

TURNAROUND

Story by

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Written by

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Based on the play Macbeth  
by William Shakespeare

OVER BLACK

A droning hum, rushing over us.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DUSK

A ribbon of freeway stretching through heavy smog, asphalt bubbling in the summer heat. A bog of despair on the 405.

The sun setting in a radioactive pink and orange hue. Deep in the bowels of the Valley. A hell of its own making.

EXT. VENTURA BLVD - NIGHT

Hummers. Bush v. Kerry. *Entourage*. Blockbuster. Peak 2004.

A dark sedan, windows tinted, headlights blazing, turns up Coldwater Canyon.

CUT TO:

A heavy, low-slung pickup truck traveling toward the sedan. Neither slowing down despite the narrow road.

Like jousting opponents, the cars pass each other in a deafening cacophony of noise. The sedan swerves to the side of the road, jumping the curb.

INT. 1999 CHRYSLER SEBRING - NIGHT

TIGHT ON: The face of, **ALEC DONOVAN** (30s): attractive, but not easily handsome. The look of the prince second-in-line for the throne. Forever one step away.

Alec grips the wheel - steading himself. A cracked windshield. Shaken, but alive.

In the rear view mirror - the pickup comes to a skidding halt. Tipping on its side, paint cans exploding.

EXT. COLDWATER CANYON - SOMEWHERE IN THE DONNAS - NIGHT

Alec makes his way to the pickup where the driver climbs out of the passenger side.

ALEC

Hey man! What the hell's the matter with you-

The man panics in Portuguese, gesturing wildly:

PICKUP MAN  
...Algo maléfico vem nesta direção!

He grabs his backpack and takes off down the hill.

ALEC  
WAIT... Fuck.

Alec race back to his car. Looks on the passenger seat floor for his Blackberry.

No signal. Fuck. Oil leaks from his undercarriage.

TIGHT ON: Alec's fist knocking feverishly at the door of:

EXT. COLDWATER CANYON - MANSION - NIGHT

An Australian STONER decked out in Ed Hardy and Diesel answers the door, Wu Tang Clan blasting in the background.

STONER  
Hell do you want, mate-

ALEC  
Hey, sorry to bother you but-

STONER  
Holy shit - you're Alec Donovan  
aren't you?

Fuck, a fan. Our Stoner blows a huge cloud around his face.

ALEC  
There's been an accident I need you  
to call 911.

Stoner cranes his neck to see the wreckage - *Shit* - pulls Alec inside before he can stop him, calling out to his mates.

INT. COLDWATER CANYON - MANSION - NIGHT

White Couches. Marble Floor. Scarface. Patron. Weed.

STONER  
YOU'LL NEVER GUESS WHO'S HERE!

DINGBAT 1 (O.S.)  
Crocodile Dundee?

STONER  
No, our favorite guy from *Catching Hell*!

DINGBAT 2  
Tom Adair's here, no way!

STONER  
No, the other one! Alec!

Dingbats turn to face their new guest, disappointed.

DINGBAT 2  
So what, you delivering pizza now?

ALEC  
Is there a phone I can use.

STONER  
I gotchu mate, sit down.

Stoner takes a rip from his zero gravity bong, as he dials.  
911 what's your emergency?

STONER (CONT'D)  
There's been a car accident on Dona  
Evita Dr - uh, okay. Thanks.  
(hangs up)  
They're on their way.

Alec exhales. Sits down. Stoner offers him a blunt. Alec  
waves it off. Silence. Then...

DINGBAT 2  
Do the speech.

Alec looks up at him -- seriously?

STONER  
Come on man, we saw *Catching Hell*  
like fifty times in college. It's  
iconic.

Fuck it. Alec sits forward, grabs the blunt. Slipping into  
character like breathing air. A natural who draws you in-

ALEC  
(southern drawl)  
*That's the thing about racing, no  
one ever enters intending to lose.  
But everyone's so busy trying to be  
the hero of their own story --  
shit, they never realize they might  
just be the villain. You say  
give'em hell down on the speed way -  
- well fuck that - try catching it.*

STONER  
 FUCKING GREAT! I'VE GOT CHILLS!  
 Think you & Tom might do a sequel?

Alec shifts uncomfortably at the mention of *Tom*.

ALEC  
 No. I don't believe in sequels.

Huh.

DING BAT 1  
 Yeah, but didn't like Shakespeare  
 write sequels and he's like  
 arguably the best writer ever.

STONER  
 You alright mate?

ALEC  
 I've just been busy writing my own  
 stuff. Tom was always more down to  
 do that commercial shit.

STONER  
 I meant your head. You're bleeding.

Alec reaches up to touch his head. Blood on his hands. The SOUND OF CLASHING METAL arises, as we CUT TO:

INT. METRO START PICTURES - SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

Two full-costumed GLADIATORS crash into scene battling it out. Only pulling back do we realize that they're on the set of a big budget movie.

*Caesar Is Dead*, a *Julius Caesar* "reboot," to be exact.

FIRST A.D.  
 CUT. RESET!

Crew buzz around them, setting up things. A SECOND A.D rushes past, haranguing the gladiators back into position.

FIRST A.D  
 Roger that. Ready for Tom in five!

Camera floats over to **TOM ADAIR** (30s), preternaturally handsome and charismatic leading man, a star with his own gravitational pull. Though, he often conflates the brilliant words of others for his own.

He sits in full Roman costume arguing with the movie's **GERMAN DIRECTOR, HANZ** (50s), eating loose peanuts from his pocket.

TOM

Now, I still don't get this. I say,  
"But you? Brutus?" That wasn't in  
the script I read. That wasn't in  
the script I signed on to, Hanz.

HANZ

*Das ist* true Tom, it's just that-

TOM

I know you know. But the line is  
supposed to be "Et Tu, Brutus?"  
That's the line.

He tosses some peanuts in his mouth.

TOM (CONT'D)

That's what all the actors have  
said through the centuries. That's  
what Olivier said. That's  
what...uh...

He searches for another actor to name.

TOM (CONT'D)

(guessing)

That's what Kevin Costner said.

He may be the Director, but Hanz has to tread lightly.

HANZ

Kevin never played Caesar, but-

TOM

Well, that's what he would have  
said!

The FEMALE SECOND A.D rushes over to our Director.

SECOND A.D

Cali still isn't in wardrobe. And  
we're ready for the next take-

HANZ

Well, get him out of his trailer.

SECOND A.D

The crew can't. He-

The SECOND A.D mines a throwing motion.

DIRECTOR  
*Shizer, get... Claudette?*

He looks around, landing on the stunning French FEMALE LEAD, **CLAUDETTE** (20s), dressed as a peasant spy.

CLAUDETTE  
*Moi? No, no. I'm in character.*

She takes a sip of her green juice, not in character at all. Everyone looks to Tom. Taking charge like Caesar, he stands declaring his royal decree.

TOM  
 BILLY!

We whip pan to **BILLY ADAIR** (20s), Tom's younger, idiot brother, who shoots first and doesn't think later, rushes from craft services at the sound of Tom's voice. He wears the costume of a Senate Page.

BILLY  
 Tom, what's up? You need another smoothie, more nuts-

TOM  
 Billy, relax. You're doing great. I just need you do me a tiny favor.

INT. DARK TRAILER - DAY

Billy's KNOCKING sound is heard. Stops. Then gets LOUDER.

BILLY (O.S.)  
*California? Cali? It's Billy, Billy Adair. You're needed on set, man.*

More KNOCKING.

BILLY (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
*Cali, I'm coming in? Okay? Don't throw shit this time-*

The door at the far end of the trailer opens and light bursts into the room. Billy squints into the darkness, at something right below us. Then his eyes adjust and steps back, sick.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
 Oh fuck.

He lurches outside and throws up.

CUT TO:

## ON SCREEN: AN ENTERTAINMENT TONIGHT SPECIAL EDITION PLAYS.

The seasoned male host, CHUCK, narrates live from the home studio for a breaking news alert, as we intercut shots of home made shrines and mourning fans.

CHUCK

Allegations of drug abuse had always haunted California "Cali" Christiansen, but too late friends and co-workers found out the truth. Drugs striking their deadly touch yet again, as police have confirmed the cause of death as a narcotic induced seizure.

(then)

Reporting live from the set of his latest film, *Caesar is Dead*, is our very own Kelly Rose-

CUT TO:

CEASAR SET where the overly perky CORRESPONDENT, KELLY ROSE as she interviews the distraught crew and cast.

KELLY ROSE

It was said to be Brutus who struck the final blow, but it's not Caesar we mourn today, but Cali Christiansen. I spoke with Cali's co-stars, who reflect on the star's short, but bright career, from the set where he was starring in the iconic role of Brutus.

Claudette is interviewed first, laying on the waterworks.

CLAUDETTE

Some would say, thirty-five is too old to die young, you know?

(drag of her cigarette)

But he died doing what he loves.  
The death of a true artist, no?

Claudette takes a drag of her cigarette, shedding a single, French tear, as we cut to Hanz.

HANZ

We have a saying in German, *Nicht entgehet dem Tode, wer der Geburt nicht entgangen ist*. Those who are born, can not escape death. Cali, was, as you say, the most alive of us all.

Finally Tom comes on. He plays the mourning friend well.

TOM

I'd always wanted to work with Cali  
and he was... he is a total genius.  
It's too often used, that word. But  
he was a stone cold genius.

(choking up)

The world has lost a rare talent.  
Excuse me.

A bearded and pot-bellied seasoned **PRODUCER, JERRY SHILLING** steps in for an inconsolable Tom.

SHILLING

Cali was one of the finest actors  
I've ever known. I can speak for  
the whole Metro Start family when I  
say we're utterly shocked and  
saddened by the whole ordeal...

INT. METRO START PICTURES - EXECUTIVE OFFICES - NIGHT

The rest of interview plays ON A TELEVISION in the C-Suite office of Metro Pictures's President GREGORY PATRICK. Bulging veins, demanding presence. A hangover from the coke-fueled days of the 80's. Like a cold you can't shake.

SHILLING (O.S.)

*But the show must, and will go on.  
Cali would have wanted that.*

TOM

I've always hated that prick.

Click! PULL OUT TO REVEAL An emergency production meeting in process, with Hanz, Shilling, and Tom.

SHILLING

Business Affairs says insurance  
buys us time to respectfully mourn,  
and then picture's up again at the  
end of the month-

TOM

A month?! Gregory, you know I have  
other commitments-

Gregory slams his hand on his oak desk. The room stiffens.

GREGORY

You're committed to me! I have NDAs  
and checks being cut left and right  
- so somebody better tell me what  
the fuck really happened on my set.

(to Shilling)

You said you could control him!

Shilling sips from his coffee.

SHILLING

And I did, Gregory. To a point.

(turning to Tom)

Would you fellas like to add  
anything or do I need to say it?

Tom and Hanz scramble like scared school boys.

TOM

(pointing to DIRECTOR)

*He wanted to loosen him up!*

DIRECTOR

Loosen, not turn into a fucking  
corpse!

TOM

Like I was supposed to know that  
dealer's shit was bad-

GREGORY

ENOUGH! Or I'm shutting down  
production for good!

Everyone is scared quiet. Shilling dares to speak as Gregory  
squeezes a stress ball at his desk.

SHILLING

Greg, we're only out the first week  
of shooting. With the insurance  
money, we have time to recast the  
part. It's save-able.

GREGORY

Who were you thinking?

*Squeeze. Breath. Squeeze.*

SHILLING

I always liked Brad, and he owes me  
a favor.

TOM

Love it. Problem solved.

GREGORY  
Yeah, no. We need someone cheap.

Tom pouts.

HANZ  
What about Natalie Portman?

TOM  
A female Brutus? Fuck off.

Shilling ignores that, and turns to the Gregory.

SHILLING  
How about Jamie? He's funny, brings  
in the urban audience.

TOM  
Sure, but you know... he's black.  
(awkward silence)  
All I'm saying is it that authentic  
to the period...

The room settles back into aggravated contemplation.

GREGORY  
We need white. We need male. We  
need cheap. Or we got nothing.

Tom smiles, with an inspired thought.

TOM  
Actually, I might know just the  
guy.

INT. SOUND STAGE - ROMAN SENATE STEPS - NIGHT

Tom, in full Caesar costume once again, steps past the shadowy pillars and starts down the steps. SENATORS appear out of the darkness, their faces hidden from view. Pulling out long knives, they stab into Tom, who contorts his face in agony as a SPOTLIGHT hits him.

Turning his back to face the darkness, he sees an unexpected figure approaching.

TOM  
Et.. Tu.. Brutus???

With that, ALEC DONOVAN in full roman costume, steps out into the light and thrusts his sword into Tom.

Tom acts out an agonizingly and ostentatiously slow death, falling down each step one at a time, til he crumbles to the floor.

HANZ (O.S.)  
And... CUT! Print it!

The lights go up and the background noise rises. Hanz walks over to congratulate Tom, who immediately begins worrying.

TOM  
I think, maybe we should try it one more time Hanz, it felt false that last bit on the stairs-

DIRECTOR  
It. Was. PERFEKT! Better than Olivier!

TOM  
Really? You think?

HANZ  
I don't think. I know.

Tom moves off, as Hanz move on towards Alec.

HANZ (CONT'D)  
(whispering)  
Great stuff Alec. It's nice to have a real actor around.

With that he moves on, Alec smiling for the first time in what seems like forever. Other crew members patting him on the back, happy to see him again. He could get use to this.

Parked at video village we find **KARYNN PIEPER** (30s), a cunning and ambitious talent agent, armored with striking good looks and fast talking platitudes. A keen eye for bullshit and talent.

Karynn manically types into her BlackBerry 7100t, as she wraps up a call on her other comically large flip-phone, making her way toward her star client - Tom Adair.

KARYNN  
(as she nears Tom)  
...and you can tell them I'm with Tom. Everybody else can fuck off.  
(to Tom)  
That was incredible. I can already see the nominations rolling in.

She hugs Tom. Air kissing him.

TOM

Hanz said I was better than Olivier-

KARYNN

Of course you fucking are! That old fuck doesn't hold a candle to you.

TOM

I don't know, I can't tell with that guy. He's so... German?

KARYNN

(pulling him close)

Listen.

(she jerks her head at Hanz)

If you don't like him, we'll replace him. You wanna direct?

TOM

Huh. Maybe...

KARYNN

Let's sort it out over a martini.

EXT. SOUND STAGE - NIGHT

Alec getting into his car, his windshield still cracked, catches Karynn and Tom getting into a black town car.

ALEC

Karynn, don't I get a hello or is my ten percent not good enough for you?

KARYNN

Ten percent of nothing, is still nothing, Alec! I'm kidding, babe.

Tom laughs. Karynn motions for Tom to get in without her. She turns to Alec, barely looking up from her Blackberry.

KARYNN (CONT'D)

Sorry, I thought you had this day off. My assistant gave me the wrong call sheet. Look, I got dinner reservations at the Chateau. I'll catch up with you after.

Out of Tom's view, Alec delicately touches Karynn's arm.

ALEC

Sure, but I was hoping we could talk some business. Real business.

Karynn, looks up - a moment of connection - then spots Alec's car behind him. Her face recoils.

