You'll have to work
that one out with your partner.

SEAN
You're going to be my partner.

Braden kisses Sean's forehead.

BRADEN
In that case, no way in hell I'm
letting you drive.

INT. BRADEN'S HOUSE (KITCHEN) - NIGHT

Braden leans against the kitchen counter with a Miller High Life, reading sample questions from the upcoming California Real Estate Exam to his wife **KAREN** (26). Sam and Karen have been together since High School. She's smart, ambitious. An '80s career woman in the making.

BRADEN
A transaction broker is not A. a
nonagent, B. Facilitator, C.
Intermediary, or D. Fiduciary

On the TELEVISION: a REAL COMMERCIAL for SANTA'S VILLAGE in the San Bernardino Mountains. 'You can visit Santa at SANTA'S VILLAGE in the San Bernardino Mountains. See Santa's Reindeer. Ride the BOBSLED CAVERNS...' Followed by a HERTZ COMMERCIAL starring O.J. SIMPSON.

KAREN
Fiduciary.
(re: the TV)
You promised to take him up there
this year.

BRADEN
To Hertz?

Karen gives him a withering look.

BRADEN (CONT'D)
My next day off.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KAREN

That's what you said before your last day off.

BRADEN

I will. I swear. *Emblements* are A. Real property, uh, *frook-tus...*

KAREN

Fructus naturales. It's Latin. Means fruits of the land. Agricultural. Produce. Wild game.

Braden kisses her neck. His beard scratches.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Speaking of wild game. When the hell are going to get rid of that thing anyway? You're scratching up my thighs.

BRADEN

Really?

INT. SHOWER - MINUTES LATER

Karen and Braden face to face in a shower.

KAREN

Tilt your chin up, tough guy.

She begins to shave him. Careful but sure.

KAREN (CONT'D)

I was thinking. Once I get my license, maybe you can transfer to one of the tables. Burglary?

(Braden winces)

Stand still. Regular hours. Give you some more time with Sean.

He tries to cop a feel. She giggles, bats his hand away.

KAREN (CONT'D)

We'll be waiting up for him before we know it. Ten years, he's not going to want to be seen with us.

Braden takes this in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRADEN

You're very persuasive when you're naked. Okay. New deployment starts Monday. I wrap this one up I'll put in for a transfer.

She sees he's serious. She kisses him.

KAREN

I love you.

INT. BRADEN'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Karen asleep on Braden's chest. Braden lies awake, he rolls over, slowly picks up the phone, dials...

KAREN

(rolling over)
Jesus Christ...

Even before caller ID, Gomez knows it's his partner.

GOMEZ (V.O.)

Try warm milk.

BRADEN

(whispering)
So where'd Garza get x-ray vision
all of a sudden, huh?

GOMEZ

*Who cares? Witch is dead. Hail
Dorothy. Now go back to bed. The
rest of it can wait til tomorrow.*

BRADEN

But what if it can't. They grabbed
you from that stash house, right?

EXT. 7620 SIXTH STREET - LATER THAT NIGHT

Braden and Gomez in the Trans Am, across from a shabby four-story APARTMENT BUILDING. Lots of movement inside.

GOMEZ

You're gonna be the death of me.

BRADEN

Looks like Union Station up there.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GOMEZ

So what? Garza's dead. Somebody's picking over what's left of his shit. Happened to the mustache?

BRADEN

I was given a choice. Shave or suffer a loss of consortium.

GOMEZ

That's not a choice.

BRADEN

Exactly. Somebody burned us, brother. This is our last chance to find out who before these guys are in the wind.

GOMEZ

Well, Lord hates a coward.

INT. 7620 SIXTH STREET (4TH FLOOR HALLWAY) - SECONDS

Braden and Gomez move quietly down the dark hallway, stepping softly through pools of light and shadow. Gomez reaches down to try the KNOB... *Slowly...* It's locked.

INT. WE PASS THROUGH THE WALL INTO APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

To see the BARREL of a SPAS-12 COMBAT SHOTGUN held flush against the door, pressed there by a man in a **SKI MASK**. Gloved FINGER slowly takes up the slack on the TRIGGER...

INT. PASSING BACK THROUGH INTO THE HALL - CONTINUOUS

Braden and Gomez trade looks. They'll have to boot the door. Gomez silently mouths counting *ONE...TWO...*

--BOOM! Double ought buckshot BLASTS a splintered HOLE through the DOOR and Gomez just **DISAPPEARS**. Seemingly teleported back across the hall. Thrown up against the wall like a body ejected from a deadly collision. Dead.

Braden stumbles backward. **FWUMP! FWUMP! FWUMP!** The walls seem to EXPLODE around him. Geysers of paint chips and sheet rock. But there's very little noise because the first BLAST of that shotgun has stolen all the sound, replacing it with a high-pitched TONE shock tinnitus.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Braden FIRES back. **BRACK! BRACK! BRACK!** His .357 SUPERMAG ROARING. **BRACK! BRACK! BRACK!** That's six. Asshole with the SPAS-12 needs no help with his arithmetic. Soon as Braden cracks off his last shot, the guy SPINS into the hall and FIRES. **BOOM!** Hitting Braden DEAD-CENTER. The BLAST floats him backward to smash through a WINDOW--

I/E. WE FOLLOW BRADEN OUT THROUGH THE 4TH FLOOR WINDOW

--FALLING with him. Braden's ribs buckle as he folds around the FIRE ESCAPE and slumps on to the platform. Shirt blown apart, buckshot imbedded in his body armor. Trying to draw breath into bruised lungs, reaching for his SUPERMAG on the platform, pops the cylinder, empties falling through the grate while he digs a SPEED LOADER out of his pocket. Dropping six more into the cylinder, snapping it closed with a wrist flick just as--

--The SKI MASK FIRES again. Braden ducks with buckshot fizzing past him like a swarm of bees, throwing SPARKS as off the iron railing. Braden FIRES back. **BRACK! BRACK! BRACK!** One of his ROUNDS actually punches a HOLE in the RECEIVER of SKI MASK'S SPAS-12, rendering it useless. The guy in the ski mask doesn't hesitate. He DROPS the SPAS-12 and DRAWS a **.357 REVOLVER**, PRESSING THE TRIGGER FAST AND SMOOTH, a pro. Bullet IMPACTS crawl up Braden's vest until the last bullet **PUNCHES INTO HIS SKULL BELOW THE HAIRLINE AT 950 FEET PER SECOND!** Braden looks mildly perplexed as he FALLS backward off the fire escape. TUMBLING thirty feet through the air to--

INT. THROUGH ROOF INTO THE LIQUOR MARKET - CONTINUOUS

CRASH down through the water-damaged tar roof, landing in a pile of torn tar paper and acoustic ceiling. Braden CONVULSING, blood flowing from his head wound, spreading slowly across the floor. Braden's pupils DILATING all the way BLACK as we PUSH in ON BRADEN'S SIGHTLESS LEFT EYE, **INTO... FATHOMLESS BLACK.** *The Kinks In a Foreign Land.*

WE FADE IN ON:

I/E. RANCHO LOS AMIGOS - DOWNEY, CALIFORNIA - DAY

Mission-style buildings. Ramps. Anti-slip tape. Hand rails. PEOPLE here move strangely. Many shuffle behind walkers, though they are not elderly. Others giggle and wander distractedly, though they are not children.

Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THERAPISTS and VOLUNTEERS coaching PATIENTS through simple tasks. We WIND through them to a **MIDDLE-AGED LONER** pacing apart from the others. Everything he was. Memory. Name. The power of speech. All lost to Traumatic Brain Injury. The man is **SAM BRADEN**. He is 53. The year is...

2014

DR. HALL (PRELAP)
Patient exhibits normal gait velocity, stride length, cadence. Gross motor proficiency, manual and bimanual dexterity are good.

INTERCUTTING:

INT. BROAD CENTER FOR REGENERATIVE MEDICINE (USC) - DAY

DOCTOR CIARA HALL (40) Attractive. Neurosurgeon. Stanford. Johns Hopkins. Research Fellow at the Keck School (USC), inspecting COMPUTER TOMOGRAPHY IMAGES of **BRADEN'S BRAIN** while she dictates into a recorder.

DR. HALL
 Poor guy can tie his shoes. He just can't remember his name.

INT. DR. HALL'S OFFICE (BROAD CENTER - USC) - DAY

Dr. Hall at her desk now, reviewing the **PATIENT FILES** of her **POSSIBLE CANDIDATES** arrayed on the desk in front of her, shoulder-gripping the PHONE, not particularly interested in this conversation, wanting to cut it short.

DR. HALL
 Because my funding is limited and frankly I think a younger candidate with a fresher injury might respond better to the treatment, so unless you can have some very compelling reason--

--Dr. Hall suddenly listening intently.

INT. BROAD CENTER FOR REGENERATIVE MEDICINE (USC) - DAY

Dr. Hall and her RESEARCH ASSISTANT watch a TECHNOLOGIST slide Braden into a CT SCAN MACHINE. Braden's eyelids heavy with sedation. He has no idea what's happening.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RESEARCH ASSISTANT
(re: Braden's chart)
This one's older than the other
candidates. Wow. He's been gone a
long time. Why him?

INT. LABORATORY - NIGHT

DR. HALL using samples of Braden's **SKIN CELLS** to create Induced Pluripotent Stem (IPS) cells. Then using BLAST (Biophotonic Laser-Assisted Surgery Tool) pulses to transfer GENETIC CODE, creating new **BRAIN CELLS**. *All the technology and its applications are real.

DR. HALL (V.O.)
*Because the project could benefit
from a high-profile success story.*

INT. BROAD CENTER FOR REGENERATIVE MEDICINE (USC) - DAY

DR. HALL (V.O.)
*...And apparently this guy's a
material witness to a homicide.*

HALL and her TEAM performing **SURGERY** on BRADEN. Crowded around him. Our view obscured. Dr. Hall thumbs a SYRINGE, sending new **BRAIN CELLS** into Braden's damaged brain...

EXT. RANCHO LOS AMIGOS REHAB CENTER - WEEKS LATER

Head-bandaged. Braden back to PACING. Hall watches him sadly. Surgery was a failure. He's still lost on a desert island deep inside his head. He can't even see the shore.

INT. DORM (RANCHO LOS AMIGOS) - MONTHS LATER

Braden in bed. Bandage gone. Hair grown back. PICTURES of his WIFE and SON we last saw on the nightstand next to a CHILD'S HOMEMADE GET WELL CARDS. Magic marker DRAWINGS of a FATHER and SON walking hand in hand. But these drawings have faded with age, yellowed, buckled and brittle. Braden's EYES flutter OPEN in the dark. **And there's something in them that wasn't there before.** Braden looks around as though seeing this place for the first time...

DR. HALL (PRELAP)
What's your name?

EXT. RANCHO LOS AMIGOS REHABILITATION CENTER - MORNING

DR. HALL standing next to Braden's bed.

BRADEN
...Braden. ...Sam.

He croaks the words. Like he has a mouthful of gravel.

DR. HALL
Sam, can you tell me, what's the
last thing you remember?

BRADEN
Yeah, somebody shot me.
(sitting up)
You got a cigarette?

DR. HALL
Uh, no. You can't smoke in here.

BRADEN
Yeah, sure, okay. Get the doc,
willya?

DR. HALL
I'm your doctor.

BRADEN
Seriously?

DR. HALL
Seriously.

Braden reaches up to feel the scar at his hairline...

BRADEN
...No sutures.

Hall carefully blinks her face.

DR. HALL
Can you tell me what day it is?

BRADEN
No, but so far it's a shitty one.

DR. HALL
Who's the President of the United
States?

BRADEN
Reagan.

CONTINUED:

Still foggy, Braden reaches for his WEDDING PICTURE...

BRADEN (CONT'D)
How long was I out?
(Hall hesitates)
I need to call my wife.

That's when he notices his wrinkled HANDS. Braden DROPS the PHOTO on the bed, SHOVING past Dr. Hall--

DR. HALL
Sam. Wait. Sam! Sam!

Braden stumbling into other PATIENTS on his way into--

INT. RESTROOM - CONTINUOUS

Motion-sensing LIGHT. Braden GRIPS the sink. In the MIRROR, drenched in unforgiving fluorescent light, a FACE he can't recognize. Wrinkles around his eyes, corners of his mouth. Flesh softer around his jaw. Grey stubble.

BRADEN
What the hell did you do to me?

DR. HALL
It's called neuronal replacement.
I used your own stem cells to
generate new neurons, transplanted
them into your brain. And the
damaged circuitry repaired itself.

DIGITAL MELODY. **SMARTPHONE** on Hall's belt [INCOMING CALL] Hall taps [DECLINE]. He's never seen a cellphone smaller than a shoebox. Or a touch screen. And it's like seeing the Statue of Liberty up to her neck in the sand.

BRADEN
What year is it?

DR. HALL
Twenty fourteen. You've been gone
almost twenty seven years.

Braden looks back at the face in the mirror. His face.

I/E. LAPD EUROCOPTER AS350 - SAME

LAPD CHOPPER banks through canyons of concrete and glass. PILOT, TACTICAL FLIGHT OFFICER playing chauffeur to an **LAPD DETECTIVE**: Detective-SERGEANT if we're being formal, and he'd prefer it if we were. Mid-thirties, young to have attained the rank. But it suits him, like his grey Brooks Brothers three-piece. EYES are like sea glass. Cool, but not cold. Incisive, but not unkind. Borderline ascetic. Bond without the vice. Atticus Finch with eleven percent body fat. LA flying by, reflected in his tortoise shell spectacles, as the chopper swings over...

EXT. UNION BANK (FIGUEROA) - SAME

A STANDOFF. The BANK surrounded by LAPD BLACK & WHITES. UNIFORMS at yellow tape, keeping PRESS and GAWKERS away. Prone SWAT SNIPERS waiting for the word. SKIDS kiss the pavement. Our DETECTIVE walking to the COMMAND POST and **DEPUTY CHIEF WADE DONIGER**. The years have been good to Doniger (50s). Fit. Distinguished. More politician than cop. Still carries his old .357 REVOLVER with a sandalwood grip, more ceremonial than practical.

DONIGER

That was fast. Even for you.

DETECTIVE

Launchpad McQuack landed in the middle of my kid's soccer game.

DONIGER

He must've loved that.

DETECTIVE

He'll treasure it always. My wife not so much. How many inside?

DONIGER

Twelve hostages. Four assholes with high-powered assault rifles.

The detective removes his jacket, tie, Oxford shirt, down to his white cotton T-shirt. He's not one of those top-heavy gym rats you see in a patrol car. Think triathlete, or boxer, strength and agility in equal proportion.

DETECTIVE

Who went down?

CONTINUED:

DONIGER

Just the guard, poor guy probably
saw too many Seagal movies.

DETECTIVE

One is too many.

He has the kind of pelagic self-containment that only
orphans and astronauts attain. And whatever molten and
dangerous things might dwell in him are guarded and deep.

DONIGER

Rathborne says his snipers can
probably take them.

(dryly)

Without losing too many hostages.

DETECTIVE

One is too many.

DRAWS his GLOCK, removes the mag. Leaving the empty
weapon. He fits a flesh-colored earbud into his ear.
Doniger tries to hand the detective a KEVLAR VEST.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

I think that would send the wrong
message, don't you?

DONIGER

I could order you to wear it, son.
(off his look)

Every time I call you out to one
of these I remember I promised her
I'd look out for you and I can't
get you to wear a goddamned vest.

DETECTIVE

It'd be useless at that range.

DONIGER

How close are you planning to get?

INT. UNION BANK - SECONDS LATER

The detective walks unarmed through the FRONT DOORS.
HOSTAGES huddled facedown on the floor. The detective
immediately clocks the **SECURITY GUARD** in a pool of blood,
shot in his leg. GUNMEN are Crips in way over their heads
here. Pointing new **M249 LIGHT MACHINE GUNS** and BELLOWING--

GUNMAN

On the floor!

GUNMAN

Get on the fucking floor!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He's brushing right past the gunmen, heading straight for the SECURITY GUARD. And no one makes any move to stop him. The detective exudes what those in law enforcement call *Command Presence*, which is another way of saying The Force is Strong with him. Removing his belt, the detective kneels beside the guard to cinch a tourniquet.

DETECTIVE

Hold it there. Keep it tight.

JITTERY GUNMAN

The fuck are you, a doctor?

DETECTIVE

Right now, I'm the difference between five years with good behavior and a lethal injection. And I just bought you about ninety seconds to make up your mind before this guy bleeds out and you're a slam-dunk death penalty for a DA who's up for reelection.

(noting his eyes)

Anyway, you're not the one I should be talking to, are you? Your pupils look pretty blown, partner. Meth. Breakfast of champions, right? And I'm going to take a wild guess and say you're the genius who shot the guard.

The jittery gunman throws a look to his **SHOT CALLER**: a kid just dipping a toe into his twenties. Tattoos look fresh. New to the game. Smart enough to put this together, and dumb enough to actually try to pull it off. He's trying to mad-dog the detective, and failing...

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

Maybe you didn't get the memo, but takeover bank robberies are like Blockbuster Video and the Republican Party. They don't really exist anymore. Because you get caught. People rob banks with their laptops now. Safer that way.

The shot caller raises his MACHINE GUN at the detective.

SHOT CALLER

That's close enough.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DETECTIVE

You really don't know what the hell you're doing, do you? You don't lay your hostages down on the floor. You stand them up, so the SWAT snipers will have to shoot through them to get at you.

They all shift uneasily, eyes on the windows.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

This isn't XBox, my man.
(re: the guard)
See how pale he is. Meter's running. I'd say you've got about sixty seconds.

The scared kid showing through now.

SHOT CALLER

Shit wasn't supposed to go down like this.

DETECTIVE

I know. But it did. And you can't change it. What matters is what you do now. Right now. You can't win this. We're past that. But I can help you survive it.

The shot caller hesitates, sighs, squats down to place his M249 MACHINE GUN on the floor. The others trade resigned looks, do likewise. Fingers laced behind their heads, assuming the position they all know by heart.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

(touching his earbud)
Units on the perimeter, Code 4.
Suspects have relinquished their weapons and will submit to arrest.

SWAT OFFICERS rushing in. PARAMEDICS Treating the guard. The detective inspects **M249 MACHINE GUNS**. In the army, these are known as Squad Assault Weapons. Heavy shit.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

(re: the M249s)
Where the hell'd you get these?

The shot caller swallows dryly, shakes his head. Whoever sold him those guns scares him a lot more than prison. SWAT officers hand the handcuffed Crips off to UNIFORMS who march them into the backs of their BLACK & WHITES

EXT. BACK AT THE COMMAND POST - MINUTE LATER

The unloaded M249s on the FOLDING TABLE under the Command Post's portable shade, DONIGER and the DETECTIVE watch as **SGT. RATHBORNE** from SWAT hefts one. *Rathborne is all muscle, spit and polish, subtle as battering ram.

SGT. RATHBORNE

M29 LIGHT MACHINE GUN. I carried one in Panama. Belt-fed 5.56 mm rounds. Eight hundred rounds per minute. *Adios muchachos.* Good thing you talked them out of there. Would've been a shitshow if we'd tried to breach.

DONIGER

Well, better locked up in evidence than out on the street. Good work.

But the DETECTIVE senses something's not right here.

DETECTIVE

They're new. No scratches. You can still smell the factory lubricant. Probably never been fired. These were part of a larger shipment.

Deputy Chief Doniger and Rathborne share a look of dread.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

We need to find out who's bringing them in, how many more are out there, before some poor cop winds up on the wrong end of one.

-**CHIRP**- INCOMING CALL on the detective's CELL...

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

Excuse me.

(into phone)

Hello.

He listens for a beat. His face CHANGES. At no time during the ordeal in the bank did he lose his cool. But whatever's on the other end of this call rattles him.

INT. RANCHO LOS AMIGOS (CORRIDOR) - 43 MINUTES LATER

Our DETECTIVE now walking with DR. HALL.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR. HALL

He wants to find his family. I
didn't know what to tell him.

DETECTIVE

No, you did the right thing.

INT. DORM - CONTINUOUS

The detective hovers, watching Braden carefully wrap his framed pictures in newspaper, placing them in a plastic bag. He holds Sean's drawings. But can't fold them. The paper has become too brittle.

DETECTIVE

Sam.

Braden turns and looks this DETECTIVE over: To Braden he looks more like a stock broker than a cop. Wearing some kind of PISTOL Braden doesn't recognize. *His Glock.

BRADEN

Where's my wife?

Braden waits for an answer. This isn't easy to say.

DETECTIVE

She's dead, Sam. Ovarian Cancer.
She died seventeen years ago.

In French literature people die of grief, and watching Braden absorb this we can well believe it. Anguish racks him. Burning through him the way fire guts an old house.

BRADEN

What about my son?

The detective seems to weigh this question a moment.

DETECTIVE

Actually, I'm your son.

Braden searches the detective's face for some trace of the boy in the race car bed. Twenty seven birthdays. Teenage triumphs and tragedies. First love. Heartbreak. His wedding. The birth of his kid. Braden missed it all.

BRADEN

Sean?

EXT. RANCHO LOS AMIGOS REHAB (COURTYARD) - SAME

Sean and Braden at a patio table. Strangers meeting for the first time, with almost nothing to say to each other.

SEAN

You're lucky. They haven't even started clinical trials yet.

Braden watches other brain-injured PATIENTS shuffle past.

BRADEN

Yeah, lucky... So what now?

SEAN

Well, I guess now I was hoping you'd come home with me. Your grandson really wants to meet you.

BRADEN

Grandson...

I/E. ACROSS PARKING LOT - LATER

Braden leaving here for the first time in twenty seven years. The sun sinking as Sean leads Braden to his car. A PRIUS. Braden reacts. It looks like a fucking golf cart.

I/E. SEAN'S PRIUS - CONTINUOUS

The Prius starts with the push of a button. Silent. The GPS NAVIGATION boots up automatically, a FEMALE VOICE asking them to 'ENTER YOUR DESTINATION...' Braden reacts.

BRADEN

This your wife's car?

Sean shoots him a look as they pull away.

INT. SEAN'S PRIUS (NORTH ON THE HARBOR FREEWAY) - LATER

Braden takes in the ELECTRONIC BILLBOARDS advertizing FREE HIV TESTS and THE GAP in Spanish. Los Angeles has a NEW SKYLINE. The STAPLES CENTER.

BRADEN

I want to see her.

EXT. FOREST LAWN MEMORIAL PARK - SUNSET

Spectacular sunset. Sean leads him through a sea of headstones. Braden suddenly hesitant, like Scrooge afraid to follow the Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come those final steps. Seeing Karen's grave will make it real.

SEAN
I'll be in the car.

Sean heads back. Braden walks slowly, almost like he's underwater. And the traffic sounds fade to silence when he's close enough to read "*KAREN BRADEN*." He drops to his knees, palms pressing against the earth between them.

I/E. SEAN'S HOUSE - 47 MINUTES LATER

Braden's still in shock as Sean opens his front door. His wife **LAURIE** (30s) appears. Successful architect. Works from a home so she can spend more time with their son. Reminds Braden (and us) a lot of Karen. Seeing her prodigal father-in-law, Laurie doesn't hesitate. She practically lunges at him, immediately wrapping Braden in an unexpectedly warm HUG, something Sean couldn't do.

LAURIE
This must be so...

BRADEN
You have no idea.

SEAN
Sam. My wife Laurie.

Over Laurie's shoulder he sees Sean's son **SAM** (9).

SAM
Hey.

