

STAKEHORSE

Written by

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EXT. FIELD - DAY

A horse running hard and sweaty across an open plain. No rider, no saddle, no fences. This horse is wild.

NICK (V.O.)

The racing pulse of an American thoroughbred beats two hundred times a minute. They have seven blood types, twenty-one injection sites, a pulmonary artery that pumps fifty-four more liters of blood than the human heart...

As the horse runs on, growing faint in the distance...

NICK (V.O.)

We both bleed out in less than six minutes.

MATCH TO:

EXT. CHICAGO STOCKYARDS - NIGHT

Two figures running across a freight bridge, black metal of AR-15s bouncing against their sides. Light rain coming down as they crouch against the railing, looking down on:

MEATPACKING LOT

Just as a SEMI TRUCK rolls in. Airbrakes hissing as it stops.

INT. SEMI TRUCK, FRONT CAB - NIGHT

The DRIVER scans the line of vacant meat trucks across the lot. Then --

One flashes its lights. Once. Twice.

INT. SEMI, CARGO TRAILER - MOMENTS LATER

The rear cargo door rolling up. We see the trucks have backed up to each other end-to-end, creating an enclosed corridor.

Three CHECHEN men in the meat truck on one side. Three armed TEAMSTERS staring back from the semi. They throw back a tarp to reveal a pallet of potting soil, slicing one open. Bags of brown powder inside. Across:

The Chechens turn back to a stack of crates, sliding one forward: stenciled label on the lid coming into the light.

**"PROPERTY : CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT"**

Satisfied, the two teams start unloading their cargo over to the other side. No words are said.

INT. MEAT TRUCK - CONT'D

The CHECHEN DRIVER shakes a pack of cigarettes. He lights one, his eyes roaming for something, pausing as he spots:

ACROSS THE LOT

The two BRIDGE GUNMEN dropping down from an access ladder. The driver waves them forward. As they run ahead we realize they're with the Chechens: This is an ambush

The Teamsters unaware inside, the Chechen driver keeping watch as the two gunmen silently start climbing his hood onto the roofs...

INT. TRUCK CORRIDOR - CONT'D

The exchange continues in silence, most of the cargo transferred over now...

INT. SEMI, FRONT CAB - CONT'D

Engine running. The SEMI DRIVER clocking side mirrors as he waits, pistol on the seat beside him. Not seeing:

EXT. TRUCK ROOFS - CONT'D

The bridge gunmen slink from the meat truck onto the Semi's roof. Unslinging the AR-15s, rifles hovering downward as they sneak forward...

ONE BOOT *momentarily slips* on the rain-slick roof. A screech of rubber on metal. The two men freeze, eyes locking.

INT. SEMI, FRONT CAB - CONT'D

The driver looking up.

INT. TRUCK CORRIDOR - CONT'D

Everyone still. The men inside staring up at the sound, then at each other.

Six armed men... in a box... ten feet from each other...

Total silence.

Then everyone *reaching at once* - ALL GUNS RISING --

STREET LIGHT AND RAIN suddenly POURING IN - all *jolted* as the semi truck VIOLENTLY HITS THE GAS - breaking away and *racing off* - Glimpses of bridge gunmen spilling over the roof as others take aim -- *bodies hitting concrete* as the first shots *FIRE* --

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. HAWTHORNE RACE TRACK - NIGHT

Metal gates clang open, fourteen horses bursting out, a flash of colored fabric and muscled hide.

WIDE TO:

A STADIUM CROWD, LIGHTS around dirt track, immaculate greens in the center, dirt clouding as the stampede takes the turn.

INT. HAWTHORNE STABLES - AT THAT MOMENT

The race playing out on a TV bolted up in the corner. Below:

A horse being walked by a Guatemalan handler. A man studying its gait at the other end. Late 40s, jeans and a stethoscope, eyes clocking each step. This is Doctor NICK EASTER.

The horse's OWNER and a TRAINER stand off to the side, nervously watching Nick as he examines the horse's stride.

ON NICK, face revealing nothing.

INT. STABLE STALL - MOMENTS LATER

Nick chewing on a syringe cap as he injects the horse.

The Guatemalan handler now standing by, steadying an ultrasound scanner as Nick starts running a sensor over the horse's pelvis, watching the screen.

HANDLER  
Todavía cojeando?

NICK  
...Yeah that left lumbar...

HANDLER  
Trainer piensa que solo es inflamacion.

NICK  
I'm sure he did...  
(then, honing the sensor)  
There it is.

On the screen: A blossoming black and white image.

NICK (CONT'D)  
Hairline fracture.  
(and then)  
Scratch him.

Nick unplugs, starts packing away the ultrasound. Seeing this the Trainer starts over, leans pensively in the doorway.

TRAINER  
Vet at Belmont had the same  
diagnosis on his ride Zeus two  
weeks back, they let him run.

Nick signs off on some paperwork, hands him the clipboard.

NICK  
(a pained smile)  
Zeus isn't my patient.

Trainer weathers it. As he stalks away a cell phone buzzes in Nick's gear bag. He glances at the screen, an incoming call:

**"Itasca Stables"**

Nick stares a beat, starts packing faster.

EXT. SERVICE ROAD - NIGHT

A horse trailer being driven down a forested road. Remote, only high-beams and tail-lights in a sea of green.

EXT. VETERINARY RANCH - NIGHT

Darkened buildings. Lit-up stables. A fenced-in horse run.

A corrugated gate closing behind the trailer as it pulls inside. Nick and a Hispanic vet tech (SONDRA, 30s) standing ready for them, opening the trailer doors to see:

TWO MEN on gurneys writhing inside, shot and bleeding. We see they're the TEAMSTERS from the opening. The vets holding them both down long enough to check their gums:

Each have a NUMBER tattooed above their teeth:

**"3232"**

**"7141"**

Nick and Sondra grab the gurney bars, slide them out.

INT. SURGICAL ROOM - NIGHT

Windowless, blinded by the operating light.

Those vets now masked up, Sondra assisting, both covered in blood as they work over the men.

Items in a tray: wedding rings, a pendant of a Polish Saint.

Quick glimpses of equipment: instruments, bottles, barcodes. A fully stocked and running operating theatre.

EXT. VETERINARY RANCH - DAWN

Horses in blankets, ready for morning walks.

In the dawn light now we see the spread is equal parts ranch and compound. The front entrance completely walled off from the road. Private pastures running behind it for miles.

NICK emerges from the stables, tired, the same clothes as last night, disposing of a bag of bloody surgical scrubs in what looks like an industrial furnace. We'll see this later.

As he heads for his truck he passes SONDRA rinsing out last night's horse trailer with a pressure sprayer, leftover blood pooling and dripping off the running boards.

EXT. CHICAGO STOCKYARDS - DAWN

The crime scene of last night's exchange. The meat truck now crashed against the far wall. Police tape and forensic techs quietly processing as a sedan pulls in.

DETECTIVE JIM PULASKI getting out. Late 30s, home-town lifer. He starts pulling on a pair of rubber nitrile gloves, stepping around broken glass and leftover bodies. AHEAD:

A blazered MAN kneeling near one, tie flung over his shoulder.

PULASKI

Cook. Heard they got you on the way home.

DETECTIVE COOK glancing up, knees cracking as he rises. He's 60s, going through the motions.

COOK

Trying to. Seven minutes from clock-out. Gotta stop charging my phon-

Pulaski sneezes. Rubs the bridge of his nose.

PULASKI  
Goddamn moisture allergies.

He pulls out an eye dropper, holding open his lids as Cook looks over the scene.

COOK  
They said you traded up for this one from across town. Where you at again, Woodlawn?

PULASKI  
Chatham. Closer to my mother.

Cook makes a face as he leads Pulaski further in, motioning to the crashed meat truck.

COOK  
I figure we got a buy gone wrong. Driver catches an unlucky one in the front. A hundred and twenty kilos of brown and five hundred pounds of dead Chechens in the back.

PULASKI  
(off the drugs)  
Other guys left the score?

COOK  
Couldn't offload it. Or didn't know how. Either way, pair of tire marks on the curb says they left in a hurry.

Pulaski nods toward TWO MORE bodies across the pavement. We recognize them as our gunmen from THE BRIDGE, fallen AR-15s marked and cone'd beside them.

PULASKI  
And those two?

COOK  
With the Chechens. Puts them down 0-6. Other guys got away clean.

PULASKI  
Against two automatic 15s? That's a nice run of luck.

COOK  
Well this probably helped.

Cook holds up what looks like a carbon-fiber kickstand, L-shaped.

COOK (CONT'D)  
 Came off our mystery crew's gun.  
 Called a Magpul - lets you clear the  
 bolt with the trigger finger. Third  
 party add on, most think it's not  
 worth the weight but a few rare  
 birds still use it. Probably broke  
 off when they jumped the curb.

Pulaski is about to respond, just sneezes again.

FORENSIC TECH (O.S.)  
 Detectives...

A forensic tech (YANG) waving them over. He leads them to one of the bridge bodies.

YANG  
 Hadn't processed this one yet. The  
 victims in the truck, all multiple  
 gunshot wounds. DOA. This guy:  
*spinal trauma*. Like from a fall. No  
 entry wounds, no external  
 hemorrhaging. Which means...

He nods to a field marker next to a splatter of blood nearby.

YANG (CONT'D)  
 ...all that blood, belongs to  
 somebody else.

COOK  
 (looks to Pulaski)  
 Our mystery crew?

Pulaski shrugs, frowning down at the red concrete.

COOK (CONT'D)  
 Okay. Check area gun merchants,  
 anybody selling peripherals,  
 speciality mods, depots with nine  
 millimeter and .223 Rem-

PULASKI  
 Nah forget it, those pieces coulda  
 come from anywhere, Milwaukee,  
 Cincy... What if we don't follow  
 the guns. Check the pharmacies  
 instead, any large purchases, call-  
 ins, over the counters...

COOK  
 Why not the hospitals?

PULASKI  
 (already ahead of him)  
 Two closest are Holy Cross and  
 University of Illinois - nothing on  
 the AR's, three handgun vics, but  
 all traced back to the club  
 shooting downtown.

Cook grunts. Fucking Boy Scout.

COOK  
 Fine. You wanna read a bunch of  
 Walgreens receipts be my guest.

Both staring back down at the body.

YANG  
 ...yeah and that's not all.

The detectives look over.

YANG (CONT'D)  
 We recovered a tarp twenty yards  
 down with a splatter pattern.  
 Tested our Chechens for blood type:  
 A and B negative and a couple of O  
 positives. Sample on the tarp: AB  
 positive. Different vic. Doesn't  
 match anyone at the scene.

Pulaski mutters at Cook.

PULASKI  
 'Other guys got a clean getaway'...  
 yeah alright.

COOK  
 It's a fuckin' tarp.

PULASKI  
 Tarp's goddamn Columbo next to us  
 right now.

COOK  
 ...So what are you thinking?

PULASKI  
 I'm thinking unless they just  
 walked it off, we're missing two  
 bodies. No hospital, no meat wagon,  
 so they either show up in a gutter  
 in the next 48, or somebody's  
 getting some help.

On Cook as Pulaski pulls out his phone, starts for the car.

INT. UNION STATION DINER - MORNING

A cacophony of talk and plates clattering, commuters wolfing down coffee and eggs as they wait for their trains. Nick moves through the crowd, threading his way back to:

REAR BOOTH

A man in his 70s reading the paper. Carl REINHART, Carhartt jacket, missing part of his ear. Unlike the other patrons he takes his time eating, has a coffee waiting for Nick as he slips into the booth, slides it over to him.

REINHART

I got the eggs coming.

NICK

Thanks, I can't stay. I gotta get back. DVM license inspection.

REINHART

License... didn't you have that back in January.

NICK

That was for the track, this is for the practice.

REINHART

Christ...

(muttering inwardly, then)

You talking to Sean soon? I got the seats. Detroit, against the glass.

NICK

Going in tonight. I'll let him know.

REINHART

Thirty-five days right?

NICK

Thirty-three.

Reinhart nods, lets Nick sip his coffee. Then...

REINHART

So how are my horses?

Nick looks up at him. Direct and even.

NICK

Prospector, internal hemorrhaging  
in the abdomen, he's recovering.  
Yankee Gentleman was non-responsive  
by the time we got him on any  
transfusions. He's gone.

A clinical compassion here, holding Reinhart's gaze as he takes this in. Not new to it. Never gets used to it. Finally:

REINHART

And what do you need from me. You want me to wire the...

NICK

No we'll bill the insurance, services and materials, you pay off the EOB. I'll take care of the body. Creamer?

Reinhart passes the creamer. Weighing on something.

REINHART

You good? On the books?

NICK

...Books are good Carl...

REINHART

Because you know, people are asking to meet you-

NICK

I don't want to meet people. I told you, this isn't out, it's not open door. It's you... and it's me.

A look. Not the first time they've had this conversation.

REINHART

(finally relenting)

Okay... about us then. I know the arrangement, I got my own guys I'd like to bring on though. How full are your stables looking. Got something open for me?

Nick considers, reluctantly digs into his pocket, pulls out the Polish Saint pendant that one of the wounded men had on.

NICK

As of last night,  
(sets it on table)  
I got one.

EXT. VETERINARY RANCH - LATER

Nick pulls in, sees cars parked outside the clinic office. One a clean black sedan, not enough dirt on the wheel wells.

INT. X-RAY ROOM, VETERINARY RANCH - MOMENTS LATER

His vet tech SONDRA standing with two others as they checklist through their inspection. All turning as Nick approaches.

SONDRA

Nick you know Dr. Anderson from the licensing board.

ANDERSON, rural polite, nodding as Nick joins them.

ANDERSON

Dr. Easter, just checking your RMTC controlled substances. This is Agent Barber with the District DEA.

On Nick, a little thrown as he shakes Barber's hand.

NICK

DEA... something I should know?  
We've made every effort to cooperate-

BARBER

Standard procedure to secure and assess supply after any domestic... or in your case, juvenile incident.

Nick growing cold.

NICK

...They're secure.  
(holding his gaze)  
Our inventory should be in the registry.

BARBER

Yes your narcotics, fentanyl, methadone, all accounted for...  
(glancing at his records)  
The amounts on the last few procedures have been... well they're just irregularly high.

NICK

Well they're 700 pound animals Mr. Barber, couple of baby aspirin usually doesn't cut it.

Barber flashes a pained smile, continues off an iPad --

BARBER

You recently logged two procedures including a surgical bypass of a duodenal obstruction for a six year old stallion, *Prospector*. Where is that animal now?

NICK

Recovering.

BARBER

So it's here on the grounds.

NICK

...He is.

BARBER

Great.

(then)

May I see him?

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. STABLES - MOMENTS LATER

Staring directly into the mouth of A HORSE, a gloved hand holding its upper lip to reveal the same number we saw last night on one of the men, tattooed across the horse's gums.

**"3232"**

ANDERSON (O.S.)

3232, *Prospector*.

REVERSE TO:

The group now standing outside the stall, Dr. Anderson lowering her paperwork.

ANDERSON (CONT'D)

Serial number matches.

Nick clocks Barber innocently, shrugs.

NICK

You're welcome to cut him open though and take a look inside. Check his duodenum.

Barber nods, weathers the joke as he returns to his iPad.

BARBER

Also says there was a failed laparoscopy operation on a seven year old mare, Yankee Gentleman. Where is that animal now?

NICK

Destroyed.

BARBER

...destroyed.

Nick nods over to the industrial furnace we saw earlier. We realize now this is A CREMATOR. A walk-in sized incinerator for the cremation of horses.

NICK

But you're welcome to crawl inside, have a look in there too.

Barber glares. Anderson chortles, starts for her car.

EXT. VETERINARY RANCH - MOMENTS LATER

The inspectors driving away, disappearing through the gate.

NICK

Watching as it closes behind them, then starts back toward the clinic. We follow him into...

STABLES CONTINUOUS

He walks past several horses, continues to an empty stall in the back.

STALL

Wood slats, hay on the floor. Nick flips open an outlet panel on the back of the rear beam, hits a button...

THE FLOOR BEGINS TO LOWER

We see the entire floor of this stall is a FREIGHT ELEVATOR, lowering down into...

INT. SURGICAL FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

An underground emergency room. Windowless, a half dozen hospital beds. The room we saw from the opening.

Nick starts over to the survivor, known to him only as PROSPECTOR, unconscious in the corner, oxygen and a breathing tube.

Nick checks a few vitals, marks them on a chart. Refilling an IV of pain medication when... the sheets move.

He looks down to see the patient. Emerging from the drug haze momentarily, mouth working, eyes landing on Nick.

PROSPECTOR  
(low, rasping)  
...he's a rat...

Eyes now staring at Nick. Or through him, it's hard to say.

Prospector falls back into delirium, unconscious. Nick stares down at him, wonders what he just saw.

INT. DARK ROOM, VETERINARY RANCH - LATER

Sondra reviewing x-ray images on a light box. Slides of spines, knees. Joints backwards, strange lengths. Not human.

NICK (O.S.)  
How's she look?

Sondra looks up, sees Nick in the doorway.

SONDRA  
Joint load looks pretty worn,  
subchondral injury for sure.  
Probably some PT.

Nick nods, hovers there...

NICK  
Prospector. He show any  
responsiveness since this morning?

SONDRA  
No cognitive signs. Replaced his  
pentobarbital at 1300. Why?

Nick weighs this. Finally shakes it off, grabs his keys to leave.

SONDRA (CONT'D)  
Doctor...  
(he looks over)  
We still need to talk. I mean, about  
my place here... about moving up.

On Nick. He knows. It's been a long time coming. He nods.

NICK  
We will.  
(opening the door)  
You're on call. Goodnight.

EXT. JUVENILE CENTER - NIGHT

A plain stone entrance sign out front:

**ILLINOIS DEPT JUVENILE REHABILITATION**

PRELAP:

SEAN (V.O.)  
We did this exercise in group...

INT. JUVENILE CENTER - NIGHT

A meeting room for supervised visitations. Fake plants and hotel furniture. Nick sits across from a teenager (17) in matching white sweats. His son, SEAN.