KARYNN

Jesus Christ Alec, your car-

ALEC

Yeah. It looks worse than it is.

One of Karynn's phones ring, she turns back to the town car.

KARYNN

Shit, I gotta take this. We'll talk soon, I promise.

(on the phone)

Leo darling, yes - we're heading to the Chateau - no way - you should join us - please it's no trouble.

Alone, Alec stares at his cracked windshield. He touches it, only to CUT HIS FINGER on a shard of glass. Blood pooling.

CUT TO:

KARYNN AND ALEC FUCKING

Which is exactly what it is. Fast, violent and hard.

INT. KARYNN'S MALIBU BEACH HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Once it's over, she reaches for a cigarette and one of the five mineral water bottles lined up on the bedside table.

ALEC

So we're just going to pretend you didn't blow me off last night?

Karynn sighs. Already with this.

KARYNN

Yeah. Cause I like my sex like my coffee. Warm and bitter.

She leans over for her phone. Scrolls through her BBMs.

KARYNN (CONT'D)

Alec, Tom's a star. He gets off on seeing people abused on his behalf.

ALEC

Well, I'm not people. Christ's sake  
Karynn, you signed us together.

KARYNN

'97 was a while ago babe. You two  
don't really talk anymore and we  
both know that.

ALEC

He put me in the fuckin' movie  
didn't he?

KARYNN

Because you're cheap and available  
on zero notice. Plus the whole "Tom  
and Alec together again" thing  
makes for good publicity.  
Especially after Cali's-

Karynn mimes snorting blow, seizure. She laughs.

ALEC

Jesus Karynn, his body isn't even  
in the ground yet.

KARYNN

Didn't stop you from taking the  
job?

Karynn gets out of bed, throws a robe on, and moves to the  
bathroom to freshen up.

ALEC

(calling out)

Please tell me you had nothing to  
do with that?

KARYNN

Of course not! Well, not directly.  
I kinda knew the dealer from Yale  
or whatever. But It's not like I  
forced the guy to do drugs.

ALEC

Aren't you supposed to be scoring  
jobs, not bad coke?

Karynn pops her head out, toothbrush in hand.

KARYNN

Hey! Vin has a place in Bel Air.  
He's a high class dealer. Far as  
that sort of thing goes.

She moves from the bathroom throwing open her closet with force. All designer suits and heels lining the shelves.

ALEC

Yeah, well, maybe Vin should try representation, 'cause all I'm getting is fucked.

Alec shifts through the piles of scripts on her night stand. He finds his - *"Sure Shot."*

KARYNN

And it's best sex of your life.

ALEC

Did you even read my script?

KARYNN

Of course.

(then)

I skimmed the coverage, but I got you that meeting with Shilling didn't I?

Taking the hint cuddle time is over, Alec gets dressed.

ALEC

Yeah, a meeting with the guy whose career I saved with *Catching Hell*, only to use my street cred to keep making shitty action movies.

KARYNN

Shitty movies that make the studio millions of dollars a year.

ALEC

He and Tom oughta be a footnote in my autobiography, not the other way around.

KARYNN

You aren't commercial Alec-

ALEC

- Commercial, is the worst word to happen to the history of cinema. I'm in the business of selling ideas, not fucking Hondas.

(then, pathetic)

The Village Voice called me the voice of a generation.

Karynn pulls Alec close to her. We aren't sure if she's agenting or playing the role of the supportive girlfriend.

KARYNN

Growing up, I use to beg my mom to buy me these clothing catalogs from New York. She couldn't understand why I was so obsessed with them. I'd never be able to buy any of it. But even in bum fuck Ohio I knew they existed somewhere, and the world they existed in also existed.

(then)

You know I always thought between the two of you, you'd be the bigger star. You're more talented than Tom. Smarter. Handsome.

ALEC

I like this, keep going.

KARYNN

But talent isn't enough. You have to really want it.

(whispering)

Do whatever it takes to get to the top.

ALEC

Oh yeah, like what?

KARYNN

For one, start taking my advice.

She bites his ear. Reeling him in.

ALEC

And am I taking your advice as my girlfriend or as my agent?

KARYNN

Well, at this point in your career, neither.

Only to throw him right back. Turning to her makeup counter.

KARYNN (CONT'D)

And fix your fucking window before going to the Lot. You look poor.

Alec stares at his unopened script "*Sure Shot*" by her night stand. He reads the first page, smiling. Pleased with himself. Maybe he does have the potential to be great.

## EXT. GUARD GATE - METRO START PICTURES - DAY

Teamsters and personnel zip by on golf-carts. A tour guide leads a tram in the background. Alec idles in his car at the gate, his windshield still not repaired. He stares at a GIANT POSTER of TOM ADAIR advertising some dark sci-fi trilogy.

GUARD

Here's your pass and map. Up the road, turn right to park in structure four.

Alec re-focuses.

ALEC

Oh, I was told I'd have parking outside the production offices?

GUARD

(a sad smile)  
That's for VIPs.

Eager to avoid the pity smile, Alec looks down at the map. It's a long walk.

## INT. SHILLING PRODUCTION'S - WAITING AREA - DAY

A classic studio bungalow. Alec sits outside Shilling's office, sweaty. A Poster for *Catching Hell* hangs by the bathroom.

A YOUNG MALE ASSISTANT comes out from Shilling's office.

ASSISTANT

Hey. Can I, uh, get you anything?  
Mr. Shilling will just be a couple more minutes.

Alec hoists up the unopened, bottle of water next to him.

ALEC

Nah, all hydrated and everything.

The assistant looks around, the coast clear.

ASSISTANT

Listen, I just wanted to tell you, *Catching Hell* is, like, my favorite movie. It's the reason I work here.

ALEC

Oh, cool.

He flashes Alec's SCRIPT - *Sure Shot.*

ASSITANT

I'm not supposed to say this, but I read your new script. Some real deep stuff in there. Nothing like the crap we normally get submitted.

Now Alec lights up.

ALEC

Thanks man. Much appreciated. I was taking a big swing, never know how it's gonna land.

ASSITANT

Oh for sure. You knocked it out of the park. But how come you don't write with Tom anymore? You guys made a good team.

Alec's smile fades. He can't seem to escape Tom's name.

ALEC

Uh-huh.

ASSISTANT

I mean the dailies on *Caesar is Dead* are pure magic. Maybe this could be another team up?

ALEC

Well, let's see what he thinks first.

Alec gestures to Shilling's door.

ASSITANT

Right. Of course. For what it's worth, I think it's great for a first draft-

Before Alec can respond to the dig, Shilling emerges from his office. Motions for the script, while he shakes Alec's hand.

SHILLING

Alec, great to see you again. Can I get you anything? Coffee, water? Coke?

(then)

Well you know, not that kind.

He laughs, slapping Alec hard on the back.

INT. SHILLING'S OFFICE - DAY

The posh man-cave. Photos of a younger Shilling, Tom and Alec smiling at the premiere of *Catching Hell*, dwarfed by Shilling's posters for the low-brow shoot-em-up franchise that made Tom a superstar and Shilling a lot of money.

SHILLING

Nice to have you back on the lot.  
Everyone's still talking about how  
you saved Metro's ass stepping in  
for Cali.

ALEC

It was a good part, despite the  
circumstances.

SHILLING

The assembly is looking good. You  
should be proud. Kinda disappeared  
into that indie 'woo-woo' land for  
a while, there, huh kid?

ALEC

I wouldn't say disappeared.

SHILLING

Could have used you in that last  
*Blood Quench*, is all I'm saying.

ALEC

You're saying a lot.

SHILLING

Alec, we go way back so I'm gonna  
cut straight to the chase. I just  
don't think-

(glancing at the title  
page)

*Sure...* *Shot...* is the type of  
movie this studio wants to make  
right now. It feels small. And none  
of the characters are very like-  
able. Not to mention the ending-

ALEC

What's wrong with the ending?

SHILLING

It's a mess. The videotape that  
kicks it off comes out of nowhere,  
total deus ex machina. Yeah, the  
car chase is fun, but then  
everybody dies. It's a real downer.

ALEC

It's a satire. And everyone doesn't die. Maurice lives.

SHILLING

I don't see how the villain living makes it any better.

ALEC

He's not the villain. The capitalist system that rewards unchecked greed and ambition is. The American Dream is.

Shilling flips through the script, totally confused.

ALEC (CONT'D)

It's subtle, but it's there. I guess I could underline it to make for an easier read-

SHILLING

Yeah, yeah. Maybe bold it too.

ALEC

-but I firmly believe that audiences are smarter than we give them credit for. They'll get it.

SHILLING

I get what you're going for, I do. But it's... unconventional.

ALEC

Well they said all that and more about *Catching Hell*. And look how that turned out.

Shilling smiles from behind his desk - cute line.

SHILLING

Look, if it wasn't for my overall deal, I'd take a run at developing this. Try our luck at Sundance, but the way the world is right now-

ALEC

That's exactly why I want to do it.

Uh huh. Shilling pops a couple M&M's into his mouth.

## SHILLING

People are scared shitless Alec. And when they're not worried about their medical bills, they're worried about the fucking ice caps melting or a kid in a trench coat shooting up a school. They don't want to be reminded of the doom and gloom of their everyday lives.

(pointing to his posters)

What they want is an escape. To be entertained!

Alec stares blankly. Unmoved by Shilling's own spectacle.

## ALEC

Do you know the difference between art and entertainment, Jerry?

A tight smile crosses Shilling faces. It's gonna be like that, huh?

## SHILLING

...please do enlighten me.

## ALEC

Entertainment enforces an audience's world view. It lulls them to sleep. Art challenges it. It wakes them the fuck up.

## SHILLING

That's good. You make that up all on your own?

## ALEC

Jerry, I SEE this movie. I can FEEL it. You trusted me before with less, and we both made our careers off it.

Shilling looks at him with a resigned sigh.

## SHILLING

You wrote a great script at the right time. We both got lucky. But I don't want to walk out of the casino a loser, Alec. I've got alimonies to pay. Plural.

Alec drops all pretenses. He's vulnerable.

ALEC

I need this. Just tell me what I gotta do to make it happen.

Shilling sits back in his chair. Thinks.

SHILLING

The only way a studio does a movie like this is as a prestige film. And that's only with a BIG star who they want to keep happy.

Alec sits back. He knows what's coming next.

SHILLING (CONT'D)

If you could get, I don't know, Tom Adair attached, we'd have a shot.

Now it's time for Alec to smile tightly. It's gonna be like that, huh?

EXT. METRO STUDIO BACKLOT - DAY

Alec walks through the busy, hot streets of the studio. Hustling production moves past him on all sides, the script in his hand a heavy reminder of his failure.

As he walks up a main drive, LOUD RAP/ROCK MUSIC floods the area as a fleet of posh new convertibles honk him onto the side of the street.

As the SECOND CONVERTIBLE drives by, it suddenly BRAKES, coming to a full a stop. The driver, a very young and fast-rising actor/writer/director named **AARON KEEV** (20s), lets out a trio of short HONKS causing Alec to turn around.

AARON

ALEC DONOVAAAAN! Whassup!

Alec has no idea who this guy is, but plays it off well.

ALEC

Hey bud! Good to see you!

AARON

Hey man, what's going on? I haven't seen you since the *Rain of Tears* preem at Sundance. Shit, that was a piece of shit. Good booze'n'hos tho-

Aaron doesn't get out of the car. He waves to the other passengers in a slight introductory way.

AARON (CONT'D)  
Gary, Tree, and Bartello meet the  
fucking iconic Alec Donovan.

His minions look up barely perceptibly, annoyed that someone else has their boss's attention.

AARON (CONT'D)  
He was in *Catching Hell* y'know,  
with Tom Adair. Gotta tell you,  
bro, I get high to it. Freakin' art  
hotties go for that big time.

He turns and expectantly looks to Alec, who has no idea what the question posed was.

ALEC  
Yeah. Well, I'm just here for a  
meeting. Got a new script-

AARON  
Hey! I just got outta meeting too,  
uh, Gregory-the big dude-

ALEC  
-the studio President?-

AARON  
-The Prez, yeah. Fat as fuck, ain't  
he. I hear he's gotta plaster an  
AmEx to his forehead just for a  
chick to fuck him. Shit I wouldn't.

Again, the expectant pause.

ALEC  
(reminding)  
A meeting?

There's a HONKING from behind, as Aaron's caravan of cars clogs all the traffic down the main studio drag. He ignores it or, rather, can't seem to hear it over his music.

AARON  
Oh, yeah, talking about my new film  
out of Sundance, *Risks of the Game*.  
He was mad wet, sucking my dick raw  
son - shit, you know what that's  
like. Anyway, my new film idea -  
*Bang Crash Boom* - check it - Me  
with beautiful babes and big guns.  
Like that Hong Kong stuff. Hey,  
maybe I can get you in on it! Like  
an homage to the past n'shit.

AARON (CONT'D)  
Have your assistant give mine a  
call, kay? Catchin' HELLLLL!!!!

With that, he jets off. Alec can't decide whether to be pissed off or flattered.

INT. ALEC'S VALLEY VILLAGE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Alec sits by the window staring out at the city, wondering how he got to where he is. A large, life-size poster of *Catching Hell* is hung above, the twin figures of a youthful Tom and Alec staring down at him cockily from it. He glares at it, as if to silence it.

Picking up his phone, he picks through the auto-dial numbers. He rings "Karynn Home," "Karynn Office," "Karynn Cell," and "Karynn Car." All head straight to voice-mail.

He reclines back into the chair, looking at the top of the movie poster, where his and Tom's name share equal billing.

He runs his hands through his hair, then buries his face in them. Sighing, he finally open his eyes, trying to resolve himself to do something he doesn't want to.

CUT TO:

LIGHT PASSING OVER THE TITLE PAGE OF "SURE SHOT"

INT. CHRYSLER SEBRING (DRIVING) - NIGHT

Alec's script lies on the passenger side of his car, as he drives down the freeway towards Tom's house. His face has moved into a mask of grim and confident determination, attempting to cover for desperation.

With irritation, he notices that the crack in his windshield seems to have gotten bigger. Spreading.

EXT. TOM ADAIR'S MANSION - FRONT GATE - NIGHT

Alec pulls up to a security gate and rings the intercom. There's a pause as the camera above the gate clicks on. Tom's voice comes on, sounding somewhat faraway and odd.

TOM (O.S.)  
(filtered)  
Alec?

ALEC  
Yeah, Hi Tom. Uh-

Suddenly, there's a loud BUZZ and the gates swing open. A bit thrown, Tom nudges his car up the hill.

EXT. TOM ADAIR'S MANSION - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

All the lights in the house blaze on. The front door already open, Tom nervously proceeds inside.

INT. TOM ADAIR'S MANSION - NIGHT

The place is marble and chrome. Expensive, slightly tacky. Very 2004 Britney Spears mid-meltdown.

TOM (O.S.)  
Did Karynn send you?

Alec can't figure out where the voice is coming from. He looks around, trying to figure out where to head.

ALEC  
Uh, no. I couldn't get a hold of her. I wanted to come here first, talk to you.

TOM (O.S.)  
What?