BRADEN
Hey.

SEAN
And this is Sam.

Braden offers his hand. Sam hesitates. Then takes it.

SAM
I'm your grandson.

BRADEN
Looks that way.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM

I made this for you. Welcome to the future. You can sleep in my bottom bunk if you want to.

He hands Braden a comic strip in magic marker. Three panels. Braden being SHOT through the HEAD by what appears to be an ALIEN, blood SPURTING from the head wound. Braden waking up in a hospital bed. And Braden and Sam playing Xbox together. 'WELCOME HOME, GRANDDAD.'

BRADEN

Thanks... Dig the arterial spray.

SAM

I copied from Black Ops II.

Sean gets his first look at the card.

SEAN

Oh, Sweet Jesus. Laurie.

LAURIE

He worked on it all afternoon.

INT. SAM'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Braden places the plastic bag containing his meager belongings on the bottom bunk of Sam's bunk bed. Sam has electronics Braden's never seen, a laptop, XBox, iPod.

SAM

I got this for my birthday.

Sam shows Braden his IPAD. Braden has no idea.

SAM (CONT'D)

I just turned nine.

(less subtle)

My birthday was last week.

BRADEN

Oh, well, happy birthday. Sorry, I would've gotten you something, but I didn't know you existed until an hour ago and I seem to have left my wallet back in the 1980s.

(re: Sam's iPad)

Hell is that thing anyway?

Sam touches the IPad's SCREEN to un-pause a YouTube of a MAN violently VOMITING, played off by *The Keyboard Cat*.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRADEN (CONT'D)
What a time to be alive.

INT. KITCHEN - HOURS LATER

Sean and Braden are alone in Sean's kitchen. Sean packing up the Chinese Food Boxes, starting the dishes.

BRADEN
Kid's kinda weird.

Sean reacts. Braden looking at CHRISTMAS CARDS, SAM'S ARTWORK, FAMILY PHOTOS stuck to the fridge.

BRADEN (CONT'D)
You got a nice family, Sean.

SEAN
They're yours too.

BRADEN
No. They're not.

Picking up a picture of Karen in a head scarf, looking so pale you can almost see through her. Smiling. Beautiful.

SEAN
She waited for you. Probably longer than she should have. Everyone told her to let you go. But she wouldn't. Then she got sick. Never complained. Not once.

Braden alone with her a moment, then he looks at Sean.

BRADEN
Who shot me?

Sean puts down the dishes, turning to Braden...

INT. SEAN'S HOUSE (HALLWAY) - MOMENTS LATER

Braden watches Sean SLIDE a BANKER'S BOX off the closet shelf. The sticker displaying the **DIVISION OF RECORD NUMBER** and **DATE** of the incident. **12-21-87**. Braden's case.

SEAN
It was buried in the cold case archives when I found it.

INT. DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Transcripts. Autopsy reports. Newspaper Articles. Reward posters. CRIME SCENE PHOTOS of that apartment. Tossed. Littered with BODIES. Gonzo dead in the hallway. The blood-spattered liquor store floor where Braden landed.

SEAN

They had a task force up and running within twenty-four hours. And they hit it with everything they had for over a year. They offered a reward for information. They even set up a tip line, but they didn't generate a single viable lead. No prints. Every bullet recovered, including the one they took out of your brain, all too deformed for ballistics.

BRADEN

And no witnesses.

SEAN

Just you.

BRADEN

Ski mask. Six foot. One ninety.

SEAN

We just cracked this wide open.

BRADEN

What were you hoping for?

SEAN

A lead.

Braden reading progress reports...

BRADEN

They were working from the theory we walked into a dope rip-off. This was a hit meant to look like one. This guy was a professional.

SEAN

And you know this how?

BRADEN

Because he took me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SEAN

(skeptical)

Even if it's true, doesn't change anything. I've been on the job longer than you had when you went down. And I spent most of my career trying to find the bottom of it. There isn't one. For you it happened last night. But it's been twenty seven years. Whoever this guy is, by now he's either in prison for another crime, or dead.

BRADEN

He's still out there somewhere.

SEAN

You want him to be.

BRADEN

I'm taking over the case.

SEAN

You can't.

Braden reaches past Sean, gathering up the files.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Sam. You're not a cop anymore.

That never occurred to Braden. He's a civilian now.

EXT. LAPD HEADQUARTERS - THE NEXT DAY

Braden walking toward the new LAPD HEADQUARTERS. Contemporary. Ten stories. Glass. Stainless steel. Symbol of openness, transparency. Fountains. Courtyard. To Braden it looks futuristic. Federation Headquarters. Sleek Caprice PPVs (Police Patrol Vehicles) come and go.

INT. 10TH FLOOR MEZZANINE (BULLPEN) - MOMENTS LATER

OFFICER TEAGUE (Doniger's adjutant) leads Braden through bright new bullpen. *Braden can't believe this is a cop shop.* It looks like a tech start-up, if Braden had any fucking idea what a tech-start up is. Open floor plan. Potted plants. Framed motivational posters. **Teamwork. Excellence.** Ergonomic chairs. A few standing desks.

INT. DEPUTY CHIEF DONIGER'S OFFICE - SECONDS LATER

Braden walks into **DEPUTY CHIEF WADE DONIGER'S OFFICE** and finds Doniger at a TREADMILL DESK. Braden's look says *Oh, you poor bastard. Look what they've done to you?* Doniger steps off the treadmill to wrap BRADEN in a bear hug. Over Doniger's shoulder, Braden sees awards commendations covering the walls. But he still has his PET ROCK.

DONIGER

I can't believe this. I can't believe you're standing here in my office. If this isn't a God damned miracle I don't know what one is.

BRADEN

I don't know what to call this. Karen's dead. I don't even know Sean anymore. Woke up in a clinic wearing this old man suit and I can't seem to find the zipper.

DONIGER

Yeah, me either. They tell me it's stuck on there for good.

Braden picks up Doniger's pet rock.

BRADEN

Thought you'd be a millionaire by now. What happened to your security business?

DONIGER

Gone the way of all flesh. Sold it off. Years ago. Wasn't meant to be, I guess. I know this has to be a hell of an adjustment for you. Christ, I can't imagine. Listen, there's anything I can do...

BRADEN

Reinstate me.

Doniger chuckles, then realizes Braden isn't joking.

DONIGER

You're serious.

BRADEN

I was injured in the line of duty. I got better. I want my job back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DONIGER

Well, sure, legally you're eligible for reinstatement. But you'd have to be remediated through the academy. You'd never make it, Sam, not at your age.

BRADEN

This is all I know how to do.

DONIGER

But you don't, Sam. I'm telling you, you don't know how to do this anymore. Even if you make it through remediation without having a fucking stroke, which I doubt, they changed the rules on us, brother. This isn't the LAPD you remember. Not for twenty years. Not since Rodney King.

BRADEN

Who's Rodney King?

Doniger doesn't know where to begin.

DONIGER

Jesus Christ... Look, most of the guys you knew, they pensioned out a long time ago. The few of us left, we're just pushing paper around. Marking time. It's a lame new world out there. They don't want ass kickers any more. In 1987 you were a hero. Today, they'd indict you for all that shit, man.

BRADEN

Let me ask you something, Wade. What would you do? You were me. Guy kills your partner, takes you away from your family, punts you into the Phantom Zone for thirty years. And he's still out there.

Doniger sighs. Against his better judgment, pulls a LETTER from his drawer. Hands Braden a **RECOMMENDATION FOR REINSTATEMENT**, made out in Braden's name, already signed by *Wade Doniger, Deputy Chief*.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DONIGER

I had to at least try to talk you out of it. Just try not to have a fucking heart attack.

BRADEN

No promises.

EXT. LOS ANGELES POLICE ACADEMY (CHAVEZ RAVINE) - DAY

Asphalt glimmers like mercury, **LAPD RECRUITS** seeming to rise out of it as they crest the hill. Buzzcuts. Peak condition. Running through heat that ripples like jet exhaust. **BRADEN** running way behind. Sweat-drenched T-shirt clings to his body like a poultice. He staggers to the SUMMIT. Overlooking a smog-sheathed SKYLINE he doesn't recognize anymore. He bends over, pukes...

EXT. LOS ANGELES POLICE ACADEMY - OVER SEVERAL DAYS

PUSH UPS until his trembling arms give way. He flops face down. LATER: RECRUITS on the PULL UP BARS, pumping up and down like pistons. Braden struggles. His traitorous arms shake. Sweaty fingers slip and he drops. LATER: RECRUITS scaling walls, scrambling over cyclone fences. Braden runs through tires with a RECRUIT named **TALMADGE** right on his ass. Talmadge SHOVES him aside. Braden lying in the mud, watching the other recruits blow through the tires.

EXT. LOS ANGELES POLICE ACADEMY (PT FIELD) - DAY

RAIN pounds the PT FIELD into a marsh of shoe-sucking mud. RECRUITS soaked, SPARRING in the rain. BRADEN and TALMADGE toe to toe, trading blows, but Braden can't match his youth and strength. Talmadge hooks an ARM around Braden's THROAT in a *mata leon* choke...

TALMADGE

Go home, old man.

BRADEN

Go fuck yourself.

Talmadge tightens his grip. Braden struggles, his eyes flutter. He passes out. Talmadge leaves him in the mud.

INT. FIREARMS ANALYSIS UNIT - LATER

Sean watches Firearms Analyst OFFICER PAULA TORRES (30s) disassemble one of the **M249s** from the bank on her examination table, performing an autopsy on the gun.

TORRES

Well, you're right. These are new.
Direct from the factory new.

SEAN

Where's the factory?

TORRES

South Carolina. These guns went to Afghanistan. Shipment reported destroyed in an IED attack.

SEAN

From South Carolina to Afghanistan to gangbangers in Los Angeles.

TORRES

If I were more imaginative I might say it looks like you've stumbled on to a conspiracy here. But I'm a not very imaginative. Be careful.

SEAN

(turns to leave)
Thanks.

A COPY of the **LOS ANGELES TIMES** on Torres' desk, folded open to the METRO section: a photo of BRADEN at the ACADEMY and the headline: "A BLAST FROM THE PAST"

TORRES

Think he's going to make it?
(re: the paper)
Your dad. Think he's got a chance?
Or they just dicking him around?

SEAN

I honestly don't know.

INT. SAM'S ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Braden now sitting on Sam's bottom bunk with a bag of FROZEN PEAS on both knees, drinking a bottle of Budweiser, while Sam plays around on his iPad.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM
Granddad.

BRADEN
No. I don't want to see any more
cat movies on your Etch-A-Sketch.

SAM
You liked the grape stomping lady.

BRADEN
Yeah, that one's pretty good.

Braden's voice horse from getting choked out repeatedly.

SAM
What happened to your voice?

BRADEN
Talmadge.

SAM
What's Talmadge?

BRADEN
Me about thirty years ago, which
is another way of saying he's an
asshole. And he's been kicking the
shit out of me all week.

Braden dumps some Advil into his hand and washes it down
with a swig of Budweiser, draining half the bottle.

SAM
My dad doesn't drink beer.

BRADEN
...Jesus.

SAM
What's it taste like?

BRADEN
Dodger Stadium. Hermosa beach.
Backseat of a Camaro. Your dad
owes his very existence to it in
fact, so I guess you do too.

SAM
Can I have a sip?

BRADEN
When you're fourteen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SAM

Hey, Granddad. Maybe Dad could help you with Talmadge. He knows a lot about fighting. He used to--

Laurie enters, snatching Braden's beer.

LAURIE

Uh, Karma Chameleon? My nine-year-old's room is a dry county.

BRADEN

Right. Sorry.

Laurie lifts the bottle to her lips and kills the beer.

LAURIE

I'll let you off with a warning this time.

Teasing him. Braden smiles without any conviction.

BRADEN

Night, kid.

SAM

Goodnight, Granddad.

Braden walks out. Laurie watches him go, concerned.

EXT. LOS ANGELES POLICE ACADEMY (COMBAT RANGE) - DAY

Pneumatic hiss. SILHOUETTE TARGETS swivel to FACE us. RECRUITS DRAW city-issued GLOCKS. Braden DRAWS and FIRES, unaccustomed to the Glock. **BAM! BAM! --BOOM!** Gomez blown back across the hallway -- Braden misses the cardboard altogether, KICKS up SAND behind it. Awful. Talmadge SMIRKS. Braden holsters up, feeling old, useless.

INT. SEAN AND LAURIE'S ATTIC - THAT NIGHT

Sean and Laurie duck-walking with flashlights, spelunking in their attic for the box of Christmas decorations.

LAURIE

I think the decorations are behind all the camping stuff.

Sean stops. Wait a minute...

CONTINUED:

SEAN

You know damn well they aren't.
 You want to get him killed?
 Because that's what'll happen.
 Sure as you're standing there.

LAURIE

That's not up to you. He's a grown
 man. And it belongs to him.

Laurie pushes aside camping stuff, opens a cardboard box
 to reveal a **TEAK BOX**.

LAURIE (CONT'D)

You promised her.

Sean looks at his wife, at the box, torn...

INT. SEAN AND LAURIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Braden's on the couch in front of the TELEVISION, watching *Keeping Up With The Kardashians*. He has a black eye, a gift from Talmadge. Braden's city-issued **GLOCK** broken down, its components arrayed on a cheesecloth on the coffee table in front of him while he cleans the weapon. Sean enters, carrying the TEAK BOX.

SEAN

What're you watching?

Braden wiping down the components.

BRADEN

I thought it was an Iranian
 sitcom. Now I'm not sure. But one
 of 'ems got an ass like a forty
 dollar cow. I haven't figured out
 how this old lesbian fits in.

SEAN

Bruce Jenner?

Braden squints at the TV...

BRADEN

Jesus Fucking Christ. What
 happened to his face?

SEAN

(re: his black eye)
 What happened to yours?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRADEN

I'm not gonna make it. I'm not
gonna pass remediation.

Braden's begins to reassemble the weapon. He tries to fit
the recoil spring back into the slide, fumbles it. *Fuck*.

SEAN

Glock takes some getting used to.

Sean takes over, reassembling Braden's weapon for him.

BRADEN

All that new lightweight polymer.
Feels like you're holding a toy.

SEAN

Maybe this'll help.

Sean slides Braden the **TEAK BOX** from the attic. Braden
lifts the lid. INSIDE: Braden's old **.357 SUPERMAG**. LASER
SCOPE! Snarling WOLF carved into the ivory grip.

SEAN (CONT'D)

It was your duty weapon. So,
technically, you're still
permitted to carry it.

Braden grips his old friend, feeling the heft...

SEAN (CONT'D)

Mom made me promise to hang on to
it. She said you were going to
want it back someday.

He smiles. Like Karen just wrapped her arms around him.

EXT. POLICE ACADEMY (HOGAN'S ALLEY) - NEXT DAY

Braden draws his **.357 SUPERMAG**, FIRES one-handed. **BOOM!**
LOUD. Coughing SMOKE like the tailpipe of a muscle car.
BLASTING killshots in every TARGET. RECRUITS turn and
stare. **BOOM! BOOM!** Braden's getting his MOJO back.

EXT. POLICE ACADEMY (OBSTACLE COURSE) - DAY

Braden dashes through the obstacle course. *Faster now*.

INT. ACADEMY GYM - DAY

Talmadge and Braden GRAPPLING on the mat while their classmates cheer them on. Talmadge CHARGES Braden. Braden pivots into a *kubi nage* throw. Talmadge tumbles, recovers, TACKLES Braden, both men CRASHING into folding chairs, scattering recruits. Talmadge rains PUNCHES down on him, until Braden whips his head sideways and Talmadge MISSES and PUNCHES the FLOOR. *ARRGH!* Braden HOOKS his LEG around Talmadge's NECK: *Triangle choke*. Talmadge TAPS OUT! Braden PULLS Talmadge to his feet, CLAPS him on the back. Talmadge nods, respectfully.

EXT. CHAVEZ RAVINE - SUNDOWN

RECRUITS running that same hill. But Braden's keeping up with the pack now, leaner, stronger, more distilled somehow. Braden pauses at the summit, enjoying the SKYLINE lighting up against the sky. He digs a pack of MARLBORO REDS out of his sweatpants, taps out a coffin nail and lights up. Figures he's earned it.

INT. SALVATION ARMY THRIFT STORE - DAY

Braden walking the aisles with purpose, pulling a dozen VINTAGE SHIRTS off racks. An armful of faded WRANGLERS and a LEATHER JACKET. Braden brings his haul to the REGISTER, winks at the CHECKOUT GIRL (20s) *beaming up at Braden with undisguised lust*. Then Braden notices the pair of DINGO COWBOY BOOTS on the shelf behind her.

INT. LAPD ADMINISTRATION BUILDING (LOBBY) - DAY

Those COWBOY BOOTS walking through the lobby, past plainclothes and uniformed COPS. Corporate, young, fit, diverse. A few recognize Braden, murmuring as he walks past. SEAN sees BRADEN swaggering across the lobby. *Oh Christ...* Braden looks like a fugitive from a '80s theme party. Wranglers. Loud shirt. Leather jacket. Ray-Bans. He notices Braden's **NINJA BELT BUCKLE**, which has a **SHURIKEN** clipped to it.

SEAN

What the fuck is that?

BRADEN

Ninja star. Bitchin, huh?

Sean doesn't know how to answer that.

CONTINUED:

SEAN

Come on. Doniger wants us to report to the academy.

BRADEN

But I just got out of there.

EXT. LA POLICE ACADEMY (TACTICAL VILLAGE) - MINUTES LATER

A simulated CITY STREET for live-fire and practical training, and weapons testing. Bullet-riddled VEHICLES on the street painted and re-painted primary colors. Engines removed. Forty MANNEQUINS playing civilians in harms way. A few even have Baby DOLLS in backpacks and strollers.

EXT. BLEACHERS - SAME

BRADEN and **SEAN** take their SEATS next to **DONIGER** on raised aluminum BLEACHERS overlooking the village. Packed with **DIGNITARIES** from LA government. The **MAYOR, CITY ATTORNEY, DISTRICT ATTORNEY, CITY COUNCILMEN**, LAPD Command Staff, including the **CHIEF, DEPUTY CHIEFS, MEMBERS** of the **POLICE COMMISSION** and the **NEWS MEDIA**.

DONIGER

(to Sean)

Sorry to drag you out to this dog and pony show, but I'm supposed to be on the advisory and oversight committee for whatever the fuck this is. And we need to talk.

HUDSON KREUTER (40s), Chief Operating Officer of **SENTINEL SECURITY OPTIONS** climbs a raised dais in front of the bleachers to begin his presentation. 1st Special Forces Operational Detachment Delta. Flat Appalachian drawl. Wears a hand-free mic like an informercial pitchman.

DONIGER (CONT'D)

(to Braden and Sean)

Hudson Kreuter. Runs an outfit called Sentinel Security Options. Private military contractors. They're closing down Afghanistan and he's looking for a fresh tit.

KREUTER

(over speakers)

The Watts Riots of 1965 lasted six days and caused three hundred million in property damage.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KREUTER (CONT'D)

1992: Rodney King Riots, what you've delicately renamed 'civil unrest', left fifty-two dead. Seven hundred million in damage. There are currently seventy thousand registered gangmembers in LA and nine thousand cops. At its current strength, the LAPD simply lacks the manpower to withstand another armed uprising.

CHIEF

And your solution, if I understand correctly, is to supplant our officers with your private contractors?

KREUTER

Not to supplant, to *supplement*, to provide additional security for your officers. Similar to the role we played in Afghanistan.

MAYOR

LA has a crime problem, Mr. Kreuter. We're not Kandahar.

KREUTER

Not yet. But *Mara Salvatrucha*, Crips and Bloods, The Aryan Brotherhood? You're staring down the barrel of an insurgency. I've been there. And you're going to need all the help you can get. I want to put a rapid-reaction force multiplier at your disposal. You're in control. You decide whether and when to deploy us. Let me show you what I mean.

IN THE CENTER OF THE VILLAGE: A disabled LAPD BLACK & WHITE, realistic black smoke curling up from the engine - nice touch. Two OFFICERS pinned down behind their Black & White, uniforms bloody, calling for help on their radio. Our cops left out here to die at the hands of 'STREET TERRORISTS' firing 'SIMUNITION' ROUNDS. Non-lethal training cartridges, but they mark targets with SPOTCHES of fluorescent PAINT and it's not hard to imagine blood.

KREUTER (CONT'D)

Now, your own SWAT OFFICERS have graciously agreed to play street terrorists for this demonstration.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KREUTER (CONT'D)

And of course we've asked them to
pull no punches when they engage.

ARMORED **BLACK SUVS** screech around the corner, peeling off to block intersections. Kreuter's **SECURITY SPECIALISTS** deploy silent and swift. Black fatigues, sectional body armor. Full face HELMETS giving them a mantid appearance.

The 'FIREFIGHT' is over quickly. Even with the home field advantage, the SWAT guys never stood a chance against battle-hardened high-tech mercenaries. Impressive. But Kreuter has saved his best trick for last. As Kreuter's men move in, loading wounded officers on to MedEVAC stretchers, they come **UNDER FIRE AGAIN!** This time from a **SNIPER** on the ROOF of the BANK BUILDING down the block.

KREUTER (CONT'D)

Well, I didn't want to make this one too easy on my boys. Now, in a riot situation, your air support is grounded. Too dangerous to fly. Leaves your rank and file blind, vulnerable to ambush. Here at Sentinel we have a solution.

It seems to FLOAT up over the back of the bleachers, giving us a view of its belly, bristling with armaments and scanning equipment, it swings around over the street.

BRADEN

The fuck is that?

SEAN

Welcome to the future.

KREUTER

Gentlemen, meet my friend **GABRIEL**.

GABRIEL is a Bell **918 'EAGLE EYE'** - a tiltrotor unmanned aerial vehicle capable of flying like a fixed wing or hovering like a helicopter. *Currently employed by the Coast Guard and Homeland Security. Just eighteen feet long, the Eagle Eye appears (no bullshit) to have been patterned after the Hunter Killers from Terminator.

KREUTER (CONT'D)

Gabriel comes equipped with a 360-degree sensor field, electro-optic and infrared, parabolic mics.

GABRIEL takes only seconds to locate the sniper, drops below his field of vision and rises into view BEHIND him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

KREUTER (CONT'D)
And he's armed at your discretion.

The MINIGUN on the nose of the DRONE **FIRE**s a brief BURST, *BRRRRR!* putting about sixty PAINT splotches across the sniper's back in seconds. Braden notices Kreuter's TECH, **JANEWAY** has a shock-proof case open on the table in front of him, controlling the drone with a JOYSTICK.

BRADEN
(sotto to Sean)
*Future my ass. It's just a big
fuckin toy.*

Braden's **IMAGE** suddenly APPEARS on TVs surrounding the crowd. Clear VIDEO of Braden saying: *It's just a big fucking toy.* Like the drone overheard. Sean reacts. Nervous laughter from the crowd. Kreuter smiles.

KREUTER
I see today we are graced with the presence of a media favorite, Det. Sam Braden, the noble savage. Welcome to the future, Detective.

Polite laughter. Scattered applause.

KREUTER (CONT'D)
You sound skeptical, Detective.
But I suppose that's understandable given your history.

BRADEN
Just old fashioned, I guess. I just don't think a flying robot is any substitute for gut instinct.

KREUTER
I see. Perhaps you'd like to attempt to evade Gabriel?

An anticipatory hush falls over the crowd...

SEAN
(sotto to Braden)
Don't do this.