SEAN  
...had us hit a pillow with a bat.

NICK  
They gave you guys a bat?

SEAN  
Like a foam bat. Each swing was supposed to be us knocking out like an old choice, bad decisions. We'd say it out loud... make new ones.

NICK  
Yeah, what'd you think. Feel like that helped?

SEAN  
...Maybe, I think so.

NICK  
(keeping him engaged)  
Everything else okay? You need anything?

SEAN  
No.

NICK

You get the note from Grandpa?  
About the game?

SEAN

Yeah.

They fall back into silence. Sean idly spins an ID bracelet.

SEAN (CONT'D)

(voice cracking)

It's hard dad.

A beat. Nick angry, helpless here. Finally --

NICK

Thirty three days.

INT. HALLWAY, JUVENILE CENTER - LATER

After hours now. Nick standing in the corridor with a female probation officer, DAVIS.

DAVIS

...steps before approving release back into your custody. Any violation will automatically reinstate the charges and the full term of his sentence. And that won't be here. He will serve that out in a state detention facility.

NICK

He's a month out. He's not going to violate.

DAVIS

It happens. They search his room, they get a bad test. I've seen it. Be aware.

Nick hears this, nods. Davis continues.

DAVIS (CONT'D)

A few days before social services will visit the primary residence. They're looking for stability: Substance free. Employment, curriculum. Role models.

(a beat)

Someone that's going to show him how to keep his nose clean.

Nick looks up, meeting her gaze.

NICK  
Not a problem.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. TATTOO PARLOR, BACK ROOM - DAY

Looking into the mouth of a young black man, renamed MOZART. A bloodied bib around his neck as an INKER leans over him, initiating him by tattooing a series of four numbers across his gums.

NICK (O.S.)  
Allergies to any medications?

Mozart motions none.

NICK (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Diabetic?

No.

NICK (CONT'D)  
How about operations. Any major surgeries in the last five years?

CUT WIDE TO:

NICK sitting in the corner, filling out a chart. He makes a few final notes, closes it.

NICK (CONT'D)  
Ok check with Night Boss. He'll arrange for you to come by, take some introductory vitals.

Mozart nods in the chair as Nick rises and exits.

INT. TATTOO PARLOR - HALLWAY

Two others waiting for Mozart in chairs outside. We recognize them as the TEAMSTERS from the opening scene:

LADY JUROR (50) - Salt and pepper, arthritis in her knuckles.

NIGHT BOSS (40) - Reinhart's #2. Denim and Timberlands. Tucks in his shirt.

These two along with Mozart, Yankee Gentleman, Prospector... named for the horses they're paired with, their real names something Nick never wants to learn. One less secret to protect.

If there's one theme between them, it's their rank in life. Teamsters, dock workers, construction. Head-down, work-hard, all-union with no college degree...

All except Nick.

Nick stops in front of Lady Juror, hovers for a moment.

NICK  
Lady J, how's the knee?

LADY JUROR  
Got something weaker? I fell asleep  
in the fucking shower for two days.

NICK  
That diazepam is rated for large  
mammals, you've got to cut it into  
fourths. Give me a week, I'll  
relook at the dosage.

Lady Juror nods as Night Boss rises to escort Nick out the back...

NIGHT BOSS  
Carl said you needed something.

NICK  
Yeah, an import called Hemo-Pure.

Nick pulls out a file from his chart, hands it to him.

NICK (CONT'D)  
It's a synthetic blood substitute  
out of South Africa. Supposed to  
address the HIV supply shortage.  
Universal strain from bovine  
hemoglobin, still in trials here  
but FDA has approved it for  
livestock.

NIGHT BOSS  
We're getting cow blood?

NICK  
Synthetic. And it's the only thing I  
can transfuse into both species that  
won't put your bodies into hemolytic  
shock. So unless you guys run a blood  
drive or stop getting shot, that's  
what I can put on a tax return.

As they EXIT into the back alley....

NIGHT BOSS  
You want 20,000 cc's?

NICK  
That a problem?

NIGHT BOSS  
Not to me. But you can ask him  
yourself.

Night Boss nods down the street. A pickup truck idling.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - DAY

Nick climbs in. Reinhart waiting in the driver's seat.

REINHART  
My new runner. How's he look?

NICK  
Checks out. I'll run some labs in a  
few days. Get him in the system.

Reinhart nods.

REINHART  
Listen I got a new job coming in. A  
request. From the outside.

NICK  
Carl, I told you. I don't want to  
meet anybody.

REINHART  
So don't meet anybody. It's nothing  
in the field. Nothing on call,  
nothing under the knife. It's a  
consult. Nothing face to face.  
(and then)  
Pays good.

Nick stares ahead.

NICK  
...Just a consult.

REINHART  
Just a consult.

On Nick. Reinhart throws the truck in gear.

INT. MECHANICS GARAGE - DAY

The two waiting as a bay door rises. Inside we find:

An enclosed auto shop. Five or six utility vehicles in various states. A man wheeling out from under one of them, called VAN GOGH (35) - Southern. Flannel and facial hair.

Van Gogh spotting NICK as he rises.

VAN GOGH

Doc.

He joins them as Reinhart leads Nick further inside, leading him to a stall in the back where we find:

An ARMORED BANK TRUCK. Beat up, rust on the fenders. And next to it...

A HORSE TRAILER. Aluminum, generic. A tow-rig like we saw in the beginning.

REINHART

Got the truck off an impound auction. Not pretty but she's for parts. Galvanized steel plating, run-flat tires, ballistic resistant windows. Whatever we need to take off her. We gotta turn that...

Points from the armored truck to the horse trailer.

REINHART (CONT'D)

...into that.

NICK

You want an armored horse trailer...

REINHART

On the outside. On the inside it's got to pass field inspection. Whatever track vets would move a million dollar horse in. Down to the paint job.

NICK

Race tracks don't use trailers. They use ambulances.

Reinhart and Van Gogh looking over. Nick continues.

NICK (CONT'D)

Air-suspended chassis, rear and side ramps. Safe-kick walls, digital in-floor scale that reports the horses tonnage and vitals in the cab.

(glancing over)

You got it backwards Carl. You've got to turn that...

He nods at the horse trailer, now over to the armored truck.

NICK (CONT'D)

Into that.

Reinhart processes. Curses under his breath. Nick turns to head back outside. Then hears...

REINHART

So, can you do it?

NICK

(stops, looks back)

You're serious.

We see he is.

NICK (CONT'D)

No. I can't. I'm not a mechanic  
Carl, I can barely change my oil-

VAN GOGH

Lady Juror and I can handle the fabrication and electrical.

REINHART

We'll do the body work, you just got to walk us through the equipment side. Order what you need, show us where it goes, and how it works.

NICK

...it's going to be expensive.

REINHART

Like I said, we've got an outside partner on this.

(a beat, then)

So, can you do it?

Nick staring at the two vehicles, mind running.

NICK  
Whatever this is for, I never leave  
the garage?

REINHART  
Not if you don't want to.

Nick turns, a direct look to Reinhart as he heads for the car.

NICK  
...I don't want to.

INT. UNDERGROUND SURGICAL FLOOR - DAY

The new crew member MOZART now sitting with Sondra for his labs. As she preps a syringe he looks across the room at Prospector, lying still in the gurney bed.

MOZART  
He going to be okay?

SONDRA  
(glancing over)  
Hard to say. Severe blood and fluid loss, put him in hypovolemic shock. We're monitoring him.

She rolls up Mozart's sleeve, feeling for a vein.

MOZART  
So where's the doc? Thought he'd be here.

SONDRA  
He's working offsite.  
(positioning the needle)  
Hold still.

Mozart winces, staring off as she draws his blood.

MOZART  
What's his deal anyway. How'd Reinhart find him.

SONDRA  
Find him? He's Reinhart's son-in-law.  
(off his look)  
Started it after Easter's wife died.  
Paid for his tuition. Down payment on his practice. They had a deal.

MOZART

What was the deal?

SONDRA

You are... and the others. Patch you up, set your breaks, write your scripts. And Nick gets...

(motioning all around her)  
Welcome to your new HMO.

As she detaches the blood vial... MUSIC RISES

SERIES

INT. AUTO GARAGE - DAY

Sparks flying, Van Gogh in welding goggles. WIDE TO:

He and Lady Juror perched atop the truck, Night Boss in the bg working a pneumatic lift, lowering the new chassis in place.

EXT. CARPENTER'S UNION BANK - DAY

REINHART making his way across the lot for the bank doors.

EXT. HAWTHORNE RACETRACK - DAY

Tracking NICK as he walks along the white fence. Horses running past us. A horn sounding somewhere. He continues on into...

INT. RACETRACK MOTORPOOL - DAY

Track vehicles housed inside: Landscaping, security and...

A small fleet of AMBULANCES. Large neon bodies, a reflective horse on the side. Nick nods to a passing maintenance worker, waits till they're gone then --

Starts pulling technical manuals from the garage shelf. He then slides into one of the ambulances, lifts his phone. FLASHES as he starts taking reference photos:

- Layouts... VIN numbers... instrument panels...

We catch a brand name: VET-Tech Diagnostics

EXT. AUTO GARAGE - DAY

A DELIVERY TRUCK backing up into the lot. "VET-TECH DIAGNOSTICS" on the side.

MOMENTS LATER

Van Gogh and Lady Juror dollying crates off the back. Van Gogh drops one inside the garage, turns back for more...

FLOATING TOWARD THE CARGO

A dozen crates stacked. Older ones against the wall. We PUSH IN toward the pallets in back, and now see THE CRATE FROM THE OPENER stored amongst the rest, a stencil across the side.

**"PROPERTY : CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT"**

PRELAP - the chime of an elevator.

INT. CHICAGO PD, MAJOR-CRIMES-UNIT OFFICES - NIGHT

The elevator opening, the forensic tech YANG stepping off. He scans the floor...

A few detectives congregating around Cook's desk. And off to the side: a lone desk lit up. A head down, working alone.

WITH PULASKI

Combing through records as Yang arrives beside him, tossing a report and evidence bag on the table.

YANG

Results on the stockyard case. Tarp came back. That secondary residue... *vitamin supplements*. A, K, B-12...

Pulaski leaning back from his screen.

PULASKI

What, like weight lifters?

YANG

No, get this: also traces of oat flakes, barley, yeast culture... all ingredient from any off-the-shelf feed store.

COOK (O.S.)

So one of 'em owns a dog.

Yang and Pulaski looking over. Cook has overhead, engaging now. Yang shakes his head.

YANG

These are large animal supplements.  
Cattle, farm shit like that.

One of the deputies (GRAZANO) slaps Cook's desk.

WEIR

There's your APB Cook. Chechens got knocked off by a bunch of 'roided-up cows off the Kennedy Expressway.

The group snickering. Cook catches a glare from Yang.

COOK

What? We'll look into it.

The group goes back to their conversation, moving on...

But Pulaski isn't, sliding over Yang's report. He opens it.

INT. AUTO GARAGE - DAY

The ambulance starting to take shape...

QUICK SHOTS OF -

- A LIGHT BAR is lowered to the roof.
- VAN GOGH in a respirator as he works a paint spray gun
- EMERGENCY VEHICLE decals being peeled off the side

INSIDE

Nick spot-checking the work as Van Gogh installs panels over *bullet-proof plating*. Nick comes to a partition in the floor, checks against his specs.

NICK

These panels in the subfloor.  
They're not on the layout.

VAN GOGH

Change of plans.

Van Gogh continues as Nick watches him, absorbing this.

NICK

...and the vent off the rear plate. It's not big enough for the saddle sling.

VAN GOGH  
Big enough for a twelve gauge and a-

NICK  
Okay.  
(holding him there)  
I don't want to know.

Van Gogh smirks, nods him over.

VAN GOGH  
C'mere a second.

Nick steps over, securing a panel for him. As Van Gogh rivets it in place Nick's eyes wander across the garage floor...

In the bay across he sees a TRUCK. All four wheels bizarrely removed, the words "Chicago Transit Authority" printed across the side.

NICK  
That what I think it is?

Van Gogh glances up at him, a wolfish grin.

VAN GOGH  
Said you didn't want to know doc.

On Nick, muting his conscience as he brushes it off, locks the next panel in place.

GARAGE - LATER

Mozart leaning over something inside the cab.

LOADING DOCK

Lady Juror, Nick and Van Gogh standing across the floor. Van Gogh reaches over, hits the shop lights.

The garage plunges into darkness. And then...

The room COMING ALIVE in an explosion of LIGHT. Roof lights pulsing, strobing, the sirens singing, a fireworks show of color and sound as Mozart test-cycles through the gauges.

Nick looking over, sees Lady Juror and Van Gogh bathed in red, grinning at him. It's *finished*.

Nick looks back at the ambulance, can't help but crack a grin himself.

EXT. JUVENILE CENTER - NIGHT

Looking inside as Nick signs himself out at the desk. He collects his ID, pushes through the doors, slowing as he sees...

REINHART on a bench. Smoking, waiting.

NICK

Hey.

Reinhart looks up, self-consciously stubs out his smoke.

REINHART

Hey.

NICK

...You here to go in?

REINHART

Nah just dropping off some magazines and stuff for him.

On Nick, can't help but be touched as Reinhart avoids eye contact.

INT. UNION STATION BAR & RESTAURANT - LATER

Two drinks getting low on the table. Spasms of laughter.

REINHART

...it's cataract surgery so I couldn't see the fucking phone to call a cab or nobody. End up taking the bus, holding some poor asshole's hand the whole time...

More laughter.

REINHART (CONT'D)

Chrissy calls me later, says sorry Sean's game went into overtime. Fucking peewee hockey going into sudden death.

NICK

Well what'd you want her to do?

REINHART

I dunno, send someone else. Tell you.

NICK

She did. I was with her at the game, but I wasn't fucking leaving. It was overtime.

This sets them off again. Nick's eyes flicker down, sees he still has the VISITOR'S PASS sticker from the juvenile center on his shirt. He quietly peels it off, shoves it in his pocket out of sight. Reinhart watches.

REINHART

You know it's not your fault. That he's in there.

NICK

(uncomfortable)

...Yeah, just wasn't um, I didn't...

He drifts off. They fall back into silence.

REINHART

He ever see anything?

NICK

Nah...

(and then)

But he knows. Even if he doesn't know what it is.

A beat. Reinhart stares at him a while.

REINHART

So what if he did?

(off Nick's look)

You know most people, their lives, they gotta walk a line. Buy, sell; hire 'em, fire 'em, vote innocent, send him to the chair. They gotta justify their answer. *Am I doing the right thing here?* Your job, the answer always gets to be the same. So if one day Sean walks in, what he's going to see is his old man next to someone, tryin' to keep the guy alive. Doesn't matter who he is: he got kids, he got a record, he's got fucking two heads. *Am I doing the right thing here?* If he's got a pulse, the answer, for you... it always gets to be yes.

Nick takes this in, fighting something else on his mind.

NICK

Carl I saw the crate, at the shop.  
You've got a Chicago PD weapons case  
in your garage... you got Prospector  
in a Pentobarbital fever-dream  
talking about a rat...  
(earnest with him now)  
Do I need to be worried?

Reinhart's eyes start to wander across the diner.

REINHART

You know we delivered the vehicle  
to our partner. The work, he was  
very impressed-

NICK

Carl...

Reinhart stops. Not planning on doing this here. Finally he  
leans in...

REINHART

We're putting something together.  
The ambulance, the transit car, the  
crate. It's all gearing up for one  
job. And this partner, he wants you  
in.

NICK

I don't like exposure. It  
complicates things.

REINHART

Nicky, the guys I pick, the guys I  
bring you. As long as we've been  
doing this have I ever brought in  
someone that complicated things?

Nick doesn't answer. They both know -- he never has.

REINHART (CONT'D)

This one, he's got access. His  
information, it's been good.  
(pausing, confiding now)  
And it's the kind of job that could  
really get a guy set.

A tone in his voice.

NICK

You thinking about being done?

REINHART

(coughs a laugh)

Retire? And what would I go do,  
fish? That's the difference between  
me and you, I don't want to be  
done.

(a beat)

But you could be.

Nick goes still, thrown by this. Reinhart continues...

REINHART (CONT'D)

Go, pay off your practice, hire a  
lawyer to fight this license shit,  
get Sean whatever help he needs.  
Hell bring him upstate, teach him  
to rehab old police horses or  
something.

Reinhart suddenly gets quiet. He leans in, sincere, *direct*.

REINHART (CONT'D)

I love that boy to fucking death. I  
know we had an agreement. But stick  
with me through the end of this  
one, and by the time he's out of  
that place, you and him don't gotta  
worry about things getting  
complicated ever again.

On Nick. Not answering here. Not being asked to. But he hears  
what Reinhart is offering... this is a ticket out.

INT. CHICAGO PD, MCU OFFICES - DAY

Working hours. Phones and conversations buzzing, drowned out  
by the sound of an OFFICE COPY MACHINE.

PULASKI leaning against the wall, waiting as it spits page  
after page out.

FEATURE

Papers collecting in the tray - we see it's printing a list  
of CHICAGO AREA RANCHES. Names. Addresses. *Hundreds*.

Pulaski peels the first page off the stack, starts for his desk.

PRELAP

The sound of footsteps running, gear shaking...

EXT. HAWTHORNE RACETRACK - DAY

Chasing behind Nick as he sprints across the track grass.

Ahead we see: the race has stopped, vehicles parked on the track, staff collecting around A HORSE, downed on its side.

A track vet kneeling next to it, DR. COTTER, horn-rimmed and confident. A JOCKEY with them, blood dripping from his brow.

COTTER

...been down since the bend...

Nick drops his gear bag, joins them beside the horse.

DR. COTTER

No motion. Think it's a total  
laminitis fracture.

NICK

Maybe...

He starts feeling along the limbs, running fingers up the bone, the joints, the fetlock...

NICK (CONT'D)

I don't feel it.