With that, Tom appears above the front hall up on the THIRD FLOOR, looking down from a balcony. His hair is tousled and uneven, his complexion exceedingly pale.

Alec can tell he's stumbled into something very terrible.

ALEC  
Tom, are you okay?

Before he can get an answer, Tom heads down the nearby stairs, hitting them three at a time. He would appear to be on at least two or three bad influences.

TOM  
It's all fucked man. I'm so glad you're here. You're the only one I can trust right now. Totally trust, totally. I can trust you, right?

ALEC  
...yeah. Of course.

TOM  
Good, good...

On reaching the last step, Tom sits down and begins to cry.

TOM (CONT'D)  
Fucked up, man. I fucked it all up.

Alec sits down uneasily next to him.

ALEC

Tom, what happened?

INT. TOM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The all-white décor is only thrown off by the **DEAD BODY** of a **HALF-NAKED MAN** on the bed. Blood pouring out of his face onto the satin sheets.

ALEC (CONT'D)  
Dead... It's okay. Being gay that is, not the dead part.

TOM

A Natalie Wood situation I could  
survive, but a dead call boy?

# ALEC Career killer.

A mirror with several lines of coke spilt onto the mattress sits nearby. Alec turns away from it. Sick. Tom hides in the door frame, pacing. Unable to wake up from his nightmare.

TOM  
So, what're we gonna do?

ALEC

TOM  
(unnerved)  
You're the fucking smart one! Just  
tell me what the fuck to do and  
I'll do it! I'll owe you my life.

Alec looks back, one more time.

ALEC

You didn't happen to get that coke  
from a guy named Vin, did you?

TOM

Yeah! How'd you know?

INT. TOM'S LOUNGE - NIGHT

Alec slumps in a chair facing the enormous picture window that looks out onto the L.A. sprawl. Under several framed posters from his hit movies, Tom paces fretfully in front of a GIANT TUBE TV and impressive VHS collection.

TOM

You think we should still wait for  
Karynn?

ALEC

(weary)

Yeah. That's what I said.

TOM

It's just.. That was five minutes  
ago and...

ALEC

I still think it.

TOM

(a beat)

Ok, yeah. She'll know what to do.  
She'll take care of it.

He stops pacing long enough to walk over to the coffee table and snort a line of coke off his Bruce Weber photo books.

ALEC

Y'know, I don't think that's such a  
good idea...

TOM

(scornfully)

It's from a different dealer.

ALEC

Ah.

TOM

Yeah. Whatever. My house, okay?

(suddenly suspicious)

What're you doing here?

ALEC  
I came to visit.

Alec tucks his script deeper into his inside jacket pocket.

TOM  
Visit. Yeah, right. Nobody just  
visits me.

ALEC  
(insulted)  
I do.

TOM  
Yeah, you're going to tell me that  
you didn't want something? Some  
drugs? A Skip the Bouncer card at  
Hyde? Another supporting role?

Alec looks away, his face burning.

TOM (CONT'D)  
You just wanted company?

ALEC  
(getting up)  
Yeah, I did. Maybe I should leave.

Tom moves to block him, now very conciliatory.

TOM  
No, don't leave. Okay? I'm sorry.

Suddenly, the front door SLAMS shut (OS). And they both jump.

KARYNN (O.S.)  
Tom? Alec?

CUT TO:

INT. TOM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The same dead body and bloody mess as before, but a PAN to  
the door reveals Karynn looking in on the scene now.

KARYNN  
Fuck. Vin. That fucking fuck.

INT. TOM'S FRONT HALL / KITCHEN - NIGHT

From here we see that Tom is in the kitchen, noisily sorting through cleaning products. Karynn stops Alec outside the entrance to the room.

KARYNN  
(hissing)  
What the hell are you doing here?

ALEC  
(covering)  
I was here to, see him. We're friends. What are you doing here?

KARYNN  
He called me.

ALEC  
I couldn't even get a hold of you.  
How'd he?

She holds up a BRIGHT-RED BLACKBERRY that we haven't seen before.

KARYNN  
The Tom phone. Goes everywhere.  
Even therapy.

She walks into the kitchen, not waiting for a reply.

ALEC  
What, I don't get a phone?

INT. TOM'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Inside the kitchen, Tom has brought out all the cleaning products from under the sink and lined them up.

TOM  
Which one do we use to get blood out?

Instinctively, both he and Alec turn to Karynn for an answer.

KARYNN  
I'm supposed to know?!

TOM  
Don't they teach you this at the agency?

KARYNN  
How to clean up dead bodies?

TOM  
I don't think it's the first  
fucking time it's happened.  
(worried now)  
You-you're supposed to take care of  
it. You said you would!

Determined, Karynn grabs all the cleaning supplies, throws them into a big trash bag. She hands more trash bags to Alec and rubber gloves. *Hell no.*

KARYNN  
Sorry, do you make 15 mil a film?

Alec, Karynn, and Tom put on rubber gloves as they walk and talk back through the foyer, UP THE SPIRALING STAIRS.

KARYNN (CONT'D)  
Now, let's figure a few things out  
first. Cover our tracks. Tom,  
where'd you pick this guy up?

TOM  
Um, Les Deux? No, Dan Tana's and  
then we went to Les Deux.

KARYNN  
Okay. Did anyone see you two  
together? At Les Deux?

TOM  
Yeah, I think so. I mean, there was-  
everyone was around. Billy, Cowboy,  
Sketch, y'know. Everybody.

KARYNN  
Fuck.

This is worse than she thought.

KARYNN (CONT'D)  
So people saw you with him. Okay,  
well, he OD'd, right? I mean he  
could have done that anywhere.

Tom stares off into the middle distance.

TOM  
Yeah, yeah definitely...

KARYNN

Tom, baby - look at me. Is there anything else I need to know?

Tom looks startled and confused at the directness of her question.

KARYNN (CONT'D)

You didn't, uh, take any photos together? Shoot a feature film?

TOM

No... Jesus.

KARYNN

Well, we should be okay then. The way I see it we've got two choices: One, we dump him somewhere, say he OD'd there, hope it doesn't come back to haunt us.

Both guys nod their heads.

KARYNN (CONT'D)

Or two, the more sure-fire way:

Both guys again nod their heads expectantly.

KARYNN (CONT'D)

We chop him up into little pieces and dump him into the ocean.

ALEC

What?

TOM

Uh, I'm not doing the chopping.

KARYNN

(without breaking stride)  
Okay, Alec can do it.

ALEC

WHAT?

KARYNN

Well, I'm not doing it. And it's not like I can call my fucking assistant to do it. So man up.

INT. TOM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Everyone stares at the body anew. The pool of blood seems to have gotten larger. Karynn dumps all the cleaning supplies.

ALEC  
(to himself)  
What the fuck am I doing here?

KARYNN  
You boys should go get the knives now. I'd say bring...  
(a pause as she looks at the scene)  
All the big ones.

She lays down a garbage bag.

Alec is about to protest, but Tom obediently walks out, leaving him no choice but follow.

INT. STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Tom heads down the stairs like a sleepwalker, then as if breaking out of trance, turns to Alec.

TOM  
Hey, can you go back and turn off the VCR? I left it on.

Alec starts to go back, but stops himself.

ALEC  
Why the fuck am I doing everything around here? I didn't kill any fucking call boys, I'm not your fucking agent, so why am I doing all the shit?

TOM  
(very slowly)  
Go back and turn off the VCR.

ALEC  
Fuck you. Do it yourself.

Alec moves past, Tom reaches for him - his script falling free from his jacket pocket. Tom bends down picks it up.

TOM  
What's this?

Alec freezes. Shit.

ALEC

Nothing. Just something I was working on. I wanted to see what you thought, like old times.

TOM

I bet. *Sure Shot*, huh? By Alec Donovan. More like long shot.

He flips through the script.

ALEC

So says the star of *Blood Quench 3*.

Tom claps dramatically, bordering on insane.

TOM

You know, Alec, I gotta say that I like tonight's performance best of all. The concerned, loyal friend. Come on, go on, ask me what you really wanted. To be in this.

(off Donovan's look)

Yeah I heard about your sad little meeting with Shilling.

He slams the script back at Alec.

TOM (CONT'D)

Now go turn off my fucking VCR, because that's all you're good for. You fucking has-been.

Alec is done taking Tom's shit for the evening.

ALEC

If I'm a has-been then you're a fucking SELL OUT! And I'm not gonna eat your SHIT anymore-

Tom suddenly shoves Alec against the wall, hard. Grabs him by the collar, lifting him up against the wall.

TOM

-Oh you'll eat whatever SHIT I give you, Alec. You know why? Because you're NOTHING without me. If it wasn't for me, you'd still be flipping burgers back in Tulsa. The way I look at it, your whole fucking purpose is to eat my shit. So say it-

(British Accent)

*PLEASE SIR CAN I HAVE SOME MORE?!*

ALEC  
-Get your fucking hands off me.

Karynn comes out from the bedroom, tries to break it up.

KARYNN  
BOYS, stop measuring your dicks and  
get the cutlery. There's a corpse  
decomposing in the master bedroom,  
remember?

Tom drops Alec. Drugs coursing through his veins, he turns his fury on Karynn.

TOM  
(to Karynn, Donovan)  
NAG NAG NAG! I'm tired of carrying  
you fucking people. I should have  
cut ties with both of you long ago-

KARYNN  
Tom, baby - I know tensions are  
high, but the sooner we wrap this  
up the better. I'll book you a spa  
retreat in Santa Fe, talk strategy-

TOM  
YOU DUMB CUNT, STOP TRYING TO SELL  
ME and get back in that room.

KARYNN  
(cold)  
Or what?

TOM  
I'll sign with Endeavor. YEAH. Whom  
everyone but YOU knows I've been  
flirting with for the last six  
months.

(to Alec)  
Before you try to come to her  
defense know the only reason why  
this MANIPULATIVE BITCH is fucking  
you at all is because I rejected  
her at the *Catching Hell* premiere.

(off Alec's look)  
Oh, you didn't know? Well, the  
sooner you accept you're nobody's  
first choice, the better. Consider  
it another fucking favor.

Tom slips off his rubber gloves. Both Karynn and Alec are standing stock still.

TOM (CONT'D)

Now I'm going out. And if you both want to keeping working in this town, you'll have this cleaned up by the time I'm back. *Comprende?*

Alec doesn't move.

TOM (CONT'D)

...pathetic.

As Tom starts to head down the stairs, Alec breaks out of his stupor. Rushing him, he SHOVES Tom to the side of the stairs.

But Tom pushes back surprisingly strongly. He is, after all, totally wired on several different drugs.

As the two shove back and forth, they move down the stairs, while Karynn watches impassively from the top of the stairs.

Finally, at the plateau bridging the two sets of stairs, Alec gets the advantage and SWINGS into Tom.

The PUNCH connects and is harder than either expected. Tom loses his balance, FALLING DOWN THE STAIRS HEAD FIRST.

He lands with a sickening crunch at the marble base of the stairs. Alec and Karynn stare down at his body from their respective places, before rushing down to him.

Alec reaches him first, pulling back his head to see if he's still breathing. He is, but his breath comes out in sharp, ragged exhalations.

KARYNN

(coming down the stairs)

Is he still alive?

Alec nods YES. Karynn, now at the body, picks up Tom's head and stares into the fading eyes. Then SMASHES his head viciously into the marble. BAM! BAM! The breathing stops.

KARYNN (CONT'D)

Not anymore.

Standing up, she heads out of the room to the bathroom. The sounds of RUNNING WATER as Karynn washes her hands can be heard.

Alec simply sits down on the steps and stares down at his handiwork. A small pool of blood begins to flow out onto the expensive marble tiles.

FADE DOWN

FADE UP on Alec, disheveled and clad only in his underwear, sitting on the edge of his bed and staring at us.

INT. ALEC'S HOLLYWOOD BUNGALOW - BEDROOM - MORNING

As we begin to CIRCLE around the room, we see that Alec is watching not us but TV. ONSCREEN an aerial view of Tom's home is being displayed as paramedics remove a stretcher.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

We're not sure whose body that is, right now. It has been reported that there are at least two bodies in the house, but it is confirmed that one of the bodies is that of Tom Adair, the well-known actor. Chris Parker is standing by and..

The sound FADES as we slowly FADE DOWN

CUT TO:

A SHINY, EMPTY BLACK

In the middle, a bright red sun suddenly snaps to life.

Numbers turn over, on a LCD, from :59 to :00.

A whirring sound begins, from what we now recognize as a VCR.

From the middle of a BLANK TV SCREEN a picture bursts forward to full-size.

ON THE TV: An aerial view of Tom's Mansion, stretchers being removed. The same footage we saw earlier. But this time, the familiar voice carries us over the shocking footage.

JOY (V.O.)

These shots have played out on millions of television sets around the world and yet it took us so long to understand what they meant. The scene inside this house haunted and illuminated thousands to the awful reality of a tortured man everyone loved, but no one truly seemed to know. What really went on fueled speculation, innuendo, and finally, change.

CUT TO:

INT. STUDIO - NOT, NOT 60 MINUTES

On the set of her talk show, Joy speaks straight to CAMERA, with the seriousness of a Barbara Walters or Larry King.

JOY

Now, a year to the day that this all happened, we have in our studio the man who can answer all these questions, who might as well have lived inside those walls, who knew Tom Adair as no one else could.

She turns to her guest and we see now see that it is Alec.

He is well-dressed and looks, somehow, much younger and more handsome than before. On his jacket, he wears a RIBBON with the small initials "TA" in the middle of it.

JOY (CONT'D)

Alec Donovan, thank you for being here on the anniversary of this painful event.

ALEC

It's my honor, Larry. If there's one thing I never grow tired of talking about, it's Tom.

JOY

You two were like brothers, correct?

ALEC

I think everyone who ever worked with us or even anyone who's seen *Catching Hell* can attest to that.

JOY

So you were there firsthand to witness his rapid rise to fame. Ever jealous?

ALEC

Not really. I mean, he had his way and I had mine. We both did projects we believed in, but we were different people. We supported each other throughout.

JOY

And you were there to see the toll it took on him.

Alec nods.

JOY (CONT'D)

It can't have been easy, a gay man playing the straight hero. Never able to show the true Tom Adair to the fans who loved him. Would it be fair to say that he turned to drugs to deal with it?

ALEC

I guess so. It was just something that I.. I couldn't understand. They would have loved him either way, I told him...

He lowers his head in emotion, chest heaving. Then looks up, eyes watery.

JOY

Let's talk about something positive that came out of this, something beautiful. The TA ribbon, for example, and the Foundation.

The camera cuts to a C.U of the ribbon on Alec's jacket.

ALEC

It just started as a grass-roots thing, an industry way of showing support. And then it spread.

Larry's producers CUT TO:

FILE FOOTAGE of gay pride parades where hundreds of people wear the ribbon, marching in unison. There are monuments to Tom Adair, now a martyr for the gay rights movement.

JOY (V.O.)

Spread indeed. Suddenly, one of the most photographed faces in the world belongs to that of a gay man. I think it's fair to say that your campaign to spread awareness become a key factor in other fellow celebrities coming out.

CUT TO:

INT. STUDIOS - CONTINUOUS

JOY

Do you think, Alec, that Tom would have believed what a hero he's become to the LGBTQ community and, indeed, the entire world?