BRADEN
Sure. Why not?

EXT. TACTICAL VILLAGE (MAIN STREET) - MINUTES LATER

Braden stands alone in the middle of the street, calmly feeding SIMUNITION ROUNDS into the cylinder of his SUPERMAG. Flicks the cylinder shut. Lights a smoke. UP IN THE STANDS, Doniger and Sean watch with dismay.

DONIGER

Your father led the city every year in felony arrests. And shootings. And excessive force complaints. He was uncooperative, insubordinate, brutal, borderline racist. He was also the best cop I'd ever seen. No one came close.

Every Cell phone camera in the crowd is on Braden, but Braden looks casual, almost bored.

DONIGER (CONT'D)

Nobody expected him to make it through remediation. Now they have to let him back out on the street.

SEAN

Look at him. He doesn't know what he's up against. He doesn't understand cell phone cameras or viral videos or why you can't give a female coworker a high five on her ass. He'll be dead or under indictment in a week.

DONIGER

Well, I'm not sending him out there alone.

Sean throws Doniger a stricken look.

SEAN

Oh shit.

GABRIEL floats around the corner, HOVERING at the other end of the street, less than ten feet off the ground.

BRADEN

(to Kreuter)

What are the rules?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KREUTER

Tell you what, Detective. You go thirty seconds without being marked by Gabriel, we'll call that a successful evasion.

BRADEN

Sounds fair.

KREUTER

It isn't. So I've going to give you a ten second head start.

PROPELLERS sending dust and debris (an errant tumbleweed) across the street as GABRIEL moves closer, until the DRONE is HOVERING right in front of Braden. Like two gunfighters facing off in the street. Man versus MACHINE. Sean's stomach sinking as Doniger lays it out for him.

DONIGER

You're the one person on the department he might actually listen to.

Braden's in the spotlight and the Chief feels it's an excellent PR opportunity.

KREUTER

Ten seconds, Detective...

SEAN

Out of the question.

KREUTER

Nine. Eight. Seven. Six.

Braden doesn't move, just stands there, facing the drone.

DONIGER

You misunderstand me, son. I'm not asking you to babysit your father. I'm ordering you to partner with him.

KREUTER

Five. Four. Three. Two...

Without taking his eyes off GABRIEL, Braden EXTENDS his ARM out from his shoulder, pointing his SUPERMAG not at GABRIEL, but at **JANEWAY** sitting on the dais! Braden **FIRE**s. **BAM! BAM! BAM! BAM!** Every stinging simmunition ROUND impacting Janeway's FACE...

JANEWAY

Fuck!

Janeway RAISES his HANDS to protect his face, LETTING GO of the controls. And GABRIEL DROPS to earth like a PIANO pushed out a window. CLANG! Not permanently damaged, but impacting street hard enough to rattle servos.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The drone BUZZES like a bee in a swimming pool, unable to fly as Braden returns to his seat amid *CHEERS* and *APPLAUSE*. Sean can't believe it. John Henry beat the locomotive.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Braden and Sean walking through the parking garage.

BRADEN

Looks like we're gonna be partners
after all, huh?

SEAN

Well, we're going to be working
together anyway.

BRADEN

I'll drive.

SEAN

You're joking, right?

BRADEN

I'm your father.

SEAN

And I outrank you. You're lucky
I'm letting you ride up front.

I/E. UNMARKED CAPRICE (STREETS OF LA) - MOMENTS LATER

We're riding with Sean and Braden in a sleek CHEVY CAPRICE. Sean behind the wheel. Braden checking out the onboard computer with FLIR (Forward Looking Infrared) and ALPR (Automatic License Plate Recognition).

BRADEN

It's the goddamned Batmobile. My
seat doesn't eject, does it?

SEAN

Not if you behave yourself.

BRADEN

Yeah, I remember you used to love
Batman. You had the bed and those,
hell were they called? *Underoos*.

SEAN

I was six.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Braden searching the center console, glove compartment.

SEAN (CONT'D)
What're you looking for? I was
kidding about the ejection seat.

BRADEN
Wakeup juice. Your flask, dummy.
Coffee could use some Irish in it.

SEAN
Are you kidding? This isn't New
York. You can't drink on duty.

BRADEN
I'm not talking about drinking,
I'm just talking about a little
eye-opener... Forget it.

Braden taking in our brave new world. Smart Cars. Can-Am Spyders. Segways. Starbucks on every corner with a dozen laptops open in the windows. Everyone is texting. Even DRIVERS. A HOMELESS GUY talking on a cell phone. Dogs sitting right next to their owners at bistro tables.

BRADEN (CONT'D)
Used to have a saying on the job,
you get three great loves in your
lifetime. Two great dogs, if
you're lucky, but only one great
partner.

SEAN
Gomez was yours.

BRADEN
Yeah, but that's not why I bring
it up. I had this German Shepherd
when I was a kid. Great dog. Until
my mom took him to get neutered.
He was never the same after that.
That's what this reminds me of, I
mean it looks like LA, but it's
not. Somebody cut off its balls.

Braden taps out a Marlboro and lights up.

SEAN
Whoa. Whoa. Whoa.

BRADEN
What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SEAN
You can't smoke in here.

Braden looks at Sean incredulously.

BRADEN
Oh for Christ's sake.

Before Sean can stop him, he FLICKS the CIGARETTE out the window, in front of a group of SCHOOL KIDS. Ten minutes in the car with his father and Sean's ready to shoot him.

BRADEN (CONT'D)
Where we headed?

SEAN
Day you woke up, couple of Crips tried to take down a bank. It went sideways on them, ended up in a standoff. Doniger brought me in to talk some surrender into them. They were packing brand new Light Machine Guns, Government Issue.

BRADEN
They say where they got it?

Sean shakes his head.

SEAN
But I know the guy who used to be their shot-caller down there. I think Xavier might talk to us.

BRADEN
He *might* talk to us? What is he the Wizard of Oz? I don't get it. In my day, they either talked to us or they talked to us.

SEAN
Right, in your day all you needed was a locked room and a phone book to beat confessions out of people.

BRADEN
No. Sometimes we used to pillowcase full of oranges.

EXT. PULLING UP TO 9200 SUNSET BLVD - LATER

Braden sullen and brooding as Sean pulls the car up to the front of a **9200 SUNSET BLVD**, a gleaming 14-STORY BUILDING on the Sunset Strip. Braden looks confused.

SEAN

There's a supper club on the top.
I'm meeting him there for lunch.

BRADEN

The gangster.

SEAN

Former gangster. He's an actor.

BRADEN

He's an actor.

SEAN

He was nominated for an Oscar.

BRADEN

And they know he's a gangster?

SEAN

He kind of wears it on his sleeve.
Makes him more authentic I guess.

BRADEN

Jesus Christ.

EXT. SOHO HOUSE (ROOF GARDEN) - MOMENTS LATER

A terrace garden dining area buzzing because **XAVIER DIXON** is sitting at a two-top. Sean and Braden can find him just by watching PATRONS subtly turning to sneak a peak. Other not so subtle, craning their necks. *That him?*

XAVIER DIXON(40s): former CRIP shot-caller, Oscar-Nominated actor. Bespoke suit. Shaved head. Charismatic. He might be a corporate lawyer or a financial advisor, but for the full-size TATTOO, a perfect copy of his own face on the back of his shaved head, like a Janus (so he literally has eyes in the back of his head). The effect of the tattoo is eerie. Two WOMEN dressed for the wrong kind of attention at his table, trying to chat him up.

SEAN

Sorry I'm late.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The women quickly steered away by **ALLEN**, Xavier's colossal BODYGUARD.

XAVIER
(re: girls)
Pharaoh suffered locusts.

SEAN
Xavier. This is my... colleague.

Xavier looks sheepish, maybe even a little star struck.

XAVIER
We've actually met.

BRADEN
We have?

XAVIER
I was sixteen. In a stolen ride.
Scared to death. We used to call
you The Big Bad Wolf, said Braden
could sniff you out of a perimeter
faster than the K9s. Think you've
made it home to Grandma's house,
homie? That's when Braden takes
off his granny suit and eats you.

Sean raises his eyebrows.

ALLEN
Big Bad Wolf. Shit. He looks a
little long in the tooth to me.

Allen moves closer, looming over Braden like a rearing bear. Braden ignores him, which only pisses Allen off.

BRADEN
How was I?

XAVIER
Tough, but fair.

ALLEN
You still tough, Dumbledore? You
don't look tough. You look soft.

Allen stepping even closer. His broad chest bumps against Braden's right shoulder. Allen glaring down at Braden...

BRADEN
Is he retarded?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

XAVIER

Just exuberant. Don't mind Allen.

Braden shrugs, signalling a waitress.

BRADEN

Sweetheart, I trouble you for a couple Tylenol?

SEAN

You alright?

BRADEN

They're not for me.

Braden **BOOTS** Allen right in the **BALLS**. Some of the other **DINERS** and **WAITSTAFF** react as Allen drops to his knees, then over on his side, groaning. Xavier's mildly amused. Sean is mortified. He looks at Braden the way, well, the way you look at your dad when he embarrasses you.

WAITRESS

What happened? Is he okay?

XAVIER

My friend slipped. He's fine.

BRADEN

We were just on our way out.

(hauling Allen up)

Weren't we, big guy? Come on. Let Uncle Braden buy you an ice cream while the grownups talk.

Allen drapes his big arm around Braden. Braden props Allen up, helping him limp gingerly to the elevator.

EXT. 9200 SUNSET BLVD - MINUTES LATER

Braden and Allen sitting together on the trunk of Sean's unmarked, both drinking from STARBUCKS holiday cups.

BRADEN

What do you call these again?

ALLEN

Caramel Macchiatos.

Allen pulls a **FLASK**, pours some into his cup, hands it to Braden, who dumps the rest into his, and hands it back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALLEN (CONT'D)
I ask you a question? Would you've
kicked me if I wasn't a brother?

BRADEN
I'm not even gonna dignify that
with a response.

ALLEN
Thought so.

A PORSCHE pulls into the HANDICAPPED SPACE nearby, an
able bodied ASSHOLE on his Bluetooth as he gets out...

BRADEN
HEY!

The Porsche asshole looks back.

BRADEN (CONT'D)
Fuck's a matter with you?

PORSCHE ASSHOLE
Excuse me?

BRADEN
You can't park there. See the blue
wheelchair guy? That space is
reserved for cripples and
spastics, you dumb shit.

Braden flashes his badge.

PORSCHE ASSHOLE
Fine. Write me a ticket. Leave it
on the windshield. I'm in a hurry.

He turns to walk away.

BRADEN
Move your car, fuckface. Or I'll
give you a lifetime excuse to park
there.

PORSCHE ASSHOLE
Fuck you.

Braden GRABS him, torquing his arm to steer the guy back
to his car, shoving him up against it. He yanks the guy's
keys out of his pocket.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BRADEN

I gave you a chance. Now my
partner here's going to have to
impound your vehicle.

Braden no-look passes the keys back to Allen, who catches them one-handed as he strolls up to the car.

ALLEN

(to Braden)
I stand corrected.

As Allen hops in the Porsche, REVS the engine and--

ALLEN (CONT'D)

Owe you one, brother.

BURNS RUBBER down Sunset Boulevard. Gone.

PORSCHE ASSHOLE

Wait. So where do I pick it up?

BRADEN

How the fuck should I know?

EXT. SOHO HOUSE (ROOF GARDEN) - SAME

Xavier eating stuffed squab, Sean kale and quinoa salad.

XAVIER

So what's it like, working with
your old man?

SEAN

Like being strapped to a bomb.

Xavier smiles, takes a contemplative bite.

XAVIER

Wouldn't do this for anyone else.
After what you did, what you did
for my nephew, I figure...

SEAN

All I did was send him to prison.

XAVIER

You gave him a chance. He would've
died in that bank.

(beat)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

XAVIER (CONT'D)

He said some spooky white dudes show up in the hood from time to time looking to unload a lot of dope from Afghanistan. Only this time they came bearing gifts.

SEAN

Description?

XAVIER

You guys all look the same. He says there's a lot of these new burners on the street now. 18th Street. *Wah Ching*. Korean Boys. Aryan Brotherhood. It's the hot toy this Christmas. The drums say there are more coming in.

SEAN

Anything you can tell me about the guys selling these things?

XAVIER

You're not listening. Nobody's selling. They're giving them away.

Sean reacts. *What???*I/E. SEAN'S UNMARKED (STREETS OF LA) - LATER

Sean and Braden heading down the Sunset. Tension.

SEAN

You really embarrassed me up there. You know I don't like to fight, not if I don't have to.

BRADEN

Shit. That wasn't a fight. That was a handshake. That was me introducing myself.

(beat)

What'd he say about the guns?

SEAN

Somebody's giving them away.

BRADEN

Like free turkeys.

SEAN

That's what he said.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRADEN

Then he's bullshit. Some enterprising prick out there selling say hello to my little friend for some running around money, that makes sense. Giving the fucking guns away makes no sense. See the difference?

Rapid-fire LAPD **RADIO CHATTER** from all over the city as constant background noise. Overlapping calls: *Armed 211... All units, ADW Shooting Suspect... Code 2 High...*

LAPD DISPATCHER

All units. Possible 211 in progress. 1146 Venice Boulevard at the Superior Liquor Market...

Sean and Braden trade looks. They're close. Braden GRABBING for the radio, eager as a kid on Christmas.

BRADEN

Case in point. Bad guys rob liquor stores. Because they want money.

(into RADIO)

David 14 en route to the 211.

(to Sean)

I'm good at these. I am.

INT. SUPERIOR LIQUOR MART - DAY

MR. LEE serving a line of CUSTOMERS as **(4) GANGSTERS** storm in. Hard as scrimshawed whalebone. Covered in calligraphic tattoos, even their FACES. Warriors from *Apocalypto* wearing wife beaters and khakis. LA's most savage gang: **Mara Salvatrucha**. **GOBLIN** carries a LOUISVILLE SLUGGER. **SLEEPY**: a sawed off SHOTGUN. **SMILEY** grips a 9mm. **PAYASO** slings a MACHETE. Lee reaches for the PHONE, but GOBLIN smashes the phone with his BAT.

SLEEPY

Everybody on the floor. Now!

The CUSTOMERS hit the deck as Goblin VAULTS the counter, OPENS the REGISTER, stuffing the bills into his pockets.

GOBLIN

Open the safe.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He SWINGS the BAT, bashing LIQUOR BOTTLES off the shelf behind the register, revealing the WALL SAFE concealed behind them. PAYASO checks the aisles for any stray customers. *We'll lose track of Payaso for a moment.

GOBLIN (CONT'D)

Open it.

MRS. LEE SCREAMS as SMILEY grabs a fistful of her HAIR and PUTS his PISTOL against her temple.

MR. LEE

Please. Don't touch her. Please.
I'll give you whatever you want.

GOBLIN

Yeah, no fucking shit.

EXT. SUPERIOR LIQUOR MART - SAME

Sean and Braden moving from cover to cover, crouching behind parked cars. Eyes on the action inside.

SEAN

(sotto into radio)

David 14. We're Code 6 on that 211 on Venice. Multiple armed suspects and hostages inside. I need units to respond to the alley rear for containment only. Notify SWAT and Advise them we will hold here until they arrive.

BRADEN

Fuck's wrong with you?

SEAN

Hostages. We wait for SWAT.

BRADEN

Piss on that. I'm going in there.

SEAN

Braden. I'm a negotiator. This is what I do. And we follow a protocol for armed suspects with hostages. The Four C's. Contain. Control. Communicate. Call SWAT.

BRADEN

It's not the Munich Airport. It's a liquor store for shit's sake.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRADEN (CONT'D)
 You guys make everything too
 complicated. My day all we had to
 remember was N.U.A.S.S.

Sean has no idea what the hell he's talking about.

BRADEN (CONT'D)
 Nut Up And Shoot Somebody.

INT. SUPERIOR LIQUOR MART - SAME

The gangsters HEAR the ELECTRIC DOOR CHIME and all look up to see **BRADEN** strolling up to the register...

BRADEN
 Gimme a pack a Marlboros, coupla
 lottery tickets and do you still
 carry Juggs Magazine?

They're all thrown off for a second. Because Braden's just standing there. Like nothing's wrong. Like he hasn't walked into a 211. But it's more than Braden's casual attitude that throws them. It's Braden. The Jacket. The Wranglers. Those fucking boots. These are High Definition Criminals facing an analog lawman for the first time.

SLEEPY
 Wallet on the counter, fool.

Sleepy covers Braden with his sawed off. Braden tosses his wallet on the counter. Beat. Goblin reaches for it.

BRADEN
 You wouldn't believe the paperwork. Nobody talks about that part, what a pain in the ass it is. It's like you have to fill out an application for a home loan every time you pull the trigger. I always hated that part, the paperwork. But I gotta tell ya, man, this part? Right here?

The bat in his right hand, Sleepy picks up the wallet with his left. It FLOPS OPEN, revealing Braden's **BADGE**.

BRADEN (CONT'D)
 This part I really like.

Braden moves with blurring speed, pulling his **.357 SUPERMAG**. Braden's first shot not at Goblin, but at Sleepy standing to his right with the sawed off SHOTGUN.

CONTINUED:

BOOM! We watch a .357 HOLLOW POINT *fly* out of Braden's pistol in slow motion - right **INTO THE MUZZLE** of the big bore shotgun in Sleepy's hands traveling straight DOWN THE BARREL to DETONATE the twelve gauge round INSIDE the shotgun, causing the weapon to EXPLODE in his hands. Sleepy drops, SCREAMING, curled up around his hand.

Before Sleepy even hits the floor, Braden turns his Supermag on Goblin. **BOOM!** His baseball bat FLIES APART into a storm of SPLINTERS, leaving him gripping a jagged stump. Dark urine spreads across the front of his pants. Braden reaches up, clamping his hand around the back of Goblin's neck, savagely bringing it down to SLAM his face into the counter. He sags to the floor. Unconscious. Smiley is using Mrs. Lee as a human shield, handgun grinding against her temple as he backs her toward the STOREROOM. Braden covers him with his REVOLVER.

BRADEN (CONT'D)

Case you haven't figured this out yet, today's not going to go the way you thought. Neither is the rest of your life for that matter.

SEAN steps through the plastic strip curtains of the storeroom behind Smiley, his **GLOCK** against the base of Smiley's skull. Smiley releases Mrs. Lee. Sean cuffs him.

SEAN

Braden!

The convex MIRROR up behind the register shows Braden that PAYASO is sneaking up BEHIND HIM, his MACHETE raised. Braden FIRES behind him without looking back. **BOOM!** The guy blown back off his feet, MOANING on the floor, as Braden steps over to survey the damage...

BRADEN

Whoa. Looks like the next place you rob better have a ramp, amigo.

I/E. SUPERIOR LIQUOR MART - LATER

NEWS HELICOPTERS orbit like carrion birds. UNIFORMED OFFICERS holding back a MOB of LOOKIE-LOOS, REPORTERS. Crime Scene PHOTOGRAPHERS snapping PHOTOS. HOMICIDE DETECTIVES taking perfunctory notes. The Kims sweeping the broken glass while Braden helps himself to a CORNDOG from the warmer. Slathers it in mustard. Ravenous.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A Crime Scene TECH approaches Braden with SOMETHING gripped in a pair of FORCEPS. It's a BULLET, the one that imbedded in Goblin's bat. Still in pretty good shape.

TECH

Braden, right? Thought you might want this to commemorate your first day back. The one that went down the barrel of the guy's shotgun's in about a million pieces. I pulled this one out of the guy's bat. Nice work.

He drops the bullet into Braden's palm. Braden tucks the bullet into his pocket just as **LT. KIM CHILDRESS** (40s) enters. Proven herself in gang units that see women as albatrosses of affirmative action. Tries to downplay her beauty, without success. Probably make chief someday.

CHILDRESS

Which one of you wants to tell me what the hell happened here?

SEAN

Lieutenant, we responded to a--

BRADEN

(mouthful of dog)
--What happened? I'll tell you what happened, sweetheart.
(patting his holster)
Bullets came out the end of this and went in some bad guys. We used to call that police work.

Sean winces, bracing himself for an explosion.

CHILDRESS

You violated department procedure for dealing with barricaded suspects. This I was willing to forgive because you're this unfrozen caveman.

She steps closer, nose to nose with Braden now.

CHILDRESS (CONT'D)

But I'm close to certain I just heard SWEETHEART issue from that cigarette holder in your face.

(to Sean)

Detective, what time is it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SEAN
Fourteen twenty one hours.

CHILDRESS
What time exactly?

SEAN
And thirty four seconds.

Childress grabs Braden's arm, pushes his sleeve up, pulls a pen, and writes those numbers **14:21:34** on his arm.

CHILDRESS
So you'll remember. Whatever slack
I may have extended you. This is
the moment it ran out.

With that, Lt. Childress turns and walks out.

BRADEN
I think she digs me.

I/E. SEAN'S UNMARKED CAR (STREETS OF LA) - MINUTES LATER

Braden lounging in the passenger seat, window open, elbow resting on the door. Relaxed. Sean grips the wheel, breathes through his nose, composed but seething underneath. He PULLS the car over to the CURB.

SEAN
If you and I are going to be
working together, I can't have you
acting like this.

BRADEN
Like what?

SEAN
Like Yosemite Sam on bath salts.

BRADEN
What are bath salts?

SEAN
You know what I mean.

BRADEN
Why is everybody acting like I did
something wrong? Bullets are in
the bad guys. Good guys won. As
one of the good guys, you should
be pleased with this outcome.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRADEN (CONT'D)

In fact, I would say it calls for celebration, and it is the custom of My People to partake of adult beverages after a good shooting.

SEAN

I've got almost ten years on the job. I've made over two thousand felony arrests and I've never had to pull the trigger. I'm proud of that. It was just blind luck a stray round didn't hit a civilian back there. Put SWAT in place, I could've talked them into handcuffs. Nobody gets hurt. Same result.

BRADEN

Yeah. Except while you're setting the table, those assholes take turns with that Oriental chick. You don't like the way I do things don't ride with me. Seriously. I won't take it personally.

SEAN

I don't have a choice. And neither do you. Doniger wants us to work together and in this century, I'm the senior man on the car, so it's my call. And she's Asian.

BRADEN

Huh?

SEAN

We say Asian now. Oriental's offensive.

BRADEN

Why?

SEAN

I don't remember exactly. I think it's something about the Orient and a Western-centric worldview.

BRADEN

What the fuck are you talking about? Jesus Christ. Oriental's offensive and we have to be gentle with gangbangers now. That's progress. *Asian*.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BRADEN (CONT'D)

But no flying cars, no jet packs, no pro football team, traffic's even shittier than I remember. And oh yeah, my wife is dead.

(Sean reacts)

Your century's got nothing I want except the son of a bitch who did this to me. After I find him, I don't care what happens after that. I'll grab a desk somewhere and you'll be a free man. Okay?

But Sean knows just how hopeless Braden's quest is.

SEAN

You're not going to find him.

He nods to the building they're parked in front of.

SEAN (CONT'D)

We've been parked at the crime scene this whole time. And you didn't even recognize it.

Braden reacts. This is where it happened. Some visionary architect has converted the grim apartment building where he was shot into a modern mixed-used residential and commercial space. The first floor is now stylish retail space occupied by *Coffee Bean*, a *Cold Pressed Juice Bar*, *American Apparel*. Sleek lofts and offices above.