Dirt grinding behind them as one of the EQUINE AMBULANCES arrives. A driver getting out. Cotter rises, heads to them:

DR. COTTER

Possible in-field euthanization.  
We're going to pull the Xylazine-

NICK

No. Hold it... look at his eyes.

Cotter pausing. He and others looking over to the horse's face. Its walnut eye glazed open, flickering rapidly.

NICK (CONT'D)

Nystagmus.  
(his mind running, then)  
...it's a concussion.

He looks over: Cotter, gone pale at his wrong call. But Nick says nothing.

NICK (CONT'D)

C'mon help me get him over. Put him  
on his sternum.

As Nick and other ground crew brace to roll the horse -

EXT. HAWTHORNE RACETRACK, LOCKERS - LATER

Medical offices and equipment for the track. Audio feed from the race announcer echoing from a speaker in the corner.

A woman enters. Silver hair, logo on her fleece. This is senior track veterinarian CASSANDRA FOSTER.

She comes around the corner, finds Nick at his locker, unloading supplies from his gear bag, his shift over.

FOSTER

Trainer took Stage Coach to the university MRI. You were right. Nystagmus.

NICK

(glancing up briefly)  
Shouldn't be chronic. I didn't see any lameness in his gait.

FOSTER

Did you have any further notes, to add to Dr. Cotter's report?

NICK

...guy's a little trigger-happy with the lethal injections maybe.

Foster nods, on his side. She watches him pack, grimacing at what comes next:

FOSTER

Nick. I spoke to the track director... with the Cup staffing up, it's been decided that after this week we'll be bringing in Dr. Bohannon from U of I's program as our outside contractor.

Nick looks over, not expecting that. Studying her-

NICK

Am I being punished?

FOSTER

Officially, it has nothing to do with your probationary status, technically we aren't even allowed to discuss it but... well it's an optics thing. If something happened, and you were to call it wrong-

NICK

What, like I did today?

Foster goes quiet, knows he's right. Nick stares. Then, direct:

NICK (CONT'D)  
Am I done here, Cass?

No answer. Finally Nick turns away, knows it won't get him anywhere. She offers:

FOSTER  
I told the director I'm keeping you  
as an alternate. So, maybe if  
somebody steps down...

But Nick just resumes packing. They both know that won't happen. Foster hovers, searches for some words...

FOSTER (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry.

She leaves him there. He packs a few more things, stops.

He stares ahead... never out from under this thing...

EXT. JUVENILE CENTER - NIGHT

The sound of sneaker squeaks and wood scrapes on tile floors.

INT. JUVENILE CENTER - NIGHT

A rolled sock getting paddled across the floor... WIDE TO:

The visitation room. The chairs and tables pushed aside, NICK AND SEAN playing ad-hoc hockey with broomsticks.

Both talking shit as Sean guards a goal between two plants.

NICK  
...wide open, clapper right in  
there, goin' home...

SEAN  
No crossbar. What's gonna bail you out.

NICK  
Yeah? Alright, alright-

Nick suddenly plants *and fires*. Sean extends a leg, saves it with a foot, recovering it. A look to his dad, breathing hard.

NICK (CONT'D)  
Save it smart ass. It's the  
mileage, you'll get there.

Nick waves him on as he retreats back to his goal.

Sean brings it forward, concentrating now. Nick crouching in his corner, Sean working his stick, *then drives* - a quick decoy slap around Nick - the sock shooting past and in.

SEAN  
Hooo... that's game baby!

Sean's arms up, smug grin on his face. Nick eating it as he chases down the sock. Looking back:

His son wrapping his victory lap, stick in the air, smiling for the first time in a while. Sean sees his dad watching him:

SEAN (CONT'D)  
What?

Nick shrugs, "nothing." He tosses the sock back to him. But as Sean grabs his sneakers, taking a seat to slide them back on - Nick leans on his stick, watching him...

This was them once... This could be them again.

PRELAP:

REINHART (V.O.)  
...next job is a ride-along.

INT. AUTO GARAGE - DAY

Reinhart and the others gathered around a work bench. Nick now joining them. A utility street map laid out between them:

REINHART  
We cover what Nicky needs to know,  
get into the rest later.

Night Boss's finger starts tracing the map.

NIGHT BOSS  
Incursion on a stationary vehicle,  
northbound on Cicero. We enter  
westbound in the transit car, pinch  
them in here.

NICK  
Where's your partner?

NIGHT BOSS  
Off scene, supplied the intel. It's  
a five man run, one in the cab, one  
on the money, three on the vehicle.  
(MORE)

NIGHT BOSS (CONT'D)  
We are armed, they are armed.  
Points of fire here and here...  
(motioning to positions)  
Keep them covered, keep them  
inside. We access the cargo, return  
to the rail car.

VAN GOGH  
Where's the doc in all this?

REINHART  
Nicky's in the wagon on standby,  
two miles off our exit line. He  
doesn't see a gun that's not ours.  
We evac to him, torch the truck,  
make our exit. Everything goes to  
plan... he's doing nothing more  
than riding shot gun.

Mozart looks at the map, eying the standby point.

MOZART  
To get to there you're talking  
westbound from Cicero to Roosevelt.  
There's no road there.

NIGHT BOSS  
For us, there's a road.

MOZART  
And they're not going to follow?

NIGHT BOSS  
Not in what they're driving.

NICK  
You said five guys. Prospector...  
he's in no condition to operate on  
something like this-

REINHART  
I'm going.

A pause. Nick staring at him.

NICK  
That's a good idea? You don't keep  
them contained, that's a lot of  
free-fire.

REINHART  
That's why we got you.

A look. Nick feeling the weight. As Night Boss moves on...

EXT. LIVESTOCK AUCTION HOUSE - DUSK

Bleachers and stables under tin roofs. The sun getting low.

Pulaski emerges from a gate, starts for his car. He perches on the hood a moment, pulls a fold of papers from his blazer.

It's the list of Vet Ranches. We see he's working his way down, dozens already checked, question-marked, crossed out.

He marks the next one off, spits, climbs into the car.

INT. SURGICAL FLOOR - NIGHT

CLOSE ON a ventilator, pumping softly beside Prospector's bed.

ACROSS THE ROOM

Nick looking over from a desk, paused from his work. Prospector's chest rising, face still. Nick stares, still unsettled by what he heard several nights ago.

Suddenly a BUZZER sounding, a wall cable leading topside.

Nick looks up, glances at his phone: nothing. The buzzer sounds again, repeating, frantic now.

He rises, calls the stable's freight elevator down.

EXT. VETERINARY RANCH - NIGHT/MOMENTS LATER

Floating behind Nick as he stalks toward the main gate.

He pauses beside his truck, quietly reaches into the tool chest in the bed, lifts out --

A 16 GAUGE SHOTGUN

On-hand for putting down animals in the field. He continues ahead, the buzzing louder now. A fist banging on the corrugated wall. Nick goes to a barred window slot, slides it open, eyes going wide -

OUTSIDE

An INJURED MAN pressed against the wall outside, holding his stomach. Hearing the slot open he rushes over. Covered in sweat, words sputtering...

INJURED MAN

I need help... I'm hurt man, I'm hurt, I need to get in...

Nick's eyes freezing, seeing his condition.

INJURED MAN (CONT'D)  
C'mon you're... you're him right?

NICK  
I don't know what you mean...

INJURED MAN  
Nonono I'm, I'm one of your guys...  
One of Reinhart's guys.

NICK  
I don't know you.

The man winces, a wave of pain --

INJURED MAN  
*Please man please. I'm shot, I got, it's in my... I think it's in my fuckin' ribs man...*

NICK  
...what's your number?

The injured man pauses between heavy breaths, thrown.

NICK (CONT'D)  
Your number. What's your number?

INJURED MAN  
I don't... they didn't...  
(grasping now)  
Eighty-six. I'm eighty-six.

He's guessing.

Nick starts to slide the window closed.

INJURED MAN (CONT'D)  
No, wait! Waitwai... people say, I heard things, people say you fix us.

His eyes bloodshot, pleading. Nick stares, terrified himself. He eyes the blood pooling in the dirt at the man's feet.

Finally --

NICK  
There's a gas station a mile and a half down. Don't come here again.

INJURED MAN  
No wait I'll pay! I'll get you  
whatever you need, please, PLEA-

The slot *shuts*.

CUT TO BLACK:

INT. CAR/MOVING - MORNING

Pulaski drives down a forest road, rounds the bend...

AHEAD

Squad cars and an ambulance parked. No lights. No sirens.

EXT. SERVICE ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Pulaski pulls over, climbs out. Glances at --

DET. COOK, standing aside with a medical technician. As they confer Pulaski walks past, looks down into the ditch.

A white cloth over an outline. He skid-steps down into the ravine, lifts the sheet back --

The INJURED MAN now lying face up, dead. His mouth frozen open in a painful grimace, the weeds around him dried in blood.

Pulaski climbs out of the ditch, starts wiping dirt from his hands, as he surveys the scene, pauses --

DOWN THE ROAD

A certain METAL RANCH GATE in the distance.

EXT. HAWTHORNE RACETRACK - DAY

The track's billboard screen cycling through upcoming events:

**...GOLDEN HOUR PICK 4...**

**...MARCH 9TH SPRING NATIONALS...**

**...44th ANNUAL THOROUGHBRED CUP...**

BELOW - STABLE LOT

A green starter gate being hauled away. As it clears-

NICK working with a stable hand, soft clicks from his mouth as he soothes a horse into the back of a trailer.

A blurred figure leans on the fence in the distance, calls out:

MAN (O.S.)  
Doctor Easter?

Nick leans inside, starts securing the horse --

NICK  
Yeah...

MAN (O.S.)  
I was told I might find you here.  
Do you have a moment?

NICK  
Not really. In the middle of  
wrapping out. What's it about?

Nick finishes and looks over, sees PULASKI at the fence holding up his badge, flashing a smile.

EXT. HAWTHORNE RACETRACK, GRANDSTAND SEATS - MOMENTS LATER

Empty this early. Scattered with daily players, old men and addicts. Races going in the background as they speak. Nick and Pulaski sit a few seats apart.

PULASKI  
...And you were there all night.

NICK  
I was. But 'there' runs forty-five acres off the road.

PULASKI  
So you didn't hear anything after hours?

NICK  
...after hours, a client calls. If they don't, they're not a client.

Pulaski nods, accepting that.

PULASKI  
I was reading up on you on the way over.  
Says you did four years as a paramedic before going back for veterinary surgery. Bit of a left turn isn't it.

NICK  
The patients. Liked them better.  
(a confessing shrug)  
Not much of a people person.

They fall back into silence a moment, watching the race a while. And then --

PULASKI

You know a guy from my last precinct is over here now. Works security. Says you can never hear the outside when you're here. No sirens, no cell phones. Just the horses running, the crowd reacting. Like it could still be the thirties or something.

(glancing at Nick)  
You like it?

NICK

When I'm here. The practice though, that's my real work.

Pulaski watches him.

PULASKI  
Can I come see it?

Nick turns at this, thrown.

PULASKI (CONT'D)  
Listen this guy, the John Doe on the road, he's a bad dude. Close as we found him, whatever's going down out there I'd hate for it to end up on your doorstep next.

Nicks nods slowly, absorbing this as he gazes at the track.

PULASKI (CONT'D)  
So you don't mind? Me coming out.

A beat.

NICK  
...we'll see you there.

EXT. VETERINARY RANCH - DAY

Nick's pickup pulls in, the gate closing behind him.

IN THE TRUCK

As he puts it in park, sits there. He looks pale, visibly shaken, then looking out through the windshield, sees:

## HOLDING STABLES

A plume of cigarette smoke drifting up from behind the wall.

## EXT. HOLDING STABLES - MOMENTS LATER

Reinhart stands beside an American Quarter Horse, its coat greying with age. He scratches its neck, glances up as he sees Nick approach.

REINHART

Been a while since I'd seen my boy  
here...

Reinhart pulls another apple from his pocket. As the horse chews at it Reinhart holds its lip, reveals the faded numbers tattooed on its gums.

REINHART (CONT'D)

Numbers are getting a little soft.  
Suppose that's a good thing though,  
being around long enough to fade.

He flashes a grin, his own aging tattoo just visible beneath his lip. The grin falling as he takes in Nick's face.

Something's wrong here.

## INT. STABLES - MOMENTS LATER

The barn door rolled closed. A private argument going here...

NICK

...they found the guy, half a  
fucking mile from here...

REINHART

Nicky he wasn't one of mine.

NICK

That's the problem, it is out. This  
cop, they came to my work...

REINHART

He pulled my medical license, These guys, they don't know  
he knew my records- nothin-

NICK (CONT'D)

(rising above)

Carl he was *right here!* ...and he  
is coming back.

Letting this sink in.

NICK (CONT'D)

For years, this has worked because we have been smart. We have been careful. But now, you're asking for us to be lucky. And I cannot let that happen.

REINHART

It won't. We are close here. You take this ride-along, you finish this job and goddamnit we are *there*.

But Nick just stares, wrestling with something. Finally --

NICK

I know what you pulled me from, after juvie, after Chrissy. I know what I owe you... But I need something for Sean to come back to.

REINHART

We'll handle the money Nicky...

NICK

I need *someone*, for him to come back to.

A tone in his voice.

REINHART

What are you saying?

NICK

...I'm saying, I'm done.

Dead silence. Nick eventually looks away. Then --

NICK (CONT'D)

I will be on call tomorrow, I will monitor Prospector till he's back on his feet, but after that...

He trails off, sees Reinhart isn't listening anymore. To him this wasn't just the end of a job. It was the end of an era.... this was family.

The two men stand there.

EXT. VETERINARY RANCH - MOMENTS LATER

Sondra carries two buckets across the yard, pausing as Reinhart exits from the stables, heads for his truck.

Nick emerges moments later, no eye contact as he passes her.

NICK  
I'm on call. Go home.

He disappears inside the clinic. Sondra looks back across the yard, eyeing Reinhart's truck suspiciously as it drives away.

PRELAP

NIGHT BOSS (V.O.)  
What the fuck we do now?

INT. AUTO GARAGE - DAY

Reinhart watching as Night Boss paces the room, agitated.

NIGHT BOSS  
You know the terms. He's not going to go for it. He needs the doc in, all the way, or none of this works.

REINHART  
Then it doesn't work.

NIGHT BOSS  
It's gotta fuckin' work! We're five months in. Heywood's divorce, Ford's kid, both of Sadler's knees are fucking shot. We traded three other jobs for this. We pull out now we get nothing for that.

REINHART  
We'll work with it. We'll figure it out.

Night Boss stalks to the window, jaw grinding, mind running.

NIGHT BOSS  
Maybe let me talk to the doc, get him to rethink this. Make him s-

Night Boss suddenly being spun, pinned against the wall. Finds REINHART, fist clenching his shirt. Fast and physical, an old tiger still savage when called to be. He leans in...

REINHART  
Nobody touches Nicky. He is protected.  
(inches from him)  
You tell me you understand that.

Night Boss breathes, nods.

Reinhart releases him, the adrenaline draining. He still hears Night Boss's point though, taking a seat...

REINHART (CONT'D)  
I'll call our guy in. Meet. Find a  
way to maybe keep this in play-

CUT OFF as the garage buzzer sounds. The two men going quiet,  
Someone's outside.

MOMENTS LATER

As the bay door rises up:

SONDRA waiting there outside, a gear bag slung over her  
shoulder. Nervous energy as she meets their eyes. Finally -

SONDRA  
Take me... I can do it.

CUT TO:

BLACK. Then the far away sound of thunder rumbling...

EXT. VETERINARY RANCH - DAWN

A damning grey sky hanging overhead. In the distance we see  
Nick leading in two horses from the pasture.

AT THE FENCE

As he unlatches the gate, waiting as they trot inside. He  
glances up at the sky. A troubling electricity in the air.

As the wind starts...

EXT. RAILROAD CROSSING - MORNING

A FREIGHT TRAIN barreling past us. Metal screaming. WIDE to:  
THE INTERSECTION

Rush hour for the morning commute. Six lanes of wall to wall  
traffic waiting as the train clears, cars inching forward as  
the gate rises...

DOWN THE TRACK

A RAIL-WORKER hovering over a signal box. We see its MOZART,  
offers up a wave to the conductor as the train passes.

As it rides off a walkie on Mozart's vest chirps to life. Mozart palms it, listens a beat. He turns back to the signal box, reaching in as he glances back toward the intersection.

EXT. RAILROAD CROSSING - SAME

The bell sounding, red lights ticking as the cross bar starts to RE-LOWER, the last cars slipping through..

The ones not making it boxing each other in, commuters in sedans, painters in cargo vans, and five cars back...

AN ARMORED BANK TRUCK

INT. ARMORED TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

As it grinds to a stop. Two bank delivery guards in the cab, WILKINS driving, cursing under his breath as his partner CUSACK reaches for the radio on the dash.

CUSACK (INTO RADIO)  
Truck 141 on blue route. Make it  
twenty minutes out to next drop.

He sits back, wipes his nose as he settles in.

CUSACK (CONT'D)  
I'm putting in for afternoons. This  
early-bird shit's not working.

WILKINS  
You're gonna miss that OT.

CUSACK  
Laura's starting overnights. I  
gotta take the boys in the morning.  
I'm telling her we just move back  
over to PS 170 we could-

WILKINS  
....the hell is that...

Wilkins isn't listening, staring out his window.

EXT. RAILROAD CROSSING - CONTINUOUS

Drivers in surrounding cars awaiting the train, craning necks to look down the track. But emerging from around the bend...

A PICK-UP TRUCK driving directly on the train tracks, tires replaced with a retrofitted METAL TRAIN-WHEEL MOUNT coming into view. This is called a **High-Rail**.

As it pulls to a stop on the tracks a WORK CREW climbs out, jumping past a municipal logo printed across the doors:

"CHICAGO TRANSIT AUTHORITY"

The rail truck from Reinhart's garage. We see now the crew is:

LADY JUROR and REINHART, hard hats and safety glasses, reaching for gear while NIGHT BOSS hooks a rubber hose line into a GAS TANK in the back, starts unspooling it...