Alec pauses a little while before answering the question, a crack in his armor allowing him to indulge in pondering the extreme irony of the situation.

ALEC

(a small smile)

No, I don't think he would have. He would never have believed a bit of it.

LARRY KING

All right, we're gonna take a few questions from callers. Luis from Burbank you're on Larry King.

They sit their in silence, awaiting the caller.

JOY

Luis? Are you with us?

Luis's voice comes on, sounding even a little muffled by call-in standards. He has a hint of a Mexican accent.

LUIS (V.O.)

Hi Joy! First time caller, long time listener.

JOY

(brusque)

That's great, Luis. What's your question for Alec?

LUIS (O.S.)

(suddenly grave)

Tom Adair's ghost speaks to me. He says he was murdered.

Both men react, Alec going pale.

ALEC

Excuse me, do you even know-

JOY

(interrupting; to Luis)

Murdered? By who?

LUIS (O.S.)  
By him.

                          JOY  
Him?

                          LUIS (O.S.)  
Alec. Donovan.

At this Alec goes really pale, but tries to cover it up.

                          ALEC  
Joy, what the hell is this?

                          LUIS (O.S.)  
He's here!

There's a fumbling of the phone, like the sounds of a struggle then...

                          VOICE (O.S.)  
It was you, Alec. My so-called best friend.

The VOICE isn't exactly that of Tom's, it sounds softer, but it's really close. Close enough to chill the blood.

                          VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
You killed me. Murdered me. Took my money. Took my movie. Stole from my family and made me a joke. You're an impostor living my life, and I will never rest until you are in hell. I will haunt you-

At this point, Joy signals for the producers to kill the line. It drops to a DEAD SIGNAL filling the air.

                          JOY  
And we'll be right back after this commercial break.

BELLS BUZZ. Inside the studio, there's YELLING and SHOUTING going on. Who let that caller on and whether it was good TV.

At the desk, Alec sits stunned and alone. Like he just saw a ghost. A Producer rushes over.

                          PRODUCER  
We're sorry - after the break we'll-

                          ALEC  
(snapping out of it)  
Hell if I'm sticking around.

ALEC (CONT'D)  
I mean what kind of fucking show  
are you running here?  
(then)  
Sarah, get the car!

Alec takes off his microphone, tangled, then storms off. His mousey and tired personal assistant **SARAH** (20s) chases after.

INT. BILLY ADAIR'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

On the big-screen TV is the commercial we saw Larry King cut to, but muted. On the couch watching is Billy Adair. Tom's kid brother. He HANGS UP the phone in front of him. A middle-aged Mexican man next to him, Luis, clicks the TV off.

LUIS  
Really think he killed your bro?

BILLY  
(tasting blood)  
Definitely.

EXT/INT. ALEC'S HOLLYWOOD HILLS MANSION - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A expensive mansion, a drastic improvement from a year ago, is Alec's new abode. Walking in the front door, he notices that the lights in the living room are on.

ALEC  
Karynn? You here?

Walking into the LIVING ROOM, he notices a small ENVELOPE on the coffee table addressed to him. Opening it reveals a VHS with a post-it: PLAY ME - XO.

Alec stares at it... Tormented, but inescapably curious.

CUT TO:

HIS GIANT TV:

There's static and then the abrupt cut of a dubbed tape. In this case, it's a scene from an 'intense' police drama starring Mr. Tom Adair. He's shouting at his sergeant, no doubt ordered off a dangerous case.

TOM  
(on-screen; very  
emotional)  
I promised them, Killarney!

TOM (CONT'D)

Promised them I'd get him, wherever he was, whatever he was doing, WHOMEVER he was. I don't care if he's the Prince of England, the Sultan of Arabia or the Mayor's son. He can't hide from me. I'm going to find him and I'm going to exact my revenge upon him.

POLICE SERGEANT

(on-screen)

You're walking on very thin ice, Berrico!

TOM

(on-screen)

Whatta gone do? Arrest me? I'm going after that murderer. He betrayed me, betrayed my family, and he's going to pay for WHAT HE DID!

On that high note, the tape cuts back to static.

Alec stares at the screen a second, and then furtively looks around for his invisible antagonist.

INT. THE IVY - DAY

Karynn and Alec eat at a restaurant expressly created to be seen eating in. As opposed to a year ago, Karynn very publicly acts the part of devoted girlfriend. Even though it doesn't seem possible, she appears even more assured and confident than before, convinced of her own importance.

KARYNN

(on cell)

Fuck him is why not! That's my reason. Yeah, you can tell him that. I don't care. I'm with Alec Donovan, I gotta go.

(hangs up)

Sorry babe, how'd the taping go?

ALEC

You didn't watch it?

Reading from the menu.

KARYNN

I was in a screening. But I'll watch it later. Spill.

ALEC

Oh it was great. Tom called in.

KARYNN

(not listening)

That's good. You plug the movie?

ALEC

Did you hear what I said?

Karynn lowers her menu.

KARYNN

(beat)

Tom's dead, honey.

At this point a WELL-WISHER drops by, prominently wearing the TA ribbon.

WELL-WISHER

Great to see you, Alec. You look beautiful, as always Karynn.

(points to his ribbon)

Still can't believe all the good the foundation has done, and in just a year.

KARYNN

Has it only been a year? It seems like forever.

They share a laugh.

WELL-WISHER

A good deed never goes unpunished.

KARYNN

No it doesn't.

WELL-WISHER

I was going to pick up your check, but...

(indicates the Maitre'd)

He wouldn't let me. Said the restaurant had it, being the anniversary... and all that.

They all look to the Maitre'd, also wearing an TA ribbon. Seeing their glance, he smiles back and gives them a raised fist of solidarity. Karynn jauntily waves back.

KARYNN

I guess being the chairperson of the Tom Adair Foundation has *some* benefits. Right honey?

She nudges Alec, who feigns a smile. All eyes on him.

WELL-WISHER

I um, caught your latest film. My kids really enjoyed it. Fun stuff.

ALEC

Happy to entertain.

With that, the Well-Wisher kisses off. Alec tries to pull it together. He slips himself a XANAX, without Karynn seeing.

KARYNN

(sweetly)

So, you were saying that Adair called?

ALEC

(not finding the humor)

Yeah, well, it sounded exactly like him. He accused me of...

(whispering)

Killing him.

KARYNN

Well, we all know that isn't true.

ALEC

(grim)

Yeah.

Waiter approaches.

WAITER

Ready to order?

KARYNN

(brightly)

What's the special today?

EXT. RESTAURANT/VALET PARKING - DAY

Karynn and Alec wait for their cars to come round.

KARYNN

Well, I hope you plugged the movie. Metro won't be happy if you didn't.

Alec ignores her.

KARYNN (CONT'D)  
Relax, okay? You're going to act  
totally normal. This is all...  
Nothing.

Alec nods, trying to convince himself as much as Karynn.

KARYNN (CONT'D)  
Don't let some prank phone caller  
from Radio Shack throw you.

ALEC  
Yeah. But there's one more thing. I  
got a... videotape.

KARYNN  
Okay?

ALEC  
It was scene from, um, *Badge of  
Honor*.

KARYNN  
Tom's movie?

ALEC  
Yeah.

KARYNN  
So?

ALEC  
It was him talking about catching a  
murderer.

KARYNN  
And you're worried about what?  
Rental fees?

ALEC  
I found it in my house, Karynn.  
INSIDE it.

KARYNN  
Inside it, huh?

ALEC  
I don't know, if it's a stalker, or  
...something else.

KARYNN

Something else, right. Well here's  
what you've got to do about this.

She motions for him to lean in.

KARYNN (CONT'D)

(whispering)

Get better security.

The VALET brings Karynn's car out first. Karynn walks around to her driver side and beckons Alec over.

KARYNN (CONT'D)

Listen, you're hosting the TA  
Memento Mori party tonight, right?

ALEC

Yeah. We flipped for it, remember?  
I lost.

KARYNN

Of course. But go and try to have fun. Get high, get laid. Act like nothing happened and nothing will.

Looking towards the Valet, she waves a five-dollar bill. He refuses, pointing to the TA ribbon on his jacket. Smiling, Karynn motions Alec to lean in close.

KARYNN (CONT'D)

There oughta be an Oscar for best cover-up.

With that, she speeds out of the lot. Alec watches her go, in perpetual disbelief at her.

RICHARD THORNBURG (PRE-LAP)

*...The trick to traveling  
international is to stick strictly  
to carry-on.*

INT. CHATEAU MARMONT - NIGHT

The First Annual Tom Adair Memorial party is in full swing.

Poster-size photos of Tom hang from the walls as two video projectors play clips from Tom's old movies.

Alec barely listens as a OLDER PRODUCER, RICHARD THORNBURG (60s) prattles on. Alec fixates on Tom's looming image. Hovering over him. Taunting him.

RICHARD THORNBURG

Sure you wash your underwear in the sink, but the extra hour you get zipping past those sorry-fucks at baggage claim is worth it.

Alec puts down his whiskey sour, grabs another one off a passing tray. Quickly downs it. Despite being surrounded by well wishers, he can't help but feel utterly alone.

EXT. CHATEAU POOLSIDE - NIGHT

Alec looks around the scene with disgust. A memorial turned into yet another networking event, people swapping business cards and spit. He downs another drink when-

AARON (O.S.)  
*BANG CRASH BOOM BABY!*

Alec turns to see Aaron Keev and entourage cozied up with beautiful women, cutting lines of blow.

AARON (CONT'D)  
This is one hell of a funeral.

ALEC  
It's not a funeral.

Aaron does a huge line. Waves for his buddies to move over for our guy.

AARON  
Shit, whatever, you know what I mean. It's crazy, even from beyond the grave Tom still knows how to throw a good time. Yo, my agent said he sent you my script to your girl, um, Karynn? It's money baby-

ALEC  
Yeah, I leave it to Karynn, so-

AARON  
Fo sho, but maybe me and you can get in a room. Kick some ideas around like you and Tom did? Suits make shit more complicated right?

But before Alec can respond, Aaron rises his glass.

AARON (CONT'D)  
To Tom Adair! May that crazy son of a bitch get mad dick in heaven.

GROUP  
TO TOM!

CLINK! A MODEL places a sympathetic hand on Alec's arm.

MODEL  
Sorry for your loss.

She hands him the tray. Fuck it. Alec snorts a line and his mind takes off far from here.

INT. ONE NIGHT STAND'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Face down in the pillow of a stranger's bed, a CLACKING noise awakes Alec. It's his MOTOROLA RAZR, about to vibrate off the bedside table. He picks it up.

ALEC  
(into phone)  
Yeah?

The voice of KARYNN, comes through.

KARYNN (V.O.)  
(filtered)  
Where the fuck are you?

Alec looks around. An impossibly thin MODEL slumbers next to him.

ALEC  
(into phone)  
I don't know. It's Sunday, what's it to you?

KARYNN (V.O.)  
(filtered)  
It's Monday, Alec.

ALEC  
(into phone)  
Monday?  
(total realization)  
Oh fuck. Fuck.

EXT. GUARD GATE - METRO START PICTURES - DAY

Alec pulls up to the gate. The Guard instantly recognizes him. No attitude, only deference.

GUARD  
This way Mr. Donovan.

Alec pulls up in front of the building, a spot reserved for him and his new BMW.

INT. STUDIO PRESIDENT'S OFFICE - DAY

In the middle of a meeting with the Gregory, Shilling, and a couple of execs, Alec nurses his hangover with black coffee and confident smile.

Gregory looms over the meeting from behind his mahogany desk.

GREGORY

So, Shilling tells me that *Caesar II* is coming along well.

ALEC

Yeah, I wanted to discuss the subtitle. *Brutus' Revenge* seems a little, well, tawdry to me.

GREGORY

What were you thinking?

ALEC

*Brutus' Return* sounds more noble, more in character, right?

SHILLING

Of course, Alec. We can make that work. Good note.

GREGORY

You know that myself and everyone here has always had the utmost respect for you. Particularly the way you handled the tragedy with the press. You were the first to say, "The Show Must Go On," and we appreciate that.

ALEC

It's what Tom would have wanted.

GREGORY

That's why we'd like to fund your next picture, your directorial debut.

Shilling throws down Alec's script - *Sure Shot*.

ALEC

(a beat; considers)

Okay. What's the catch?

GREGORY

No catch. You'll star in it of course. And perhaps as a follow-up, you could consider doing the Tom Adair bio pic we're developing.

ALEC

*Out of the Closet and Into Their Hearts?*

SHILLING

That's the working title. You could change it to something else, of course.

GREGORY

Whatever it is you want to do, we want to be in the business of Alec Donovan. Only question is, do you want to win an Academy Award or do you want to make a lot of money?

ALEC

Both?

GREGORY

(smiling)

Perfect.

There's a knock on the door. AN ASSISTANT pops her head in.

ASSISTANT

Mr. Patrick? You told me to tell you when set was ready for Alec?

GREGORY

Let's go shoot another blockbuster.

They stand exchanging handshakes.

INT. SOUND STAGE - COSTUME DEPARTMENT - DAY

Shilling and Alec finish reviewing various costume selects and mock-ups with a seasoned COSTUME DESIGNER.

As they exit, Alec hears a familiar voice.

AARON (O.S.)

*Fucking check this out dawg-*

Around the corner a toga-clad Aaron Keev, swings a sword with members of his entourage. Until he spots Alec. Throwing up an elaborate, street-gang style wave/greeting their way.

AARON (CONT'D)  
(shouting)  
Wassup, Alec! Kismet right?

Shilling and Alec give a polite wave back, continuing on into the soundstage.

SHILLING  
(explaining AARON's  
casting)  
He's hot with the kids. At least  
for the next five minutes.

Shilling laughs, as Alec looks back, annoyed.

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - VIDEO VILLAGE - DAY

A Roman set, this time even more elaborate than the last one. Sequel money at work. In Video Village, a JUNIOR EXEC sits with Shilling going over the shooting schedule between takes.

JUNIOR EXEC  
So how are they covering for Tom in  
the assassination flashback?

ALEC  
Computer graphics. It's amazing  
what they can do these days. They  
might even be able to make him a  
decent actor posthumously.

He pop an almond in his mouth. Laughs.

Hearing this derisive comment, no one's sure how to react. After a pause however, seeing Alec's mood, Shilling chuckles lightly and laughter spreads amongst the tent.

Still snickering at his own joke, Alec suddenly freezes.

Standing with his back to Alec seems to be the **BLOODY GHOST OF TOM**.

He's an exact match for him and when he turns towards Alec, his face remains in shadow. His body, however, in a half-shredded Roman costume, is covered in blood.

Alec stumbles back into the approaching crowd. Seeing his face, the light mood evaporates. He's petrified.

SHILLING  
Something wrong, Alec?

There's the call of *LUNCH BREAK!* and suddenly the "Ghost" steps out of the dark, heading off towards the cafeteria.

The face is that of another man - the BODY DOUBLE for Tom.

Passing Alec, the Body Double gives a polite, reverential nod towards him. Alec tries to regain his composure.

ALEC  
(cracking a joke)  
I'm fine. Blood sugar getting too  
low, I guess. Cleanses right?