INT. VINYASA YOGA STUDIO (FOURTH FLOOR) - MOMENTS LATER

Braden and Sean step off the elevator. All the walls have been knocked out for a VINYASA YOGA STUDIO. Gorgeous WOMEN wearing Lulemon yoga pants and twist tops contort themselves on yoga mats. Forty tight butts in the air.

YOGA INSTRUCTOR

Downward Dog. Into High Plank.
Into Chaturanga Dandasana...

Approaching the twenty-something GIRL at the FRONT DESK.

GIRL

Namaste.

BRADEN

Sure.

GIRL

Here to sign up for a class?

CONTINUED:

BRADEN
(seeing their poses)
Don't think so.

GIRL
(flirting)
You might be more flexible than
you think. I also do personal
training. The first session is--

SEAN
(showing his badge)
--We're police officers. We're
investigating a homicide.

GIRL
Oh my God.

BRADEN
It happened here--

GIRL
Oh my God.

BRADEN
--Before you were born.

She relaxes. A little.

SEAN
Mind if we look around?

GIRL
Of course. I mean no, go ahead.

Braden and Sean walk around the perimeter of the class. The space is totally open. There's nothing left of the hallway. Or any of the apartments. Just bamboo floor.

SEAN
I wanted you to see what you're up
against. Trail hasn't just gone
cold. It's been obliterated.

On the far side of the studio, Braden looks out the WINDOW. This is the same window. Braden is standing where the guy in the ski mask was when he shot him in the head.

BOOM! The BLAST lifts Braden off his feet and floats him backward to smash through the WINDOW on to the fire escape. The SKI MASK FIRES out the broken window--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Braden looking out the window at four-story modern APARTMENTS where the grubby liquor store once stood, glass and steel and reclaimed brick, rooftop garden.

SEAN (CONT'D)
Bad guy got away, Sam. I'm sorry.

Braden's watching a BROTHER(5) and SISTER(6) chasing each other around a spacious apartment while their NANNY watches *El Nombre Del Amor* on a big **FLATSCREEN**...

TRANSITION TO:

ANOTHER FLATSCREEN: Two male DETECTIVES catch sight of a HOT YOUNG female DETECTIVE across the room, clipboard in hand, trying to concentrate on her work.

DETECTIVE 1
All units. Officer Needs Help.

DETECTIVE 2
Code 4, partner. Already had her under surveillance. She just transferred in from Burglary.

DETECTIVE 1
What unit's she working?

DETECTIVE 2
She's gonna be workin MY unit.

And as they high five we **PULL BACK** to **REVEAL** they are standing over an AUTOPSY TABLE with a BODY on it. The frumpy MEDICAL EXAMINER scowls at them.

MEDICAL EXAMINER
Uh, excuse me, I'm trying to work here. You people need to grow up.

The VIDEO FREEZES and TOM SIZEMORE steps into frame.

TOM SIZEMORE
I'm Hollywood actor Tom Sizemore. And whether as DEA Agent Deets in Point Break or Detective Danny Ditello in Striking Distance, I've played a lot of great cops over the years, so I know about the challenges you face out there on the street.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

TOM SIZEMORE (CONT'D)

Well, today I'm here to talk to you about one of the greatest challenges officers face on a day to day basis: Recognizing Sexual Harrassment.

We're watching a SEXUAL HARRASSMENT VIDEO in...

INT. CLASSROOM 1 (HUMAN RELATIONS DIVISION) - NEXT DAY

Braden sitting with a dozen other OFFENDERS, all of them sentenced to Sexual Harassment Training. **OFFICER PAULA CHAVEZ**(30) sitting next to him. Sexy little fireplug.

CHAVEZ

(flirtily)

What're you in for?

BRADEN

I called Sgt. Childress
Sweetheart.

CHAVEZ

You're lucky to be alive.

BRADEN

You?

CHAVEZ

I asked a motor cop if he'd been working out.

The INSTRUCTOR sees Braden and Chavez talking and PAUSES the video. Irritated. He puts Braden on the spot.

INSTRUCTOR

Before we continue, Detective Braden, can you tell me what makes this conduct unwelcome?

BRADEN

They were being insensitive. The medical examiner's standing right there and she feels bad because she's not as attractive as the new girl and she looks like she might be a lesbian or...

(refers to his notes)

Maybe *trans-gender*. That's when you have both, right? Like Jamie Lee Curtis.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Stunned silence. Everyone is staring at Braden.

BRADEN (CONT'D)
I've said the wrong thing.

EXT. CHRISTMAS TREE LOT (OLD GAS STATION) - THAT NIGHT

In LA, this is what passes for a winter wonderland. Christmas lights strung on what used to be a Chevron station. KIDS tumbling in a MOON BOUNCE. TODDLERS smothering the inmates of a tiny PETTING ZOO. BRADEN, SEAN, LAURIE and SAM hunting for a tree. Braden drifts from the others. Sam, churro in one hand, leads Laurie to the tree he's decided on, a lopsided Douglas fir.

SAM
This one.

LAURIE
It's lopsided.

SAM
I know.

LAURIE
Okay, I'll get your father and you can explain why you want to turn our living room into a charity ward for disabled Douglas firs.

Braden walks down a ROW of NOBLE FIRS, silently COUNTING each tree he passes. He stops.

SEAN (O.S.)
You okay?

Sean appears next to him.

BRADEN
That's twenty seven.

Sean shrugs. So? He doesn't get it. Not at first.

BRADEN (CONT'D)
Christmases he took from me.

Beat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SEAN

And you think if you catch this guy he's going to cough 'em up for you? That's why they call it the past, Sam. We can't get it back.

Braden nods, but there's no comfort in it for him.

EXT. SEAN AND LAURIE'S BACK PATIO - LATER THAT NIGHT

Braden sneaks out, taps a Marlboro out and LIGHT up, taking his first puff when he HEARS the SLIDING DOOR open behind him. Laurie stepping out in her sweats.

LAURIE

Mind if I join you?

Braden holds out the pack. You recognize your own. She pulls one out. He lights it for her. Beat.

BRADEN

I really don't belong here.

LAURIE

None of us do. Get used to it.

BRADEN

Now you sound like my wife. You remind me of her.

(beat)

I don't know what Sean was expecting. But I know I ain't it.

LAURIE

He's the reason you're here. You know that, right?

(Braden reacts)

Every time they came out with some new treatment, he'd be on the phone, writing letters, trying to get you into clinical trials. For years. When he talked Dr. Hall into taking you on, I just figured we were in for another heartbreak.

(beat)

When they told him you'd come out of it, Sean was terrified. He didn't say it, but I know he was. After all this time. Afraid he'd be a disappointment to you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRADEN
Disappointment to me?

LAURIE
You were a legend. He grew up
hearing stories about you.

BRADEN
Well, now he knows better.

LAURIE
He could've been anything. I think
he became a cop, hoping to get to
know you. I know that's what your
case was for him, even if he
doesn't. It was never about the
shooter. It was about finding you.

BRADEN
Looks like I disappointed him. On
both counts.

Braden digs something out of his pocket - the **BULLET** the
tech at the liquor store extracted from Goblin's baseball
bat, weighs it thoughtfully in his palm.

LAURIE
Is that from your case?

BRADEN
No. Just a souvenir. I thought Sam
might like to have it. Shit, if we
had a bullet like this from my
case, we might actually...

BOOM! Goblin's baseball bat FLIES APART into a storm of SPLINTERS-- BOOM! The BLAST lifts Braden off his feet and floats him backward to smash through the WINDOW on to the fire escape. The SKI MASK FIRES out the broken window-- Those KIDS chasing each other around in that spacious apartment, in the building that didn't exist before.

BRADEN (CONT'D)
We might actually get somewhere.

INT. BACK AT THE VINYASA YOGA STUDIO - DAY

Sean watches Braden making a finger gun. The kid in that APARTMENT across the way, crouching behind his couch to fire back at Braden. *Bam. Bam. Bam.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRADEN

You said none of the bullets
recovered were worth shit, right?

SEAN

Right. Too distorted.

Through this WINDOW and another WINDOW in front, Braden
can see clear THROUGH the apartment to the STREET beyond.
To a WOODEN **UTILITY POLE** across the street. He smiles...

EXT. UTILITY POLE ACROSS SIXTH STREET - DAY

Sean nimbly climbing the rungs of the UTILITY POLE...

BRADEN

Bullet they pulled out of the bat
got me thinking. Guy shot me with
a .357, like mine. Effective range
is only what? About--

SEAN

--Fifty meters.

BRADEN

Figure if a round made it across
the street, hit this pole--

Sean finds a decades old **HOLE** in the wood. Sean pulls a
TOOL from his belt and begins digging into it.

SEAN

--Most of its kinetic energy spent
on the trip here. Soft wood...

Sean PRIES something loose and a **BULLET** plops into his
hand. Rust-tinged, otherwise in good condition.

SEAN (CONT'D)

...I don't fucking believe it.

EXT. DOWN THE BLOCK FROM 7620 SIXTH ST - DAY

A **BRUTE** in a Viking beard, WATCHING Braden and Sean
behind 'LOCS' SUNGLASSES on a SHAVED HEAD covered in Nazi
tattoos. He's ARYAN BROTHERHOOD. Call him **VIK**.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

On second thought, don't. Just watch him as he walks around to the back of a FORD F-350 PICKUP with a SHELL on it and casually DROPS the TAILGATE, leaving it OPEN as he slides into the DRIVER'S SEAT, adjusting the big SIDEVIEW MIRROR so he can still keep an eye on Braden and Sean...

HIDDEN UNDER THE SHELL ON THE BED OF HIS F-350:

A SNIPER: Prone on the bed of the truck. CLEAN HEAD, wife beater, and tattoos tell us he's a fellow BROTHER, got his training at the Fallujah Finishing School. So he's pro. Perfectly still. He's **BARRY**. You'd never see him unless you were staring straight into the back of the truck, and you wouldn't want to because--

--BARRY'S RIFLE IS A FUCKING BEAST: BARRETT M82
sniper/anti-materiel RIFLE mounted on a BIPOD. Recoil operated. High rate of fire. **.50 CALIBER**

EXT. BACK AT SEAN'S UNMARKED CAPRICE - MINUTES LATER

Sean POPS the TRUNK LID giving us our first look into the trunk of his unmarked car: fastidiously organized with separate sections for his fingerprint kit, gunshot residue kit, latex gloves, luminol, and so on.

SEAN
(re: Sean's trunk)
Looks like you got the whole detective playset in there. All that shit and no booze.

SEAN (CONT'D)
(ignoring him)
This could be the first break in your case that anyone's had in twenty seven years.

BARRY'S POV: Breathing SLOWLY, making tiny corrections until **BRADEN** is MAGNIFIED through the scope's RETICLE.
BARRY'S FINGER: As it CURLS slowly around the TRIGGER...

EXT. AT THE OPEN TRUNK OF SEAN'S UNMARKED CAPRICE - SAME

Braden pinches the envelope OPEN, but before he can slide the recovered BULLET inside, the **BULLET** slips through his fingers, rolls under the car. BOTH bend down for it as--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

--**BOOM!** Where BRADEN'S HEAD was an eighth of a second ago, a .50 Caliber ROUND **PUNCHES** a flanged HOLE the size of a dinner plate through the open TRUNK LID with enough force to TEAR the lid right OFF its HINGES--

[Shockwave setting off CAR ALARMS up and down the block.]

--SEAN and BRADEN scrambling for cover behind the car, both DRAWING their WEAPONS--

--**BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!** Barry now unleashing HIGH-VELOCITY HELL, rounds TEARING through the CAPRICE like tinfoil--

--and into CARS and STOREFRONTS. People PANICKING, a WOMAN abandoning her MINIVAN in the middle of the road--

--**BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!** PUNCHING out through the DOORS and FENDERS, inches from Sean and Braden, who both PRONE OUT FLAT against the SIDEWALK in a rain of atomized auto glass, because the car offers some concealment, but absolutely no cover against Barry's armor-piercing ammo.

BRADEN

SEAN

Fuck! FUCK! Where is he? North! Mid-block! The truck-

--**BOOM!** A round PIERCES the ENGINE BLOCK, spilling flaming gas, rivulets of burning fuel spreading toward--

SEAN

MOVE!

--But he won't. Not without his bullet. Braden wriggling under the car to reach for it as the FLAMES spread, Braden's fingers fumbling for it, CLOSING around it as--

SEAN (CONT'D)

BRADEN!

--Sean YANKS him to his feet, both RUNNING, forced to break cover to get away from the car before it--

--**KA-BOOM!** A SERIES OF ANGLES: The CAPRICE dies giving birth to a DWARF SUN, spewing fire and blackened metal--

--Sean pulling Braden along as he RETURNS FIRE, pressing the trigger of his Glock *fast and smooth*, peppering the F-350 with bullets. Braden notices Sean's a hell of a shot!

But when Barry ROLLS smoothly out of the bed, he's TRADED in his BARRETT for an **M249 MACHINE GUN** - just like the ones from the bank - posing like Rambo, ammo belt over his arm as he unloads **BRACKABRACKABRACKABRACK!** Tearing the whole street apart. Braden and Sean dive for cover.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Barry hops in the bed of the TRUCK as it *roars* away. Braden RUNS after it, takes a shooting stance. Too far...

SEAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
GET IN!

Braden turns to see *-OH, NO, NO, YOU GOTTA BE FUCKING SHITTING ME-* Sean behind the wheel of the **MINIVAN**.

SEAN (CONT'D)
We're commandeering it.

Braden climbs in next to Sean as he STOMPS the PEDAL to the floor. The minivan lurches after the truck. The pig iron piece of shit's almost as old as Sean, knobs broken off the stock stereo, and there's a CD stuck in it...

SEAN (CONT'D)
--I already tried, okay? The fucking knob is broken! And since I'm already out of policy by practically stealing this car, I don't want to hear a fucking word from you about the fucking music!

...Lady was listening to fucking Abba's Greatest Hits. And we're pursuing the Aryan Brotherhood to "Waterloo."

I/E. MINIVAN (90 MPH) - SECONDS LATER

Sean pushing the minivan past its limits, STRAIGHT THROUGH a RED LIGHT to catch up with the F-350. HORNS. Tires SCREECH. Sean SWERVES out into oncoming traffic--

--And DRIVES up on the sidewalk. PEDESTRIANS scrambling as Braden hangs his gun arm out the window to **FIRE**, BOOM! BOOM! The F-350's windshield SHATTERS and Vik's SIDEVIEW MIRROR flies apart like a clay pigeon. Vik CRANKS the wheel in a desperate move, heading the WRONG WAY UP the--

EXT. 101 FREEWAY OFF RAMP - CONTINUOUS

--The F-350 muscling its way up the OFF RAMP. Barry kneels in the truck bed, FIRING the **M249** back at them as Sean LEAPS the MINIVAN back off the curb, fishtailing in behind the TRUCK, the wrong fucking way up the off ramp-

Sean death-gripping the wheel, WEAVING in and out of ONCOMING TRAFFIC. Horns BLARE. Cars SWERVE. SCREECHING.

CONTINUED:

He winces. Traffic SLASHING the air around them as Braden **FIRE**s, ducking back inside to dump his empties, reload...

SEAN

Probably just another day at the office for you, huh?

BRADEN

Pretty much, yeah.

They're catching up to the truck as it SMASHES through the CEMENT MEDIAN back into SOUTHBOUND LANES and on to--

EXT. CENTURY FREEWAY CONNECTOR (100 FEET UP) - CONTINUOUS

Both vehicles now racing neck and neck along the highest OVERPASS in Southern California, ONE HUNDRED FEET over the 110 Freeway. Barry stands in the truck bed, angling his **M249** to **BRACKABRACKABRACKA!** Perforating the MINIVAN. Braden and Sean hunched as low as they can manage. Braden **FIRE**s, a round catching VIK in the shoulder, causing him to LOSE CONTROL and SMASH through the SAFETY RAIL, the truck STUCK there, but BARRY goes SAILING out over the Harbor Freeway, FALLING a hundred feet into northbound lanes.

But the truck REMAINS, somehow TEETERING on its balance point one hundred feet in the air. Braden and Sean exit the minivan, but not before **BOOM!** Braden BLOWS a HOLE through the CAR STEREO, silencing Abba. He and Sean approach the teetering TRUCK, their guns up on target.

BRADEN

Alright. Sir, my partner and I observed you driving very erratically. And I'm going have to ask you to exit the vehicle with your license and registration.

Vik looks out the window and sees nothing but freeway traffic WHOOSHING around something that might have been Barry a hundred feet down.

VIK

Fuck you!

EXT. CENTURY FREEWAY CONNECTOR - 26 MINUTES LATER

Once again, NEWS HELICOPTERS hover overhead. LAPD Black & Whites have traffic blocked in all directions.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Vik still inside the truck as Braden and Sean watch a TOW TRUCK DRIVER UNLOCK his CABLE WINCH. He grabs the HOOK, yanking several yards of slack off the winch drum. The damaged GUARDRAIL groans, weaker by the second. The driver is just about to LOOP his cable around the truck's frame when Braden SNATCHES the HOOK from him...

BRADEN

Where'd you get those guns?

VIK

Eat shit! Get me out of here.

SEAN

Braden, stop fucking around...

BRADEN

Who hired you to take us out?

VIK

I want my fucking lawyer!

BRADEN

And I was kinda hoping Heather Locklear would show up here and sit on my face, but it looks like we're both gonna be disappointed.

And with that, Braden **KICKS** the BUMPER of the TRUCK! HARD! And the GUARDRAIL SCREAMS OUT, finally giving way and the F-350 LURCHES forward--Sean quickly SNATCHES the HOOK from Braden, hastily LOOPING the cable around the truck's exposed frame, and manages to set the HOOK just as--THE TRUCK FALLS SILENTLY OFF THE OVERPASS!

Sean and the tow truck driver watch in horror as CABLE UNSPOOLS from the tow truck's winch drum with *blurring* speed, friction smoke curling from the winch *until--*

-THWANG! The CABLE PULLED TAUT **JERKING US** to a SUDDEN STOP, like a hanged man - *GRAVITY VIOLENTLY RESTORED INSIDE*, throwing Vik against his AIRBAG. His **CELL PHONE** tumbling out, wedged between the dash and windshield.

EXT. CENTURY FREEWAY CONNECTOR (100 FEET UP) - SAME

The tow truck driver looks down at the gently swaying F-350, dangling fifty feet over the freeway.

TOW TRUCK DRIVER
That was awesome.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SEAN
ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR FUCKING MIND?

BRADEN
What? They don't have good-cop-bad-cop in this century?

INT. DONIGER'S OFFICE - 43 MINUTES LATER

Braden and Sean standing across the desk from Doniger. Doniger doesn't have to look back the TV mounted on the wall behind him. He knows what's on. Because it's on every channel. KTLA 5 NEWS with footage from SKYCAM 5: the F-350 dangling from the OVERPASS and BUMPER TO BUMPER TRAFFIC to the ends of the earth.

DONIGER
You going for a personal best?

BRADEN
Did I make it?

DONIGER
One KIA. Property damage north of half a million. Adjusted for inflation, yeah. I'd say so.
(to Sean)
You were supposed to civilize him. You went native for Christ's sake.

SEAN
The cases are connected somehow. His shooting and these guns. I don't know how the hell they fit together, but they do. We're getting close to something, and it's big enough to risk trying to kill two cops in broad daylight.

BRADEN
Wade, if you just give me five minutes in a room with that asshole. I know I can--

DONIGER
--WHAT?!? Do you have any fucking idea what's happening here? What century we're in? Either of you?
(softer)
Look, for what it's worth, I agree with you. Something hinky about all this. But I gotta ground you.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DONIGER (CONT'D)
Both of you. You're suspended,
until further. I'm sorry.

Sean walks out. Braden lingers. One last try. Pulls the EVIDENCE ENVELOPE out of his pocket and rolls the BULLET from the TELEPHONE POLE out on to the desk.

BRADEN
Pulled it out of the telephone
pole across from the building
where I was shot. It's old.
(Doniger reacts)
I need one more favor, Wade. And I
know it's asking a lot...

Braden rolls the bullet back into the evidence envelope and passes it to Doniger.

BRADEN (CONT'D)
Get this analyzed for me.

Doniger holds the bullet up. Considering...

DONIGER
Okay. I'll see what I can do. Now
get the fuck out of here.

INT. LAPD HEADQUARTERS (PARKING GARAGE) - LATER

Sean in civilian clothes walking out to his car when he HEARS beeping and sees the CITY TOW TRUCK backing Vik's **F350 TRUCK** into a PARKING SPACE roped off with CONES and CRIME SCENE TAPE. Airbags sagging. Windshield shattered. Sean looks closer. SOMETHING wedged between the dashboard and shattered windshield -- Vik's **CELLPHONE**.

INT. THE SHORTSTOP BAR IN ECHO PARK - NIGHT

The gentrification of Echo Park has turned what was once a beautifully seedy cop bar into one of those self-conscious dive bars populated by twenty-something HIPSTERS. A DJ in the corner spinning records. Weird electronic stuff Braden's never heard before.

BRADEN
This was a cop bar. This was THE
cop bar. What the hell happened?

SEAN
Gentrification. I told you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Braden and Sean make their way to the bar, as the BARTENDER arrives, looking sullen and sarcastic.

BRADEN
Budweiser.

BARTENDER
We don't have Budweiser.

BRADEN
Miller?

BARTENDER
We carry microbrews. Hoptimus
Prime. Seriously Bad Elf. Arrogant
Bastard. Clown Poison. Farmer's
Tan. Bitter Bitch. Leghumper...

BRADEN
Are they cold?

BARTENDER
Yes.

BRADEN
Then I don't give a shit. Pick
one.

SEAN
Make it two.

The bartender walks out of frame. Braden turns to Sean.

BRADEN
Thought you didn't drink beer.

SEAN
Guess it's a night of firsts then.
Not a blemish on my record. 72
hours with you and I'm suspended.
Kinda liberating, actually.

BRADEN
Yeah, I always did my best work
after I'd been suspended.

The bartender returns with two bottles of BELLIGERENT ASS
ALE. Sean laughs. Braden raises his glass to his son.

BRADEN (CONT'D)
You did alright today.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SEAN

You don't know the half of it.

Sean digs VIK'S CELL PHONE out of his pocket and places it on the bar between them.

BRADEN

What's that?

SEAN

A cell phone. That I pulled out of that F350 on my way out. So I guess if you wanna be technical, I guess it's stolen evidence.

BRADEN

We used to say you can wear a badge for twenty years, but you're not a cop until you break the law.

SEAN

Thanks, Obi Wan. That come off a bumper sticker? Or a muscle shirt?

BRADEN

Memory serves, used to be written on one of the stalls in back.

Sean POWERS up the phone, Braden looks over his shoulder.

SEAN

It's a burner cell. You can buy 'em at any 7-11. Buy some minutes, use them up and dump it.

Sean scrolls through VIK'S TEXTS. A lot of local SKANKS have apparently TEXTED NAKED SELFIES to Vik...

BRADEN

Wait. Go back to that one.

Sean scrolls to a **PHOTO of BRADEN and SEAN** taken outside the LIQUOR STORE with the words '**GREEN LIGHT**'.

BRADEN (CONT'D)

Pretty straightforward. Run a trace, right? Find whoever's holding the other soup can.

SEAN

Long gone. Just another burner. It's this next part I don't get.

CONTINUED: (3)

WHEN DONE CLAIM YOUR PRIZE: 34.5065/117.8271/231915Z

BRADEN

That's how he gets paid after the job. Did you put those numbers in your computer? Maybe he has to go to Tron or whatever to collect.