Glimpses of annoyed drivers as Night Boss passes, dragging it under the cross bar and down the row of cars.

INT. ARMORED TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Watching as Night Boss approaches...

WILKINS  
Where the fuck is this guy goin'...

...Night Boss walks past, then STOPS at the back of the ARMORED TRUCK. He kneels, begins screwing the gas line into the truck's rear wheel.

Seeing it:

WILKINS (CONT'D)	CUSACK
Hey, hey what the fuck is	(grabbing radio)
this asshole-	Dispatch truck 141 we got a
	situat-

FUMP FUMP FUMP! Both guards flinching as BLACK PAINT starts exploding against the windshield, the cab going dark.

EXT. ARMORED TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

REINHART unloading across the windows with a paintball gun, blacking them out.

Behind him MOZART and LADY JUROR now shouldering HK53 assault rifles, keeping watch on the commuter cars as Reinhart drops the paint gun for a pistol, continuous forward to the truck's drivers-side door.

He leans in against it, calling to the men inside:

REINHART  
(voice raised)  
Your run flat tires are now being filled with Chlorine Trifluoride gas. When ignited it will explode at 2,400 degrees Celsius, at which point we will enter the vehicle...

INT. ARMORED TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Reinhart's muffled voice continues as the guards scramble inside --

REINHART (O.S.)  
We have ten men and four cars watching your doors. Do not bring your guns out, do not bring yourselves out...

WILKINS Jesus fuck there's fucking ten of them!?	CUSACK (yelling into radio now) ...hit by armed assailants, repeat <i>multiple vehicles</i> -
---	---

INT. CHICAGO PD, MCU OFFICES - DAY

Following behind Deputy Detective GRAZANO as he rushes down the MCU floor, a fax fluttering in his hand as he heads for an office at the end of the row.

INT. COOK'S OFFICE, MCU OFFICES - CONTINUOUS

Cook looking up as Grazano arrives in the doorway, waves the paper up.

GRAZANO  
Guardian dispatch just called in a vehicle robbery in progress off the Cicero metro.

COOK  
Ok, so let it go to District 10.

GRAZANO  
We got cell phone shots from witnesses on the ground. Gunmen are carrying an H&K53, with a modded third-party magpul attached to the trigger guar-

Cook already putting it together, pushing out of his seat and rushing for the door. *They've got their guys.*

INT. CPD PATROL CARS - AROUND THE CITY - VARIOUS

The report coming over the police band. Uniformed officers hitting the lights, pulling out.

EXT. CHICAGO PD, OFFICERS LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Cook exploding out the door, heading for the cars, suddenly cut off by --

PULASKI, breaking hard in his Dodge Charger.

COOK  
320 in Archer Heights-

PULASKI  
(shoving the door open)  
I got it I got it, get in.

EXT. RAILROAD CROSSING - DAY

A CONSTRUCTION WORKER inside his car, breathing heavy as he watches the heist unfold. Out his window:

MOZART now kneeling in the bed of the high-rail truck.

WITH HIM

CLOSE ON: the pressure gauge going up on the gas tank...

Mozart watching beside it. As it hits **40 psi** he turns to the others, fires off a sharp whistle.

ARMORED TRUCK

Hearing it Night Boss unhooks from the tires, clears the gas line as he reaches into his vest, pulls out...

Two NEON ORANGE CYLINDERS. Reinhart and the others stepping back as he uncaps the tips:

IGNITES THEM. We see now - they're **ROAD FLARES.**

INT. ARMORED TRUCK - AT THAT MOMENT

WILKINS straining to watch through a small gap in the paint.

WILKINS  
...oh goddamn...

CUSACK  
What's he doing now?

Wilkins doesn't answer, continues to watch as:

OUTSIDE

Night Boss rolls the flares across the asphalt, pins them next to the tires. He clears back with the others...

ON THE GROUND: flares scorching... tire rubber glowing red...

IN THE TRUCK

CUSACK (CONT'D)  
What? What the fuck's he doing?

WILKINS  
...oh Goddamn!

OUTSIDE

CLOSE ON the tires, bubbling now... melting in the heat and...

FOOOOOM! The rear of the truck BUCKING UP - steel bolts whizzing past - a PLUME OF FLAMES erupting out. As the smoke clears:

The truck's axle now ON THE GROUND, rear wheel wells blown open - A HOLE now leading into the back.

Reinhart and Night Boss clearing it as Lady Juror starts over, two heavy duffels now hanging off her shoulders.

She slides them inside the truck, climbs in after them --

INT. DODGE CHARGER/MOVING - DAY

Pulaski swerving through traffic, sirens blaring overhead.

COOK (INTO RADIO)  
I need a twenty, all inbound units to Cicero metro.

CPD PATROL CAR 1 (OVER RADIO)  
...8324, locked in at 54th and Cermak.

CPD PATROL CAR 2 (OVER RADIO)  
8199. Jammed westbound on 47th...

COOK (INTO RADIO)  
Then take the fucking *eastbound*!

Pulaski cuts a turn, comes fast around the corner...

INTERSECTION

A WALL OF TRAFFIC backed up the block. Pulaski *swerves to avoid a collision, jumps the curb, clips a mailbox as they skid to a stop.*

Gazing ahead: Cars gridlocked for miles, horns honking.

COOK (CONT'D)  
Christ...

Pulaski tries to reverse, cars behind him already starting to block them in. He slams the horn...

PULASKI  
Stupid mother... move goddamnit!!

COOK  
(looking ahead)  
Cicero's off the Stevenson onramp.  
Fuckers knew they'd be backing up traffic twelve lights deep.

Pulaski gives up, snaps up the radio.

PULASKI (INTO RADIO)  
Central you get a CPD chopper over there?

CENTRAL (OVER RADIO)  
Negative. Substation has suspended lines over the metro track. Air traffic is working on clearance, sayin' twenty minutes.

COOK  
That's too long...

PULASKI  
(to Cook)  
What do you want me to do, fucking dig the next twenty blocks.  
(back into radio)  
What about highway patrol, put a bike en route - Hell call Lincoln Park, get a mounted unit *on his fucking horse and-*

Pausing as Cook suddenly kicks his door open, climbs out --

PULASKI (CONT'D)  
Cook! Hey- hey!

Cook hits the street, starts to run.

EXT. GRAVEL ROAD - AT THAT MOMENT

CLOSE ON:

A cell phone, GPS map pulled up, traffic patterns in the red across the grid.

DISPATCH (O.S.)(OVER RADIO)  
...arial unit 10LL - Marine  
Heliport... green and awaiting  
clearance...

WIDE TO:

TRAIN TRACKS cutting through a lightly wooded area.

The horse trailer pulled over beside them. Sondra in back, nervously checking and rechecking medical gear as Van Gogh monitors the police scanner.

He listens a moment longer, grabs his walkie --

VAN GOGH (INTO RADIO)  
We got air support ready to  
launch...

EXT. RAILROAD CROSSING - AT THAT MOMENT

Mozart at the High-Rail's driver's door, set to roll.

VAN GOGH (OVER RADIO)  
...reporting ten minutes out.

ARMORED TRUCK

REINHART - clocking the watch on the underside of his wrist, walkies back:

REINHART (INTO RADIO)  
Copy. We're two and out.

He looks over just as...

The first duffel slides out onto the road. Night Boss standing by, shoulders it and starts for the high-rail truck.

Reinhart takes his place as the second bag slides out. He hoists it up --

FOLLOWING HIM

As he retreats back to the high-rail. And then...

...a handgun behind him coming into frame.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
S-stop there. Both of you.

REVERSE TO:

The CONSTRUCTION WORKER now out of his car, angry but nervous as all hell, a personal hand gun held at Reinhart's back.

CONSTRUCTION WORKER  
You're going to slide off the gun,  
s-set it down, then the bag.

AT THE HIGH-RAIL TRUCK

Mozart seeing it, whipping his rifle up, starts barreling forward-

Reinhart holds his hand up, stopping him there.

A beat. Reinhart calmly slides his gun to the street, drops the bag beside it, turning slowly to face the man. Arms raising...

REINHART  
Hey we ain't here to hurt anybody.  
So just... cut the good samaritan  
act. We leave, you leave.

Construction Worker sweating now, considers this. Then he re-focuses the gun on Night Boss, frozen several steps ahead.

CONSTRUCTION WORKER  
Now you. Drop th-

His head violently jerks back, black paint exploding across his face -

LADY JUROR

Emerging from the bank truck, firing the dropped paint gun from the ground. The worker reels, blinded, fires off a wild shot. In a flash Reinhart twists his gun to drop, uses his own to pistol whip the guy. The worker drops hard, out cold.

Reinhart gripping both guns now, starts trotting back to the high-rail. As he does...

A wild smile, elation washing over his face. The thrill, the adrenaline. Like he told Nick: *this is where he wants to be.*

Tossing his bag in as he reaches the high-rail --

REINHART  
Son of a bitch. Guy came outta-

The rear window suddenly BLOWS. Glass raining, a volley of gunfire hitting the back of the truck.

IN THE DISTANCE

COOK - drenched in sweat, firing as he approaches down the block...

The crew crouching as sparks fly. Night Boss looks over, sees Reinhart grasping the edge of truck bed. HE'S HIT.

Lady Juror pounds the roof - the high-rail jerking into motion on the tracks as she takes position, *exchanging cover fire* -

As they race away Night Boss pulls Reinhart in, already looking pale. Night Boss secures him, swings around, honing in his sites on Cook...

COOK - honing in on Night Boss...

A shot *fires*.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Pulaski arriving at the scene, flush, breathing hard. He rushes forward, kneels beside -

COOK

On the ground, blood pumping from his neck, staring up with confused eyes. Pulaski collects his gun, rises up to see:

THE HIGH-RAIL disappearing down the track, a one way street no one can follow. Pulaski returns to Cook, grips his walkie -

PULASKI (INTO RADIO)  
(panicked)  
Cicero and 42nd officer down - we  
need an ambulance here --

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. VETERINARY RANCH -

The horse trailer doors FLYING OPEN - Lady Juror and Mozart hopping out, their vests smeared in blood.

NICK rushing, coming around the corner, going to still as he sees:

REINHART on the gurney inside. Sondra over him, pumping his chest, covered in blood herself. She looks up at Nick. Eyes wide. Out of her depth.

Nick only takes a beat.

NICK  
Where.

SONDRA  
Lower thoracic cavity. Somewhere in  
his diaphr-

NICK  
Anterior or ventral.

SONDRA  
Ventral, I-I think, I didn't see  
it. He's under .08 over 80 kilos  
vecuronium-

NICK  
You gave him paralytics!? He's  
anaphylactic - his pressure's under  
90 he's going into shock...

On Sondra. Oh god.

Nick takes over, starts pumping.

NICK (CONT'D)  
Get the radiograph ready. Chest  
seal and decompression needle -

Sondra doesn't move, still in shock.

NICK (CONT'D)  
Move goddamnit!

She runs off. Nick continues working, sees the others looking on -- looking down -- looking away... Reinhart's body cold and blue, jerking as Nick continues to pump...

And pump... and pump...

EXT. VETERINARY RANCH - LATER

Time passing. Storm clouds moving on in the distance. Bugs swarming the barn lights.

There is not a soul in sight.

EXT. VETERINARY RANCH - NEXT MORNING

HANDS spinning a valve open on a tank...

Pressing an ignition switch, dry-firing clicks...

Latching shut a heavy metallic door...

MOMENTS LATER

INSIDE THE CREMATOR FURNACE - flames silently burning, consuming a body wrapped in sheets.

OUTSIDE Nick watches through the furnace window. Drained and lost. 'Not new to it. Never gets used to it.'

He turns at the sound of a screen door snapping shut:

ACROSS THE YARD -

Sondra emerging from the office, two backpacks and a box in her hands. She walks them to her car - a silent look passing between them. Blame... Shame... she is not coming back.

As she drives off Nick's gaze wanders over to -

The stables.

INT. STABLES - SAME

The grey quarter stallion in his pen, Reinhart's assigned horse. Nick leans in, petting him a moment...

...then reluctantly reaches over, slides the gate bolt open.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Floating behind the horse trailer as it rides down the highway, getting further from the city.

UP FRONT: Nick in the driver's seat, alone.

EXT. HIGHWAY - AFTERNOON

Later now. Nick's truck taking an exit. No services.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - AFTERNOON

Barbed wire prairie fence running along a dusty road. The truck inching down it - passing a sign:

**BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**

**Protected Range**

EXT. RANGE FIELD - DUSK

The horse trailer now open and empty. Nick coiling the last of a harness, looking out at:

A HERD OF WILD HORSES in the distance. No brands. No saddles. We might realize now: these are the horses from the opening.

Down field: Reinhart's quarter horse. Released, not yet joining the herd. Nick watches him a while. Empty inside.

INT. JUVENILE CENTER - NIGHT

Watching through the chicken-wire window as Nick stands with his son. Hearing the news Sean buries his face in Nick's shoulder. Nick embraces him, his own eyes bloodshot.

INT. CPD HEADQUARTERS, CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Pulaski staring off as a voice off-screen deposes him.

VOICE (O.S.)  
...at which point you arrived at the scene to find detective Cook no longer responsive... is that accurate?

Pulaski nods, withdrawn. Simmering.

VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Now the weapons recovered at the scene indicate multiple 5.56...

As the voice drones on Pulaski's eyes drift to the window: A CAPTAIN in the hallway outside, standing with an older woman and two grown daughters. Eyes red rimmed from crying. Cook's wife and kids.

INT. PULASKI'S CAR - LATER

Pulaski drives alone.

INT. ASSISTED LIVING FACILITY - DAY

Upscale. A salon on one side, physical therapy pool on the other. Residents and nurses criss-crossing as Pulaski makes his way down the hall, a stack of flowers in his hand.

INT. ROOM, ASSISTED LIVING FACILITY - DAY

A middle-aged man passed out in a chair by the door. A slight resemblance to Pulaski.

Across the room an elderly woman (LENORA) reads in bed, looking up as Pulaski enters. He motions to his unconscious brother in the chair, unsurprised.

PULASKI

He watching you good?

LENORA

Who's watching who.

Pulaski spots a tall-boy can in his brother's lap about to spill. He lifts it, sets it on the table next to a picture board. As he replaces the old flowers in the vase...

PULASKI

Where's Ronnie? Thought he was coming up.

LENORA

Said he got an interview, something in Peoria, I don't know... he asked about the check. Said it was late.

PULASKI

It's not late, he just blew through the one he's got. I'll get him later...

(he resets the vase)

And Terry?

Lenora just shrugs. *It's Terry.*

Pulaski drags another chair over to her bedside, kisses his mother's head as he collapses back into it.

LENORA

You're off early, they switching shifts on you?

PULASKI

Nah got the next couple days off.

LENORA

Well I get my haircut today, you  
can come with me. What day is it,  
Tuesday?

PULASKI

It's Friday ma...

Then he notices the picture board by her bedside. A beat.

PULASKI (CONT'D)

...you got some new art.

Lenora looks at the board. Starts leaning over for it --

LENORA

Oh, yeah...

She unpins a HAND DRAWN PICTURE on purple construction paper, offering it to him. He reluctantly takes it, looking down, taking it in: Something from a child. Birds in crayon.

LENORA (CONT'D)

They stopped by to visit last week.  
You see them?

Pulaski plays it off, shakes his head.

PULASKI

No, I get her for a weekend next  
month.

He sets the drawing back on the nightstand. Distant now. They fall back into silence.

LENORA

...you look tired Jimmy.

Pulaski just forces a quiet smile, watching her instead. Then he reaches forward, takes the beer can, takes a slow sip.

INT. REINHART'S CONDO - DAY

Luxury without excess. Marble fireplace with take-out containers in the recycling. We hear the sound of packing tape...

BEDROOM

Nick going through Reinhart's things, saving personal items.

Flipping through an open box, we see glimpses of Reinhart's past: An Army base in the 70s, a Local 63 union baseball team, a full-haired Reinhart with a baby girl in the pool...

Nick pauses at one. A wedding photo: A younger Nick as the groom, holding a WOMAN we haven't seen before. Beside her is REINHART - standing stock still, proud.

Nick gazes down on this one, quiet, takes it in...

NIGHT BOSS (O.S.)  
Guy saved everything right?

Nick glancing up, Night Boss in the doorway. Nick smirks, slides the photo back into the stack...

NICK  
I found some stock certificates for  
the Chicago Sparta. Never gave up  
we were getting a soccer team. You  
want anything?

NIGHT BOSS  
Nah. I grabbed the whiskey.

They share a smile. Nick resumes boxing up. Then --

NIGHT BOSS (CONT'D)  
Doc...

He looks up, a tone in Night Boss's voice. All warmth gone.

NIGHT BOSS (CONT'D)  
You and me, we gotta take a ride.

EXT. SOUTH SIDE STREET - DAY

Watching a Pontiac TransAm approach. It slows, pulling to the curb across from the AUTO GARAGE.

INT. TRANS-AM - SAME

Night Boss puts it in park, keeps the engine running.

NIGHT BOSS  
Head on inside.

Nick peers toward the garage, wondering what this is. He looks at Night Boss - no eye contact, staring ahead.

Nick opens the door.

INT. AUTO GARAGE - DAY

MOZART closing the door behind Nick as he enters. Nearby Lady Juror and Van Gogh casually flanking the exits, everyone a little stiff.

Nick reads the room, smirks to himself. *Fuck it.*

NICK  
Lady Juror, how's the knee.

Lady Juror flushes, shrugs lightly. Van Gogh steps up, motions across the garage toward the enclosed glass office.

VAN GOGH  
Why don't you go take a seat doc.  
(and then)  
He's waiting for you.

On Nick, going still. *He?*

Following Nick as he slowly starts over:

Ahead: The office windows fogged with grease, a blurred silhouette inside, chair creaking as they wait at the desk.

Nick approaches, comes around the doorway...

INT. OFFICE, AUTO GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

A chipped desk. A fluorescent light overhead.