Everyone scatters off but Alec stays back one step behind everyone else. His hand shaking as he pops another pill.

INT. STUDIO PARKING LOT - DAY

Sarah's hands Alec his script pages as he gets into his BMW.

BILLY (O.S.)  
Ally D! Hey!

Alec turns, surprised to Tom's younger brother.

ALEC  
Billy! How're you doing?

BILLY  
Fine. Just... Fine, I guess.

ALEC  
What're you up to on the lot?  
(to Sarah)  
We're good here Sarah. You can go.

Sarah leaves. Eyeing Billy.

BILLY  
Callback for NCIS. Actually, I was  
hoping to run into you.

ALEC  
What's up?

BILLY  
I was wondering if I could talk to  
you about the estate.

ALEC  
Oh. Yeah?

BILLY

Yeah. Well, my family and I... We were hoping we could all get together to discuss it. I know the will said that you and Karynn were to be the executors but-

ALEC

-Billy, I'm sorry, I really don't know much about all this legal stuff. You should really bring it up with Karynn, she knows way more than I do about it.

BILLY

I did.

ALEC

(a beat)

You spoke with her?

BILLY

Yeah. She said talk to you.

ALEC

Oh.

BILLY

(getting frustrated)

We were hoping we could see some of the money from his estate holdings-

ALEC

That stuff's all going to the Foundation.

BILLY

I know. But, like, I heard you're going to sell the mansion and-

ALEC

(blunt)

You want money.

BILLY

Yes.

ALEC

Money.

BILLY

Yeah. Money. Why should you two be the only one's to profit from Tom's death?

ALEC

You want to profit from your  
brother's death?

BILLY

No. I mean - we're his family. We  
deserve it.

Wanting to end this conversation, Alec opens up his car door and starts to get in.

ALEC

That's not what the will says.

Billy reaches out and grabs the car door.

BILLY

But who knows who really wrote that will? I never heard Tom talk about writing any will.

ALEC

Maybe there's a reason for that.

BILLY

Maybe. Or maybe somebody else wrote that will.

ALEC

You know Billy, your voice is starting to sound really familiar. Ever call into talk shows? Pretend to be someone you're not? Scream bloody murder?

He pulls the door shut, almost slamming Billy's hands.

BILLY

Don't know what you're talking about.

ALEC

I bet. I remember what I hear.

BILLY

Maybe you heard it in one of your nightmares. You know, the ones where you murder your best friend, steal his money, and take his fame?

ALEC

I don't think so, Billy. My nightmares are better than your dreams.

ALEC (CONT'D)  
(starting up the car)  
Good look with that callback.

He drives off, Billy watching him go.

INT. NOT, NOT CAA - KARYNN'S OFFICE - DAY

Corner office. Chic. A WHITEBOARD is filled with her top clients. Alec's column displays a full dance-card. The column for Tom, on the other hand, is virtually empty save a stark entry: "CG-ed into commercials???"

A phone to her ear, Karynn is in mid-conversation when Alec walks in. She mouths a "hi" and finishes up her conversation.

KARYNN  
(into phone)  
I know. I know what you're saying.  
But I don't care. Listen to me,  
Robby, 'cause people won't speak  
this clearly when you're working  
the drive-thru window at In'n'Out  
burger. Get me ten or find another  
fucking lead actress. Fuck me? Fuck  
You!

She slams the phone down. Then looks up sweetly.

KARYNN (CONT'D)  
And how was your day, sweetheart?

ALEC  
Perfect. I'm doing a movie with  
Aaron Keev. How hard could that  
possibly be?

KARYNN  
Ah, did Aaron have to use cue cards  
again?

Her ASSISTANT looks into the office

ASSISTANT  
It's Robby on two.

Karynn picks up the phone.

KARYNN  
(into phone)  
Robby?

She slams the phone down again.

KARYNN (CONT'D)  
Fucker.

ALEC  
Is this how my contract gets  
negotiated?

KARYNN  
Oh no, that's a far more  
complicated and violent procedure.  
(reading a script)  
I'm assuming you have no interest  
in doing Aaron's fartsy *Bang Crash*  
*Boom* project at Metro either right?

ALEC  
No. Jesus that kid is everywhere.

KARYNN  
Don't worry, I'll make sure Gregory  
puts it into turnaround. Their sole  
focus should be making *Sure Shot*.

ASSISTANT (O.S.)  
Robby on one.

Karynn picks up the phone. Slams it down again.

ALEC  
So what brings me here?

KARYNN  
I don't know. Wanted to see my  
movie star boyfriend? Thought I'd  
get flowers, candy and a candle-lit  
dinner? Was wondering if he could  
sign off on selling Tom's mansion?

ALEC  
I'm usually against autographs, but  
I'll make an exception this time.

KARYNN  
Actually... Well, this is out of  
character for me, but I thought we  
might consider giving the family a  
chance to look over the grounds  
before the sale. Take a few  
keepsakes. Perhaps even give them a  
percentage. Would shut them up for  
a little while, at least. I'd hate  
even the thought of a little bad  
press-

ALEC

I don't think so.

KARYNN

Huh. I thought you were the good cop. Nothing for the Adairs?

ALEC

Tom should have thought about that before he appointed us his sole beneficiaries and trustees of his estate.

KARYNN

Yeah, well, he didn't have much of a chance to think. Smart move to have made a will so soon before dying, though.

ALEC

Uh-huh. We're all struck by the fortuitous nature of it all. Where do I sign?

KARYNN

Right here, Ebeneezer. Will I be seeing you tonight?

ALEC

I've got junket interviews tomorrow for *Invulnerable*, so no late night rough stuff.

Karynn walks around from behind her desk and wraps herself around him, tenderly biting his ear.

KARYNN

Who me? I'm against any and all property damage to my clients.

The Assistant looks into the office once again, ignoring the scene.

ASSISTANT

Robby on three. More pissed than usual.

KARYNN

Good.

(to Alec)  
Catch ya later, cowboy.

She picks up the phone, waving goodbye to Alec.

KARYNN (CONT'D)

Hey Robby! So, I heard you got ten  
for Clarissa. You did? Shocking.

INT. ALEC'S MANSION - NIGHT

Alec walks in and shuts off his new alarm system, admiring the cameras and laser detectors that protect his material possessions from harm.

Then he notices that the front room lights are on...

Walks in to see a Post-It on the TV: "Just Press Play."

Which Alec does.

ON THE TAPE

The same jump from static to picture, but this time it opens on a film slate. The slate reads: *Caesar is Dead*.

The tape is a copy of one of the dailies reel from that film, specifically the scene where Tom's CAESAR is stabbed to death by Alec's BRUTUS.

But the only takes on the tape are those of Alec as he STABS Tom in the back again and again.

On the final take, "Cut!" is called and Alec turns to face the camera with his bloody sword in hand. The tape FREEZE-FRAMES.

Alec hits eject, rips out the tape and walks onto his BALCONY where he powers on a decadent fire pit. Flames illuminate his horn-mad face, as he dumps the tape into the pit, where it rests with several others.

INT. FOUR SEASONS - SUITE - DAY

Press day. Publicity set up movie posters for *Invulnerable*, the film Alec's here to promote. Two chairs against a backdrop, followed by cameras, lights, and mics.

An INTERVIEWER, who is being prepped by a PR PERSON is escorted in. Takes a seat.

Finally, Alec walks in, sits down and smiles wearily at us, the TV CAMERA.

In REVERSE ANGLE, the INTERVIEWER begins their questioning.

INTERVIEWER #1

So... *Invulnerable*. What drew you  
to the role of Agent Mark Orson?

Alec smiles and begins to answer. But before he can, we

CUT TO:

A DIFFERENT INTERVIEWER

INTERVIEWER #2

I hear you did all your own stunts  
like you once did in *Catching Hell*?  
Was it difficult training without  
your partner this time?

CUT TO:

ANOTHER INTERVIEWER

INTERVIEWER #3

Growing up, did you ever think that  
both you and Tom Adair would be  
movie stars?

CUT TO:

YET ANOTHER INTERVIEWER

INTERVIEWER #4

I heard the part was initially  
written for Tom. How did you make  
it your own?

We CUT again to a DIFFERENT INTERVIEWER. Alec faces a barrage  
of questions on everything *but* the movie. Most of them relate  
in some way to Tom.

INTERVIEWER #1

What was the first thought that  
went through your head when you  
heard Tom was dead?

CUT TO:

INTERVIEWER #3

Would you say you and Tom share  
similar sensibilities?

CUT TO:

INTERVIEWER #2

Is it difficult to live without him  
being around?

CUT TO:

Alec, exhausted from the questioning. Another INTERVIEWER is brought in. He extends his hand for a quick handshake.

INTERVIEWER #5

Hi Tom, it's great to meet you.

ALEC

I'm Alec.

The Interviewer is mortified.

CUT TO:

A VETERAN INTERVIEWER is finishing up his interview by speaking to the camera, with Alec in the background.

VETERAN INTERVIEWER

-And so here, at interviews for his first film since Tom Adair's death, we see in Alec Donovan a man continuing on with his life. An actor, still acting.

(a pause, then he signals  
the camera crew)

Okay, that's it.

As he turns back to Alec, for a goodbye handshake:

ALEC

So, you never said what you thought  
of the movie.

VETERAN INTERVIEWER

Oh, it sucked. But you know that,  
right?

Alec nods, too embarrassed to admit otherwise.

VETERAN INTERVIEWER (CONT'D)

Look, we all make sacrifices to pay  
the bills.

(indicating to TV camera)

I mean, it's not like I'm proud of  
this shit either. I wanted to do  
serious journalism. Like Tom  
Brokaw... but, fuck it, it's not  
like I'm killing anybody, right?

PRE-LAP THE SOUND OF VIOLENT SCREAMS...

INT. KARYNN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Karynn orgasams with a show stopping performance, howling with pleasure. But this time it seems lonely and forced for Alec. More routine than anything. Alec rolls off her.

KARYNN

Just a few emails, then we can watch Survivor or whatever.

Karynn immediately turns to her laptop, ignoring his distress. PRE-LAP the sounds of DULL THUMPING...

CUT TO:

IT GROWS LOUDER AND LOUDER AS WE STUMBLE THROUGH THE DARKNESS UNTIL WE LAND ON...

A DECAYING WHITE CORPSE

Laying in Tom's four posted bed, wrapped in silk sheets. Suddenly it rises and points behind us. We turn and follow in that direction, moving in bleary slow motion.

A bloody trail is stained into the carpet and we track it through the bedroom and down the stairs.

A DULL THUMPING sound lies in the background, growing stronger with each downward step.

AT THE BOTTOM OF THE STAIRS is the twisted BODY OF TOM, forever smashing his head into the marble floor.

Tom looks up from the bloody, cracked crater he's made and smiles. Nothing in place of his teeth but fountains of blood dripping down from his gums. He spits a gob of it at us, drenching the screen in a thick, scarlet RED.

INT. KARYNN'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

Alec JUMPS awake, as if trying to physically escape out of the nightmare. Drenched in sweat, he rolls over onto his side, noticing that Karynn isn't there.

INT. KARYNN'S BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

He pops a pill as he steps into the glass shower. The water scalding him as he tries to purify himself.

VARIOUS FANS (PRE-LAP)  
 ALEC! ALEC DONOVAN! WE LOVE YOU!

EXT. *INVULNERABLE* PREMIERE - NIGHT

Giant banners for *Invulnerable* hang from the front off the venerable old theatre housing the premiere. A black limousine pulls up to the red carpet and out step Karynn and Alec.

Screaming fans and paparazzi make it clear Alec is a major star. Front and center like Karynn always said he should be. The star he always felt he deserved to be.

Karynn gracefully frog-marches Alec down the red carpet.

KARYNN  
 (under her breath, smiling  
 the whole time)  
 Five steps- and turn. Turn to the  
 left now. Two more and turn. Wave.  
 And turn again. Don't stop near the  
 door, no interviews tonight.

Alec does as told and they make it inside.

INT. *INVULNERABLE* PREMIERE - NIGHT

Grabbing a flute of champagne from a passing waiter, Karynn meet and greets her way through the crowded lobby.

Finally, they reach the end of the hall where Karynn makes for the Fire Exit, revealing the limousine idling for her.

ALEC  
 Not sticking around?

A passing PRODUCER gives her a wave.

KARYNN  
 What and see it again? No thanks.  
 (shouting to Producer)  
 Tracking a twenty million opening!

He gives her a thumbs-up in return.

KARYNN (CONT'D)  
 (to Alec)  
 Pretty good tho for a guy who  
 hardly booked a supporting role.

Alec nods tiredly, having heard this one before. She gives him an air-kiss.

KARYNN (CONT'D)  
Knock 'em dead, baby. See you at  
the after party.

With that, she heads towards the limousine. Alec lets the door shut and turns back towards the lobby. With another pill and a whole lot of effort, he puts a good mood on.

INT. PREMIERE THEATRE - NIGHT

Alec stands at the front of the theatre with the other stars, as the YOUNG BASEBALL HAT WEARING DIRECTOR, MAC (20s) speaks about the brilliant masterpiece about to unspool. Alec looks distinctly uncomfortable about it all.

MAC  
- With a cast like this, with a lead like Alec Donovan, it was a no brainer. No one is *Invulnerable* to his charm. Thank you. Enjoy.

INT. PREMIERE LOBBY - NIGHT

The lights in the theatre are dimming as Alec slips out. Apparently he's not going to watch it again either.

Not sure what to do, he starts to head for the limousines out front. Suddenly, he sniffs the air and smells something.

Looking for the source, he opens up the FIRE DOOR and catches Publicity & Marketing Interns smoking weed up outside. They look back at him in bewildered fear.

EXT. PREMIERE/ALLEY - LATER

Alec takes a stiff drag on the joint, waits and then slowly exhales. He passes the joint back to its owner.

ALEC  
Now that is some weak pot, my man.

All the KIDS laugh, more out of excitement at their proximity to a movie star than anything. Alec looks around and realizes he's gonna be the only one starting a conversation.

ALEC (CONT'D)  
So how come you guys aren't watching the movie?

INTERN 1  
Ah, they wouldn't let us.

INTERN 2  
Only the important people.

ALEC  
Shit.. So you guys haven't seen it?

They shake their heads.

INTERN 2  
Nah, we've all seen it.

ALEC  
Well?

The interns all look at their feet, unwilling to give their opinions.

INTERN 3  
The action scenes are pretty dope.

ALEC  
So you guys hated it.

They nervously shake their heads.

INTERN 1  
It was cool, but like, you know.  
Different from your other stuff.

Another INTERN, who's been silent up until, stops taking sips off a purloined bottle of champagne long enough to pipe in.

DRUNK INTERN  
It totally sucked, dude. How come  
you don't make good movies anymore?

INTERN 1  
Shut the fuck up, Brian.

The Drunk Intern ignores him and plunges ahead into his rant.

DRUNK INTERN  
Dude, all your earlier stuff ruled.  
Yeah, I know everybody's seen  
*Catching Hell*, but I like *Straight Brooklyn* way better.

ALEC  
(remembering)  
That was a good one. You saw that?