SEAN

The internet. I tried that already. It's not a web address. Could be a password and a bank routing number. I don't know.

INT. SHORT STOP - LATER

Braden and Sean hunched over a napkin, jotting the numbers down, circling them like a jumble, crossing them out, tearing off another napkin and starting over.

BRADEN

Hey, Breakfast Club. Gimme another Arrogant Bastard. And a Hoptimus Prime for the young master.

The bartender brings over their beers, cranes his neck.

BARTENDER

Sudoku?

SEAN

No. Actually, we don't know.

The bartender turns the napkin to take a look.

BARTENDER

I don't know about the third number, but the first two look like GPS coordinates.

(they react)

I'm part of a Geocaching group in Silverlake.

Braden and Sean share a look...

INT. SEAN'S PRIUS - MOMENTS LATER

Braden watching as Sean PLUGS the LONGITUDE and LATITUDE into his NAVIGATION SYSTEM.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SEAN

It's out in the Mojave. What about the third set of numbers?

Braden turns his arm, noticing those numbers Childress wrote on his arm in the liquor store. **14:21:34**

BRADEN

It's when. It's the Military time date format. 231915Z. That's the 23rd at 1915 Zulu time. Tonight at nine fifteen.

EXT. RUINS OF THE LLANO DEL RIO COLONY - LATER

Western edge of the Mojave Desert, LA County. Miles from nowhere, the desolate ruins of the *LLano Del Rio* Colony. A 95-year-old ghost town of mission-style STRUCTURES.

INT. INSIDE THE CRUMBLING RUINS - NIGHT

BRADEN and SEAN now sitting inside a crumbling structure. Sean checks his PHONE. **NO SERVICE**. They're on their own. They can see the STARS through a big hole in the roof.

BRADEN

See, isn't this more fun than following the rules?

SEAN

You think I'm doing this for fun?

BRADEN

Why are you doing this? You're risking your job coming out here.

SEAN

If I didn't come with you you'd find a way out here alone. And you'd get yourself killed. And I don't want to... to have to explain to my son that you're not ever coming home. Sam loves you.

Silence. So many things Braden wants to say to Sean.

SEAN (CONT'D)

I prayed you'd come back. For years. Then after Mom died... that's when I knew nobody was listening.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SEAN (CONT'D)

And for a while I figured if nobody's watching, then it doesn't matter what we do. But it's the only thing that matters. Honor's not between you and God. It's between you and you. You think I follow the rules because I'm afraid.

BRADEN

No. Just the opposite. Sean--

SEAN

--*Shhh...* Hear it?

Braden does. They both hear it now. In the distance, the snarl of **HEMI ENGINES** coming fast...

EXT. ANTELOPE VALLEY (PEAR BLOSSOM HIGHWAY) - NIGHT

A tight CONVOY of SUBURBANS and FOUR-WHEEL DRIVE PICKUPS all TURNING OFF their headlights as they PEEL off the Pear Blossom Highway, taking an angle across the desert, kicking a nebula of dust up into the night sky.

INT. LEAD SUV - SAME

The DRIVER wearing NIGHT-VISION GOGGLES. His **PASSENGER** wears a Keffiyeh wrapped around his head, in the Afghan fashion, only his eyes exposed. MERCS in back, scanning the desert, ASSAULT WEAPONS at port arms. These guys might be rolling through Eastern Afghanistan instead of the western Mojave. **POV (NIGHT VISION)**: Bathed in greenish light, the desert looks like the ocean floor.

INT. BACK INSIDE THE CRUMBLING RUINS - SAME

BRADEN and SEAN crouching inside, peering out the paneless windows at the convoy. Sean flips open his NIGHT VISION **CAMCORDER**, the SCREEN showing him...

SEAN

Six vehicles. Maybe more. Running without headlights. Night vision.

The vehicles fan out into a rough semicircle. MERCS jogging out to form a perimeter. Watching the desert, ASSAULT WEAPONS slung barrel-down. Balaclavas covering mouths and noses from dust. This has the look of routine.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Braden and Sean can hear another, larger **ENGINE** approaching now. A towering wall of sound, battering across the desert like a rogue wave. They trade looks.

A whale-sized **SHADOW** races over desert. A **V-22 OSPREY** tilt-rotor aircraft swooping down over the ruins, nacelles rotating ninety degrees, allowing the aircraft to land like a helicopter, turboprops scattering tumbleweeds. Prop wash raising rust-colored spirals as the OSPREY'S SEARCHLIGHT sweeps over the terrain.

Braden and Sean flatten against the stone walls as BEAMS from the OSPREYS' SEARCHLIGHTS blade through the windows and doorway of their half-structure, bright as sunlight.

The **MAN** in the KEFFIYEH steps out of the lead SUV through waves of scudding grit toward the OSPREY as the LANDING GEAR touches the desert floor. Rotors slowing now. The sandstorm settles as the osprey's CARGO RAMP drops OPEN. Sean and Braden shoulder to shoulder at the window, watching through the camcorder's NIGHT VISION LCD SCREEN: as the man removes his KEFFIYEH, revealing his FACE.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Kreuter.

INT. OSPREY - SAME

Kreuter enters the cargo hold, greeted by the equally dangerous MARINE CORPS **MAJOR DOUG BRENNAN**. Silver temples. Gold oak leaves on the collar of his fatigues.

MAJOR BRENNAN

Mr. Kreuter.

Behind Major Brennan, the cargo hold is packed with shock-proof WEAPONS CASES. Kreuter slides a case off the stack, pops the lid on a dozen foam-packed **M249 MACHINE GUNS**. No serial numbers. Identical to those used at the bank with one exception: these are fitted with under-barrel **40mm GRENADE LAUNCHERS**. Kreuter touches his THROAT MIC.

KREUTER

(into mic)

We're good to go.

Four MERCS jog up the ramp now, carrying DUFFLE BAGS. Major Brennan unzips a duffle. Butcher paper bricks of COCAINE stacked inside. Brennan selects one at random, draws his knife and CUTS into it, scoops out a small amount, taps it into a VIAL of cobalt thiocyanate, and SHAKES it. The substance in the vial turns **BLUE...**

EXT. LLANO DEL RIO (MERCS ON THE PERIMETER) - SAME

Heads on a swivel. Years spent in Indian Country. **MERC'S**
POV: Through his FORWARD LOOKING INFRARED (FLIR) SCOPE reading HEAT emanating from the ruins. One of the structures is glowing like a fucking Jack-o'-lantern.

MERC 1
 (into throat mic)
 Be advised. I'm reading some heat from one of the structures.

The MERC breaks off to check it out, WEAPON up.

INT. INSIDE THE CRUMBLING RUINS - SAME

Braden sees the MERCS closing in on the structure.

SEAN
 We're burned.

Sean draws his GLOCK. But Braden touches his arm. Braden and Sean press their backs against the stone wall. Sean's **CAMCORDER** is **RECORDING** on the WINDOW LEDGE. The **LED SCREEN**, we see Mercs loading WEAPONS CASES on the trucks.

The MERC right outside the doorway now, one more step and he'll see them. But Sean sees Braden removing that stupid SHURIKEN from his BELT BUCKLE. Sean waving his hands desperately. Universal language for *No, no, you idiot!*

Braden *HUCKS* the **NINJA STAR** at him. It buzzes through the air to **THUNK** deeply into the guy's forehead! And the only person more stunned than the dying merc is Sean. The merc looks to Sean as if for an explanation as he falls. Sean catches him. He and Braden hauling his limp body inside.

SEAN (CONT'D)
 Okay. That was pretty awesome.

Setting the dead man down easy. Braden grabbing the guy's RIFLE, spare MAGS. Sean grabbing NIGHTVISION GOGGLES, and RADIO. Sean GRABS the **CAMCORDER**, stuffs it in his jacket.

EXT. RUINS OF LLANO DEL RIO - SAME

The Osprey's ROTORS stirring another SANDSTORM. Kreuter and his men shield their eyes. Braden and Sean dash low to where they stashed Sean's Prius. Pulling tumbleweeds off. A BUTTON soundlessly starts the ignition. There's almost no sound as they slowly pull away...

CONTINUED:

SEAN

You made fun of my car, but you
gotta admit it has one thing going
for it... It's quiet.

The car cautiously crawling like a beetle across the
desert, heading slowly back toward the highway when--

EXT. RUINS OF LLANO DEL RIO - SAME

Everyone climbing back into the trucks. Engines revving. Merc 1 jogs back to structure to fetch his idiot comrade. Through his FLIR, sees a glowing TRAIL OF HEAT leading away from the ruins. From a vehicle. Has to be. *What the hell?* Running now to the structure, seeing the DEAD MERC, his body already starting to cool. Weapon gone.

I/E. SEAN'S PRIUS - SAME

Sean drives by NIGHTVISION, but the Prius isn't exactly an off-road vehicle. Braden wears the dead merc's EARBUD.

BRADEN

(listening)

....They found the dead guy.

SEAN

Maybe they'll think ninjas did it.

Sean FLOORS it now, heedless of the noise or dust, driving like hell for the Pear Blossom Highway as **HIGH BEAMS** flare in the REARVIEW. Braden looks back and sees a half-dozen TRUCKS and SUVS cresting that last rise.

MUZZLE FLASHES lighting up the desert, **FWAP! FWAP! FWAP!** Bullets KICKING up GEYSERS of sand around them. Joshua trees BURSTING like dandelions as Sean CRANKS the WHEEL to SLALOM around BOULDERS. Steering around hillocks. But the SUVs drive OVER them, PORPOISING them one after another, CATCHING AIR off every slope. Think Baja 1000.

BRADEN

It's like the fucking Road Warrior
and we're driving Herbie The Love
Bug. Open the roof, willya?

Sean hits the button. Braden pops out of the moon roof with the dead merc's MK 17, FIRING back at them **BRACK!** **BRACK!** **BRACK!** RAKING the weapon across their GRILLS and WINDSHIELDS.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The SUVs and PICKUPS SCATTER as though executing some predetermined maneuver, like the Blue fucking Angels. Spreading out in an attempt to encircle them, the way commercial trawlers closing a net.

In his REARVIEW, Sean sees a LIFTED CHEVY **SILVERADO** right on their ass. He GRABS Braden's BELT, YANKING him down as he SLAMS on his BRAKES. The SILVERADO *blowing-right-past-them* in a thick CLOUD of DUST. Sean then FLOORS it until the Prius is running RIGHT BEHIND the SILVERADO, the nose of the Prius close enough to kiss the Silverado's tow hitch. They're TOO LOW to be visible in the DRIVER'S mirrors, and completely SHROUDED by the contrail of DUST trailing behind the truck.

BRADEN (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

SEAN
Something really fucking dumb.
(nodding forward)
Get in the back of the truck.

BRADEN
Wow. That is dumb.

SEAN
GO!

Braden climbs out the moon roof into a wind tunnel whipping his clothes at sixty miles an hour. He balances unsteadily on the hood of the Prius, scrambles into the bed of the Silverado, shielded from view by the big WEAPONS CASES lashed to the truck bed. Sean SETS the **CRUISE CONTROL**, DRAWS his GLOCK from his belt holster as he YANKS off his BELT, WHIPS it around the **STEERING WHEEL** and CINCHES it to the ARMREST, keeping the Prius more or less on course. Tucks the GLOCK into his WAISTBAND and follows Braden, scrabbling out on to the hood--

--But the SILVERADO VEERS RIGHT, the PRIUS drifting LEFT, widening the gap. Sean DIVES for the tailgate with nothing below but the desert blurring by...

Braden REACHES back through a tornado of dust for his boy's HAND, CLASPING it tight, Sean's weight yanking him against the tailgate as Sean dangles, his feet dragging.

BRADEN
I got you.

Sean REACHES up to GRAB Braden's other hand, looking up at his father's face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Sean's GLOCK and PHONE fall out of his waistband, lost to the desert as Braden HAULS Sean up, as the PRIUS *zips* right past the Silverado.

DRIVER
(into radio)
I have the tango at my ten
o'clock, still southbound!

Kreuter's men ATTACK as the valiant PRIUS makes its last run across the Mojave, DRAWING their FIRE, shuddering like Sonny Corleone on the causeway as bullets pound it. SHATTERING windows, SHREDDING tires. A stray round SNAPS the belt tied around the wheel and rudderless Prius SWERVES as though to avoid their gunfire. They follow it.

Kreuter lifts 40mm GRENADE LAUNCHER, and FIRES out his window *KUNK! FWOOM!* The EXPLOSION obliterates the Prius.

KREUTER
Zero emissions my ass.

EXT. BED OF THE SILVERADO (PASSING THE WRECK) - SAME

Braden and Sean crouch, watching a column of black smoke rise up into the night. Braden salutes the Prius's pyre.

BRADEN
I don't care if your car was gay.
He died with his boots on.

SEAN
I think you're making progress.

EXT. SKYFOREST CALIFORNIA - LATER

The DESERT CONVOY now winding its way through the snow-covered San Bernardino Mountains, just outside of LA. The first vehicles in the convoy are being WAVED off the highway by more of Kreuter's **MERCs** with FLASHLIGHTS.

EXT. LYING IN THE BED OF THE SILVERADO - SAME

Braden and Sean are huddled together for warmth. Their faces chapped. It's been a cold fucking ride. Braden feels them SLOWING DOWN. He sits up, peeks around the cases to the MERCS waving the convoy on to a fire road.

BRADEN
Time to bail.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sean nods, reaches up and OPENS the TAILGATE and they ROLL out on to the slushy shoulder...

EXT. SKYFOREST CALIFORNIA - 52 MINUTES LATER

Braden and Sean stagger through a forest of centuries-old conifers, boughs heavy with snow. Neither dressed for the cold, breath pluming as they crunch through deep snow. They STOP dead in their tracks, just staring at--

BRADEN

Huh. Guess they must've driven us a lot further than I thought.

An eerie **SIGN POST** at the edge of the forest - A ten-foot CANDY CANE with a sign that reads **NORTH POLE** with ARROWS pointing to **SANTA'S WORKSHOP**. **PETTING ZOO**. **SANTA'S HOME**.

SEAN

I think I know where we are.

As they move quietly past the candy cane signpost, and enter a Rankin/Bass post-apocalyptic *nightmare*...

The ruins of **SANTA'S VILLAGE**, the dilapidated amusement park, just outside of LA. Closed back in 1998. GINGERBREAD MEN, zombified by age, guard lollipop fences. The boarded up CAVERNS COASTER - a poor man's Matterhorn.

SEAN (CONT'D)

We're up in Big Bear. This was Santa's Village, that old amusement park. You probably don't remember this, but you promised to take me here once.

BRADEN

I meant to, but then I went out for a pack of smokes and ditched you and your mom to start a new family with that stripper in Reno.

HALOGEN HEADLIGHTS carve the shadows around them and they DUCK behind a rusty ALPINE TRAIN as a patrol of **MERC'S** astride **SNOWMOBILES** rumble up to SCAN the area. All the mercs would have to do is lean over to see them. But they REV their engines, and continue patrol...

EXT. ALPINE TRAIN - SAME

Braden and Sean move stealthily along the train tracks, which lead to a kid-sized TRELLIS across a fifteen foot RAVINE. Braden and Sean step carefully over the creaking trellis. The village below looks like the staging area for a MILITARY OPERATION. Dozens of MERCENARIES in cold weather gear, on foot and on SNOWMOBILES.

The locus of all the activity seems to be the big Bavarian **CAROUSEL HOUSE** in the center of Santa's Village. Braden and Sean watch Mercs hauling over those **CASES** they just picked up in the desert, moving them out of their TRUCKS and placing them just inside the CAROUSEL HOUSE. The jagged sounds of INDUSTRIAL WORK coming from inside.

SEAN

We gotta call in for backup.

BRADEN

And how do you propose we do that?

SEAN

Hike back to the highway. Flag somebody down. Identify ourselves.

BRADEN

Would you pull over for us?

SEAN

I've got an honest face. Come on.

BRADEN

Not me. I've got a good spot here. Give me the camera. I'll reconnoiter while you call it in.

Sean doesn't like that. But there's nothing for it.

SEAN

Braden. Reconnoiter. Don't engage.

BRADEN

Scout's honor.

Sean hands Braden the CAMCORDER and heads back into the trees. Not long after he's out of sight, Braden SPOTS KREUTER in the village. Braden can't help himself. He creeps deeper into the village, ducking behind a truck. Braden grabs a CASE out of the truck, rests it on shoulder to shield his face he WALKS back through the village. Another worker bee lost in the flurry of activity, as he heads for--

EXT. CAROUSEL HOUSE - SAME

The carousel is long gone. GENERATORS. POWER TOOLS. SPARKS crackle from BLOWTORCHES as MEN in coveralls weld **LIGHT BARS** on to TEN **CROWN VICTORIA SEDANS**. Stenciling on **UNIT NUMBERS - TO PROTECT AND TO SERVE**. TEN perfect COPIES of **LAPD BLACK & WHITES**. Braden creeps closer to PEER around the other side, where he can see into **OPEN TRUNK** of the nearest black & white. It's PACKED with **C4**, enough to level a building. *They're making CAR BOMBS!*

BRADEN

Oh, Jesus.

Braden bends down, trying to look busy while he slips Sean's **CAMCORDER** under a **TOOL CART**, and hits **RECORD**. He sees Kreuter walking across the village square. Braden grabs an empty case and walks after him.

EXT. HIGHWAY 18 - NIGHT

Sean trying desperately to FLAG down PASSING CARS. HORMS. *Get out of the road, asshole!* He has his **BADGE** in his palm, gleaming in the passing headlights, but it doesn't mean much up here. Finally, an SUV pulls over to the shoulder in front of Sean, though not too far over, because up here there's nothing beyond the shoulder but a hundred foot drop-off.

DRIVER'S POV: Watching Sean shielding his eyes from the GLARE of OUR HEADLIGHTS, jogging around to OUR driver's side WINDOW as WE hit the button to ROLL IT DOWN...

SEAN

Thank you! This is a police emergency. I need you to--

Relief. A spark of recognition in Sean's eyes. The ghost of a smile, *what the hell are you doing up here?* The smile gone a split second later when the answer comes to him. Sean reaches for his **GLOCK**, knowing he's too late-

--BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! Rapid MUZZLE FLASHES light up the dark interior of the SUV as a three-round burst slams into **SEAN'S CHEST!** Three hundred foot pounds of energy BLOWING Sean BACKWARD off the drop-off behind him. It's like watching Braden fall off that fire escape...

I/E. SANTA'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

Kreuter walks into his makeshift command center in Santa's Home. Braden ducks inside right after Kreuter. He jams the muzzle of his SUPERMAG against Kreuter's spine.

BRADEN

Boy, Santa's gonna be pissed when he finds out you're using his house to stage a terrorist attack, or whatever the fuck this is.

Kreuter smiles, genuinely impressed.

BRADEN (CONT'D)

I was in the neighborhood.

That's when **WADE DONIGER** materializes from the shadows behind Braden, his old **.357** pointed at Braden's head!

DONIGER

Drop it, Sam.

Braden HEARS the HAMMER CLICK behind him, hears **DONIGER'S VOICE**. And he's trying to get his mind around it, something ugly and protean and twenty-seven years old.

DONIGER (CONT'D)

I'm not gonna ask you again.

Reluctantly, Braden hands his PISTOL to Kreuter. Kreuter tucks Braden's SUPERMAG into his waistband.

BRADEN

You shit-stinking son of a bitch.

Doniger SMASHES the BUTT of his PISTOL into the base of Braden's skull. **LIGHTS OUT...**

I/E. CAROUSEL HOUSE - MINUTES LATER

The world beginning to swim back to Braden now as one of the mercs tightens a KNOT around his WRISTS and TOSSES it up over one of the RAFTERS, the other end tied to the tow hitch of a SNOWMOBILE REVVING forward, PULLING Braden UP off his feet, DANGLING by his wrists from the beam.

DONIGER

It really was a miracle, you coming back. It was a gift. And you fucking squandered it. All you had to do was nothing, Sam.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DONIGER (CONT'D)

Collect your disability pension.
 Spend time with your family. But
 the job always did come first with
 you, didn't it? You'd stayed home
 that night Gonzo would still be
 alive and Sean wouldn't have had
 to grow up without his father.

BRADEN

You killed Gonzo.

DONIGER

Your profligate ego killed him.
 And now you've killed your boy.
 (Braden's face)
 Had to shoot him, Sam. I'm sorry.

Braden ROARS. His entire body bucks and twists on the rope, the rage running through him like electricity, until his chin slumps to his chest, eyes closed...

DONIGER (CONT'D)

You brought Sean into this. Not
 me! I always tried to look out for
 the kid after you were gone. He
 was fine until you showed up.

Braden raises his face to Doniger's. Eyes ablaze.

BRADEN

I'm gonna kill you, Wade. You saw
 your last sunrise this morning. If
 there's a life after this one, and
 brother you better fucking pray
 there isn't, tonight you're gonna
 find out all about it.

EXT. HIGHWAY 18 - SAME

A trembling HAND, reddened by cold, fingernails bloody from the climb, CLAWS the sharp rock face, searching for a decent hold. SEAN struggles, and finally PULLS himself up over the outcropping and rolls on to the shoulder, chest heaving. His shirt is torn and we can see the BULLETS flattened on his KEVLAR VEST like flanged coins.

A DIESEL ENGINE. AIR BRAKES. Across the highway, Sean SEES a SEMI towing an empty CAR CARRIER up to the entrance to SANTA'S VILLAGE. Two MERCS pull open the gate and approach the truck, their WEAPONS covering the cab while they verify the DRIVER's identity...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Now, Sean ROLLS out from under the CAR CARRIER and dashes for the nearest structure...

INT. CAROUSEL HOUSE - SAME

Braden hangs by his wrists, helpless, as the MERCS perform their final inspections of the CAR BOMBS before closing the TRUNKS. Kreuter produces a MAS Zengrange **BIRIS** (Battlefield Inoculation Remote Initiation System) in shock-proof, air-tight housing. Braden watches...

KREUTER

System consists of one transmitter ten receiver units, one for each car. Power up the system...

He powers up the system and the LED lights in the clear paddles on two rows of **TOGGLE SWITCHES** all turn BLUE. Kreuter flips each switch, BLUE to FLASHING RED, arming them. Each trigger protected by a hinged Lexan cover.

KREUTER (CONT'D)

Left to right arms each unit. Triggers command detonate each device via UHF digital signal.

Kreuter closes the case and slides it to Doniger. That's when Braden notices the **MERC** in the PARKA, WOOL CAP and GOGGLES walking into the CAROUSEL HOUSE, edging between the black and whites. Something about him... **It's SEAN!** His boy's ALIVE! Braden remembers the **CAMCORDER**, steals a quick glance at it. The RED **RECORD** LIGHT is ON!

BRADEN

(to Doniger)

Your pet rock. You never sold your company. You just shuffled the pieces around, reincorporated under a new name. Kreuter's the CEO, but he's working for you.

DONIGER

Sentinel Security was smaller back then. Handful of off-duty cops watching car dealerships. Nightclubs.

BRADEN

Fronts. Where Garza laundered money, stored dope and guns. That's why you dropped a dime on us. You were working for Garza.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DONIGER

I was until you killed him. That's when things got interesting. You know, nature abhors a vacuum.

One by one, MERCS climb into the BLACK & WHITES and START their ignitions. Now, the BLACK & WHITE car bombs are all being slowly BACKED OUT of the Carousel House...