And DETECTIVE PULASKI waiting in the chair. A tired smile spreading across his face as he sees Nick.

PULASKI  
Doctor Easter. Oh what a winding wicked road I have journeyed to fuckin' get to you.

Pulaski motions to a chair. Nick finally sits.

PULASKI (CONT'D)  
Hard man to find.

NICK  
...You knew where I was.

PULASKI  
Yeah. But I had to make sure you were you.

Pulaski watches him a moment --

PULASKI (CONT'D)

You know, at the station we'd all heard the stories, about a guy out there, works with a crew. Some said he was a junkie doc that lost his license, or a plastic surgeon from fuckin' Bolivia or something...

(then)

And some said... the guy worked on horses.

A look. Nick offers nothing back. Pulaski continues -

PULASKI (CONT'D)

Kind of a legend. Or a bullshit rumor, that's what I figured anyway. Until one day, I'm dealing Reinhart some intel on a job, and in his truck, right there on the dash, he's got a whole bag of fuckin' apples. He tells me: he's going to see a friend, and play some numbers. And right then, that was very, very interesting to me.

(leaning in)

See my guy at the track, the ex-partner I told you about, he's always had an idea. But for it to work, it took four things. And that last thing... was you.

(staring, direct now)

But Reinhart, he wouldn't do it. Wouldn't arrange a meet, wouldn't give you up, said it was your choice. I didn't know if you were a woman, a man, a fucking jockey midget. So, I tried following your work. Even sent out some uh, feelers.

Nick's face tightens, comprehension entering.

NICK

The man at the gate, four nights ago, that was you.

Pulaski doesn't answer, instead rubs the bridge of his nose.

PULASKI

You're very careful Dr. Easter. And very stubborn.

(and then)

But once Reinhart died, Night Boss was... well, he's a more reasonable man to money.

NICK

I don't want your money.

PULASKI

Good cause I don't have it yet.

A grin, falling as he reaches down for a manila file folder.

PULASKI (CONT'D)

But what I do have is this...

(opening it, reads aloud)

"Easter, Sean Patrick. Two counts  
felony possession, two counts  
delivery of a controlled substance,  
one count possession with intent..."

...Nick stiffening as he reads...

PULASKI (CONT'D)

"...current placement Illinois  
Juvenile Rehabilitation South.  
Parole contingent, awaiting final  
sentencing evaluation..."

Pulaski drifts off, lowers the file, staring at him soberly.

PULASKI (CONT'D)

Look, I know where you're coming from.  
I do. But then you gotta know, I make  
a call... next bunk check, they find  
something in his mattress. Do you get  
how simple that would be? To vanish  
that release date? They find a baggie  
in his kit, he pisses a dirty test...  
do you appreciate how simple it would  
be to make sure the next seven years -  
the only way you're talking to him is  
through a vent in the *fuckin' glass*?  
Cause' Doctor, I make a call and-

Metal on cement scraping as Nick suddenly *kicks the desk*,  
pinning Pulaski as Nick LAUNCHES himself over the top - both  
men crashing back.

Nick over him on the ground, elbow slicing air as he reels  
back and punches him again, *again, again* --

Blood splattering, wet meat and bone crunching - Nick with no  
intent to stop - pistonning back - his arms suddenly bound as  
Mozart and Van Gogh rush into the room, restraining him.

Nick fighting them, bucking hard as Pulaski takes stock of his  
nose, spitting as he looks up through a copper blood mouth.

PULASKI (CONT'D)

...I get it. Listen, I liked Carl.  
But whatever arrangement you two  
had, died with him.

Nick's own lip bleeding now, quivering in rage, in fear, in hate. About to lunge again --

A gun stock hammers down on his skull. The world goes DARK.

PRELAP

The drum beat of hooves hitting dirt.

EXT. PASTURE - DUSK (**THE PAST**)

Nick flying across a field on a ghost white APPALOOSA horse. HIS horse. We see it's winter now, snow blanketing the ground. Nick clean shaven. Eyes no longer bloodshot. This is the past.

Nick stares ahead, riding hard toward nothing particular in the distance.

EXT. OVERLOOK - DUSK

Purples and greys of a Chicagoland dusk. It's a captivating sunset but Nick isn't watching, his eyes instead down...

Staring at HIS HANDS. Dried red crusting his fingers. Blood. This might be post-operation.

Nick rubs at the skin, slowly at first, scraping with his nails, then faster, tougher, trying to clear it all away.

INT. CLINIC, VETERINARY RANCH - NIGHT

Nick pushes through the door, the white Appaloosa now put away in the barn behind him. Nick calls out:

NICK

Sean?

Nick starts hanging his jacket...

NICK (CONT'D)

Hey you here yet? Puck drops at seven, we don't leave now we gotta take the train in...

He listens, nothing back. He continues into...

## OFFICE

Nick flips on a small CCTV monitor hidden amongst some X-RAY equipment. On SCREEN:

An image of the ER FLOOR underneath the stables. A figure lying in the bed. Bandaged. Recovering.

Nick turns the screen off - collects his cell off the desk. No messages. He leans on the counter, dials...

Waiting as it rings, then his eyes drifting through the glass:

## X-RAY ROOM

Sanitary white. A gargantuan operating table and sling in the center. And beyond it...

A padlocked MEDICAL FRIDGE, the glass door cracked and shattered. A pharmacy of narcotic vials and pills inside...

The first few rows empty.

## EXT. CHICAGO-LAND SUBURB - NIGHT

Nick double-parks, getting out. Ahead: a row of vinyl siding homes and frat houses lining the street, and in front of one of them:

Two AMBULANCES. All the porch lights on, red solo cups and teens littering the street, huddling in the cold. Nick goes from a walk to a run, shoves kids aside...

Two paramedics huddled over A TEEN on the ground, white pill bottles spilled in the grass, NICK'S PRACTICE on the labels. One paramedic attempting to resuscitate while the other prepares a syringe. Naloxone. As they shift around we see it's...

A TEENAGE GIRL, grey in the skin. Not Sean.

Nick's gaze troubled but moving on...

Inside the open front door we see two more stretchers loaded in the hallway. We don't see the faces...

But Nick sees the shoes. A pair of sneakers he knows.

Nick flips open the shitty yard gate, about to rush inside--

Suddenly held back by NAVY BLUE SHIRT SLEEVES. Chicago PD OFFICERS rushing past him as another steers him away...

OFFICER  
Sir please step back.

NICK  
No- no I need to get in there-

Nick shoves forward. The officer grips him hard, twisting his wrist back as the other officers push their way inside.

NICK (CONT'D)  
(distressed now)  
Hey listen- fucking *listen to me* --  
I know him - *let me go!*

The officer ignores this, pulling him back now -

OFFICER  
Okay calm down, this is a secure  
scene I need you to step away-

Ahead through the doorway: Sean's shoes on the gurney, not moving.

NICK  
(furious, breaking)  
I know him! That's my son  
goddamnit, that's my son!

Then, screaming toward the house:

NICK (CONT'D)  
Sean! Sean it's dad! I'm here baby!  
I'm- I'm sorry... SEAN!!!

Sound DROPPING as the officer continues to drag him back, one side of Nick's face flickering white with the lights of the ambulance, the other side with the blue of the squad car...

Nick screams.

INT. BEDROOM, NICK'S HOUSE - MORNING (**PRESENT DAY**)

The curtains drawn. Nick's eyes shoot open. He's in bed, unshaven in the late morning light.

Someone's knocking at the door....

INT. NICK'S HOUSE - MORNING

Nick following the sound. A good look at his face now: his lip still split, gash from the rifle butt visible beneath a flop of hair.

He arrives at the door. Opens it:

PULASKI standing there, his Charger running in the driveway behind him.

PULASKI (OVER PHONE)  
Good morning doctor.  
(a wolfish grin)  
...you ready to work?

EXT. HAWTHORNE RACETRACK - DAY

As we circle the track's towering JUMBO TRON - announcements cycling across it's vintage black screen:

...44th ANNUAL THOROUGHBRED CUP...

...SAT MARCH 22ND...

...THE SPORT OF KINGS RETURNS HOME...

PULASKI (O.S.)  
The Thoroughbred Cup. Eighty-one thousand in attendance. Over 130 million in bets. That's all-source, but the on-track handle alone is 18 to 20 million. And that's just for the eight races leading up to the main event. The handle for the cup itself, 9 million plus.

INT. DODGE CHARGER/MOVING - CONTINUOUS

As Pulaski drives Nick around the perimeter of the track.

PULASKI  
The biggest line of revenue is the "takeout." That's the money deducted from each wagering pool before bettors are paid their winnings.  
(at Nick)  
That's our opportunity.

INT. AUTO GARAGE - DAY

Pulaski and Nick now gathered with the Night Boss, Van Gogh, Lady Juror and Mozart.

NIGHT BOSS

First step is getting us placed. Pulaski's contact can handle the security hires inside. But outside, we need someone on track. A known face, someone who won't raise alarms. But that's not security, those credentials are handled by the State Gaming Commission. Luckily you're already in their system.

Nick stares at the others in disbelief.

NICK

Yeah, I'm cleared, I'm also a fucking alternate. They've got a full time roster there, I'm not on staff. Come race day I've got no reason to be within forty miles of that place.

Looks exchanged, absorbing this. Pulaski finally turns to Nick-

PULASKI

We can make a reason.

EXT. U OF I CAMPUS NEIGHBORHOOD - DAWN

A suburban white guy setting out on his morning run. We tighten on his monogrammed jogging sweats:

"U of Illinois COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE"

As BOHANNON crests a hill a CARGO VAN appears behind him, the door opening as it floats closer...

MOZART in a balaclava swinging out, an iron rod in his hand. Bohannon noticing -- *What the hell?* -- Picking up speed, shoving past a trash can as he tries to flee...

Mozart reels back, van gunning it as he *bashes* Bohannon behind the knee, Bohannon YELPING OUT IN PAIN, going down --

The van STOPS. Mozart jumps out, quickly patting Bohannon down, makes it look like a mugging, grabs keys, his phone...

He hops back in the van, Bohannon on the the asphalt cradling his knee as they gun it and skid away.

INT. HAWTHORNE TRACK, ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES - DAY

A FLASH as Nick poses for his event ID, sliding off the stool. As he waits at the desk he exchanges looks with...

PULASKI, doing the same, picking up his security ID from a security technician, BLACKMUN (see him later). As Blackmun enters them into the system...

INT. JUVENILE CENTER, BATHROOM - DAY

PISS, streaming into a plastic cup.

Sean stands at the wall, his corrections kakis open. A glance over his shoulder at a PAROLE OFFICER watching from the doorway. Zero privacy.

Sean stares back at the wall.

PULASKI (V.O.)  
Now the count room is located one level above...

INT. AUTO GARAGE - DAY

Back in the garage. Schematics of the track offices now laid out before them.

PULASKI  
Between the undercard races and the final cup they'll need to bring the current winnings in to bank the takeout, then load up the cashier distributions for final cup payouts. It's the twenty minutes *between those two races*, that puts both the takeout, and the entire pot for the cup, all in the same place - at the same time.

NICK  
And where's it stored?

PULASKI  
The vault, inside the count room.

NICK  
So, what, you've got a way to crack the vault??

PULASKI  
No.  
(a beat)  
They're going to open it for us.

Silence. Nick scanning the others, missing something. Van Gogh leans forward.

VAN GOGH

The Cicero job. That bank truck wasn't random. It's the assigned route for Hawthorne Racetrack. We weren't just taking money out, we were putting money in.

INT. ARMORED CAR - **(THE PAST)**

Inside the bank truck as Lady Juror crawls in with her duffel. She goes to the shelves, eyes roaming as she scans distribution labels on each cash cart...

She finds it, box cuts the saran wrap, opens her own bag...

VAN GOGH (V.O.)

The cash reserves being delivered to the track, we inserted a remote controlled incendiary. Smoke squib.

Lady Juror pulls out a BRICK OF CASH, wires spiraling off to a concealed 9-volt battery. As she replaces the brick inside the cart...

VAN GOGH (V.O.)

That pallet, is now sitting inside their vault.

INT. AUTO GARAGE - **BACK TO PRESENT**

An automobile keyfob now dangling from Van Gogh's hand.

VAN GOGH

Short range, radio activated trigger. Looks like any set of car keys.

PULASKI

They see smoke, fire code says evacuate the room, wait for the Fire Marshal to get on scene. But with upwards of thirty million in there, they're not going to just let it torch. They're going to call in the operations director to open the vault.

NICK

Ok. That puts you inside. That also puts you right in the center of the front office, the furthest possible point from every single exit on the track. You know how to get in. How do you get out?

Pulaski starts folding up the schematic, gives Nick a look.

PULASKI  
Like I said doctor, for this to work,  
it's going to take four things.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. HORSE PASTURE - DAY

Remote. Cars parked outside a long abandoned stable.

STABLE

The weapons crate from the opener being slid onto a table.  
Familiar words stenciled across the boards:

**"PROPERTY : CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT"**

Nick watches as Lady Juror and Night Boss crowbar the lid off.  
Inside:

An absolute Frankenstein of a gun. A hybrid between a pump action shotgun and long-range sniper rifle. Optical scope with a 10 gauge barrel.

Lady Juror reaches in, lifting it out.

LADY JUROR  
LBD40. Commissioned build by Chicago  
Swat and Riot Control as its non-  
lethal weapon of choice. Downs a  
three hundred pound protestor at  
ninety yards. Max range to target of  
120. Capable of firing a long range  
1.36 ounce silica bean bag with a  
muzzle velocity of 284 FPS.

Night Boss chimes in.

NIGHT BOSS  
Only we're not shooting bean bags.

He holds up a roll of white fiber cloth.

NIGHT BOSS (CONT'D)  
Recognize this doc?

NICK  
...Compression wrap.  
(tosses it back down)  
You're telling me your plan is to  
shoot your way out past a bunch of  
guys with a bean-bag gun from hell.

Lady Juror opens the chamber, inspecting down the barrel.

LADY JUROR  
Oh we're not shooting a guy...

EXT. HAWTHORNE RACETRACK - NEW DAY

Pulaski leaning at the rail, a track program in hand, reading down the roster of horses for the upcoming race. A low rumble building in the distance...

Suddenly DEAFENING as a STAMPEDE OF RACERS thunder past him, a blurred wall of speed and sound.

Pulaski waits for them to enter the turn into the backstretch, then pulls a small device from his coat, holds it near his temple as he aims it down the track...

CLOSE ON DEVICE: a small screen flickering, then reads...

**DSTNC: FEET 139**

Pulaski clocks the screen, then kneels beside the fence to tie his shoe. As he does...

His hand reaching out *under the rail*, scoops up a handful of track dirt.

INT. HORSE PASTURE - DAY

Mozart hammering in the distance, planting plywood field markers every 50 feet. Nearby we hear the machine-gun drilling of a SEWING MACHINE.

STABLES

Night Boss threading a piece of compression wrapping shut, grains of track dirt spilling out.

On the table beside him we see two dozen dirt-filled ballistic BAGS ready to go next to empty rifle shells. A hand reaches in, picks one up...

LADY JUROR, holds it up to Nick and Pulaski.

LADY JUROR  
Meet your new magic bullet.  
Replaces the silica bag inside the 10 gauge shell. Still non-lethal, still downs a thousand pound animal within 150 feet.  
(MORE)

LADY JUROR (CONT'D)

We fire one of these into the head  
of the pack, we've got an on-track  
pile up that sends every vet on  
call out to the backstretch. And  
when they get there...

(off the bag)

They'll find jack shit. Bursts on  
impact. Anyone looking afterwards is  
going to see dirt and hoofs wraps.  
Nothing on that track that wasn't  
already supposed to be there.

NICK

How do you know there's no skin  
avulsion.

(Lady Juror just blinks at  
him)

Holes in the fucking horse.

LADY JUROR

Shouldn't be, velocity starts  
dropping after 90 feet.

NICK

You sure about that...

Lady Juror shrugs, 'sure enough.' Nick nods, picks up the  
gun, inspects it...

Then points it down field toward Mozart, hammering in the 150  
foot marker.

LADY JUROR

Whoa whoa hold on now...

NICK

90 feet right?

Nick centers the scope on Mozart, the others all rising now,  
tensing up. Pulaski just watches.

NIGHT BOSS

Doc settle down now...

LADY JUROR

Just wait a second-

MOZART

(seeing it now)

Hey hey what the fuc-

Nick FIRES. Mozart diving as the plywood board SHATTERS...  
splinters flying as a fist-sized hole punches through the wood.

LADY JUROR

(grabbing the gun)

Are you fucking stupid!?

NICK

Are you!? Because you do *that* to a horse they're going to euthanize it right then and there on the track.

LADY JUROR

So the horse gets clipped. Who cares!?

PULASKI (O.S.)

You do.

Pulaski watching the scene from the back of the stable...

PULASKI (CONT'D)

Lower the velocity.

LADY JUROR

We can't without changing the shooting position.

PULASKI

Then we change the shooting position. Fire from the goddamn parking lot if we have to. Figure it out, re-site it and get it done.

Pulaski rises to leave, catches Nick watching him, appreciative.

PULASKI (CONT'D)

Look I don't give a shit about the horse. But we don't keep it alive, this whole thing is over.

NICK

...why.

PULASKI

Because that horse, is our passport out of there.

Pulaski starts for his car.

INT. SURGICAL FLOOR - NIGHT

A beer getting low on an instrument tray...

Nick hovers over Prospector, changing out his ventilator tube. He opens his jaw, about to reinsert the mouthpiece, pauses...

CLOSE ON: Prospector's lips, stirring slightly. Finally awakening? Nick checks his pupils, watching him...

...nothing more happens. Prospector goes still again.

Nick finishes re-taping the mouthpiece, takes a seat beside the bed. The hiss of the ventilator the only sound.

After a moment:

NICK

I get we're um... not supposed to know things about each other. But you and Carl, you two were my first patients. Not sure you ever knew that...

Nick grabs the beer, absently peels the label, talking to himself as much as anything.