DRUNK INTERN  
Hell yea! And, uh, *Desolation Row*?  
That was out there, but good. But

DRUNK INTERN (CONT'D)  
 Everything since then - *Caesar is Dead. Invulnerable. It's so... mainstream. Formulaic.*

A beat. Even the drunk intern sensed he's crossed the line.

ALEC

I'm gonna do you a favor - the sooner you and all your little film school buddies realize this is a business, the better. You either have something to sell or you don't. So whatever delusions you have about making great art and money, forget about it. You can't have both.

Another long pause. Nobody knows what to say. Alec looks around at the faces of the kids, all staring at their shoes. Wonders what he's doing. Right now. And with the rest of his life. He takes one last drag, and then goes back inside.

INT. PREMIERE PARTY - NIGHT

It's a crowded, expensive affair. Gourmet chefs and free booze. Everybody's here to meet everybody else. Karynn works the room like a Queen.

Alec stands at the back of the room near the bar, nursing his third or fourth drink. Gazing out at the rest of the room, awash in people trying to get to people, trying to use people. Rather than think, he taps the glass for another.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
*These things are never as much fun as you want them to be, are they?*

Alec turns to see it's a tuxedoed, **GHOSTLY TOM**.

ALEC  
 ...Tom?

GHOSTLY TOM  
 Well, was it worth it? Pandering, forgettable crap in the theatre? Your fans viewing you as - what did you call me - a sellout? You could have asked me, I would have told you...

A thin line of blood begins to trail down Tom's head, ruby red against his pale face. Alec rushes away from the bar, shoving his way through the masses towards the nearest exit.

EXT. TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

When Alec finally makes it outside, he sucks in great gulps of air as if he just ran a marathon. Karynn catches him fleeing, follows after.

He picks up a glass of red wine from a nearby table, but after drinking it decides it's the last thing he needs.

KARYNN (O.S.)  
Alec, darling, you alright?

He spits it out, spraying it over the edge of the balcony, and scattering the people near him.

KARYNN (CONT'D)  
(to the room)  
It's a merlot! Who can blame him!  
(whispering)  
Jesus Christ Alec, what the hell is  
the matter with you?

When he finally gets the courage to look back towards the bar, Tom isn't there. It was all in his head. Of course. But that just makes him feel worse.

THE SOUNDS OF WAVES rising...

CUT TO:

BLACK WAVES VIOLENTLY CRASH INTO THE SHORELINE.

INT. KARYNN'S MALIBU BEACH HOUSE - NIGHT

Karynn is sleeping like a baby. Alec lies wide awake. Restless. He reaches over for his pills. One last pill. Shit.

He studies the empty bottle, the prescription is not in his name. He looks over to Karynn.

He gets up quietly rifles through Karynn's purse, grabbing her little black book. He flips through it 'til finds what he's looking for. WE PRE-LAP A LOUD GONG DOORBELL SOUND...

EXT. BEL AIR ESTATE - DAY

Alec, shades plastered to his face, stands anxiously in front of the tasteful Classic Hollywood Home of none other than the infamous VIN LUNSFORD (30s) - drug dealer to the stars.

VIN (O.S.)  
*Uno momento por favor!*

Vin finally opens his door, standing in his drug dealer uniform: silk bathrobe, swim trunks, Aperol spritz in hand.

VIN (CONT'D)  
 As I live and breath - Alec  
 Donovan. Come on in. *Mi Casa is Su  
 Casa.*

Alec follows him in. Karynn wasn't lying. It's pretty tasteful as far as drug dealers go. One of Bruno Nicolai's soundtracks plays in the background. Vin does a little shimmy to the xylophone.

VIN (CONT'D)  
 Would you like an aperitif?

ALEC  
 I'm good.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Alec follows Vin into his sunken living room.

ALEC  
 Thanks for getting back to me so quickly.

VIN  
 Of course, of course. A friend of Karynn's is a friend of mine.

ALEC  
 She doesn't know I'm here-

VIN  
 I got you man - think of me like your Priest. And instead of faith, I offer you shit that actually works. No one needs to know.

Alec gives him the cash. Vin hands him new pill bottles.

VIN (CONT'D)  
*Besides, the psychotic drowns in the same waters in which the mystic swims with delight.*  
 (off his look)  
 Joseph Campbell. You ever read Hero's Journey?

ALEC

A while ago. I'm more a fan of  
William Goldman.

VIN

William Goldman? I'm gonna have to  
write that down.

(then)

You know, I always thought I could  
be writer. Just gotta find the time  
to sit down and do it. It's all in  
here, ready to pour out of me.

He points to his head.

ALEC

Yeah, the writing it down part is  
crucial to screenwriting.

Vin, excited, leans into Alec. Bursting with a genius idea.

VIN

Hey, tell me if this is something -  
It's a story about a handsome drug  
dealer named Fin. We follow him and  
all his crazy clients.

ALEC

Uh-Huh...

VIN

You know, it's a little Cassavetes  
mixed with Scorsese. Lots of  
violence and sex. And laughs too.  
It's not a downer. You think that's  
something I could sell?

ALEC

Right. Sure. Great idea.

VIN

Fucking knew it!  
(then, deadly serious)  
Don't tell anyone. Don't want  
anyone stealing it.

ALEC

Of course.

VIN

Cool cool. Can I get you anything  
else? Uppers? Downers? A piece?

ALEC  
A piece? A piece of what?

Vin opens a cabinet filled with GUNS.

VIN  
A Gun my *Amigo*. Fresh from Meh-Ico.  
It's gonna cost you, but a small  
price to pay for peace of mind.

Alec stares at the guns. A faint THUMPING NOISE growing.

CUT TO:

INT. ALEC'S BMW - DAY

Alec gets into his car. The THUMPING LOUDER till Alec downs a couple of pills. He lets the cool numbness roll over his body. The sound fades.

He looks over to the passenger seat - throws his pills and his new GUN into the glove box. He starts up the car.

TALK SHOW ANNOUNCER (PRE-LAP)  
*It's LIVE, LIVE, LIVE with EDDIE  
SANDERS...*

INT. EDDIE SANDERS SHOW - DAY

A popular, African-American, talk show host, EDDIE SANDERS (40s) comes out to greet his live studio audience.

EDDIE SANDERS  
Folks, we have a great show for you  
coming up. Our guests today include  
Alec Donovan...

CHEERS ERUPT as we CUT TO:

INT. GREEN ROOM - THE EDDIE SANDERS SHOW - DAY

On the monitor, we watch Eddie continue his opening Monologue. Karynn paces. She looks ragged and thin, like a woman fraying at the edges from perpetual motion.

KARYNN  
(on the phone)  
Did you try his assistant, Sarah? I  
don't give a fuck-

Finally Sarah ushers in Alec, late. His eyes are sunken in. He hasn't been sleeping. Up all night doing god knows what.

KARYNN (CONT'D)  
Where the fuck have you been. I've  
been calling you non-stop.  
(taking him in)  
Jesus you look like shit.

Alec paws at a sandwich on the spread.

ALEC  
I'm here aren't I?

SARAH  
I'll leave you guys to it...

JONATHAN, a hyperactive show producer pops in to check in on them, crossing an exiting Sarah.

JONATHAN  
Alec Donovan? This is a pleasure!

He shakes Alec's hand.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)  
We're so excited to have you on the  
show. We should be getting you into  
make-up shortly-

KARYNN  
(under her breath)  
Might have to hose him down first.

Jonathan feels uncomfortable, but doesn't let it show.

JONATHAN  
-I just wanna walk you through the  
interview. See if there are some  
fun talking points we should hit.  
Eddie is really into crazy stories.  
The more out-there-the-better. But  
family friendly of course.

ALEC  
Right. So no stories about picking  
up tranny hookers or people's  
disillusionment with the Iraq War?

Jonathan looks to Karynn.

JONATHAN

If you don't have any material that could work, um, we have some writers on stand-by.

Karynn steps in.

KARYNN

He's got something. Don't worry. He's full of family friendly stories everyone can talk about at the water cooler. He just needs some alone time. Thank you...

Karynn pushes Jonathan out of the room, slams the door. Then marches up to Alec, slapping the sandwich out his mouth.

KARYNN (CONT'D)

Snap the fuck out of it. Do you want to throw everything away? After everything we built? Because why? You're feeling sorry for yourself? You think you're better than this-

ALEC

I use to be better than this...

KARYNN

You wanna direct *Sure Shot*? Win an Oscar? Then suck it the fuck up. Do one for the team.

Alec sinks into the couch. Cradles his head, exhausted.

ALEC

How can you feel nothing? I'd love know how you do it. To be you for a day.

KARYNN

(cold)

No you wouldn't.

She turns away from him, her hands shaking. She recovers, throws celery at him.

KARYNN (CONT'D)

And eat something fucking green, you're getting fat.

Alec stares down at his gut. Fuck.

BILLY (PRE-LAP)  
Gonna get what we deserve.

EXT. TOM ADAIR'S FRONT GATE - SAME TIME

It's the same front gate that we saw Alec pull up to, but now the security systems are faded and powered down, while an "Estate Sale" sign adorns the front gate.

Parked in front is a van belonging to Luis, the prank caller from before, and Billy. The two of them flank it.

LUIS  
I don't know man...

BILLY  
Listen, Luis. Nothing is going to happen. We're more than just scene partners, right? You trust me?

LUIS  
Sure, but-

BILLY  
I just want a little of what my family deserves. It's my birthright.

Billy gets out of the car.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
I'm going to jump this fence, I'm going to get what's mine, and then I'll open this gate and we'll truck it away.

LUIS  
Okay... And I'll just stay here.

BILLY  
(holding up giant cell phone)  
And you'll call me if anyone shows up?

LUIS  
I'll call.

BILLY  
But don't worry, no one will. Just tell the tourists you're LAPD.

LUIS  
And what do I tell the cops?

BILLY  
(shrugs)  
Tell them you're the gardener. Act.

With that, he begins to CLIMB over the gate.

EXT. TOM ADAIR'S MANSION - DAY

Billy looks around, then lifts up a particular stone in the now overrun garden. Picks up a rusted key from underneath and, with effort, slots it into the front door. Turns the key and then slowly, ready to run at the first alarm bell, opens the door.

INT. TOM ADAIR'S MANSION - FRONT HALL - DAY

No alarms. He goes inside. Peers around and then gives out a couple light coughs. Place hasn't been dusted for a while.

All the items here have tags on them from the appraisers, standing ready to be shipped out to their new owners. Billy pulls a couple of garbage bags from his pockets and flaps them open, making a double bag. Glances at the jeweled clock on the entryway table, then pockets it.

Suddenly, a sharp CRACK. He jumps, nervous now. But it's nothing, just a random sound. Still, he's a bit spooked. Not as cavalier.

He heads on, towards the kitchen. LAUGHTER RISES...

INT. EDDIE SANDERS SHOW - MAIN SET - CONTINUOUS

Alec and Karynn watch from behind the curtain as Eddie and an ANIMAL TRAINER play with EXOTIC REPTILES.

The crowd eats it up. Alec, takes in their drunken stupor. Eating the shit happily. Begging for more. He feels sick.

Jonathan appears behind them.

JONATHAN  
Ready to go?

Alec, all smiles now, pulls it together. A star again.

ALEC

Yeah. I have this great story about being propositioned by a guy and his dog. They'll love it.

Karynn gives a thumbs up of approval glancing from her phone.

JONATHAN

That's good. Just remember to... illustrate rather than describe. You dig it?

ALEC

I dig it Jonathan!

Jonathan moves off. Alec opens his new pills, pops a few. Karynn clocks it this time.

INT. TOM ADAIRS'S MANSION - DAY

His garbage bag clunking, Billy has finished casing the bottom floor. He starts to head upstairs, but to do so he must step over where his brother's corpse was found.

The blood washed off the tile, but is still stained into the grouting. After a pause, he quickly steps over it and heads up the stairs.

INT. TOM'S BEDROOM - DAY

This is the room that gives Billy the most pause. The sheets have been taken off the mattress, but a crimson stain is still very noticeable and the whole place stinks.

Trying to distract himself, Billy flicks on the TV using a massive remote built into the bedside table.

Going through the channels, he stops when he sees Alec on the Live, Live, Live! show.

BILLY

...the Motherfucker.

INT. TV STUDIO/LIVE SHOW - SAME TIME

Just as Billy saw, Alec is sitting on Eddie's couch telling his Man plus Dog story.

ALEC

-so then the guy goes, "I've never done it with a movie star." And I go, Well, y'know that's nice. I'm flattered to be your first one.

The Audience LAUGHS and Alec waits for it to die down.

ALEC (CONT'D)

"But, hey, I've got something special for you," he goes. And, at this point, I'm trying to politely leave. Oh yeah, what's that? "I'll bet," he says-and he's saying this real quiet-like, as if it's the map to hidden treasure-

(a beat, the punchline)

"I'll bet you've never done it with a man and his dog."

More LAUGHTER.

ALEC (CONT'D)

So, yeah, sometimes I do like being a movie star.

Again, the Laughter signs lights up. Smiling, Alec glances out into the audience. Sees a **STARK PALE MAN**, still. Eerie.

Looks closer, into the first row of the audience. It's TOM?

Alec blinks, looks up at the lights, looks back down. Tom's still there. His face, bloody and smirking, looking like the day he died.

Eddie continues, not noticing anything is wrong with Alec.

EDDIE SANDERS

-And now you're starring in *Invulernable*. Now, I just saw a little bit of this, but it looks incredible. What can you tell us about it?

Convinced that it's Tom in the audience, Alec has started to wander off the stage, towards him.

EDDIE SANDERS (CONT'D)

Alec? Are you going to act it out?

Eddie nervously laughs. The closer Alec gets, the clearer Tom becomes. Glowing like a prophet from on high.

CUT TO:

INT. TOM'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Billy watches it on TV.

The cameras are clumsily tracking Alec and his mic is barely on. Still, the sight is disturbing. A movie star heading out into the audience towards an invisible vision.

BILLY  
What the fuck?

CUT TO:

INT. TV STUDIO/LIVE SHOW - SAME TIME

Alec gets a few feet away and then stretches his arms out towards Tom's Ghost, somehow expecting deliverance. Confused AUDIENCE MEMBERS stare back slack-jawed.

ALEC  
What do you want? You want me to  
admit it you were right Tom?  
(then)  
SAY SOMETHING YOU COWARD!

Alec stares up at the vengeful ghost, remorseful. Tom, still grinning maniacally at Alec, cocks his head to the side and shapes his right hand into a pistol.

TOM  
*Heavy lies the Crown...*

He places the "pistol" inside his mouth and pulls the trigger. A fountain of blood, wet and sticky, explodes into Alec's face. He falls backwards, as if shot by bullet himself, and BLACKS OUT.

KARYNN (O.S.)  
CUT TO FUCKING COMMERCIAL!

INT. TOM ADAIR'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Watching as the show cuts commercial, Billy shakes his head, completely dumbfounded.

BILLY  
Jesus. What a twisted fuck.  
(shrugs)  
Maybe this'll help the lawsuit.

He makes to turn off the TV, but confused at the massive remote, hits the VCR power button by accident.

An image of Billy sitting on the bed, taken from the angle of a camera mounted on the VCR, snaps onto the TV.