DONIGER (CONT'D)

They were going to get it anyway, Sam. They always do. I've learned that much in thirty years. That market forces are just stronger than we are. The law has limits. But there's no limit to their appetite for what they can't have. The Market wins. Every time.

Doniger watches the mercs driving the BLACK & WHITES up on to the FRAME of the CAR CARRIER behind the TRUCK.

DONIGER (CONT'D)

Whole landscape changed after 9/11. New frontiers opened up in Iraq, Afghanistan. Turns out our brave men and women in uniform have a healthy appetite for it.

BRADEN

But why the bombs?

DONIGER

Think of it as a hostile takeover, of the LAPD.

As each BLACK & WHITE rolls on to the CAR CARRIER.

DONIGER (CONT'D)

(the first car)
Kill their communications.
Metropolitan Dispatch Center.
(the second car)
Blind them. Air Support Division.
(the third car)
And then take out their command and control.

BRADEN

Headquarters...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DONIGER

The rest are mostly freeways,
sever the city's main arteries.

One after another. Ten Black & Whites in all. Braden
watching the mercs STRAP the vehicles to the CAR CARRIER.

BRADEN

You're gonna murder a whole city.

DONIGER

Not quite. But I'm sure going to
kick the shit out of it. When the
Department tries to regroup after
the bombings, they're gonna find
themselves under attack from all
sides by gangsters armed with
military ordinance. Anarchy's a
polite word for what you're gonna
have out there.

Braden sees it now...

BRADEN

Until Sentinel Security comes to
the rescue. Contract negotiations
with the city probably go a lot
smoother when it's on fire. But
you're fucking nuts if you think
you'll be able to take it back.

DONIGER

Not overnight. Not without months
of martial law. Years of tactical
support. But that's the whole
point of a government contract, to
extend it. I'm about to close the
largest no-bid contract of my
career. Biggest financial coup
since Hurricane Katrina.

Braden watches Kreuter's men wheel over a dolly with
oxygen and acetylene cannisters on it.

DONIGER (CONT'D)

I'm going to save lives in the
long run. Put an end to our gang
problem. No more needless
bloodshed. The cartels will deal
with me directly. Because I'll
control the biggest gang in the
city: The new and improved Los
Angeles Police Department.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Outside, Braden can see the CAR CARRIER, loaded with black & white CAR BOMBS, pulling out on to HIGHWAY 18.

DONIGER (CONT'D)

Now, I know you didn't find this place by accident. Have to assume you walked in here already knowing more than I'm comfortable with.

Kreuter dons WELDING GLOVES, turns on the GAS and LIGHTS the oxyacetylene **BLOWTORCH**. Moves the blowtorch FLAME closer. Heat causes the hairs on Braden's arms to curl and blacken and disintegrate. Sean edges up behind.

DONIGER (CONT'D)

I need to know who else you told.

The FLAME closer to Braden's skin. It begins to redden...

BRADEN

ANY TIME NOW, KID!

SEAN YANKS Braden's SUPERMAG from Kreuter's waistband - Huh? - and steps back to cover Kreuter and Doniger.

SEAN

(to Doniger)

You're always trying to get me to wear my vest, Wade.

(to Kreuter)

Cut him down, asshole.

Kreuter uses the blowtorch to BURN through Braden's rope. Braden lands on his feet and Sean TOSSES Braden his SUPERMAG, but the moment he does Kreuter OPENS the FLOW on the TORCH, shooting a blinding two-foot FLAME. And Doniger and Kreuter GONE with the **BIRIS DETONATOR**.

BRADEN

Son of a bitch!

SEAN

WATCH IT!

Sean SHOVES Braden out of the line of fire just as a MERC pulls the trigger **FWAP! FWAP! FWAP!** Snow SPOUTING from the ground all around them as Sean ROLLS, raises his M4 to return FIRE! **BRACK! BRACK! BRACK!** Sean stuffs the **CAMCORDER** in his parka, pulling him out the BACK toward the TOBOGGAN RUN. Braden RAISES his SUPERMAG, puts the RED DOT on the acetylene cannister and **FIRE**s. **KA-BOOM!** Jumping on to the toboggan run as the Carousel House is SWALLOWED by a BALL of FLAME that lights up the night.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

FWAP! FWAP! Bullets KICKING up snow all around Braden and Sean as they SLIDE down the toboggan run INTO the back of SANTA'S WORKSHOP. Mercs FIRING as they pursue them.

I/E. SANTA'S WORKSHOP - CONTINUOUS

FWAP! FWAP! FWAP! Bullets PUNCHING HOLES through the workshop, exploding long dormant animatronic elves as Braden and Sean RUN across the toy assembly line to DIVE out through the STORE WINDOW--

EXT. SANTA'S VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS

Braden and Sean in a RUNNING GUN BATTLE through the village. Three MERCS come around the corner single-file, like a SWAT team. Braden puts his RED DOT on the LEADER and **BOOM!** FIRES a SINGLE ROUND **FWIP! FWIP! FWIP!** through ALL THREE MEN and for a split second the BEAM of his laser SHINES unobstructed through the entry and exit wounds in all three men before they FLOP in the snow.

VROOM! A MERC FIRING from the saddle of the **SNOWMOBILE**. Sean ROLLS and **BRACK! BRACK!** BLASTS the merc right out of the saddle. The snowmobile coasts forward and Sean climbs on, grabbing the handlebars. Braden jumps on behind him.

BRADEN

Go! GO!

Sean OPENS the THROTTLE and the SNOWMOBILE tears right down Santa Claus Lane. **FWAP! FWAP! FWAP!** Mercs FIRING at them from pursuing snowmobiles and MORE rushing into the intersection up ahead to cut them off, Sean forced to make a hard LEFT across the CANDY CANE GROVE, slaloming through big candy canes with mercs in close pursuit.

Braden sees snowmobiles paralleling them on both sides as they near the end of the Candy Cane Grove. They're going to be boxed in. Nothing in FRONT but the artificial cliff face of the BOBSLED CAVERNS COASTER. The ENTRANCE covered with sheets of PLYBOARD, spray-painted KEEP OUT.

SEAN

Hold on!

And Sean STEERS straight for the ENTRANCE to the BOBSLED CAVERNS. He EMPTIES his M4 into the PLYBOARD, all but obliterating it before they **SMASH** THROUGH into--

I/E. BOBSLED CAVERNS COASTER - CONTINUOUS

Snowmobile HEADLIGHT illuminating caverns of fiberglass and cement as Sean drives the SNOWMOBILE on the **COASTER TRACK** down a series of ice tunnels, over dips and curves, under huge fiberglass icicles, past an ANIMATRONIC YETI. Sean can't help himself, he's loving this! *WHOOOO!*

BRADEN

Better late than never.

FWAP! FWAP! FWAP! Bullets SHATTER fiberglass icicles around them. Another snowmobile pursuing them down the track. A circle of starlight ahead. Sean accelerates.

Coming OUT of the caverns, the TRACKS curve steeply over a drop off. But Sean heads straight ahead, airborne off the tracks, landing HARD on the slope below. The other snowmobile LANDING right behind them, FIRING--

Bullets KICKING up chunks of asphalt around them as SEAN GUNS the SNOWMOBILE across **HIGHWAY 18** and down the slope toward the Lake. The pursuing snowmobile a second behind when it crosses the highway AND IS WIPED OFF THE FACE OFF **THE EARTH**, OBLITERATED by a PASSING **TOUR BUS**!

EXT. TREES OVERLOOKING THE HIGHWAY - SAME

Doniger, Kreuter and Janeway standing at the treeline, watching Braden and Sean getting away. What's worse, they're HEADING towards the CAR CARRIER of black & whites. The truck is miles ahead of them, but...

DONIGER

You better fucking handle this.

KREUTER

(to Janeway)

Wake him up.

EXT. BIG BEAR LAKE (MARINA) - NIGHT

Looking straight across the FROZEN LAKE, Braden and Sean can see the SEMI rolling down the HIGHWAY 18. The lake is only a mile wide, but seven miles long.

EXT. ACROSS BIG BEAR LAKE AT 75 MPH - MOMENTS LATER

Braden and Sean's snowmobile *SKIMMING* across the frozen surface of the lake at 75 mph, taking an angle to intercept the **CAR CARRIER** on the opposite bank. Another few seconds and Highway 18 will take the **SEMI** away from the lake. They can see the pier of **BIG BEAR YACHT CLUB** up ahead, Sean steers them toward the **BOAT LAUNCH**. When--

--Buzzing ROTOR BLADES blast the frost off the ice in front of them as **GABRIEL** swoops down to **HOVER** low over the frozen lake between the snowmobile and the shore.

SEAN

Shit!

Sean swerves, skids as the drone's MINIGUN *WHIRS*. **BRRRR!** Bullets **PERFORATE** the **ICE** in front of them. The jagged, **BROKEN ICE** just **FOLDS UP** all around them--

--And then all sound is instantly **MUTED** and they're riding the **GURGLING** snowmobile to the **BOTTOM** of the **LAKE**. The cold like poison as they kick toward the surface, but when they look up they can still see **GABRIEL HOVERING** over the break in the ice, so they head for the pier, clothes turning to wet cement in the gelid water.

Braden reaches the **SHADOW** of the **PIER** and **HAMMERS** the ice with the handle of his **SUPERMAG**. When that doesn't work he **SHOOTS UP**. **FWOOM! FWOOM! FWOOM!** SHATTERING it, allowing Braden and Sean to **PUNCH** through, **GASPING**, **COUGHING**. Hypothermia texts to say he'll just be a minute. But they **DUCK BACK UNDER** as **GABRIEL** makes another **SWEEP** before heading skyward, toward the mountains...

INT. BIG BEAR YACHT CLUB - MINUTES LATER

The Yacht Club's Annual Christmas Party. A **BAND** playing *Rockin' Around The Christmas Tree*. Champagne. Honking laughter. Sloppy dancing. Groping. Suddenly the music **STOPS** as **BRADEN** and **SEAN** STAGGER in, soaked and convulsing, steam rising from their clothes. Forty **MILFS** and **COUGARS** and plastic surgery **CASUALTIES** and **FINANCIAL PLANNERS** on their second families turn around to **STARE**.

SEAN

(shivering)

Police... Emergency.

I/E. DONIGER'S SUV (MOVING) - NIGHT

Doniger heading back down to Los Angeles. The lights of the city below, a circuit board stretching to the ocean. Lots to do yet. His CELL PHONE chirps. He answers.

DONIGER

Doniger... Where? You and Rathborne get your asses over there before the sheriffs do. Get that camera if they still have it. Then do them both. Hear me?

INT. BIG BEAR YACHT CLUB - MOMENTS LATER

Braden and Sean letting the fire warm them, steaming rising from their clothes. An attractive WOMAN stumbles over to mash her breasts against Braden while she PLANTS an open-mouth KISS on him, leaving a smear of lipstick.

SEAN

(into phone)
Last seen southbound Highway 18.
You need to notify Sheriffs and CHP. Yes, I'll fucking hold!

Sean digs the CAMCORDER out of his parka.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Fried. But I think the memory card might still be okay. We gotta be careful. We don't know who else is in with him. Doniger's a DEPUTY CHIEF. He asks for it any cop's gonna hand it over to him.

Sean slips it into his pocket just as--

RATHBORNE (O.S.)
POLICE! HANDS IN THE AIR! DO IT!

RATHBORNE and TEAGUE are charging across the room, with their GUNS on Braden and Sean, barking commands. Braden and Sean on their feet and point their guns back at Rathborne and Teague. A Mexican standoff. The music stops. Party guests scatter to the corners of the room.

SEAN

FUCK YOU, RATHBORNE! YOU'RE BOTH UNDER ARREST! DROP YOUR WEAPONS!

TEAGUE

WE'RE NOT FUCKING AROUND HERE, SEAN! DROP YOUR GUNS!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Braden puts a **RED DOT** on Rathborne's forehead.

BRADEN

Listen to me. I don't know how you wound up on the wrong side of this, but it ain't too late to come back. Don't die for Doniger.

But it's TEAGUE who makes a play, spinning to **FIRE** at Braden. SEAN **BLASTS** Teague before he can get a shot off. Rathborne turns to shoot Sean, but Braden **BLOWS** Rathborne out of his socks! *Crisscross*. Each man **SAVING** the OTHER!

SIRENS outside. People screaming. Sheriff's DEPUTIES charging in, responding to the 911. DEPUTIES see Braden and Sean standing over two **DEAD COPS**, with smoking guns.

They know better than to wait for an order to drop their weapons. They let their pistols fall and assume the position, fingers laced behind their heads. DEPUTIES pointing guns at them. All of them looking for a reason.

DEPUTY

Down on your fucking knees! Now!

They're both SLAMMED facedown on the carpet, side by side, arms TWISTED behind them. The familiar rattle of handcuffs biting deep. Braden turns to his son...

BRADEN

I think we may be fucked here.

SEAN

You think?

EXT. ALL OVER LOS ANGELES (VARIOUS LANDMARKS) - NOW

Tumorous black thunderheads rolling in. LIGHTNING. The first rain drops spatter the concrete river bed...

EXT. LAPD HEADQUARTERS - 56 MINUTES LATER

Slashing El Niño RAIN pounds LA with extreme prejudice. A dozen **NEWS VANS** in front of LAPD HEADQUARTERS. REPORTERS under umbrellas, talking into CAMERAS and LIGHTS.

LILIAN ENRIQUEZ (FOX 11)

Tonight, as what may be the storm of the decade pounds the city Los Angeles, the scandal of the decade has rocked the LAPD...

INT. SEAN AND LAURIE'S HOUSE (LIVING ROOM) - NIGHT

Laurie BOLTING off the couch in front of the TELEVISION, fumbling for the remote, turning up the SOUND...

LILIAN ENRIQUEZ (ON TV)
 ...Two decorated officers lie dead
 and the LAPD has arrested two of
 its own - a father and son - for
 the crime of murder...

Her hand clapped over her mouth. On the television in are BOOKING PHOTOS of **SEAN** and **BRADEN**. She grabs her phone.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM B - NIGHT

Burly UNIFORMS roughly hauling Sean into INTERROGATION ROOM B. Sean glances up, calculates the angle of the surveillance camera overhead. *It has to be now...*

SEAN
 Hey. Memorandum of Understanding
 says I'm entitled to have a league
 rep present, and a lawyer. I want
 my phone call.

COP
 Who gives a fuck what you want?

Sean manages to TWIST away from the cop on his left and SWING his ELBOW into the other's TEMPLE, knocking him against the wall. Sean BACK-KICKS the other cop's solar plexus. Sean REACHES down for his CUFF KEY, yanking it from his belt. But he deliberately FUMBLES the cuff key, dropping it under the table. Pretending to REACH for it, his hands briefly DISAPPEARING UNDER THE TABLE. Sean slips the **MEMORY STICK** out of his SLEEVE and PRESSES it into the grimy medallion of CHEWING GUM on the underside of the table as the other UNIFORMS are flooding in to WRESTLE Sean to the floor, savagely KICKING him.

INT. OBSERVATION (OUTSIDE INTERROGATION ROOM A) - NIGHT

Braden THROUGH A TWO-WAY MIRROR. No shoelaces. No belt. Handcuffs. He's used to the other side of the table.

DONIGER (O.S.)
 They've only been arrested. They
 haven't been convicted. No, of
 course I don't. Not for a second.

CONTINUED:

PULLING BACK to REVEAL: DONIGER looking in at Braden as he talks to Laurie on his cell, trying to reassure her.

DONIGER (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)

No. The roads are crazy and you won't be able to see them anyway.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM A - SAME

DONIGER enters. Braden doesn't move. Only his eyes, tracking Doniger as he sits down across from him.

BRADEN

Guess you haven't had a chance to get that bullet analyzed for me?

DONIGER

What bullet would that be?

BRADEN

The one from the baseball bat. Because that's the one I gave you, asshole. I still have the one I pulled out of the telephone pole.

Doniger smiles. Nice try.

DONIGER

No, you don't. But I understand the memory card's still missing. Better for everyone, *safer*, especially for Laurie and Sam, if we could recover that tonight.

(smiling)

I was gonna blame the bombings on the Cartels. They bomb cop shops in Meh-heek-o all the live long day. But when the smoke clears the world's still gonna want a mug shot. And I'll be able to give 'em yours. You and Sean just killed two decorated cops in front of fifty people. They'll believe anything I tell them about you.

Doniger stands to leave.

BRADEN

You're making the same mistake you made twenty seven years ago.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DONIGER
Yeah? What's that?

BRADEN
You didn't kill me.

DONIGER
Oh, didn't I?

INT. CORRIDOR (MENS CENTRAL JAIL) - LATER

BRADEN and **SEAN** shuffle down a grim corridor. ORANGE JUMPSUITS designate them **K 8** [Special Segregation]: child molesters, snitches, **COPS**. A cacophony of CURSES, THREATS as (4) **DEPUTIES** escort them past caged INMATES. RIOT SHIELDS deflect FLAMING GARBAGE and God knows what else.

INT. WATCH COMMANDER'S OFFICE (MENS CENTRAL JAIL) - NIGHT

Behind the watch commander's desk sits **CUSTODY SENIOR DEPUTY WILL RICHTER**. Hard as the hull of a nuclear sub. Richter the PHONE with Deputy Chief Doniger, listening...

DONIGER (OVER PHONE)
**We're all in shock over here. We
got 'em dead bang on murder one
with special circumstances.**

INT. DONIGER'S OFFICE - SAME

Doniger sighs theatrically, drinks whiskey. Out his WINDOW, Men's Central looms through a haze of rain.

DONIGER
**'Course the DA wants to march 'em
to the Death House himself. And
when I think of what a trial would
do to this department. The city...**

RICHTER (OVER PHONE)
We take care of our own here, sir.

INT. CELL (PROTECTIVE SEGREGATION UNIT) - MINUTES LATER

Sean paces the cramped cell he and Braden now share.

CONTINUED:

SEAN

Doniger's not going to risk detonating those bombs, not until he has that memory stick.

BRADEN

Or until he knows we're dead, which isn't gonna be long now.

SEAN

We're okay as long as we're in protective segregation. The other inmates can't get to us here.

BRADEN

We're cop killers, Sean. It's not the inmates I'm worried about. Listen, Sean, if we don't...

Their DOOR clacks OPEN. BIG DEPUTIES swarm into the cell, SLAM Braden and Sean up against the wall.

RICHTER

You murdered brother officers.

BRADEN

That's fucking bullshit.

Richter drives a STUN GUN into Braden's kidney. ZAP! 50,000 volts crackling through his body. Arrgh! Sean wheels on Richter, but another deputy ZAPS him.

RICHTER

Sorry. Cases like yours? Just too important to settle in a fucking courtroom. Too many variables. So we handle 'em in house. But I never had to do this to another cop. And that presents me with kind of a legal quandary. From a sentencing standpoint, I mean. Think I found a solution.

INT. DONIGER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Doniger sits at his desk, fingers steepled, staring out at the rain. Kreuter sits across the room, waiting...

DONIGER

She's on her way here with the kid.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DONIGER (CONT'D)

And then we'll know one way or the other. Tell them to start moving the cars into position.

KREUTER

Roger that.

INT. MAIN TIER (AFTER LIGHTS OUT) - MINUTES LATER

A BUZZER sounds. A STEEL DOOR swings open and the deputies SHOVE Braden and Sean out on to the **MAIN TIER** of the '**3000 FLOOR**' reserved for the county's most dangerous inmates, locked up in their CELLS. For now. Eerie quiet.

RICHTER

Normally, we'd just hang you from the bars of your cell with a bedsheet. But in light of your years of service to the city, figure I owed you better than that. I'm going to give you what the Maasai call a *lion's chance*.

BRADEN

What's a lion's chance?

RICHTER

Well, I'm about to open up those cells, let those things out of their cages. Odds are they're going to tear you both apart. But you still have the option of kicking all their asses and walking out of here.

Richter slides Braden his Monadnock **SIDE-HANDLE BATON** Aircraft-grade aluminum. This isn't some spasm of magnanimity. He just wants to see a good fight.

BRADEN

Lucky us.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A crow's nest overlooking the MAIN TIER, giving RICHTER a bird's eye of the whole floor. Takes hold of the MICROPHONE, pulls a COWBELL from a drawer and SHAKES it in front of the mike. **CLANG! CLANG!** over the PA SYSTEM.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CELLS: All over the tier, INMATES on their feet. Swinging their arms, cracking their necks, loosening up. Like Moreau's animals, they know what that sound means: flesh.

RICHTER (INTO MICROPHONE)

Gentlemen. We've got a special treat for you this Christmas Eve. As some of you are no doubt aware, tonight we are hosting two of LA's Finest. The Bradens. And they're all yours. Merry Christmas.

And a collective HOWL goes up from every cell. CRIPS, BLOODS, HOOVERS, KOREAN KILLERS, BIKERS, ARYAN BROTHERS crowding against the doors to their cells. Braden and Sean HEAR four hundred fists POUNDING the doors.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - SAME

Richter at the MASTER PANEL with a TOUCH-SCREEN FLOOR PLAN, ICONS to LOCK/UNLOCK each cell. Like Liberace, Richter playfully taps the **UNLOCK ICON** on **EVERY CELL...**

INT. MAIN TIER - SAME

The rapid-fire **CLACK! CLACK! CLACK! CLACK!** of MAGNETIC DEAD BOLTS parting all around them. Heavy cell doors SWING open. INMATES pouring out. LEAPING down off the railing to LAND like panthers. They're surrounded. Two ORANGE jumpsuits in a ocean of BLUE ones.

BRADEN

I'm sorry I brought you into this.

With inmates closing in, Sean turns to Braden and smiles.

SEAN

I'm not.

And we watch as something breaks open behind Sean's eyes. Whatever's been trapped down there all this time now surges up to the surface, molten and scalding. Years of pent up rage suddenly freed by the proximity of death.

Inmates stop in their tracks, like they've hit a force field. Because there is no fear in Braden's eyes. Sean's either. Just the promise of pain and death for the first man to come for them. The first and maybe a few more after that. Hey, we'll see where the night takes us.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Braden smiles, gripping his baton. No one moves for a moment. Then, like the crowd of Arabs parting for that Cairo Swordsman in *Raiders*, they clear a path for **VIK**, the guy Braden dangled off the freeway. He grips a SHANK.

VIK

I'm gonna cut open your chest and take a shit in your fuckin lungs.

BRADEN

Is lung-crappling a thing now? Like a Colombian necktie or something?

SEAN

I think he just made it up.

BRADEN

Pretty creative.

Vik LUNGES. The millisecond Vik comes within range, Sean DRIVES a half-fist into Vik's THROAT. Vik goes down gagging. The tense, crackling silence broken by a few scattered GIGGLES, inmates trying to hold it together. But laughter spreads among them and builds until the tier thunders with ROARING LAUGHTER. Braden stares at Sean...

BRADEN (CONT'D)

You been holding out on me kid.

SEAN

Fifteen years of Muay Thai and Jiu Jitsu. I said I didn't like to fight. I never said I didn't know how. You ready for this, old man?

BRADEN

You kiddin'? I live for this shit.

Braden spins, SWINGS the BATON, shattering THREE FACES, like smashing ceramic piggy banks off a shelf. Braden LEAPS over them, wades straight into the INMATES like a samurai with rabies. He spent years swinging a baton on the street and brings every bit of that knowledge to bear. Inmates BLOWN backward as if from a shotgun blast. Snapping ulna. Smashing kneecaps. Ribs snap like wicker. Inmates collapsing, gasping, gurgling moans.