NICK (CONT'D)

You with uh... vascular tissue laceration. Couple stitches. Carl with a... prolapsed hemorrhoid. Said you gave it to him.

Nick smirks to himself, takes a swig, grows quiet...

NICK (CONT'D)

Carl. He's gone now you know.

Nick stares off. Looking at nothing. Memory suddenly welling. Nick biting it down, looking for a distraction, finds...

A sealed PERSONAL EFFECTS BAG under Prospector's gurney. Inside: wallet, military ring, keys...

Nick stares at it. On the verge of breaking protocol. He leans over, unseals the bag. He pulls out the wallet, opens it --

Prospector's DRIVER'S LICENSE: Height, Weight, Birthdate. And his name:

**GOMEZ, HECTOR**

Nick takes in the picture, the face in the bed beside him....

Finally he replaces the wallet, returns the bag underneath.

After a moment Nick raises his beer, cheering the IV bag next to Prospector.

NICK (CONT'D)

...good to meet you too.

EXT. CHICAGO - DAY

POV: BINOCULARS

Spanning across the cityscape, coming to rest on...

HAWTHORNE RACETRACK in the distance. We center on the stadium office complex lining the grandstands.

PULASKI (O.S.)

Count room is located two floors up  
in the south-east corridor...

EXT. PARKING GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Pulaski perched on the wall, directing as Nick peers through  
through the binoculars.

NICK

...got it...

PULASKI

Okay, down the hallway 30 yards to  
the northern corner, three windows,  
that's the staff break room...

(Nick following along)

Wall beside that is a utility room.  
And beneath that...

Nick squints... lowers the binoculars, looking up at him.

NICK

...motor pool.

EXT. AUTO GARAGE - DAY

The garage bay doors rising to reveal the ARMORED AMBULANCE.

OUTSIDE: Pulaski, Nick and Van Gogh looking in.

MOMENTS LATER

Its rear doors open, Van Gogh in the back, popping open  
panels in the floor, in the walls...

VAN GOGH

We've got four 3x5 hatches in the  
sides for the men. Another three  
partitions in the floor for the cash-  
(stomps with his boot)

In-floor scale. 28 million dollars in  
hundreds comes in at 572.2 pounds.

(MORE)

VAN GOGH (CONT'D)

Another 800 for the guys and gear. Once the weight up front reads above 1300 pounds you'll know we're all in and you're good to go.

NICK

Why's it bulletproof then.

VAN GOGH

...backup plan.

Van Gogh smacks Nick's shoulder hard, hops out.

PULASKI

Now motorpool as you know has four of these on call. So we've got to get theirs out, get ours in, and stash theirs close enough where the SAT GPS will still read as being parked at the track.

VAN GOGH

On top of that, Lady Juror's got the new shooting solution for the LB40. The only in-range line-of-site to the backstretch furlong... is the corporate executive suites.

NICK

Box seats. Nice view.

PULASKI

Now we can machine a suppressor for the sound, but come race-day it's going to be covered in private security protecting their billionaire boys club's favorite hobby. So we're going to need to plant the gun inside, en-suite, ahead of time.

NICK

Yeah, and how are you planning to do that?

Pulaski and Van Gogh go silent, stare back at Nick.

INT. MOTORPOOL, HAWTHORNE RACETRACK - DAY

Red lights glowing as the ARMORED AMBULANCE slowly backs up into the motorpool garage.

Nick parks and climbs out, eyes ticking up to the ceiling:

ABOVE

A METAL AIR DUCT from the utility room, now aligned with the roof hatch of the ambulance.

Nick continues to the back of the ambulance, opens the rear doors where his field medical bag sits. He starts to unzip...

FOSTER (O.S.)  
Nicholas.

Nick peers over his shoulder. Cassandra FOSTER, the senior track vet standing there, hands in her fleece.

Nick turns back to his bag, staying busy.

NICK  
Cass. Figured you'd be elbow deep in  
some Arabian Mustang for a spot check.

FOSTER  
(smirks)  
We're checking day-of now, plenty  
else to do before Sunday though.  
(and then)  
Don said he saw you down here.

NICK  
Yeah, wanted to check inventory.  
Last time I was on call someone  
mixed the RMTC's with my tartate  
injections, goddamn mess...

Foster nods, keeps eye contact.

FOSTER  
...He said he saw you take the  
ambulance out of the gates too.

The briefest pause. Nick turns to face her.

NICK  
The deck scale, it wasn't zero'ing  
out, reading heavy. V-Tech couldn't  
get a service guy out here for two  
weeks but said if I brought it in  
they could look at it today. Only  
took a couple hours.

He shrugs, returns to his bag. Foster watches him a moment.

FOSTER  
Nick I wanted to talk to you about  
something...

A tone in her voice. She approaches the back of the truck, looking uneasy.

FOSTER (CONT'D)  
I hope its okay I ask, but people  
have been wondering...  
(a beat)  
How is Sean doing?

On Nick, thrown by this. He shuts his bag, sits there a moment. Finally --

NICK  
We're working it all out now.

Foster flashes a pained smile, slides her hand down his arm, squeezing it a moment.

FOSTER  
I'm around. If you need it.

Nick can only nod, watching as she turns and heads back outside.

He stands there, phased, waits till she's out of sight. Finally he turns back to his bag. INSIDE:

We see the stock of a RIFLE, the other pieces of the LB40 gun dismantled and wrapped inside.

Nick exhales... She was three feet away.

INT. AUTO GARAGE - NIGHT

A row of dry-cleaned 'TRACK SECURITY' blazers hanging on a chair.

PULASKI - standing over a table, four M-4 carbine rifles deconstructed across the bench. Pulaski cleaning, reassembling. Across from him:

NICK - medical gear spread before him. With the LB40 rifle now removed his empty field bag sits beside him, Nick meticulously replacing supplies inside.

Both men working in silence. After a moment:

PULASKI  
...You got all these horses you're taking care of. You got one of your own?

A little surprised by the talk. Nick keeps working.

NICK  
Yeah. White Appaloosa.

PULASKI

He got a name?

NICK

Yes he does.

Done answering. Pulaski smirks, continues to pack.

PULASKI

Others said when someone goes down  
you get rid of 'em, take care of  
the bodies.

NICK

Someone has to.

PULASKI

Yeah and what happens when you go  
down. Who takes care of you?

Nick pauses here. A question? A threat? Looking up at Pulaski:

NICK

Were you ever a cop? Or did you  
just see a score, pick up a badge  
along the way.

Dead silence. The two men halting what they're doing,  
watching each other.

PULASKI

I got people too. To take care of.

NICK

And how long are you going to tell  
yourself that one.

PULASKI

...just until it's enough.

Nick smirks dryly, goes back to packing. But Pulaski doesn't, staring at him:

PULASKI (CONT'D)

And who are you Doc? You held up  
your hand, repeated some fuckin'  
oath, same as me. You think you're  
absolved of all this? Carl might  
have thought you were some golden  
boy, but it's just the other end of  
the same job. Same bullets, same  
bullshit. Doctor, you and me, we're  
the same guy.

NICK  
I wouldn't kill somebody.

PULASKI  
...you already did.

On Nick, thrown.

PULASKI (CONT'D)  
Three years ago, red and blue  
responding to a shootout in East  
Garfield. I'm en route, hearing it  
go down on the radio. By the time we  
get there, we find two officers down  
who don't ever get up. One takes it  
in the throat, the other in the  
stomach. Guy who pulled trigger...  
you stitched up four weeks earlier.  
Gave him a lollipop and sent him  
right back out on the street.

Nick, blood going cold. Pulaski watches him a moment --

PULASKI (CONT'D)  
All this time, you think you  
haven't been in it? Brother...  
you're neck deep.

INT. NICK'S TRUCK/MOVING - DAY

Nick driving, numb. Then his foot slowly ramping up the gas.

INT. JUVENILE CENTER, HALLWAY - NIGHT

Sean and a PAROLE OFFICER emerge from bathrooms, returning to  
the dorms. An admin knocking on an office window as they pass-

ADMIN  
Easter. Visiting room.

INT. JUVENILE CENTER, VISITING ROOM - NIGHT

Sean now sitting across from Nick, staring at his face.

SEAN  
(re: the forehead gash)  
What happened to your head?

NICK  
...rounds.

Sean not buying it. Nick continues.

NICK (CONT'D)  
Listen, Seany. I might not see you  
for a little bit. I'm getting  
called away on work.

SEAN  
For how long?

NICK  
I don't know, could be... I don't  
know yet.  
(and then)  
Means I might miss your sentencing  
review.

SEAN  
What do you mean? It's, it's in-

NICK  
Whatever happens it's going to be  
fine. You're going to be fine. Dr.  
Davis is writing you a letter,  
lawyer will be there-

SEAN  
I don't need them there, I need  
you.

Nick meets his gaze, hating this.

NICK  
I know, I'm sorry.

Silence. Nick suddenly leans forward, grabs Seans hands.

NICK (CONT'D)  
You are going to watch yourself.  
You got friends here, stop. You-

GUARD (O.S.)  
No contact! Hands out sir, no contact...

A GUARD calling out across the room. Nick ignores him.

NICK  
Don't trade. The food, if it's not  
sealed throw it out. Drink from the  
water fountain. Sleep with your stuff.  
Nobody gets near you, you got it?

Sean nods, startled now. The guard starts over. Nick sees it, cups the back of Sean's neck, brings their eyes together.

NICK (CONT'D)

You are leaving this place. You hear me? You are getting out, we are both getting out... and then we are gone.

Suddenly pulled away as the Guard arrives, ushering him back. Nick half resisting, walking backwards, keeping eye contact with his son.

NICK (CONT'D)

This wasn't your fault. It was mine. It was always mine. I'm going to fix it. We're going to be okay.

Sean stares at him, still not understanding.

SEAN

Dad w-what's going on-

NICK

I love you, you hear me? You know that? Tell me you know that.

SEAN

(nodding, worried now))

I-I love you. Dad... DAD!

Sean watching as his dad is taken through the door.

EXT. CHICAGO - DAWN

An overcast sunrise. Factory smoke painting lines on the horizon.

EXT. HAWTHORNE RACETRACK - DAWN

The track's towering JUMBO TRON cycling:

**...ARLINGTON DOWNS PRESENTS...**

**...THE THOROUGHBRED CUP...**

**...WELCOME CHICAGO...**

ACROSS THE GROUNDS:

- Press prepping greens and winners circles.
- Owners at the trailers, unloading million dollar horses.
- POLICE setting barricades, preparing for the masses.

INT. HAWTHORNE GRANDSTANDS, CASHIER WINDOWS - MORNING

SECURITY rolling a fleet of EMPTY CASH CARTS in. As they park each one behind a betting window...

EXT. TRAILER PARKING LOT - MORNING

A truck pulls its horse trailer up to a check point, the driver lowering his window.

The GATE GUARD scans their permit, eyes the trailer lot.

GUARD

Spot 43-C. Follow the cones. Good luck today.

As he hands it over....

VAN GOGH taking the permit back. Night Boss and Mozart seated in back, jeans and work shirts of ranch hands. Van Gogh pops the truck back in gear -

VAN GOGH

Thank you sir.

As they pull forward...

INT. HAWTHORNE GRANDSTANDS - ENTRANCE GATES

The crowd streaming in now, race-day dresses waiting in line with nose-bleed regulars. Keys, cell phones, lighters dropping in trays as they step through security.

We float to one line, a group clearing to reveal:

LADY JUROR

Hands raised while an attendant wands her, waves her through. As she collects her keys...

PULASKI (O.S.)

Help you to your seat ma'am?

She looks up, PULASKI waiting there, fresh-pressed in his security blazer. She flashes her ticket to him. He eyes it...

PULASKI (CONT'D)

Your box is right this way.

INT. EXECUTIVE BOX - MOMENTS LATER

As he unlocks it for her, opens...

Inside: a one room suite leading out to an exterior balcony. TV, couch, mini bar... LADY JUROR taking it in as she walks through, opening the glass doors out to the balcony where...

WIDE TO:

A CROWD OF THOUSANDS arriving for the race, canvassed across the homestretch grandstands. And beyond them: THE TRACK, virgin and pristine, a view of the backstretch...

A clear shot.

EXT. TRACK, CENTER FIELD - MOMENTS LATER

A TRUMPETEER standing atop a floral garnished stage, playing the classic opening anthem ("Call to Post"). End-Notes echoing over the PA as the crowd stands, roars, cheering...

Let the races begin.

CUT TO:

*DIRT FLYING* as racers thunder down the stretch.

INT. STABLES - DAY

Horses running silently on the tv in the corner. Graphics telling us it's the 5th race now. Wide to:

STABLES

Where we first met Nick. EVERY STALL NOW FILLED, an assembly line of horses as vets give their final pre-race screenings.

WITH NICK

Event ID dangling as he clears the next horse. He grabs release papers, signing off, his eyes drifting over to...

STABLE FENCES

Thirty handlers talking, smoking. Standing by for their horse to be up. And blending in amongst them:

Van Gogh, Night Boss and Mozart. They lock eyes, acknowledgement passing between them.

Nick looks away, waves the next horse forward.

INT. EXECUTIVE BOX - DAY

The couch now tipped over. Lady Juror cutting away the fabric underneath. She reaches in, slides to the floor...

A black storage case. She opens it: The LBD40 rifle inside. A small case tucked into the foam beside it.

Just then a KNOCK at the door. As it opens --

ATTENDANT  
Catering...

An attendant with a vegetable tray, about to step in- suddenly blocked as Lady Juror doorstops with her foot.

LADY JUROR  
Sorry wrong room. I didn't order anything.

ATTENDANT  
It's complimentary with your suite.

LADY JUROR  
That's okay, not for me, thanks.

ATTENDANT  
Well if you need anything, there's a concierge phone on the wall and...

ANGLE: As the attendant continues we go BEHIND Lady Juror, gripping a pistol against the back of her waistband.

ATTENDANT (CONT'D)  
Or if you'd like, we've got a full bar, I can at least take a drink order?

Lady Juror grabs the door, a little too abruptly. She flashes a pained smile, her arm coming around...

Holds out a 100 dollar bill.

LADY JUROR  
Just here for the horses.  
(money out)  
For your trouble.

The attendant nods politely, taking it.

ATTENDANT  
Enjoy the race.

She leaves. Lady Juror closes the door, releasing the pistol. She stows it, heading back for open case...

EXT. THE TRACK - DAY

The crowd RISING as another race finishes, close as hell.

The LEAD JOCKEY standing in his stirrups, pumping his fist in the air. The crowd roaring along with him.

INT. BETTING WINDOWS, HAWTHORNE GRANDSTANDS - DAY

Lines at the electronic betting machines, ten people deep.

Hands at the cashier windows, tickets sliding under glass.

BEHIND THE WINDOWS

Cash being counted out, placed in divided trays. Tens of thousands being exchanged in 60 seconds.

PULASKI

Watching as a teller wraps out a count, adds it to his cart, signals it full. An officer in a yellow VANGUARD SECURITY shirt coming forward to wheel it away. (This is a dedicated banking service, different than Hawthorne's own track security).

Pulaski watches as he heads toward the elevator upstairs...

Then A RISE from the crowd outside:

ANNOUNCER (OVER TV)

And Bully Pulpit takes the purse in  
the 8th race, Moonshine and Trojan  
Lass just behind him at two minutes  
three seconds... incredible drive  
at the end there...

(a beat)

Ladies and Gentlemen, with that we  
are only moments away from the main  
event of today's race. Our title  
run: The *Thoroughbred Cup*. Stay  
Tuned on the HRN Network...

Pulaski watching the monitor. He starts to move.

EXT. STABLES - DAY

An exterior door opening, Pulaski appearing. Waiting:

Night Boss and crew seeing it, casually lift their ranch bags. They start over, sliding past Nick on their way...

VAN GOGH  
(softly as he passes)  
Remember, 1300 pounds doc. You don't  
piss yourself and jump the gun.

Nick looks up at the monitor as they disappear inside, sees the 8th race is now over. *It's time.*

He walks to the staff vet in the next stable, hands them some paperwork.

NICK  
Hey I'm out of doxycycline, going  
to grab some more from the MC.  
Cover my next few?

The other vet nods as Nick starts off.

INT. STAIRWELL - DAY

Bags open. Night Boss and the others shedding their work clothes for Security blazers and slacks. *Guns emerging --*

INT. HAWTHORNE GRANDSTANDS, UPPER ADMIN LEVELS - DAY

Pulaski nods at fellow guards as he walks down the hall.

AHEAD:

A pair of security doors. Through the chicken-wired windows we see an ENCLOSED ROOM at the end of the hall. A key-padded steel door with an overhead camera: The COUNT ROOM.

Pulaski stands aside as a few track staff exit their offices, waits for them to clear. Then peering back down the hall...

CLOSE ON his hand as he pulls out a KEYFOB. *PRESSES IT --*

INT. COUNT ROOM - DAY

Dozens of carts around the room. Machines running. Three clerks working the count. Two ARMED VANGUARD OFFICERS stationed inside. And at the back:

A steel reinforced walk-in vault.

CLOSE ON THE FLOOR

As silent smoke starts curling out from beneath the vault door...

NEARBY

One of the clerks finishes a stack, noticing it.

CLERK

Gene...

His partner coming over, more smoke snaking across the floor. Vanguard men on their feet, alert now.

Gene's mind running --

GENE

Pull the carts.

Cashiers grabbing carts, clearing them back as Gene goes to a hard-lined phone on the wall, picks it up, waits as it connects.

GENE (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)

Yeah, count room on two... get me Wallace.

INT. ADMIN HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

An electronic chime pulsing overhead.

Admin staff clearing offices, flooding into the hallways. As they exit through the security doors we see:

Night Boss, Van Gogh and Mozart now uniformed, posing as security, standing guard as they exit.

INT. CONTROL ROOM, HAWTHORNE RACETRACK - DAY

A hub overlooking the track. Technicians running broadcast feeds, Security watching internal monitors. The track director (WALLACE) walking swiftly through, on the move --

DIRECTOR

(to a security tech)

...suspend track operations below.