BILLY (CONT'D)

What?

Billy approaches the VCR and locates a pinprick-sized camera. Pulling it out, he sees that it's hooked into the VCR.

He pushes PLAY on the VCR.

A picture of Tom's empty bedroom with the bleeding corpse on the bed, from the night he died, comes on the screen.

But only for a few seconds. Then, drops to static.

Billy sits for a second. Then jumps up and hits REWIND.

CUT TO:

ALEC'S POV

Blurred and foggy. Dropping in and out of consciousness.

As he is lifted from the FLOOR onto a STRETCHER.

Rushed through the halls of the TV STUDIO.

Put into an AMBULANCE that speeds through the afternoon traffic.

Taken into the ER wing of CEDARS SINAI HOSPITAL.

Anxious faces peer down at him, throughout. Trying to wake him up, communicate with him, take his blood, ask if he's on something.

Finally shifting from his POV, we see him lying on a hospital bed, breathing shallowly and staring straight ahead with dead-eyes.

INT. TOM'S BEDROOM - DAY

In contrast, Billy's eyes are blazing with energy as he rewinds the videotape and blasts the sound. The events of his brother's death are becoming clear to him.

ON THE SCREEN: KARYNN, TOM, and ALEC stare at the corpse on the bed. Tom and Alec leave the room, and the SOUNDS OF THEIR ARGUMENT ARE HEARD.

Karynn leaves the room and soon after, DULL THUMPS are audible as Tom falls down the stairs OFF-SCREEN.

Billy rewinds and increases the volume. The THUMPS become louder and louder as he replays them.

Billy closes his eyes to hear more clearly. Smiles and shakes his head in amazement at it all.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - SUNSET

A sparse, white room. Alec is drained and sullen, staring out the window as the city lights flicker on. The Hollywood Sign in prominent view, fading into the night sky.

Suddenly, the door bursts open and people flood into the room. A TABLOID JOURNALIST leads the way, pursued by a NURSE and Karynn.

TABLOID JOURNALIST

Alec, you just gotta answer some questions. C'mon you're okay, you can do this! Let's clear it all up.

NURSE

Mr. Donovan, I'm so sorry...

(then)

SECURITY!

Alec doesn't move just gapes at the intruder as if he were from another planet. Meanwhile, SECURITY grabs the Journalist around the waist and starts to pull him out of the room.

TABLOID JOURNALIST

The public wants to know! We have a right to know!

KARYNN

(to the JOURNALIST)

We're gonna get your credentials revoked, asshole! Yeah, fuck you too!

Then she turns to Alec, all fake, cheerful.

KARYNN (CONT'D)

Who do I need to fuck around here to get a real VIP suite.

Alec doesn't smile. Karynn sits down on the edge of his bed. Playing the concerned agent/girlfriend/whatever she is.

KARYNN (CONT'D)

Are you... do you feel okay, Alec? The doctor, he said there didn't seem to be anything wrong.

KARYNN (CONT'D)  
Physically wrong, I mean.  
(then)  
Where did you get the pills baby?  
Did Sarah get them for you-

Alec looks away.

ALEC  
What are they saying out there?

KARYNN  
(stalling)  
What do you mean, what are they  
saying?

ALEC  
What are they saying Karynn?

KARYNN  
They're saying... well, we're  
saying that you're stressed out.  
That it's nerves and worry and all  
the things going on. And they're  
buying it, pretty much.

ALEC  
Pretty much?

KARYNN  
There are... rumors. That it's  
'cause of the anniversary. That it  
was almost a year ago and now...  
(a beat)  
What happened out there, Alec?

ALEC  
Nothing. Just leave me alone.

He turns away from her in his bed. Sick to still be alive.

KARYNN  
You saw him. Didn't you?  
(then)  
I see him too sometimes.

Alec turns and looks back at Karynn. He takes in how fully  
deteriorated she is this time. Her armor cracking.

ALEC  
You do?

KARYNN  
Every night. Sometimes, in the  
daylight.

KARYNN (CONT'D)

His mouth covered in blood, his  
teeth...

(covering)

I'm totally crazy with a capital  
fucking C, right?

ALEC

Not any more than me, darling.

They laugh.

ALEC (CONT'D)

Karynn... do you, do you regret it?

KARYNN

I know that... what we did was  
wrong. We knew it, but we did it,  
and I didn't care. I never thought  
that it was bad, though. You  
understand? I didn't care, because  
it was a necessary decision.  
Necessary for survival.

ALEC

It was an accident.

KARYNN

At first.

They both consider this. There's no getting around that  
they've done bad things, that they're bad people.

KARYNN (CONT'D)

You and me, Alec, we're bonded.  
We're stuck together forever by  
this. Fuck whoever you like, but  
for the rest of our lives, we'll  
always have to know where the other  
is, what they're doing. Otherwise,  
we'll go insane.

ALEC

Karynn...

KARYNN

Just tell me, does he, um, speak to  
you too?

ALEC

(lying)

No... what does he say?

She stares at her hands. Smiles to herself.

KARYNN  
That he'd see us soon.

With that, a NURSE walks into the room, giving Karynn her out. She wraps her coat tightly around her body and leaves the room before Alec has time to respond.

The SOUND of a TRAM RIDE and a TOUR GUIDE RISE OVER...

EXT. METRO PICTURES - DAY

The lot that keeps on churning movie magic, rain or shine. We pan up to the chrome and marble tower where all of it starts.

INT. STUDIO PRESIDENT'S OFFICE - DAY

Gregory Patrick is behind his desk, talking avidly on the phone, while Alec sits in front next to an empty chair.

WE SEE Alec texts Karynn, but no response. Not for a while it seems. A JUNIOR EXEC makes her way into the room on the couch behind him, note pad in hand next to Shilling.

GREGORY  
(hanging up phone)  
Sorry, Alec. Had to take that call.  
(indicating the empty  
chair)  
Should we start without Karynn?

ALEC  
(seemingly unconcerned)  
I think she said she felt a bit  
sick, earlier. Probably should just  
go ahead.

GREGORY  
Too bad.  
(business time now)  
Alec, I won't bullshit you. We're a  
little concerned about our upcoming  
deal for your next picture and-

ALEC  
Upcoming? I signed the thing.

GREGORY  
Yes, well, it's still going through  
the legal process, you know. Hasn't  
totally gone through.

GREGORY (CONT'D)

And we had some concerns, thoughts really, about the deal. Still want to flesh them out.

ALEC

What concerns?

A beat. Gregory waves to the Jr Exec who produces various newspapers and magazines for Alec to flick through. All of them have cover stories regarding Alec's recent flip-out.

GREGORY

(indicating magazines)

We have concerns that *they* have concerns. Now neither you nor I read those, but a lot of people do. People who go to movies. Most people who go to movies, in fact. And, independent of that, we have medical concerns, insurance policies to adhere to-

ALEC

So you want to pull out of my deal.

GREGORY

Alec, you're the star of our summer tentpole movie. We want to be in business with you, but the business of Alec Donovan right now, it ain't lookin' so great.

Huh?

SHILLING

What Gregory and I are saying is, we don't want to overload your plate is all.

A NEW ASSISTANT knocks and leans in.

NEW ASSISTANT

Mr. Donovan? You're needed in makeup, Studio 2.

GREGORY

(concluding)

We'll talk about this later.

(to New Assistant)

Thank you Shannon.

NEW ASSISTANT

Rebecca-

GREGORY  
That's what I said.

Alec stands up, notices Shilling doesn't move from the couch. The temperature on Alec has clearly cooled.

ALEC  
(to Shilling)  
You're not coming with?

SHILLING  
I'll be there in a sec. We've got some other business to discuss.

Yeah right. As he leaves, Alec looks around at all the Execs who'd flocked behind him before. No longer a priority.

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - MAKE UP TRAILER - DAY

Alec sits in a high chair, getting his make-up done. He looks around anxiously, certain that everyone is staring at him and gossiping behind his back.

He clocks one of the MAKE-UP assistants surreptitiously turn a magazine over.

Alec swipes the magazine off the table. Turning it over, he sees a photo of himself leaving the hospital under the headline "*Is Alec Donovan Losing It?*"

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - CAESAR IS DEAD II SET - DAY

Arriving at the set, Alec stalks up to the DIRECTOR, ZARA, who's busy conferring with her cinematographer.

ALEC  
I'm ready to shoot.

ZARA  
That's great, Alec. Just give us a second?

Zara turns back to her discussion. Alec glances around and feels the entire crew staring at him.

ALEC  
I'm ready. What are we waiting on?

ZARA  
It's a complicated shot Alec.  
(pointing)

ZARA (CONT'D)  
We've got to set it up to go there-  
there-there-and then there.

ALEC  
(unimpressed)  
Why? Let's just do it in a oner.  
Use a stedi-cam, done.

Zara pulls Alec aside.

ZARA  
Alec, I appreciate your input, but  
we've also got to get the fight  
choreography for you and Aaron  
down. We have to put your safety  
first-

ALEC  
Forget that, we'll just improvise.

Manic, he moves over to where Aaron Keev is conversing with  
his entourage.

ALEC (CONT'D)  
(to Aaron)  
You're cool with that, right Aaron?  
We'll just improvise off each  
other, intuit the other person's  
moves, feel the moment, do some  
Stanislavsky shit.

AARON  
(completely confused)  
Sure, dude. Whatever you say. I'm  
cool to that.

ALEC  
Gnarly.

He grabs two SWORDS off the props table and tosses one to  
Aaron. He signals to a frustrated Zara and walks towards the  
set, followed by Aaron.

ALEC (CONT'D)  
Ready when you are Director!

Zara baffled by what's going on, as are the rest of the crew,  
signals for them to shoot.

ZARA  
(to crew)  
We'll shoot a loose rehearsal...

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR  
Roll sound! Roll film!

ZARA  
And, um, Action?

Alec and Aaron begin to battle, in the midst of a badly-lit and unprepared set.

It's tentative at first, but Alec soon ups the ante, taking out his anxiety on Aaron. Aaron, surprised at the strength of the blows he's receiving, fights back hard.

One of his SWINGS connects with Alec's HELMET and Alec instantly CHARGES him.

He RAMS into Aaron and SHOVES him back towards a false staircase.

As they both CRASH into the scenery, the fake staircase GIVES WAY and they FALL to the ground.

TABLOID PHOTOGRAPHER  
*WHY YA SORRY ALEC? DID YA BREAK  
TOM'S HEART? WERE YA TWO LOVERS?*

Suddenly, there's a barrage of FLASHES. A TABLOID PHOTOGRAPHER, who somehow made his way onto the set, gets a few photos off before being DRAGGED AWAY by security guards.

FIRST A.D  
Security!!!

Aaron lies on the ground, stunned, as Alec pushes himself up off the floor. Everyone staring at him, whispering.

He tosses the sword into the darkness and STORMS AWAY, as the entire crew stands still, utterly shocked.

ZARA  
(after a few moments)  
Uh.. Cut?  
(to no one in particular)  
What the fuck just happened?

EXT. STUDIO GATE - DAY

Alec's BMW tears out off the studio and onto the street. TWO CARS start up and drive off in pursuit.

## INSIDE THE CAR - MOVING

Alec looks into his rearview mirror, an angry fugitive. Ghost Tom sitting like a peach in his back seat.

TOM  
It's almost like something from  
*Catching Hell*, huh, brother?

ALEC  
SHUT THE FUCK UP!!!

He pulls a sharp U-TURN, almost ramming into an oncoming car.

## EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The BMW weaves in and out of the lanes, as Alec tries to outmaneuver his pursuers.

Except, the two cars are nowhere to be seen now. His backseat empty, Alec is still convinced that he's being tailed.

He stares out at the drivers of other cars, sure that he'll find a camera poking back at him. But all he sees are the angry faces of those he's cut off.

Looking up at the TRAFFIC HELICOPTER high above, he even becomes convinced that it too is following him.

A giant Bluetooth snuggly in his ear, he DIALS Karynn's number, but nobody picks up.

ALEC  
(to himself)  
Pick up the phone, Karynn. Pick up  
the phone.

Weaving in and out of traffic, he continues through the other entries on his phone, but still can't reach her. From his frustration we get the sense he's been doing this for awhile.

Finally, he gets so pissed off he PITCHES his CELL PHONE out the window.

Then, moments later, instantly regrets it.

## EXT. HILLS SIDESTREETS - EARLY EVENING

His BMW crawls slowly up the road, past the front gates of large estates.

As Alec finally approaches his own home, he spots a JOURNALIST waiting in his car to ambush him.

Seeing this, Alec slows to a stop. Idles. He's about to reverse when TOM reappears. Leaning close into Alec.

TOM

What are you waiting for. You  
really gonna let the paps boss you  
around? Come on, give 'em hell,  
Ally. Unless you're a 'lil bitch-

After a moment, Alec, tired of it all, ACCELERATES towards his gate.

Suddenly, the CAR that was parked in the shadows pulls in front of the gate, trying to BLOCK Alec from getting in.

Alec, speeding now, sees it but still tries to make it through the gap that the car is quickly closing.

There's a LOUD CRASH, as both cars collide. Alec doesn't make it. The JOURNALIST'S CAR has pinned the BMW to the side of the gate.

There's a loud WHINING sound as the mechanical gate tries to open again, it's motor control destroyed.

Alec is stunned, but quickly scrambles out the passenger side. He LEAPS onto the hood of his car, climbing over it and making his way through the gate.

Behind him, the JOURNALIST is leaning against his car, catching his breath.

JOURNALIST

(shouting)

Hey, you okay? You okay?

(off Alec's running)

HEY! You almost killed me, asshole!

I'm sending you the fucking bill!

He drifts off as Alec makes his way towards the unlit house. There is the distant sound of an ALARM going off.

INT. ALEC'S MANSION - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

The ALARM is blaring now. Alec goes to the security box and turns it off.

Now that the alarm is off, other sounds become obvious. Such as the STRANGE VOICES coming from the LIVING ROOM. A HOWLING WIND blowing through the house.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Alec arrives to find that the wind has scattered items throughout the room. The DECK CHAIR that broke the picture window lies in the middle of the room, surrounded by glass.

But what really attracts his attention is what's playing on the living room TV.

ON THE TV

Appears to be home-video from a party at Tom's old apartment. In it, a drunken Tom and Alec, to the delight of guests, waltz together around the room. Pre-Success. Tom playfully kisses Alec on the cheek. Happy, best friends.

The clip stops soon after and cuts back to the start of the waltz. It loops this scene endlessly.

Alec walks over the VCR, yanks it out of the wall, walks through the broken window onto the BALCONY and THROWS the VCR into the sand below.

INT. ALEC'S UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - NIGHT

Flicking the light on, Alec collapses onto the bed. He lies on it, staring up at the ceiling for a few moments, before picking up the bedside phone.

He dials a number, then puts it to his ear. Puts it down again. There's no dial tone.

He picks up the phone and sees the line has been cut.

BILLY (O.S.)  
No phone calls, Alec. No outgoing,  
no incoming. No one to get in touch  
with, no deals to make, no chicks  
to fuck. Not tonight.

Billy, sitting in the shadows of the adjoining bathroom, walks out into the light.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
Tonight it's just you and me.