Sean fights like a man possessed. Everything he has, every atom of pent up rage, flowing into the ugliest *kata* you've ever seen. Father and son fighting back to back, like Alan Ladd and Van Heflin in *Shane*, flickering among the mob like two orange flames.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

They're fighting damn near two hundred men, but as the inmates crowd in, their numbers actually work against them. Because no more than five or six can come at them at once. And the men shoving in from behind, push row after row right into the path of Sean's bloodthirsty fists and Braden's swinging baton.

INT. CONTROL ROOM (RICHTER LOOKING DOWN ON THE BATTLE)

Richter and the other deputy watch Sean and Braden dodge, strike, and move, going for position, trying to put their backs to the wall. The inmates instinctively wheeling to cut them off, men practiced in mass predation.

DEPUTY

They're not making this easy, I'll give 'em that.

They're actually holding their own, after a full minute. A lifetime in a street fight. But adrenaline will only take a man so far and they can't keep this up much longer. Inmates close in like a collapsing star.

RICHTER

Gettin' tired. Won't be long now.

INT. MAIN TIER - SAME

The inmates have found their rhythm now - slash and retreat - wear them down. Hissing shanks LASH Sean's back and shoulders. Braden sucking wind, lurching drunkenly, swinging wild, trying to hold them off. Sweat making it hard to grip his baton. Braden looks like he's about to pass out when **SMILEY** (from the liquor store) comes at him. A young BLACK GANGSTER attacks Sean. And that's when a *Christmas Miracle* occurs. The BLACK GANGSTER lunges at Sean, aiming for his throat. But Sean *dodges* the flashing shank by inches and the BLADE meant for him instead finds the throat of SMILEY, behind Braden! The SHANK buried to its masking tape hilt in the SMILEY'S NECK! *Via Con Dios.*

BLACK GANGSTER

Oh, shit...

Everything comes to a screeching halt. A spell broken. Somnambulists awakened. Angry murmurs. Growling curses.

SEAN

Now you've done it.

CONTINUED:

The black kid stares in horror as the Mexican gangster crumples and dies. He turns to the others as if to explain, but two more MEXICAN GANGSTERS are already on him, stabbing and stomping. BLACK GANGSTERS come to his aid. And the fighting now SPREADS like a Rube Goldberg zombie outbreak. Everywhere INMATES turn on EACH OTHER. Gang rivalries, street vendettas, homicidal grudges blazing back to life as Braden and Sean put their backs to the wall for support as much as protection.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - SAME

Richter is now staring down at a full-blown jail riot, a boy who played with matches and set his house on fire.

DEPUTY
This is bad, Richter.

Richter POUNDS his fist on the ALARM BUTTON. KLAXONS fill the facility. SIREN LIGHTS pulsing everywhere.

INT. MAIN TIER - 93 SECONDS LATER

The riot still raging when as TEAR GAS GRENADES land in their midst. The inmates reel and scatter. The gas spreads like pouring gray paint into a glass of water.

RICHTER and two dozen DEPUTIES charge on to the tier in BODY ARMOR. HELMETS and FOGGIN GAS MASKS. BATONS. X-REP SHOTGUNS. Advancing behind RIOT SHIELDS.

Suddenly, a WAR CRY goes up and INMATES charge the deputies from every side. Little Big Horn in a box canyon of cement and steel, hurling themselves against the deputies' riot shields, trying to wrench them away. Deputies answer with X-REP SHOTGUNS, firing wireless TASER DARTS, 950,000 volts, inmates buckling, convulsing.

In the chaos and confusion, Richter sees **TWO BODIES** in torn **ORANGE JUMPSUITS** facedown among the BODIES in BLUE. Richter grips the shoulder of the deputy from the control room. Richter nudges Braden's body with his boot. No movement. The deputy kicks Sean's body over on to its back. But the man in the orange jumpsuit is not Sean! Richter flips over the other man. It's not Braden!

Two bodies in blue jumpsuits now LEAP to their feet. Braden and Sean playing possum. Braden TACKLES Richter, tears off his gas mask and POUNDS him unconscious.

CONTINUED:

Sean snakes his right arm around the other deputy's throat, in a *mata leon* CHOKE HOLD until his eyes roll and he blacks out. They drag both deputies into an open cell.

INT. CHECKPOINT - TWO MINUTES LATER

The young DEPUTY manning the checkpoint sees two DEPUTIES coming down the corridor toward his GATE. One has his arm draped over the other for support. The deputy might not recognize them, but we do. It's BRADEN and SEAN wearing stolen uniforms, body armor, gas masks and helmets.

SEAN

Open the gate! NOW, God damn it!
He'll bleed out we don't get him
to the infirmary.

The deputy OPENS the GATE and rushes to help his comrade. Kid never sees the PUNCH that knocks him to the floor.

INT. FROM THE CHECKPOINT INTO JAIL ADMINISTRATION - NOW

Sean and Braden walk out into the crowded deputies' BULLPEN, a maze of cubicles and work stations, buzzing with DEPUTIES. Trying to look casual in full tac gear, gas masks. The deputies too busy to take notice of them. Pulsing, adrenalized breath FOGGING their masks. It's like crossing a schoolyard full of Hitchcock's *Birds*.

A DEPUTY on the phone gives them a funny look as they pass. Braden gives him a curt nod. The deputy puts down the phone, walking after them. But before he can ask what the fuck they're doing in here, Sean raises his RIOT GUN and FIRES a GAS GRENADE. **KUNK!** Striking the DEPUTY's chest, knocking him into the wall of his cubicle. Sean FIRING gas GRENADES across the bullpen. **KUNK! KUNK! KUNK!**

Gas hisses out of the grenades, spreading quickly. Sean and Braden running through the rising CLOUDS of TEAR GAS. DEPUTIES choking, staggering from their cubicles, raising their WEAPONS as Sean and Braden run past, but stinging, water-filled eyes make it impossible to shoot without hitting each other. A DEPUTY lurches into Braden's path, raising his Glock, but Braden twists the GLOCK out of his hand as he flips him to the floor. They keep running--

EXT. MEN'S CENTRAL (WALLED COURTYARD) - CONTINUOUS

--Out through the HEAVY STEEL DOUBLE DOORS into the WALLED INTAKE COURTYARD where several DEPUTIES with SHOTGUNS are leading a dozen chained-together ARRESTEES off a JAIL TRANSPORT BUS to be processed.

BRADEN

Whole goddamned facility is overrun!

The young deputies trade panicked looks.

SEAN

Secure these doors. We have to hold them here!

The DEPUTIES scrambling to HANDCUFF the HANDLES of the doors TOGETHER just as the DEPUTIES that were pursuing them begin SHOVING against the doors from the inside. The deputies outside busy holding them shut while Sean and Braden climb into the **JAIL TRANSPORT BUS**.

I/E. JAIL TRANSPORT BUS - CONTINUOUS

Braden LEVERS the DOORS shut and STUMBLES sideways as Sean POPS the CLUTCH too quickly and the BUS LURCHES forward, STUTTERS and STALLS--

SEAN

Come on...

--Now the DEPUTIES know something's wrong, swarming the bus. *OUT OF THE VEHICLE!* Sean wrestling the SHIFTER, GEARS GRINDING. The deputies OPEN FIRE: **BOOM! BOOM!** The barred windows IMplode around them, peppering them with broken glass and buckshot. Braden and Sean hunching low, under the gunfire.

BRADEN

Maybe we should ask them for a push.

SEAN

You ask them!

Braden FIRES back over the deputies' heads **BAM! BAM!** SEAN finally slots the shifter into GEAR. Sean FLOORS IT across the courtyard, *SMASHING OUT THROUGH THE MAIN GATE--*

CONTINUED:

--FISHTAILING across the wet asphalt. BASHING into a row of parked cars before Sean gets the bus heading west on Bauchet, away from the jail...

DEPUTIES running for their INTERCEPTORS, peeling into ROCKFORD TURNS to ROAR in PURSUIT of their stolen bus.

DEPUTY (OVER RADIO)	RTO (OVER RADIO)
<i>AS-16 in pursuit of a 10-29</i>	<i>AS-16 confirm stolen</i>
<i>VEHICLE West Bauchet toward</i>	<i>vehicle is a PRISONER</i>
<i>Vignes. Vehicle is a COUNTY</i>	<i>TRANSPORT BUS?</i>
<i>PRISONER TRANSPORT BUS--</i>	

Sean CRANKS the WHEEL and the lumbering bus LURCHES south on VIGNES STREET, heading for CESAR CHAVEZ AVENUE. Braden looks back at the Sheriff's INTERCEPTORS roaring right up their ass. No chance of losing them in this pig. Up ahead, Sean sees more INTERCEPTORS screeching in to block their path. They're boxed in. Gonna be a short trip.

SEAN (CONT'D)
I'm open to suggestions...

Braden narrows his eyes, focused at the street ahead...

EXT. CESAR CHAVEZ AVENUE - NOW

The bus comes to an abrupt STOP right in the middle of Cesar Chavez, quickly surrounded. Deputies using their cars for cover, taking up shooting positions.

DEPUTY (OVER RADIO)
*Advise units the vehicle is now
stationary on Cesar Chavez, just
west of Avila. No movement inside.*

I/E. JAIL TRANSPORT BUS - 6 MINUTES LATER

A platoon of LASD SPECIAL ENFORCEMENT BUREAU (their SWAT) tactically approaching the bus in body armor, ballistic helmets, goggles, AR-15s at low-ready. TOSSING **FLASH-BANG GRENADES** in through the BROKEN WINDOWS of the BUS--

--The GRENADES landing in the center aisle and **BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!** Overlapping BLASTS. SEB TEAM storms into the smoke filled bus, searching for...

SEB TEAM LEADER
Son of a bitch!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

His BOOTS right at the edge of the EMPTY SQUARE in the floor of the aisle where the emergency ACCESS PANEL has been removed. And in the street below THAT, we see a STEEL MANHOLE COVER hanging askew, still WOBBLING...

EXT. LAPD AIR SUPPORT DIVISION - NIGHT

LAPD PILOTS jogging to their birds on the heliport on the roof of the PIPER TECHNOLOGICAL CENTER. ROTORS picking up speed as ONE after ANOTHER the HELICOPTERS lift off...

RTO (OVER RADIO)

All units, this is a Citywide Blue Alert Broadcast on two 187 suspects who have escaped from Men's Central Jail, former LAPD Officers Sam and Sean Braden. Suspects are considered armed and extremely dangerous...

INT. LAPD HEADQUARTERS (WAR ROOM) - NIGHT

DONIGER entering what looks like NASA's launch control room. Clear acrylic smart boards. DIGITAL MAPS. A BANK of DIGITAL SCREENS receiving LOCAL NEWS BROADCASTS. Doniger finds the MAYOR and the CHIEF in front of a pin map of the city as Childress unrolls a schematic of the CITY DRAINAGE SYSTEM. Circling OUTLETS with a RED PEN.

LT. CHILDRESS

We're deploying units to every outlet. If they're still in the drain system, won't be able to stay for long. Whole system will be flooded soon. They'll drown.

MAYOR

We should be so lucky.

Lt. Childress shoots the mayor a disapproving look.

EXT. CULVERT - MINUTES LATER

West bank of the LOS ANGELES RIVER, WATER spewing out the mouth of a CULVERT, rushing down the bank to join the RIVER as SEAN scrambles out, hauling BRADEN with him. The river RISING, packing on muscle as it climbs its banks. **LAPD HELICOPTERS** approaching now, their **SEARCHLIGHTS** getting closer... And they can't go back in the culvert. They'll drown. They're trapped out here in the open...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The **AIR HORN** of a **TRAIN**. The **HEADLIGHTS** of a CSX ENGINE pulling fifty **FREIGHT CARS**, rattling down the track along the river, *kachunka-chank-kachunka-chank-kachunka-chank*.

SEAN

Move!

They scramble up the slope, running to keep up with the train. HELICOPTERS getting closer as Sean levers himself into a **FREIGHT CAR**. Reaches back to PULL Braden in, both ducking INSIDE just as a helicopter's SPOTLIGHT hits it.

INT. FREIGHT CAR - CONTINUOUS

Catching their breath as the city rolls by outside, *kachunka-chank-kachunka-chank...*

BRADEN

We got anything like a plan here?

SEAN

Recover that memory stick.

BRADEN

Just broke out of County and you want to break into Headquarters?

SEAN

It's the one place in the city they won't be looking for us.

BRADEN

Because nobody thinks we're that stupid. Everybody in that building thinks we murdered two of our own. Four hundred pissed-off coppers and they're not looking to put us in handcuffs. They'll kill us both soon as we set foot in there.

SEAN

That's a distinct possibility. But this isn't just about us anymore.

The rain-veiled SKYLINE passing by. Christmas lights.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Doniger detonates those bombs, the whole town tears itself apart. Los Angeles as we know will cease to exist.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SEAN (CONT'D)
We both swore the same oath. To
protect the people of this city.

Braden knows he's right. His son. His partner.

BRADEN
Whatever happens tonight, Sean.
It's been a real honor. To serve
with you. See the man you turned
out to be. She'd be proud.

Sean takes that in. We HEAR the Harry Simeone Chorale's *The Little Drummer Boy* - a haunting ticking clock through the following sequence. *Pa rum pum pum pum...*

INTERCUTTING:

EXT. ANGEL'S POINT ROAD (ELYSIAN PARK) - NIGHT

Deserted road on a hill crest overlooking Los Angeles, Sentinel **MERCs**, flawlessly disguised as LAPD OFFICERS, opening the TRUNKS of the BLACK & WHITES and double-checking the DEVICES. Done, they peel off, bound for targets all over the city. *Rum pum pum pum...*

I/E. CODE 7 UNIFORMS (SOUTH MAIN STREET) - NIGHT

CODE 7 UNIFORMS, serving the law enforcement community for over thirty years. MANNEQUINS in LAPD UNIFORMS in the WINDOW. **SMASH!** A **CINDERBLOCK** flying through the window. Braden and Sean ransacking the place. In and out.

SEAN (V.O.)
If we recover that memory stick
and get it to the media, we can
expose Doniger before he detonates
those bombs. Neutralize him.

INT. FREIGHT CAR - SAME

Preparing to jump from the moving freight car.

BRADEN
I think I know how to get us in.

SEAN
Yeah? What'd you have in mind?

BRADEN
Something really fucking dumb.

EXT. LAPD HEADQUARTERS - LATER

Two UNIFORMED COPS lead an ARRESTEE through a crushing throng of REPORTERS on their way into the building...

INT. CROWDED LOBBY (LAPD HEADQUARTERS) - CONTINUOUS

ALLEN, Xavier's huge bodyguard from the Soho House, lumbers into LAPD HEADQUARTERS in HANDCUFFS, in the CUSTODY of the two **UNIFORMED LAPD OFFICERS**, GRIPPING his huge arms. You don't look twice at cops with an arrestee. **BRADEN** and **SEAN** wearing stolen uniforms, duty jackets to conceal the fact that their badges and sidearms are gone. Walking him through a forest of BLUE. *Rum pum pum pum...*

INT. CORRIDOR (LAPD HEADQUARTERS) - CONTINUOUS

ALLEN takes up most of the corridor. Braden and Sean mostly concealed by his bulk. Other COPS have to step aside to get out of their way as they move him along.

ALLEN
(whispering)
You know, I said I owed you one, I
was talkin' about gettin' you laid
or breakin' somebody's legs.

BRADEN
Like I need your help for that.

INT. ELEVATOR (ASCENDING) - CONTINUOUS

Allen practically fills up the elevator, Braden and Sean up against the walls at his sides.

ALLEN
AW, MAN!

BRADEN
What?

ALLEN
I just realized. I'm CHEWBACCA!
You made me fuckin' Chewbacca!

SEAN
What's wrong with Chewbacca?
Chewie's a hero for Christ's sake.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRADEN
And you look like Chewbacca.

ALLEN
Fuck you.

DING! The **ELEVATOR DOORS OPEN** and - *Oh shit, why HIM? Why NOW?* - Braden's academy rival **OFFICER TALMADGE** steps into the elevator! But Talmadge doesn't really look at them. Just gives them a cursory nod as he **PUSHES [6]** on the **PANEL**, turns his back on them to face the **DOORS**. The four of them riding up together. **Pa rum pum pum pum...**

EXT. 101 FREEWAY OVERPASS (OVER FIGUEROA STREET) - NIGHT

The first **BLACK & WHITE** arrives at its target destination: The crowded 101 overpass above Figueroa Street, downtown LA. The MERC pulls to the shoulder, steps out, vaults a guardrail, jogs away down an icy slope into the rainy night. **Rum pum pum pum...**

INT. ELEVATOR (ASCENDING) - NIGHT

Talmadge watching the **NUMBERS** climb. **3-4-5** Braden, Sean and Allen all staring at the back of Talmadge's head, as it cocks slightly - *did I just see what I think I saw* - and now, excruciatingly slowly, Talmadge **TURNS** to **LOOK** over his shoulder at **BRADEN**. And Braden and Talmadge **LOCK EYES**, the moment stretching out...

EXT. LA LIVE (STAPLES CENTER) - NIGHT

Crowds of **SKATERS** wobbling around a hundred foot **CHRISTMAS TREE** in the middle of the ice rink between the Staples Center and the Nokia Theater, as a **BLACK & WHITE** car bomb pulls into **LA LIVE**. **Rum pum pum pum...**

INT. ELEVATOR (ASCENDING) - NIGHT

Braden doesn't flinch from Talmadge's gaze, doesn't open his mouth to explain... and doesn't need to. All the proof Talmadge needs is in Braden's eyes. **DING!** The bell loud as a gunshot as the doors **OPEN** on **6**. And before he steps out, Talmadge murmurs over his shoulder...

TALMADGE
I hope you know what the hell
you're doin.

CONTINUED:

Talmadge steps out into the corridor. Doors CLOSE behind him. Braden, Sean, and Allen all trade astonished looks.

I/E. LAPD AIR SUPPORT DIVISION - NIGHT

The GUARD waves a **MERC** in a **BLACK & WHITE** past the guard gate and we follow it up the RAMP to the top of PARKING STRUCTURE, pulling up to the base of the **CONTROL TOWER**.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM B - NIGHT

Braden and Allen keep watch while Sean pulls the **MEMORY STICK** from under the table, a dab of gum with it. COPS hustling through the corridor past the interrogation room. Sean passes the MEMORY STICK to Allen.

BRADEN

Counting on you, big guy.

He hands Allen someone's **LAPD RAID JACKET** draped over the back of an empty chair. Allen puts it on, puffing up delightedly. Barely fits him, but he loves it.

BRADEN (CONT'D)

You're hereby deputized.

ALLEN

Don't I get a gun?

SEAN

Absolutely not.

Allen nods, struts down the corridor in his new raid jacket, saluting cops as he passes them in the corridor.

EXT. A SERIES OF LOCATIONS ALL OVER LOS ANGELES - NIGHT

Doniger's **BLACK & WHITE CAR BOMBS** are pulling into their **TARGET DESTINATIONS** all over the city. LAPD Stations. Freeways. MERCS leaving the cars, and slipping away...

INT. EVIDENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Sean punches a CODE into a KEYPAD and he and Braden enter the EVIDENCE STORAGE ROOM. **GUNS**. HANDGUNS, SHOTGUNS and RIFLES, bearing EVIDENCE TAGS. Braden recovers his **SUPERMAG**. Sean grabs a **GLOCK** and slings a **COMBAT SHOTGUN**.

INT. 10TH FLOOR - NIGHT

Following KREUTER across the mezzanine toward the empty OFFICES of LAPD COMMAND STAFF. Kreuter approaches the WAITING AREA right outside DONIGER'S OFFICE, where Sam sits on a couch, playing *Temple Run* on his IPad, not for fun but to escape this nightmare. A dozen **MERCs** subtly boxing Sam in, their hostage whether he knows it or not.

INT. DONIGER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Laurie paces Doniger's office. Her eyes puffy from tears. LIVE COVERAGE of the MANHUNT on Doniger's wall-mounted TV. A shock-proof **BRIEFCASE** rests on the CABINET behind Doniger. We recognize it as the **BIRIS DETONATOR**.

LAURIE

There's something very wrong here, Wade. About all of this. There's gotta be something else going on.

Doniger trying to comfort her, hands her a bottled water.

DONIGER

I agree. And I'm trying to get to the bottom of it. Believe me. But in order to help them, I need to know everything Sean told you.

LAURIE

Jesus! I already told you. Sean didn't tell me anything. Last thing he told me was they were following a lead in the desert.

DONIGER

Nothing about a camera? Or a memory card? Nothing like that?

LAURIE

Nothing. NOTHING.

Kreuter leans over and whispers to Doniger.

KREUTER

Eight of the ten cars are in position now. We need to move.

Doniger nods. Okay. Kreuter RUSHES Laurie, GRABS her by the HAIR, twisting her face up to his. She SCREAMS. WADE!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KREUTER (CONT'D)

Look at me! I'll say this once, so you better put your fucking listening cap on. You either tell me where it is or I walk out there and cut your son's throat.

LAURIE

Please...

Kreuter SHOVES her to the floor.

KREUTER

Sheriffs searched 'em when they booked 'em into County. I'm starting to think maybe it's at the bottom of the fucking lake.

Then **ON THE WALL-MOUNTED TV:** LILIAN ENRIQUEZ standing under an umbrella among the other REPORTERS out front.

LILIAN ENRIQUEZ (ON TV)

...And now, this story has taken another shocking turn. I've just been handed a video by a source who claims the Bradens were framed by LAPD DEPUTY CHIEF WADE DONIGER. This graphic video is a FOX 11 EXCLUSIVE...

Everyone freezes. Kreuter stares, transfixed, like a man watching his house burn to the ground. Doniger stands, television light reflected in his eyes, looking at the TV like it's an enemy risen from the grave...

DONIGER

No.

Laurie reacts with a mixture of terror and triumph.

LAURIE

Looks like you're fucked, Wade.

Enraged, Doniger DRAWS his .357 and **BOOM! BLASTS** the TV. It flickers, sizzles as he whirls to CRACK Laurie in the side of the head with his pistol butt. She crumples. Doniger picks up the **BIRIS DETONATOR**, turning to Kreuter.

DONIGER

Bring the kid.

INT. LAPD HEADQUARTERS (WAR ROOM) - NIGHT

Lt. CHILDRESS and every other cop in the war room glued to DIGITAL SCREENS receiving **ENRIQUEZ'S LIVE BROADCAST**.
VIDEO: BRADEN HANGS BY HIS WRISTS. DONIGER TAUNTING HIM.

BRADEN

You're gonna murder a whole city.

DONIGER

Not quite. But I'm sure going to kick the shit out of it...

MAYOR

The hell is this?

LT. CHILDRESS

Where's Doniger?

INT. 10TH FLOOR MEZZANINE - NOW

Doniger and Kreuter hustle toward the elevators, led by a line of MERCS in ARMOR, HELMETS, BALLISTIC MASKS, holding SHIELDS in front of them like a Hoplite Phalanx. Past subtlety now. They're going to shoot their way out of this building. Kreuter drags SAM along with him.

DING! The ELEVATOR DOORS OPEN and **BRADEN** and **SEAN** walk out, like two gunslingers stepping into the street.

SEAN

Sam!

SAM

Dad!

DONIGER

Kill em.