Internal only, hold any announcements, and call me when he's here.

As he pushes out the doors - we see he was talking to...

BLACKMUN, the guard we saw process Nick and Pulaski into the system earlier, now seated at a bank of monitors.

EXT. HAWTHORNE GRANDSTANDS - DAY

THE CROWD milling in their seats, awaiting the final race.

INT. ADMIN HALLWAYS - DAY

Director Wallace coming down the hall, Night Boss and crew standing aside as he passes.

He arrives at the COUNT ROOM DOOR, swipes a key card, dials in a code. Green light flashing. He lets himself in, passing -

PULASKI standing guard directly outside, quickly clocking the scene within as Wallace moves inside:

TWO CASHIERS left, the TWO ARMED VANGUARD MEN remaining with the money... the closed vault in the back, Wallace heading for it...

A Vanguard man SHUTS THE DOOR, resealing the room. Pulaski stands outside, waits a beat, then reaches for the top button on his shirt collar...

INT. COUNT ROOM - DAY

A smokey haze in the air, thicker now. Wallace waving at it...

WALLACE  
...Christ...

He kneels beside the vault door, lifts a radio.

WALLACE (INTO RADIO) (CONT'D)  
How far out is the fire marshal?

An Operations Supervisor on the other end:

SUPERVISOR (OVER RADIO)  
Thirty minutes. Seeing if Chatham  
can send a guy over.

Wallace stares, mind-running. He lifts the walkie again:

WALALCE (INTO RADIO)  
You got Gene there? What's the  
current count in the room?

SUPERVISOR (OVER RADIO)  
(speaking off mic, then)  
Just under 8.4 million in process.

WALLACE (INTO RADIO)  
And in the vault?

A beat.

SUPERVISOR (OVER RADIO)  
...Twenty.

On Wallace. Jesus. 28.4 Million. A beat, watching the smoke pour out, the money inside. He turns to the two Vanguard men-

WALLACE  
No one comes in.

Wallace rises, starts entering a code on the vault. Metallic locks racking open. He reaches for the handle...

INT. TRACK CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Additional TRACK SECURITY arriving. Four men approaching Blackmun at his station. The first, KURTZ, tapping his walkie.

KURTZ  
Fire code. We got a 901?

BLACKMUN  
Yeah, south floor and Vanguard guys already on it. Novak needs extras keeping bodies downstairs, off the stairwells. I'm right behind you.

As they turn and head off we see Blackmun has been covering THE MONITORS... and in them now:

ON SCREEN: Corner angles of the upstairs hallways. One by one EACH GOING BLACK --

INT. ADMIN HALLWAYS - SAME

Night Boss lens-capping the last of the cameras. Van Gogh and Mozart beside him, arming up, unearthing the M-4 rifles, handing Night Boss his as they fit MOLDED PLASTIC MASKS over faces.

EXT. HAWTHORNE RACETRACK, VARIOUS - DAY

THE CROWD getting restless, starting to talk. JOCKEYS wrangling, FIELD STAFF ready beside the starting shoot.

INT. COUNT ROOM - DAY

The vault door now open, loaded carts pulled out.

INSIDE

Wallace moving a pallet out of the way. The smoke heavier here. His flashlight out, looking for the source...

And then a KNOCK at the count room door. Vanguard men looking over, hands on holsters.

COUNT ROOM DOOR

VOICE (OUTSIDE)  
Fire Marshal.

A Vanguard man steps over to an in-room monitor of the camera outside.

ON SCREEN: From above the door, a birds-eye of the marshal standing there. Badge, white shirt, navy slacks.

VOICE (OUTSIDE) (CONT'D)  
Director Wallace, Marshal Koenig,  
Hook and Ladder 86. Said you  
requested a 901.

The Vanguard officer turns, nods the all clear.

A beat. Wallace motions to let him in.

The officer clears some carts aside, opens the door inches -

*KNOCKED BACK AS PULASKI BARRELS THROUGH THE DOOR*, now in the fire marshal uniform, CFD turtleneck up around his face. Vanguard 2 reaching for his weapon --

*Jerking violently as NIGHT BOSS tazes him, Mozart and Van Gogh right behind him as they swarm into the room, rifles up -*

All voices rising at once --

PULASKI <i>On the ground on the ground!</i>	VANGUARD 1 <i>Lower your weapon, weapons down!</i>
--	---

NIGHT BOSS <i>Hands out hands out, fuckin' drop it -</i>
---

Vanguard 1 seeing he's outgunned, his partner groaning on the ground, cashiers already lowering...

VANGUARD 1  
Okay -- all right -- *shit...*

Getting to a knee, Mozart booting him flat, kicking his gun free. Van Gogh covering the rest of the room, sees A CASHIER reaching for a fallen walkie --

VAN GOGH  
*Hey hey, you want to keep your fuckin' head? Back - back*

The Cashier backs off. Pulaski sweeping across the rest.

PULASKI  
Hands, let me see hands.

Hands out as the others clear their guns, their phones. Pulaski grabs one of the radios, hands it to director Wallace. Calmly:

PULASKI (CONT'D)  
Director, I'm going to give you a line. And you're going to repeat exactly... what... I say...

EXT. TRACK - MOMENTS LATER

The crowd still waiting. The PA system coming to life:

ANNOUNCER (OVER PA)  
Ladies and gentlemen, BMG Racing and Hawthorne Stadium appreciate your patience today...  
(a then, winding up)  
And now if you would please retake your seats, we are just a few moments away from your 44th annual Thoroughbred Cup title race!

A rise from the stands, the crowd rallying. On the ground a tractor firing up, revving as it tows the starting gate out to the dirt.

INT. TRACK VETERINARY OFFICES - DAY

NICK zipping up a reflective jacket.

He goes to a board of TRACK VEHICLE KEYS on the wall - swipes the keys for "AMBU-3"

INT. MOTORPOOL GARAGE - DAY

Nick pushes through the garage door. Ambulances lined up, ready to go. As he starts for the one at the end --

INT. EXECUTIVE BOX - DAY

Furniture shoved aside. Lady Juror setting the now assembled gun on the table, balancing it on the mounting legs.

The custom dirt SHOTGUN SHELLS lined up on the table beside her. She grabs the first round, blows on it, *loads it* -

INT. COUNT ROOM - DAY

Night boss holding down the room while the others pack rapidly, steady but fast. No words are said.

INT. ARMORED AMBULANCE - DAY

Nick locking down in the back. He reaches up, pops the TOP ROOF HATCH...

And through it: we see... THE VENT IN THE CEILING ABOVE.

EXT. HAWTHORNE GRANDSTANDS, OFFICE ENTRANCE - DAY

Track security holding staff on the sidewalk outside. In the distances two city fire engines enter the parking lot, lights off. A white CFD Yukon ahead of them, pulling in to the curb.

A FIRE MARSHAL steps out, eyes grazing for someone in charge. Finds the track security sergeant - Kurtz.:

FIRE MARSHAL  
Need a line with the building  
superintendent.

KURTZ  
Who are you with?

FIRE MARSHAL  
Foley, District 16 fire marshal.

KURTZ  
CFD already sent a guy over. He's  
up there now.

FIRE MARSHAL  
Not from my county.

Kurtz hearing this, thrown. The marshal pulls out his cell, steps aside to dial...

FIRE MARSHAL (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)  
Yeah get me dispatch, local's saying  
they got an officer on-site...

As he paces away we stay with KURTZ - looking up at the row of office windows upstairs.

EXT. TRACK - DAY

Horses emerging from the entrance tunnel onto the field.

TV BROADCAST ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
*...Ginny going into the starting gate. American Delphi is taking his position in stall 3 here...*

INT. ADMIN HALLWAY - DAY

The Count Room Door flying open, Pulaski's gun in the lead, each man with a heavy cash duffel as they snake out. On the floor behind them: men zip-tied on the ground inside.

The crew clear the corner, turn down the hallway...

EXT. TRACK - DAY

Horses being ushered into the starting gates...

BROADCAST ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
*..Neptune up to the outside stall under Omar Diaz, they're all in line and we are ready here...*

INT. ADMIN HALLWAY - DAY

Kurtz now flanked by CPD officers walking down the hallway. They reach the first security door, Kurtz swiping his card and pushing-- the door is locked. He swipes, pushes again.

ON THE OTHER SIDE:

A METAL PLATE now pressure-bolted to the door frame.

KURTZ looks through the chicken-wire window - the count room at the end of the hall on the other side...

The door is OPEN.

Kurtz going still.

Then everything moving very fast, his walkie shooting up --

*The track bell STRIKES*

EXT. TRACK - AT THAT MOMENT

Metal gates *clanging open*, the race starting - twenty horses bursting out, a blur of thunder and dirt.

The crowd *instantly on their feet*.

INT. ADMIN HALLWAYS - SAME

Pulaski and crew rushing down the hallway --

INT. ARMORED AMBULANCE - SAME

Nick starting the engine. Dash radio going - internal staff channels covering the race --

INT. EXECUTIVE BOX - SAME

RIFLE SCOPE POV: Following the horses around the track...

LADY JUROR kneeling at the table, eye to the scope as she sets a distance dial...

INT. ADMIN HALLWAYS - SAME

Security and Police now crowding the door, all parting as a CPD officer brings a TACTICAL BATTERING RAM forward. He sets it to the door, braces himself, *swings back* --

INT. BREAK ROOM HALLWAY -

The first BANG heard from down the hall. Night Boss and Van Gogh covering the corner.

Night Boss peers out, then strafes back down the break room hallway, SPARKS flying out of an open door ahead...

UTILITY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Night Boss leans in the doorway.

NIGHT BOSS  
They're comin' through.

PAN TO

PULASKI AND MOZART over ductwork as the last of the floor vent is sheered off. Pulaski pulls it away, revealing:

THE MOTORPOOL below, looking down on the roof of the ambulance.

Mozart steps up. He gets a grip, starts lowering himself down...

INT. ARMORED AMBULANCE -

Nick feeling it as he drops, the weight on the in-floor scale ticking up on the dash: "188 LBS"

One man down, three to go.

EXT. TRACK - CENTER FIELD

Horses hitting the front stretch...

BROADCAST ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
*...splitting horses as they move  
into the turn - Mint Condition,  
Thor down on the inside...*

INT. ADMIN HALLWAY -

The BATTERING RAM pounding again. The bolted plate starting to strain.

INT. UTILITY ROOM -

Night Boss and Van Gogh now backed up to the doorway, about to drop down to the garage -

Pulaski motions to the remaining duffels in the hall.

PULASKI  
Money next, go go go --

They cover the hall as they slide the first bags forward, drop it down...

INT. AMBULANCE -

As Mozart catches it, braces for the next one --

EXT. TRACK - CENTER FIELD

Horses coming out of the turn...

BROADCAST ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
*...up the back stretch, Thor to the outside matching strides with the lead...*

LADY JUROR

On the rifle, turning with them.

INT. UTILITY ROOM

Pulaski slides the last bag down, shuffles to the doorway:

Night Boss and Van Gogh in the hallway, sights aimed down the hall, not seeing...

Pulaski as he raises his security radio, steels himself...

And says:

PULASKI (INTO RADIO)  
*...this is Pulaski. I've got shots fired, west stairwell, in pursuit...*

Van Gogh and Night Boss hearing this. *WTF* -- turning...

*BAM BAM* -- Van Gogh's head jerking back -- *Pulaski's gun firing, then drifting to Night Boss as Boss brings his own gun around -*

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. EXECUTIVE BOX - AT THAT MOMENT

Horses flying down the back furlong... Lady Juror pivoting...

RIFLE SCOPE POV: ...the lead horse entering her scope.

A breath. She *FIRE* --

SOUND DROPS

EXT. TRACK - CENTER FIELD

Everything moving in a dream like state...

BEHEMOTH HORSES going down -- dirt flying -- Jockey's grimacing -- hooves scarring grass. A TRAIN DERAILED, one colliding into the other -

THE CROWD gasping...

INT. UTILITY ROOM

Night Boss collapsing against the wall as Pulaski *fires into him again*. Boss reaches, doggedly trying to pull a pistol with his remaining hand. Pulaski *shoots* - drops him for good.

SOUND leaking back in, Pulaski's breath going a mile a minute. Rattled. Pulse pumping...

He looks around, as if awakening to what he's just done...

And then, *he's moving* --

INT. ARMORED AMBULANCE, REAR - MOMENTS LATER

Pulaski *landing*, jumping down from the roof. He unslings the final duffel, yanks up a floor panel.

PULASKI  
Get in the hole.

MOZART alarmed now, seeing its only him.

MOZART  
W-where's Heywood and-

PULASKI  
(packing fast)  
...we lost 'em, they breached the door...

Mozart stunned. Pulaski seals the floor, goes to the wall, starts pulling open the smugglers lockers -

MOZART  
But- but *fuck man!* We can't-

Pulaski grabs him by the shirt, slams him up against the wall-

PULASKI  
WE LOST EM! NOW GET IN THE GODDAMN HOLE!

As he shoves Mozart inside - *pounds on the cab wall* --

INT. AMBULANCE CAB - SAME

The dash radio going *wild now*. Staff on all channels responding to the crash.

Nick at the wheel, listening, adrenaline running -- And then:

RADIO (OVER RADIO)  
*EMT mobile unit to the field,  
 mobile unit to the field.*

His cue. Nick jumping into action - reaches up, hits the lights, leans over for the gear shift... *stops*

ON THE DASH: The weight on the scale in back: "**951 LBS**"

*It's light.*

On Nick: Staring at it. Under 1300 pounds. Somethings not right.

RADIO (OVER RADIO) (CONT'D)  
*EMT mobile unit - multiple Field  
 Response needed now! Code 2 Code 2!*

Out Nick's window: the garage door slamming open - staff VETS now rushing in, running for the other units.

Nick snaps out of it, fumbling for the shifter. He throws the ambulance into gear, **FLIES OFF** --

EXT. TRACK BACKSTRETCH - DAY

Track officials and John Deere gators already on site. Bloody Jockeys wrangling spooked horses, four others downed across the track, camps of med staff kneeling over them.

NICK pulls up on the dirt, exits, running over to...

The #6 horse. Dr. Cotter already leaning over him, palpating as Nick slides in beside him.

NICK  
 What do we got? Vitals?

COTTER  
 Tachycardic. He tried to right himself a minute ago. I think he's alright, maybe an impact contusion.

Nick scans further down --

NICK

Look, here, the adjacent flexor,  
could be a developing edema.

COTTER

There's no sign of fluid...

NICK

Fluid isn't always present in low  
pressure tissue.

COTTER

If it's edema there'd be swelling-

NICK

Which might still develop. We  
better load him in the wagon, get  
him somewhere with a seroma team.

COTTER

Doctor I don't think that's  
necessary. We can monitor here.

NICK

For ten hours? Look around, this is  
triage and move 'em.

COTTER

I can do an in-field seroma lance-

NICK

Damnit Ben, do you want to *fuck*  
*this up again*, or do you want to  
make the right call this time!?

On Cotter, taken aback. Nick uses it, grips the saddle --

NICK (CONT'D)

C'mon, get him up.

INT. ADMIN HALLWAY - DAY

The BATTERING RAM finally *burst*ed through.

Security and police now flooding through the hallways. Ahead:  
The bodies of Night boss and Van Gogh on the ground.

INT. COUNT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Officers swarming in, find the clerks and guards on the  
floor, director Wallace zip tied. And behind him -

The vault, HALF OPEN. Scattered bills on the ground. A lead SERGEANT lifts his walkie -

LEAD COP  
This is Phelps. Lock it down. 1149  
in progress. Repeat - lock it down,  
all exits...

EXT. HAWTHORNE GRANDSTANDS - VARIOUS

AROUND THE CONCOURSE, EXTERIOR GATES coming down...

PA (OVER PA SYSTEM)  
Ladies and gentlemen we are asking  
at this time that you remain in  
your seats...

INT. EXECUTIVE BOX - DAY

The attendant knocking once, the door opening --

ATTENDNANT  
Excuse me, we've just been notified  
of a situation and advising  
everyone to stay in...

She lets herself in further, sees:

The couch tipped over, the other furniture pushed aside. The open balcony door.

No Lady Juror.

EXT. HAWTHORNE GRANDSTANDS - DAY

Lady Juror amongst the crowd, black case under her arm, 20 yards away from the gate, slowing as it *starts to lower*.

She spins, starts off in search of a different exit.

INT./EXT. AMBULANCE - DAY

Nick driving toward the track's MAINTENANCE EXIT:

AT THE GATE

Stopped at the fence by a guard. Nick rolls down his window.

NICK

Hey I got an animal going to West Loop Animal Surgery.

GUARD

No one leaves. We're in a hold position.

Nick swallowing, thinking fast. Then leaning out the window -

NICK

Listen asshole, that's a 1.7 million dollar horse back there. We don't get it to over in time and it pulls up lame or worse *doesn't make it*, you wanna be on the hook for a bill like that?

The guard thrown now. Nick opens his arms innocently.

NICK (CONT'D)

Look it's just me in here. What's the problem?

Guard stares at him, then to a second guard:

GUARD

Check the back.

Second guard walks around to the rear doors, opens them...

THE #6 HORSE standing inside the mobile pen. No duffels, no guns, no one else.

POV: Light through a panel seam, Pulaski's eye watching as the guard leans in, inspecting inside...

OUTSIDE

He shuts the door, peers back around to guard one, nods.

Guard one torn now. He eyes Nick's ID lanyard, switches his walkie channel -

GUARD (INTO RADIO) (CONT'D)

This is West Gate. Verifying a...

Doctor Nicholas Easter. Employee ID  
41512...

Silence. And then.

DR. FOSTER (OVER RADIO)

*..He's with us...Let him go..*

IN THE DISTANCE

DR. FOSTER on the track, waving them off.

The guard seeing this. A beat. Finally reaches for the gate --

INT. HAWTHORNE GRANDSTANDS - VARIOUS

Lady Juror walking desperately through the crowd, neck craning at gates ahead. Nothing open.