Alec looks over at him laconically. Tired of dealing with shit.

ALEC  
Didn't think you'd ever get the  
guts to actually show up.

ALEC (CONT'D)  
I'd ask how you got in, but it's  
sort of obvious this time.

BILLY  
Oh? Well, you can't call the  
police. I suppose you're just going  
to have to kill me.

ALEC  
That'd be my pleasure.

BILLY  
Oh, don't worry. I believe you.  
That's why I have this.

He pulls out a shiny new GUN from behind his back. Alec looks  
to his nightstand.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
Well, technically it's yours.  
(then)  
Nice piece. I've never held one of  
these. I mean, a real one, not what  
they give you on set. The real ones  
are much heavier, much scarier.  
Makes you feel so powerful. Like  
you could just kill a man.

ALEC  
Whoo. Scary.

BILLY  
Now, now. You know what they say,  
"If I wanted to kill you, you'd  
already be dead." Nah, this is more  
for my entertainment. See, I've an  
audio-visual presentation.

ALEC  
Ooh. Another one?

Billy gives him a confused look.

BILLY  
You're one strange motherfucker,  
Alec.

He reaches into his pocket and pulls out the remote. Clicks  
on Alec's Bedroom TV. On it is the Video from Tom's house.

In it, Tom is fooling around with the soon-to-be-Corpse.  
Alec's face registers confusion, baffled at where this is  
from. Billy sees this.

BILLY (CONT'D)

My reaction exactly. Painful to  
watch. That's my big brother up  
there, making out with rough trade.

ALEC

What's the point of this?

BILLY

You thought he was dead, huh? Dead  
and buried. Actually, judging from  
your freak-outs of late, I don't  
know that you're so sure. A haunted  
man is a guilty man, that's what I  
think. I sleep fine at night. How  
about you?

Billy reaches into the bathroom and tosses a bottle of  
industrial-strength sleeping pills at Alec.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Not so well. Don't worry, we're  
about to get to the root of that.  
The where and how. I don't need to  
tell you the why. I think you know  
that.

On the TV, the Corpse is going into drug OD spasms and Tom is  
rushing around the room. The Corpse's nose is hemorrhaging  
blood onto the nice, white sheets.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Ah, that's not so interesting.

He FAST-FORWARDS the tape to where Alec enters in the room.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Here's you.

He continues to FAST-FORWARD to where Karynn arrives on the  
scene.

BILLY (CONT'D)

And there's her. The Black Widow  
Bitch. Now the thing I wonder is,  
whose idea was it? Yours or hers?  
I'm betting it was hers. Hell hath  
no fury like a woman scorned.

On TV, Alec and Tom leave the room, soon followed by Karynn.  
Billy ups the Volume to the maximum, so that the SCREAMING  
and THUMPS run through the whole house.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
What do you say? Any thoughts on  
the issue?

ALEC  
What do you want?

BILLY  
Justice.

Alec gets up and starts to advance on Billy. Billy, trying to stay cool, shakily points the gun at Alec.

ALEC  
If you wanted justice, you'd have called the cops. No, you want something more. Money?

BILLY  
That'd be nice. But, No.

ALEC  
Then what? What do you want Billy!

Billy shakes the gun, violently at Alec.

BILLY  
I want what I DESERVE. I want to be what Tom was, what you stole from him. What I worked for. The whole package. Fame, Money, Love.

ALEC  
(incredulous)  
You want to be, what, A MOVIE STAR?

BILLY  
I want to be the new Tom Adair, the new Alec Donovan. I want the breaks I deserve, the parts I should get.

Alec shakes his head in disbelief.

ALEC  
You'd blackmail your brother's killer for stardom?

BILLY  
It's just business. I'm sure Tom would understand.

ALEC  
I bet he would.  
(a beat)  
Fine. I'll do it.

Smiling, Billy lowers his gun.

BILLY  
Of course you will.

Then, suddenly and savagely, Alec grabs Billy and throws him at the WINDOW. It CRACKS, but doesn't break.

Billy, shocked, regains his senses fast and shoves Alec back. He raises the gun and FIRES at Alec.

Billy's aim is poor, the bullet only GRAZES ALEC'S ARM.

Alec puts his hand to the wound and stares at the blood, full of sharp pain and surprise.

He charges Billy, already thrown off-balance by the gun's kick.

The charge thrusts Billy up against and through the UPSTAIRS WINDOW.

Alec, his hands cut up the sharp glass, barely avoids falling through the window himself.

Looking down, he sees the broken sprawl of Billy on the deck.

Alec grabs a towel to wrap around his arm when he spots the gun laying near his bed.

In the distance, SIRENS can be heard. Frozen, he looks at himself in the mirror, then back to the gun. It was self defense, right?

TOM (O.S.)  
*Pathetic.*

EXT. ALEC'S MANSION - GARAGE - NIGHT

The garage door rises to reveal the only vehicle within: Alec's old Chrysler Sebring from the opening. The windshield CRACK has spread across the entire plane of glass.

EXT. ALEC'S FRONT GATE - NIGHT

The Journalist is on a cell phone, calling a tow truck, when Alec RAMS through both of the cars stuck there.

He doesn't make it all the way and the Journalist watches, speechless, as Alec tries to ACCELERATE through the gap, wrenching metal on both sides.

Fed up, he REVERSES a distance and then ACCELERATES, SMASHING into the vehicles again. They both shudder a ways to either side and this time he makes it through.

The Journalist can only stare at him pass by, watching the tail lights go down the road.

EXT. MALIBU SIDESTREETS - NIGHT

Alec's car speeds down the road, passing three police cars, with SIRENS and LIGHTS on, headed for his house.

EXT. KARYNN'S FRONT GATE - NIGHT

Alec leans out the window, yelling at the INTERCOM. But no response.

Pissed, he backs up the car and tries to RAM the gate down.

The result is a sickening, pathetic CRUNCH and a brutal HISSING from the engine. Now the car won't move at all.

Getting out, Alec jumps up onto the hood and CLIMBS over the gate. His arm screaming bloody murder.

INT. KARYNN'S MALIBU BEACH HOUSE - NIGHT

The front ajar, Alec walks right in. Noticing right away there's something very, very wrong going on here.

Things are askew, objects scattered around the floor, and, oh yeah, it stinks of gasoline.

ALEC  
(covering his nose)  
Karynn? Karynn, where are you?

He moves through the house, he hears the SHOWER RUNNING, he goes to the bathroom - No Karynn. He turns off the water, wincing in pain.

He opens her medicine cabinet looking to take something, only to see a large cache of pills. Sleeping pills, Anti-depressants, Klonopin, various mood stabilizers.

All telling him the same thing: that Karynn has been having trouble eating, sleeping and living for a very long time.

But what really frightens him is what's on the inside of the mirror door: An obsessively, compulsively-pasted collage of hundreds of photos of Tom. All horrifically mutilated in some way or another. All telling him yet another thing: that she's way farther gone than he ever would have dreamed.

He moves into the hallway grabbing a torn designer dress off the floor, Alec covers his nose from the fumes and moves into towards the STAIRS.

INT. KARYNN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alec wanders in, hearing something in the room. The light is on in the WALK-IN CLOSET. Karynn's inside wearing a dressing gown, slashing her expensive clothes to ribbons with a butcher knife.

ALEC

Karynn? What are you doing?

KARYNN

Oh, it's you! I knew you'd come.  
(motioning around)

I'm renouncing all my worldly possessions. We have to purify ourselves. It's the only way.

Dropping the knife, she picks up the GASOLINE CAN at her feet and sloshes a godly amount of fuel around the room. She walks out, pushing Alec back.

Then she strikes a book of matches and TOSSES them into the room.

ALEC

Karynn, wait-

\*FWOOSH!\* The room goes up in a burst of flame.

ALEC (CONT'D)

Jesus, Christ-

Undeterred, Karynn grabs Alec's arm and drags him out of the room. She heads down the stairs.

KARYNN

(going through her pockets; to herself)

C'mon. One... Fuck, only one left.

ALEC

(coughing)

Karynn we need to leave. You're not thinking clearly-

Grabbing her around the waist, he tries to pull Karynn out of the house. She thrashes, revealing her arms covered in cuts- She's bleeding badly. He backs away, his hands wet with her blood.

KARYNN

I couldn't be more CLEAR. I'd think you of all people would understand. It's the only way to make it stop - make *him* stop.

She points to Tom lounging in a chair. Alec looks. *Can she really see him too?* Tom bites in a peach. Delicious.

She sloshes more fuel around the front room and then backs towards the porch, leaving a gasoline trail to follow her.

KARYNN (CONT'D)

We're going to burn together in hell anyway.

EXT. KARYNN'S BACKYARD - NIGHT

Once she's a little way off, Karynn weakly drops the can to the ground. Before Alec knows it -

She STRIKES THE LAST MATCH and drops it onto the gas-soaked trail she's left behind.

The FIRE catches immediately and heads inside the house.

When it reaches the living room, there's a loud FHWUMP as it hits paydirt.

The windows of the house blow-out, shattering glass in their direction and knocking them to their knees.

Karynn watches her beautiful house burn with a wistful smile on her face. She is totally divorced from reality.

Alec crawls over to where she lies and leans over the fading Karynn, cradling her head in his lap.

ALEC

Karynn... stay with me baby. You're gonna be okay. We're gonna be okay.

KARYNN

I called them, I told them  
everything. I-I had to. Please  
forgive me. Please?

She's bleeding out badly. She's lost too much blood.

ALEC

It's.. it's all right. I got you.

They're illuminated by the flames roaring in front of them.

KARYNN

I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry, Tom. I  
didn't mean to kill you, I loved  
you. I still love you. I knew, I  
knew if I did this you'd come.

She reaches up to kiss Alec, who's too stunned to react. Then  
collapses... The blood loss finally too much. Dead.

Just then, a POLICE HELICOPTER climbs over the house, it's  
blinding SEARCHLIGHT threading over the property.

Alec, frightened, drops her head and backs off. He gets to  
his feet and moves away from Karynn's body.

As he stands, the SEARCHLIGHT catches him and follows.

SIRENS can be heard in the background now, coming up the  
driveway.

EXT. BEACHFRONT - NIGHT

Alec backs away even further, moving towards the ocean-side  
BEACH at the far end of the property.

Alec moves further down the lawn, the fiery house glowing  
behind him.

The shadowy forms of the many, many COPS emerging in front of  
the flames chasing after.

They advance down the lawn and towards him.

He starts to run now, and the SEARCHLIGHT sees the motion,  
catching back onto him.

Reaching the Beach, he heads into a PRIVATE BOATHOUSE.

INT. BOATHOUSE - NIGHT

Inside is a top of the line speedboat, but no keys. Alec searches frantically around the room, but can't find them

POLICE (O.S.)  
(over bullhorn)  
ALEC DONOVAN! YOU ARE SURROUNDED!  
COME OUT WITH YOUR HANDS UP!

Alec pulls the GUN out of his jacket pocket, considers the situation. He looks down at his hands, covered in blood.

Looks at the dark ocean beyond the beach.

Looks at the boathouse door. Clenches his teeth, tries to steady himself.

POLICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
(over bullhorn)  
ALEC DONOVAN! THIS IS-

He charges out onto the LAWN and into the BLINDING LIGHT of the Police.

MAKING HIS FINAL STAND

Alec fires blindly, wildly. He gets two shots off before.

A FOREST OF GUNFIRE cuts him down. Bloody and torn through, his CORPSE drops into FRAME.

FADE TO BLACK

FADE UP

On the blinding sunshine of another Los Angeles day. Moving away from the window, we see AARON KEEV playing a hyper-intense video game with his entourage in his DOWNTOWN LOFT.

The phone is RINGING.

AARON  
Phone! Pick-up!

The phone automatically picks up, on SPEAKER PHONE.

CALLER (O.S.)  
Aaron? It's me, babe.

AARON

Robby. You're fucking with my playtime. What's up?

ROBBY (O.S.)

You got it, babe! You're the man in *Caesar Three!* After what you did for them in *Brutus's Return*, they'd have done anything for ya!

AARON

Yeah. Whatever. Just make sure I get final cut on *Bang Crash Boom* now that it's out of turnaround.

ROBBY (O.S.)

Of course, there's already hot buzz around town. It's good to be King!

AARON

Uh-huh. Phone! Drop!

The phone cuts off.

Aaron allows himself a smug smile and glances over to the ASSISTANT cleaning out his VIDEO-EDITING SUITE.

#### ON THE SHELF

We can see hundreds of videos being stuffed into a box. All of Tom's movies are here, along with a stack of dailies from *Caesar Is Dead* and piles of tapes labelled "Exclusive Tom Adair home-video footage!!!!"

It was Aaron this whole time.

They're all swept off the shelf, headed for the garbage.

CUT TO:

#### **ALEC'S DEAD BODY**

Looking exactly like it did when we last saw it. But something seems different. The lights or the grass...

HANZ (O.S.)

And... CUT!

Suddenly the light shifts and Alec lifts himself off the floor.

Only it's not Alec, it's an ACTOR playing him.

We're on THE SET of the movie based off Alec's life. Alec's last stand, the Boathouse and all, has been recreated to the last detail. Real, but not real.

FIRST A.D.  
That's lunch, people.

We drift away towards Luis and Alec's former assistant Sarah, talking to the German Director, Hanz.

SARAH  
Look, I'm telling you he wouldn't have that poster in his house. It's too 80's.

HANZ  
Listen, I know you two co-wrote the script, but some things have to be compromised on. Maybe we can-

SARAH  
(interrupting; pissed)  
No, you listen. I'm not just the "co-writer," I'm an Executive Producer and he's the motherfucking Technical Consultant. So don't patronize us.

LUIS  
Yeah, what she said.

We PAN OVER to Shilling, who's sitting in a producer's chair chatting with Dominic (the veteran interviewer from the *Invulnerable* press day.)

DOMINIC  
God, I thought he WAS Alec. Amazing casting. I saw him in that film at Toronto -- he was incredible.

SHILLING  
We were lucky to get him. This is off the record, but Warners just locked him up in a seven-picture deal for one of their superheroes.

DOMINIC  
Seven pictures in spandex? That's a prison term. He's gonna be nominated for an Oscar for this.

SHILLING  
Yeah, well, the two guys he beat out already had Oscars.

Shilling moves to Craft services. Dominic follows.

SHILLING (CONT'D)

Writing's on the wall - they're not gonna be making many of these kinda films anymore. Who wants to make a hundred million when you can make a billion?

DOMINIC

*If you can look into the seeds of time, and say which grain will grow and which will not.*

SHILLING

That's cute. What is that? Godard?

DOMINIC

Macbeth.

We picking up on the Actor playing Alec. He's watching a scene from **CATCHING HELL** on his **FIRST GENERATION IPHONE**. Streaming, nipping at our heels.

On that tiny screen, we watch a young Alec put his arm around Tom's shoulder -- pledging eternal loyalty to his friend.

The Actor mimics Alec's body language, still researching his role, as he heads out of the darkness of the enclosed set and into the open air of the studio backlot.

As he walks off towards the cafeteria, he becomes lost to us, just another speck in the flood of people on the lot as we...

FADE OUT

END.