ALL FUCKING HELL BREAKS LOOSE. The MERCS FIRING their M4s. Braden and Sean FIRING back as they DIVE for cover, but their bullets ricochet off the mercs' SHIELDS. Ergonomic chairs and standing desks BLOWN APART. Drywall spurting as BULLETS stitch across the walls, SHATTERING framed MOTIVATIONAL POSTERS - **Teamwork, Excellence, Leadership** - leaving blackened HOLES in the wall.

Braden and Sean pinned down by AUTOMATIC WEAPONS FIRE. The MERCS closing in on them. Suddenly, **BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!** BACKUP arrives! LAPD COPS rushing in to ENGAGE the MERCS! **TALMADGE** and **LT. CHILDRESS** leading the charge. Battle-honed MERCS shooting it out with street-hardened COPS. Muzzles FLASH! Gunsmoke ACTIVATES ceiling **SPRINKLERS**. The FIRE ALARM BLARES.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A strobe-lit rainstorm to match the one outside. Shooters splashing through an inch of water. CASINGS clattering the wet floor. The cops outgunned, but holding their own. *Think HEAT inside LAPD HEADQUARTERS!

Doniger rolls a **FIRE EXTINGUISHER** down the corridor and SHOOTS it, causing it to **EXPLODE**, filling the air between him and the cops with CHEMICAL FOG, instant SMOKE SCREEN. Doniger and Kreuter are gone. And they've taken Sam...

Braden FIRES his SUPERMAG, killing two mercs by sending BULLETS THROUGH the EYE HOLES in their BALLISTIC MASKS. Sean sees Laurie STAGGER out of Doniger's Office, into the line of fire. Dazed. Her head's bleeding. A MERC turns his M4 on Laurie, about to **FIRE** when--

SEAN
(running for her)
LAURIE!

--**LT. CHILDRESS** TACKLES Laurie to the floor, just as the MERC FIRES. Bullets hit Childress in the back. Sean charges the MERC, FIRING his COMBAT SHOTGUN. **BOOM! BOOM!** **BOOM!** The force of impacts BLOWING the MERC backward through a window to tumble TEN STORIES to the street.

Braden and Sean rush to Laurie. Sean checks her over, her pupillary response. She's okay. Just stunned. Braden inspects Childress' wounds. Her vest caught them.

BRADEN
Thanks, Sweetheart.

LT. CHILDRESS
(gritted teeth)
De nada, asshole.

Sean turns to his father.

SEAN
Let's go.

LT. CHILDRESS
They're literally surrounded by cops. No way they're getting out of the building.

BRADEN
We got in.

I/E. PARKING GARAGE - NOW

DOZEN COPS running through the parking lot after Doniger, A dozen GUNS on him. Doniger holding SAM up as a HUMAN SHIELD, he and Kreuter MOVING as a unit, back to back.

DONIGER

Stand down or the boy dies.

At the end of the row: the **V-100 COMMANDO**, LAPD's infamous seven-ton SWAT "tank." Doniger SHOVES Sam in and he and Kreuter climb in after him.

INT. V-100 (MOVING) - SAME

Doniger DRIVES. SAM squirms in back, his wrist cuffed to a hold bar. SWAT ENTRY TOOLS clamped to the bulkhead; ROAD FLARES, BOLT CUTTERS, gas-powered RESCUE SAW. Sam stretches, little fingers splayed, but can't reach...

Kreuter opens the **BIRIS**, flips the first TOGGLE from BLUE to FLASHING RED, pops the Lexan cover off the TRIGGER...

KREUTER

Happy New Year.

EXT. SPRING STREET - NOW

KA-BOOM! The phony BLACK & WHITE approaching LAPD HEADQUARTERS on SPRING **EXPLODES** in ROILING CLOUD of atomized concrete. Cars FLIP OVER. Others COLLIDE.

The chaos and CLOUDS of DUST distract the COPS blocking the PARKING GARAGE EXIT RAMP just as the V-100 **RAMS** through two black & whites, spinning the cars like the bat wing doors on a saloon. Loose in LA. Unstoppable.

RTO

All units, Air 18 has suspect eastbound 6th Street from Spring Street. Suspect has a hostage.

Screech! LAPD BLACK & WHITES pinching in to barricade the intersection up ahead. LIGHTBARS twirling, spilling red and blue reflections across the shimmering street. The V-100 **CLIMBS** over THE BLACK & WHITES like a MONSTER TRUCK.

I/E. UNMARKED CAPRICE - NOW

Sean DRIVES like a MANIAC on sidewalks, blowing through intersections, spinning out in the rain. Braden riding shotgun with an MP5. Ahead, a HELICOPTER SPOTLIGHT shines down on a dozen LAPD BLACK & WHITES pursuing the V-100.

KREUTER pops up through the HATCH with an **M4, FIRING**, causing them to CRASH. Sean SLALOMS through WRECKS when a shot-up BLACK & WHITE veers into a parked car in front of him, CATAPULTING it skyward like a spinner dolphin and Sean FLOORS it UNDER the airborne vehicle before it CRASHES back down as Doniger STEERS the V-100 UNDER the--

EXT. 101 FREEWAY OVERPASS (OVER FIGUEROA STREET) - NIGHT

Kreuter ducks back inside, pulling the hatch closed as the V-100 passes UNDER the **101 OVERPASS** above Figueroa Street, where we saw one of the CAR BOMBS planted...

I/E. V-100 ROARING OUT FROM UNDER THE OVERPASS - SAME

Kreuter GRABS the **BIRIS**, flips a SWITCH to FLASHING RED, POPS the Lexan cover off to press the next **TRIGGER**--

--**KA-BOOM!** The BLACK & WHITE DETONATES like Mt. St. Helens, turning the OVERPASS into a GEYSER of grey dust and broken concrete. The first pursuing BLACK & WHITES slam on their brakes too late. Thousands of tons of concrete rains down to CRUSH and BURY them...

BRADEN

SEAN

Watch it!

How could I not see that?

I/E. SEAN'S UNMARKED CAPRICE - NOW

Sean SWERVES the car to CUT across GRAND AVENUE, catching AIR as it SOARS off the wide concrete stairs leading down into GRAND PARK, blasting through the Memorial Fountain to intercept the V-100, pulling abreast as it heads for--

EXT. 6TH STREET BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Below the bridge, the storm-swollen **LA RIVER ROARS** by, mud-thickened and muscular, like a giant conveyor belt of wet cement, carrying uprooted trees and other floating debris sucked from its banks by the powerful current down a wide concrete channel with slopes on both sides.

CONTINUED:

BRADEN
Try to keep it steady.

SEAN
You sure about this?

Braden SLINGS the MP5 to free both hands, OPENS his PASSENGER DOOR and--

BRADEN
Fuck no.

--**LEAPS!** Braden's FINGERS finding the LIP of a gun port, CLINGING for dear life, LEGS dragging inches from the back wheel. **KREUTER** pops out of the hatch, **M4** on Braden HAULING himself up. Kreuter SMILES, savoring this moment.

--As the V-100 crosses the BRIDGE, Braden sees a **SEMI TRUCK**, towing an **ALUMINUM FUEL TANKER**, coming the other way. The bridge is TOO NARROW for both vehicles! The TRUCK DRIVER slams on his breaks, causing his TRUCK to JACKKNIFE across both rain-slick lanes of the bridge.

Doniger CRANKS the wheel and the V-100 SWERVES toward the edge of the bridge, its **BATTERING RAM** BLASTING through the CONCRETE RAILING, sailing out into the night. Kreuter goes flying. Braden JUMPS CLEAR, disappearing beneath the waves as the V-100 CRASHES into the roiling **LA RIVER!**

The truck's cylindrical TANKER TRAILER swings out off the bridge, DANGLING over the river like a Sword of Damocles.

Sean SLAMS on his BRAKES, skidding out as the fierce current pulls the V-100 away. He jumps out of his car, running on to the bridge. The V-100 is too far away.

KREUTER
Help me! God damn it! Help!

Sean looks down and sees KREUTER clinging to the TANKER TRAILER as it SWAYS over the river. Suddenly, the tanker GROANS, HOSES SNAPPING LOOSE, WHIPPING free as the FUEL TANK detaches from the truck and FALLS OFF, crashing into the water. Kreuter instantly SWALLOWED by the current. But the TANK floats like a giant pontoon, three hundred GALLONS of GASOLINE now chasing the V-100!

SEAN
David 14 to control. We have personnel in the river! Notify LAFD SWIFT WATER RESCUE! Advise LAFD deploy South of Olympic!

CONTINUED: (2)

Sean jumps in the car, REVERSING off the BRIDGE into a moonshiner's turn and SMASHES through a GATE on to the access road that parallels the river. Sean over-driving to catch up with the **V-100** as it rafts on the current.

I/E. V-100 - SAME

The V-100 is nominally amphibious, but it's not a boat and the river is now POURING in through the gun ports, FLOODING the passenger compartment. ROAD FLARES, TRAUMA KITS and other debris (including the waterproof **BIRIS** DEVICE) are FLOATING inside the V-100. Doniger scrambles for the HATCH, tries to open it, but the hatch is stuck!

Doniger RAMS his SHOULDER against the HATCH. No good. He then GRABS a **RESCUE AXE** off its spring clamps on the bulkhead and SWINGS it. Sparks spurting as it the axe CUTS through the latch.

The RISING WATER now sloshes up over Sam's legs. Sam SCREAMS, trying desperately to wriggle his wrist free.

SAM

Wait! Help me!

Doniger ignores Sam, POPS the HATCH, tosses the AXE out on to the roof, grabs the **BIRIS**, and climbs out on the hood. A **HELICOPTER SPOTLIGHT** finds the V-100. Doniger sees a PAIR of sodden BOOTS on the hood in front of him, following them up to **SAM BRADEN**, *The Big Bad Wolf*.

BRADEN

Where's my grandson?

Doniger nods toward the hatch.

BRADEN (CONT'D)

SAM?

Blades of light from the helicopter's SPOTLIGHT briefly illuminate little SAM below. The water inside the vehicle has reached his chest and is still rising...

SAM

Granddad! Help!

BRADEN

Hang on, kid. Be just a minute.

Braden TOSSES HANDCUFFS on the hood in front of Doniger.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRADEN (CONT'D)
Put 'em on.

DONIGER
I don't think so.

Doniger's hand drifts toward the **AXE**...

DONIGER (CONT'D)
You wanna save that kid? Then you
got a problem. Because I sure as
shit plan on resisting arrest.

BRADEN
That's not a problem, Wade. That's
a treat.

Doniger GRABS the AXE and *SWINGS*, the blade *missing* him by inches as Braden LEAPS back, but his HEELS hit the EDGE, and he's pin-wheeling his arms to keep from going over when Doniger *SWINGS* again. Braden DUCKS, the blade *hissing* above him. He catches Doniger with a KIDNEY PUNCH. *OOF!* Doniger reverses, SMASHING the axe HANDLE into Braden's FACE, KNOCKING Braden BACK off his feet.

DONIGER
You're not comin back from this.

Dazed, Braden manages to ROLL clear just as Doniger BRINGS the AXE down to GOUGE the hood. Braden scrambles back into a wobbly fighting stance, spits blood.

DONIGER (CONT'D)
(impressed)
God, I missed you, man.

BRADEN
You always were a pussy, Wade.

Doniger twirls the axe, changing his grip on it as he and Braden circle each other, constantly shifting their footing to keep from falling off the rocking vehicle. BLACK & WHITES are chasing them along both banks.

BRADEN (CONT'D)
(circling Doniger)
Look around, Wade. Unless you're planning to swim to Catalina, you're done. It's over.

The **BIRIS** slides back and forth on the hood between them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DONIGER
(circling Braden)
The hell it is. Right there's my
exit visa. When I detonate the
rest of those bombs, the LAPD's
gonna have a lot bigger problems
than catching me. I'll be in
fucking Dubai by the time they
remember to look for me again.

INSIDE THE V-100: the water is up to Sam's neck now.

SAM
Hurry! Please!

EXT. THE RIVER BANK - NOW

SIRENS wailing, the LAFD's SWIFT WATER RESCUE TRUCK, RESCUE 88, backs up to the cement river bank. RESCUE 88 tows a TRAILER with two KAWASAKI STX-15F **JET SKIS** on it. Sean pulls up just as the FIREFIGHTERS are getting out. The FIRE CAPTAIN looking over at Sean with dread.

SEAN
The hell are you waiting for?!!??

FIRE CAPTAIN
I can't send my men into that.
We'll have to get in front of
them, try to catch them downstream
with a throw-line. But we're not
putting craft in the water.

SEAN
Bullshit! My SON is out there!

--Sean GRABS the FIRE CAPTAIN by his collar.

FIRE CAPTAIN
Hey! I'm sorry, I'm SORRY, but I
can't. Look we got rules.

The other RESCUE FIREFIGHTERS move in on Sean, but Sean DRAWS his PISTOL, stopping them in their tracks...

SEAN
Fuck your rules.

Sean YANKS the PIN out to UNHOOK the TRAILER and KICKS the TRAILER away from the truck. It ROLLS down the cement bank and PLUNGES straight into the raging river.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The trailer is instantly SWALLOWED by dark water, but the **TWO JET SKIS** bob up like corks. The current pulling both craft downstream, picking up speed.

Sean grabs a **RESCUE LINE** off the truck and loops it across his chest like a bandolier as he RUNS along the bank after the jet ski and *LEAPS* on to it like a trick rider leaping on to the back of a galloping horse. Sean CRANKS the THROTTLE and the jet ski *RIPS* open a wake across the river, *roaring* downstream after the V-100. His son. His father. His city.

Meanwhile, the **SECOND JET SKI** is just BOBBING downstream like a Popsicle stick in a rain gutter, when a **HAND** sprouts from the water to CLAW the GUNWALE as the current carries it past. **KREUTER** CLIMBS on the jet ski, still wearing his **M4** slung across his chest in a combat sling. Kreuter *REVS* it like a Harley and **TAKES OFF** after Sean...

EXT. V-100 - SAME

Doniger SWINGS the AXE upward. Braden WHIPS his HEAD back and the BLADE passes inches in front of him, then before Doniger can swing again, Braden THROWS an UPPERCUT, catching Doniger under the chin, knocking him backward, and the axe clatters over the side into the river.

But Doniger ROLLS cunningly and KICKS Braden's LEGS out from under him and Braden FALLS backward OFF the V-100 INTO the muscular CURRENT, like tossing him into a cyclone. Braden instantly DISAPPEARS, pulled UNDER...

Doniger GRABS the **BIRIS**, quickly POPS the LATCHES and OPENS the case. The SWITCHES are all FLASHING RED. ARMED.

UNDERWATER: Raging darkness. The maelstrom SUCKING Braden right UNDER the fourteen-ton V-100. Braden fights panic as he blindly CLAWS at the underside of the vehicle. One flailing HAND just CATCHES the right rear tire, the current flipping Braden around as he reaches up for the wheel well, the gun port, PULLING himself up to...

Braden BREAKS the roiling surface, GASPING, and HAULS himself up the opposite side of the V-100, just Doniger pops the Lexan cover off the **TRIGGERS**.... *NO!* Braden DIVES across the hood, landing on top of Doniger before he can detonate the bombs. The two men grappling, gouging, both fumbling for the flashing BIRIS as the V-100 gallops down the rapids...

EXT. ROARING DOWN THE LA RIVER - SAME

FWAP! FWAP! FWAP! BULLETS STRAFING the WATER in front of Sean and he LOOKS back to see that son of a bitch **KREUTER** alive and FIRING at him from the saddle of the second JET SKI. **FWAP! FWAP! FWAP!** Sean SWERVES and DRAWS his PISTOL.

SEAN

You gotta be kidding.

A high speed pursuit down the LA river. Kreuter and Sean **FIRING** at each other as their jet skis PASS under a BRIDGE on OPPOSITE SIDES of a cement SUPPORT COLUMN, rounds RICOCHET off the COLUMN between them, Sean's PISTOL goes to slide-lock -**EMPTY**- as they come out from under the bridge, their two JET SKIS NECK and NECK. Kreuter brings his M4 up, but Sean GRABS the HOT BARREL of the M4 and STEERS it away, the weapon FIRING WILD as the two craft BUMP and SCRAPE against each other at 60 MPH. They are now approaching **THE 26th STREET BRIDGE**--

Kreuter CRANKS the handlebars, FORCING Sean over and UP an **ACCESS RAMP** that takes his JET SKI up OUT OF THE WATER, its fiberglass hull SKIMMING up the cement slope on its powerful momentum, heading straight for-- **SHIT!**

Sean's jet ski actually **SLEDS ACROSS 26th STREET**, barely missing **CROSS TRAFFIC**. Cars SKID and CRASH to avoid him as his jet ski SLIDES toward a TACO STAND, scattering PATRONS huddled under the tarp to stay dry and **SMASHING** through plastic PATIO FURNITURE [Sorry!] before LEAPING the shoulder to **LAND**--

--BACK IN THE RIVER BEHIND KREUTER--

Kreuter STEERS around a nasty looking cement **PYLON** with a tangle of rebar sprouting from the water. Sean slows his jet ski just long enough to LOOP one end of his **RESCUE LINE** around the PYLON. Then Sean OPENS the THROTTLE and guns it after Kreuter. Kreuter turns to see Sean pulling abreast of him and Kreuter reaches into his vest for his **PISTOL**, taking AIM at Sean, who's SMILING back at him...

That's when Kreuter realizes Sean's **RESCUE LINE** is already draped lightly over his shoulders, around his neck, and the SLACK is running out! **THWANG!** The noose tightens around Kreuter's NECK and SNAPS it as he's YANKED off the back of his jet ski at 60 mph.

Sean cranks the throttle, heading downstream toward...

EXT. V-100 - SAME

Braden and Doniger bruised and bloody, trading vicious PUNCHES. But Braden doesn't see THE NEXT BRIDGE coming up fast. WHITE WATER curling around its SUPPORT COLUMNS. Doniger grips the hatch as the V-100 broadsides a COLUMN, the IMPACT knocking Braden off his feet. Doniger is on him now, hooking his arm around Braden's NECK, locking in a CHOKE HOLD, rolling to FORCE Braden's face UNDERWATER.

DONIGER

I tried to tell you, Braden. You wouldn't fucking listen. You don't know how to do this anymore.

Violent bubbles. Braden convulsing, clawing blindly for Doniger, finding instead one of the **ROAD FLARES** floating near the mouth of the hatch. Braden THUMB-POPS the FLARE, igniting it, as he JABS the BLAZING magnesium FLAME into Doniger's EYE! *ARRGH!* Doniger releases Braden, his hands flying to his wound. And with a magician's aplomb, Braden HANDCUFFS Doniger to the vehicle's BATTERING RAM.

BRADEN

I still know how to do this, Wade.
And you're under arrest.

Braden DISARMS the BIRIS and tosses it into the river.

I/E. V-100 - NIGHT

Braden DROPS through the hatch and SWIMS to Sam. Sam has to tilt his head to breathe. He coughs, sputters.

BRADEN

Hey, kid.

Braden YANKS the heavy BOLT CUTTERS off their CLAMP, fits them around the cuff chain and snips through it. Braden grabs the boy, hauls him out through the HATCH just as LAFD SWIFT WATER RESCUE arrives on the bridge. The FIREFIGHTERS hustling to deploy their RESCUE LINE. They all see the **FUEL TANK** hurtling toward the BRIDGE.

FIREFIGHTERS lowering a QUICK COLLAR from the bridge. Braden loops harness around Sam, cinches it tight.

SAM

What about you?

CONTINUED:

BRADEN
 (lying)
 I'll catch the next one.

Firefighters CRANK the WINCH on their VEHICLE, lifting Sam to safety. Laurie wrapping her arms around the boy.

BRADEN (CONT'D)
 Get them out of here!

The firefighters bustle Sam and Laurie into RESCUE 88, SLAM THE DOORS and HAUL ASS off the bridge as the **FUEL TANK** barrels toward the bridge like a runaway train. Braden just watches the FUEL TANK come, too exhausted to swim. As the FUEL TANK CLOSES IN, Doniger braces his feet against the battering ram, twists his wrist, trying to slip his cuff chain. No good. They're both dead men.

DONIGER
 Looks like neither one of us is going to see the sunrise tomorrow.

Then **VROOM!** **SEAN** **LEAPS** his JET SKI over the fuel tank, *skimming* over the V-100 and Braden LEAPS on to the saddle behind Sean just as the FUEL TANK *smashes* into the V-100 with the force of a car wreck. **KABOOM!** The tanker EXPLODES in a BALL of FLAME that can be seen for miles.

For a moment, the river itself is on fire, burning off into islands of flame. NO SIGN of BRADEN or SEAN. Just BURNING PIECES of the jet ski floating down river...

EXT. OUTSIDE THE MOUTH OF LONG BEACH HARBOR - DAWN

Christmas morning. Only fitting that there should be BILLS. This one RINGING atop the tower of a RED NAVIGATION BUOY as it rocks with the rolling SWELLS. A SEA LION lounging on the buoy raises its head to BARK at the two interlopers clinging to the rust-streaked aluminum hull below. We didn't notice them until they came up out of the water. BRADEN and SEAN in up to their necks, DISAPPEARING completely under each rolling SWELL, and RESURFACING as it passes. Not panicked. They've been here all night. They have the rhythm now. Swells pass over them. Submerging... Reemerging...

BRADEN
 (spits water)
 How far out you think we are?

Sean sweeps his wet hair back, looking around.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SEAN
Too far to swim, old timer.

BRADEN
Speak for yourself.

The hostile sea lion BELLOWS at them again.

BRADEN (CONT'D)
(to the sea lion)
Hey, Salty, why don't you give it
a rest, you don't own this thing.

SEAN
Actually, he might. I think he's a
protected species.

BRADEN
Of course he is.

Another SWELL passes over them. We HEAR a MOTOR coming.

BRADEN (CONT'D)
You know, they used to have a
saying on the job. You might get
three great loves. Two great dogs.

SEAN
But you only get one great
partner.

BRADEN
No disrespect to Gomez. But you're
the best partner I ever had.

Beat.

SEAN
You're the worst. Bar none.

Both men burst out LAUGHING as another SWELL passes over them. They come up sputtering, coughing, but still laughing when the COAST GUARD PATROL BOAT pulls alongside the buoy. Piloted by a WARRANT OFFICER in a SANTA HAT.

EXT. SEAN AND LAURIE'S HOUSE - THAT NIGHT

NEWS VANS camped in front of the house. REPORTERS mobbing a CONVOY of LAPD STAFF CARS as they pull up to the front of the house, SHOUTING questions at the tinted windows. TALMADGE and another BIG UNIFORM bull the reporters away from the car as Sean and Braden climb out of the back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LT. CHILDRESS (O.S.)
Not so fast, caveman.

Braden turns to see LT. CHILDRESS stepping out of the one of the other vehicles, striding toward him, PEN in hand. She grabs Braden's FOREARM and turns it to WRITE something on the inside. Her PHONE NUMBER. She smiles.

And when Braden turns back, Talmadge and the other uniforms have PARTED the crowd enough so Braden can see the front of the house now. Sean, Laurie, and Sam are smiling at him. Behind them, their FRONT YARD is a **FOREST** of **CHRISTMAS TREES**, every one of them STRUNG with LIGHTS.

SEAN
Twenty seven. I know I said we
can't get 'em back. But hey it's a
buyer's market after the 24th.

Braden's face, lit up by a hundred CAMERA FLASHES, as he walks to them. Sean embraces him. So do Laurie and Sam.

SEAN
Merry Christmas, Dad.

And we HEAR Jose Feliciano's *Feliz Navidad* as we pull UP and AWAY from the Braden Family, together for Christmas.

THE END