She turns to double back - freezes there. From afar:

The BOX ATTENDANT standing with a POLICE OFFICER. She leans to the officer, pointing... DIRECTLY AT LADY JUROR.

The OFFICER locking on her - his radio rising. As Lady Juror turns, walking faster...

OFFICER (O.S.)  
(calling out)  
Ma'am halt there. Ma'am...

She does not. As *she starts to run...*

OTHER POLICE emerging from stairwells, giving chase through the crowd -- LADY JUROR pushing people aside --

A SECURITY GUARD emerges from an access tunnel ahead of her, spots her, goes for his holster --

Fast and clean Lady Juror PULLS THE FIREARM FROM BEHIND HER -- *firing -- hitting him center mass.* As he goes down...

She bolts past him, disappearing into the tunnel.

INT. HAWTHORNE GRANDSTANDS, STAFF TUNNEL - DAY

She shoves through a doorway, turns a corner --

3 MORE GUARDS on the tail of the first. Alerted by the shots, their guns drawn, seeing hers in her hand. As it rises...

All firing on her - the shots deafening in the hallway. Lady Juror reels, black gun case clattering to the floor.

She slumps against the wall, eyes open... and goes still.

EXT. HAWTHORNE RACETRACK - VARIOUS

...Radio reports going out wide around the perimeter...

EXT. HAWTHORNE RACETRACK, PARKING LOT - DAY

Vehicles everywhere. Nick's ambulance passing incoming patrol cars and fire trucks as they head for the stadium.

INT. AMBULANCE, REAR - SAME

Pulaski and Mozart stripping down in back, changing to civilian clothes.

IN FRONT

Nick at the wheel, heart pounding as they head for the lot exit, the onramp to the freeway looming in the near distance - almost home free.

As they round the corner:

A CHICAGO PD ROADBLOCK AHEAD - Three officers at the lot gate, waving Nick to a stop as they step into the road.

EXT. PARKING LOT GATE - CONTINUOUS

A cop stepping up to the window, holds them there.

COP  
Pull over to the side.

NICK  
We were just cleared.

COP  
Not by us. We got an active shooter,  
pull to the side and exit the vehicle.

Nick hesitating, sweating now. He opens the door part way...

A metallic CLINK on the ambulance wall behind him.

PULASKI (O.S.)  
(low, through the wall)  
...Do not... get out....

IN BACK

Pulaski with his gun pressed to the other side of the partition, leveled right with Nick's head.

PULASKI (CONT'D)  
Close the goddamn door.

OUTSIDE

Nick paused there. The officer hasn't heard this, instead sees Nick has stopped. He places a hand on his holster.

COP  
Sir exit the vehicle.

CLOSE ON NICK

PULASKI (O.S.)  
(through wall)  
The outside is bulletproof Doc, the  
inside *is not*.  
(the gun clinks again)  
Close the goddamn door.

Nick caught in the crossfire. A beat. Suddenly he *shuts the driver door*. The officer's gun out now, aimed at the glass.

COP  
Shut the engine off - hands on the  
wheel!

He motions to the other two officers. As they start to move..

COP (CONT'D)  
Engine off - we *will fire* - Engine  
off now.

Nick not sure what to do. Eyes ticking to his SIDE MIRRORS:  
The other two officers sliding around to the rear...

WITH THEM

Encircling the back of the ambulance, taking position --  
They *pause*, a faint scratching heard inside. Silence...

The REAR DOORS SUDDENLY EXPLODING OPEN. THE #6 HORSE FLYING OUT, released and terrified out of its mind, bucking off into the parking lot -the two cops *knocked back* --

PULASKI  
DRIVE NOW NOW NOW!

Nick jolts into action, *hammers the gas*, 330 Horsepower roaring as the ambulance *PEELS OFF*...

COPS behind them getting up, seeing MOZART and PULASKI in the back through the swinging doors as they race away...

EXT. HIGHWAY - MOMENTS LATER

SPEEDING DOWN THE HIGHWAY, one door still banging wildly against its hinges.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. AMBULANCE - SAME

Nick driving frantically, heavy engine growling. Something catching his eye, looking left:

A BULLET CRATER in the window beside him... The cop SHOT AT HIM.

On Nick, *holy shit*, then his focus shifts past it to his mirrors...

Two HIGHWAY PATROL cars approaching.

IN THE BACK

Pulaski reaching to close the swinging rear door, seeing them coming. *Fuck*. As he *slams the door shut* -

HIGHWAY

Floating overhead as the two IHP cruisers come up behind them, a voice blaring through the PA:

IHP OFFICER (OVER PA)  
*Driver of ambulance, pull to the side of the road, NOW.*

The two cruisers hitting gears, pulling to either side, flanking the ambulance. Nick exchanging looks with one...

Then LURCHING as the left cruiser presses against the ambulance's side. A PIT MANUEVER, preparing to force the ambulance into a tailspin. Nick panicking, fighting the wheel --

IHP OFFICER (OVER PA) (CONT'D)  
*Driver. I said pull over, you will be fired up--*

WHAM!! The officer's window suddenly SHATTERING as a twelve gauge *erupts across their doors* -

BACK OF AMBULANCE

Pulaski and Mozart at the built-in portholes - firing out - a round hitting the cruiser's tire -

*It jerks, banks against the ambulance, SPARKS FLYING, then ricochets off, swerving away --*

TWO LANES OVER

The second cruiser hearing the gunfire.

INT. 2ND CRUISER - CONTINUOUS

Two patrolmen in front. The driver lifting the radio -

IHP DRIVER (INTO RADIO)  
Dispatch we are westbound on the  
Stevenson Expressway, shots fired,  
in pursuit of a green and white...

OUTSIDE: Officers not seeing the barrel of an M-4 rifle,  
silently emerging from the hole...

CRUISER

IHP DRIVER (INTO RADIO) (CONT'D)  
Just passed the 55 offramp. Repeat,  
we have *shots fired*-

His rear window BLOWING OUT - a WIND TUNNEL of broken glass:

HIGHWAY

Rifle holes riveting across the cruiser, the windshield  
spider-webbed now, doesn't see...

The DELIVERY TRUCK in front of them.

The cruiser slams INTO THE BACK OF IT - TAIL WHEELS RISING -  
both cars *hockey pucks* sliding on the road, the cruiser  
wheels *skidding, catching - starting TO TIP* --

PULASKI

Watching in back as it FLIPS, pieces *flying off* as it rolls  
wildly down the lane.

NICK

Seeing it in the mirror, then looking ahead - eyes GOING WIDE:

HIGHWAY EXIT

Two STATE POLICE SUVS pulled across the road, spike strip  
deployed between them - SIX TROOPERS barricaded behind them.  
Guns pulled and aimed over the hoods.

THEY OPEN UP

EXT. AMBULANCE - CONTINUOUS

Shots *sparking off the hood* -- Mirrors *chipping away* --

The ambulance keeps coming...

Rounds ricochetting off *bumpers*, the *bullet proof glass*, the *run-flat tires* --

The ambulance keeps coming...

The troopers losing nerve: "this should not be happening" - an ambulance should not be taking this, but as we know: this is no ambulance.

Officers firing a futile last few rounds, the ambulance barreling down on them, all desperately jumping free as:

WHAM! - the ambulance BURSTS THROUGH the barricade. SUVs *slamming* against the concrete median as the ambulance parts the sea, spiraling off as it escapes down the offramp.

EXT. INDUSTRIAL NEIGHBORHOOD - MOMENTS LATER

The ambulance riding beneath the tracks, zooms past us.

INT. AMBULANCE, REAR - SAME

Mozart peering out the side portholes, aftermath adrenaline running through him.

MOZART,  
Fuckin... God damn! Yeah!

Pulaski sits vacant on the floor, just relieved to be alive.

PULASKI  
Check the door. Watch for tails.

Mozart balancing as he makes his way to the back, cracks the rear door open, looking out...

MOZART,  
Nothing man, our ass is clear as fucking sunshine...

ON PULASKI

Watching him. Mozart not seeing it, looking out the open door as Pulaski quietly pulls a knife from his kit, rises...

INT. AMBULANCE, FRONT - DAY

Nick driving, looking at the in-floor scale, now reading lighter yet: **"763 LBS"**

Nick's mind running. *He sees Pulaski's game now.* Staring forward...

Then *MAKING A TURN* -

EXT. FOREST ROAD/DRIVING - DAY

Floating over the battered and smoking ambulance...

No civilian cars. No one in pursuit. We're in the sticks now.

INT. AMBULANCE, BACK - DAY

Pulaski alone in the back now, clocks a watch timer. This is taking too long.

He rises, glances out one of the gun portholes:

A blur of trees going by...

Then suddenly hitting the wall as the ambulance JERKS to a halt. Pulaski listens, calls forward...

PULASKI

Doc...

Nothing back. He goes to the rear... racks his gun.

EXT. AMBULANCE, BACK - DAY

As Pulaski slowly swings the door open, gun alert, sees they're at:

EXT. VETERINARY RANCH - CONTINUOUS

A place Pulaski's only seen from the outside. But he knows where this must be. Nick has brought them home.

He presses himself against door, glances around the fender..

The driver's door left open. The cab empty. Nick nowhere in sight.

Then HEAVY FOOTSTEPS. Pulaski's gun up, seeing:

A HORSE - let loose from its stall.

INT. HOLDING STABLES - SAME

Nick crouching as he runs along, unchaining pens, releasing horses one by one.

EXT. VETERINARY RANCH - SAME

As more wander out, Pulaski now surrounded by footsteps, sees Nick is masking the sound. Pulaski smiles to himself, calls out:

PULASKI  
Doctor Easter, we don't have to do  
this...

And then, the faint whine of HYDRAULICS -

INT. STABLES -

Pulaski enters, following the sound --

The whine getting louder. A FLASH of Nick in a stall at the far end. Pulaski FIRES.

Nick DUCKING, fleeing back outside...

Pulaski quickly stalks down the row after him, glances into the last stall as he passes:

Sees the floor partially LOWERED. A *freight elevator*, the hydraulics he heard. Dropped just enough to glimpse the ER down below. Nick was trying to bunker down. Pulaski mutters under his breath, in bitter awe --

PULASKI  
Son of a bitch...  
(then shouting out)  
Be smart about this one huh!

EXT. VETERINARY RANCH - DAY

With Nick, flattened against a feed bin, Pulaski's voice floating through the air as he exits the stables.

PULASKI (O.S.)  
Those guys, they weren't yours or  
mine. Nothing's gotta change here.

Nick waits for a break, then darts behind a John Deere Loader. Eyeing ahead:

His TRUCK.

PULASKI

Hunting, getting a sense of where Nick might be.

PULASKI (CONT'D)

I got no reason to hurt you. Like I said, you and me - we're the same here-

Footsteps *moving fast*. He spins, sees Nick sprinting for his truck, reaching into the back for ---

His 16 GAUGE SHOTGUN

Both guns *raising - FIRING*. Nick getting off a wild shot - *misses* - Pulaski returning *three quick bursts* - Nick *spins - drops out of sight*.

WITH PULASKI

Horses panicked by the noise, fleeing in all directions as Pulaski pushes through, coming around the truck:

Nick *vanished... his shotgun laying on the ground.*

AMBULANCE

Nick now taking cover behind the ambulance, drenched in sweat. A hand to his shoulder... *blood*. He crouches against the bumper, grimacing... shot... scared. Eyes wincing shut, then as they open, looking back...

In the ambulance: One of the FLOOR PANELS loose in back. The money duffels inside.

VETERINARY RANCH - WIDE

PULASKI circling the grounds, searching. He comes around the loader, stops, eyes landing across the yard on:

The giant walk-in CREMATOR, its metal door open. The duffel bags now just visible on the floor inside.

Pulaski's eyes scan the grounds around him, immediately suspect, trying to read Nick's plan here. Thinking... Then his GUN UP as he strafes across the yard, stopping at...

The AMBULANCE. He reaches into the cab, grabs the keys from the ignition, chucking them. He moves forward, calling out...

PULASKI (CONT'D)  
Sorry, but you ain't leaving doc.

NICK somewhere else, in the dark, reacting to this. Pulaski then makes his way to NICK's TRUCK. He feels along the grill, releases the hood, reaches inside...

*Yanks the cables from the battery.*

PULASKI (CONT'D)  
No... you and I, we're gonna talk  
this one out.

Pulaski starts walking backwards, heading for the money.

CREMATOR

Eyes roaming the yard as he reaches the door. Unsure what this structure is he glances inside -

The two duffels sitting there. No Nick in the shadows. With the M-4 rifle held on the doorway, Pulaski slides inside...

INT. CREMATOR - CONTINUOUS

Light through the window on the metal door. Pulaski moving fast now, he kneels, slides one heavy bag over his shoulder, gun balancing as he reaches for the other one...

And then a *click*.

But not a gun. Something mechanical, dry-firing over and over -- Pulaski looking around him, then noticing...

The air. It's wavering...

GAS.

The rapid clicking suddenly stops... the PILOT LIGHT.

Suddenly footsteps rushing outside, the iron creak of hinges -

NICK at the door, swinging the heavy metal hatch. As he reaches to latch it shut -- Pulaski spins in place, sees it, FIRES *through the hatch window* --

And hits Nick dead center.

Nick collapses out of frame, the door latch springing back open.

Pulaski still on one knee, suddenly backlight around him. Burner coils starting... the furnace *igniting* --

EXT. CREMATOR - DAY

Pulaski dives out the door, one of the duffels in tow. The back of his shirt singed as he hits the ground, his leg on fire. He kicks in the dirt, manically smacking it out. As he finally smothers it, turning to see...

NICK propped against the wall. Conscious, but a bullet in his chest, a shallow attempt at controlling his breathing.

Pulaski grimaces, burns stinging as he limps to his feet, approaching him slowly...

Nick's eyes drift up at him, empty. The two taking each other in, smoke still roiling off Pulaski's back. Finally -

PULASKI  
...not half bad.

On Nick, his body done. All he can do is watch.

PULASKI (CONT'D)  
Your kid, he's not going to know  
anything... okay. You just know that.

Nick doesn't answer. Pulaski sees his state, pulls the strap of his gun around to the front, checking the chamber.

PULASKI (CONT'D)  
...And I ain't gonna let you  
suffer. I'll take care of-

*BAM!* Pulaski jerked forward by a round, spinning...

PROSPECTOR standing in the dirt behind him. The 16 gauge in hand, IVs dangling off his face and arms, unsteady and pale.

Pulaski stares at him confused, finally in vain tries to lift the M-4 rifle-

*BAM BAM.* Prospector puts two more in him, drops him hard.

Prospector sways there for a moment, drops to his knees, then sees Nick. He crawls over...

PROSPECTOR  
Doc...

Nick can only stare at him, rag-dolling as Prospector looks him over, sees the wound soaking across his shirt.

PROSPECTOR (CONT'D)  
Shit, shit... Doc tell me, you tell  
me what to do.

Prospector grabs him, gets him to focus.

PROSPECTOR (CONT'D)  
Who can I call?

Nick just stares at him. He might already be dead. Then...  
his lips moving.

Prospector leans in, hears an answer...

PROSPECTOR (CONT'D)  
Okay. Okay... you, just hang on.

He gets up, clumsily ambles toward the office...

He disappears inside, the slap of the screen door, Nick  
gazing out. ...

As we pan across his land: Almost serene now, a heavy fog on  
the ranch, the pasture beyond, a dozen horses scattered and  
grazing across the distance....

Nick's eyes lose focus... and cloud over.

Nothing but insects and the wind.

FADE OUT

INT. JUVENLINE CENTER - SOME TIME LATER

An early freeze outside, flecks of snow swirling through the  
air. Watching through the chicken wire:

Sean stands in his winter coat, a backpack of personal items.  
He says goodbye to Davis, shaking hands.

EXT. JUVENILE CENTER - DAY

As Sean steps out. He takes in the cold, the world again,  
then eyes wandering out he sees:

Nick's truck parked across the lot.

INT. NICK'S TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER

Sean walks up to the door, opens it:

SONDRA in the driver's seat inside. A beat. They hug, a long  
while here, holding each other. Finally they part, Sean  
setting his bag in back as she puts the truck in gear.

EXT. VETERINARY RANCH - DAY

The truck idling as the gate opens.

INT. STABLES - DAY

Sean walking in alone. He stops in front of a horse at the end. A WHITE APPALOOSA, staring back at him inside.

Nick's horse.

Sean takes its noseband, nuzzles it for a moment. Finally he steps back, opens the pen. As he reaches for its reigns --

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Floating over the truck. The horse trailer attached, the Appaloosa now in back.

UP FRONT: Sondra driving. Sean looking out the window, almost at nothing. A dry grey day going by.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - AFTERNOON

Barbed prairie fence running along a dusty road. The truck inching down it - passing the sign:

**BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**

**Protected Range**

EXT. RANGE FIELD - AFTERNOON

THE HERD OF WILD HORSES in the distance. Reinhart's horse now amongst them. No brands. No saddles.

Across the field: The White appaloosa now released, feeding nearby. He will join them someday.

DIRT LOT

The horse trailer sitting empty. Sean and Sondra at the fence, looking out at him together. Then turning as --

A SECOND CAR arrives, rolling in beside the trailer, gravel popping.

PROSPECTOR steps out. He shoulders a small canvas bag, heads for SONDRA. He hands her the bag, exchanging some words. As they embrace --

SEAN looks back over at the car he arrived in.

INT. SECOND CAR - DAY

Sean gets in the passenger seat. A beat. He looks back:

NICK lays across the rear bench. He looks thinner, a beard growing in, an oxygen mask over his face. But through the plastic we see him breaking, overwhelmed, seeing his son.

On the floor beneath him: the same canvas bags, but slightly open we see soft green cash neatly folded inside. Both full.

Sean isn't looking at them though, instead taking in his father. Nothing is said. Then Nick's hand weakly reaches out...

On Sean, staring at it.

NICK'S HAND, laying open there. Asking.

And then, Sean's hand reaches forward...

And *takes it*.

THE END