

TAKING STOCK

By:

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FADE IN:

EXT. LAS VEGAS STRIP - NIGHT

A large HAWK glides above the Strip. Beneath its wings, the colored neon lights from the large casinos blur the sky.

The Hawk glides west - over the suburbs outside the Strip. Then sails even farther over an expanse of dark desert.

The Hawk circles and then settles on top of a tall iron gate that protects a large residential compound. It flaps its wings and SCREECHES. Another flap and another...

INT. RESIDENTIAL COMPOUND/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

SCREECH, causing a young man's head to bobble - just coming into consciousness. His arms and legs are bound to the frame of a wooden chair with duct tape.

He is DAMIAN CLARKE (30), smooth boyish face, slight build.

Damian blinks his eyes to gain focus - scans the room. Symbols of wealth - expensive furniture, art work on the walls, is everywhere.

Ten feet away stands STEVE RUSSO (45), muscular with biceps that strain the sleeves of his shirt, thick dark hair combed straight back - several facial scars. He stares at Damian.

Across the room, JAKE PETERSON (60) comes into focus. He wears a grey business suit, pearl white shirt and gold framed glasses - the looks of a banker. He sits at a desk - reading.

RUSSO

I think the short timer is back
amongst us.

Russo motions towards Damian with his beer bottle.

RUSSO

Hey, Jake - he's awake.

JAKE

I see that. Give him a moment to
size up his predicament.

Jake looks up from his papers, removes his glasses and directs his focus towards Damian.

JAKE

Steven, please get our guest a
drink of water. I'm sure his throat
must be dry.

Russo walks over to an in room bar, removes a glass from the cabinet and fills it with water.

JAKE
Bring it to me.

Russo walks over - gives Jake the glass of water.

JAKE
Remove the tape from his right
wrist.

Russo approaches Damian and rips away the duct tape that binds Damian's right wrist to the chair.

Damian's winces in pain. Russo gives a wicked smile.

RUSSO
You are one stupid fuck.

Jake, holding the glass of water, walks over to Damian. He grabs a nearby chair and slides it close to Damian and sits down. Their knees nearly touch.

Damian's eyes bounce back and forth - he's frantic. Jake gives Damian a reassuring pat on the knee.

JAKE
It's Damian, yes?

DAMIAN
Yes. Please don't - don't....

Damian starts to hyperventilate.

JAKE
Sssh, sssh, relax, Damian.
(extending the glass)
Please, have a drink.

Despite his hand trembling, Damian manages to take the water from Jake. He takes slow sips - his eyes fixed on Jake.

JAKE
Better?

DAMIAN
Yes.

Damian gives the glass back - looks at his reddened wrists.

JAKE
I am sorry for the tape. I know it
causes a deal of pain, particularly
as tight as Steven wraps it.
(MORE)

JAKE (CONT'D)
But it is his profession after all.
I'm sure you understand.

Damian nods - takes a deep breath. Jake leans back in his chair and crosses his legs.

JAKE
You must be wondering why you're here.

Damian nods, meekly.

JAKE
We will get to that. But first, I need to know more about you.

DAMIAN
What do you need to know?

JAKE
This may sound a little indelicate, but I have to determine if you are someone who's going to be missed.

DAMIAN
Missed?

Jake notices a wedding ring on Damian's left hand.

JAKE
What's your wife's name?

Damian doesn't respond - not sure where this is going.

JAKE
(firmly)
Damian, I asked you a question.

RUSSO
It's Amanda. Don't know how she got hitched to that piece of shit.

Jake turns - glares at Russo with displeasure.

RUSSO
Sorry, Jake.

Jake turns back to Damian.

JAKE
Amanda's a lovely name. What about your parents? We couldn't find anything on them. It's as if they were ghosts.

DAMIAN
They died - years ago.

JAKE
I am sorry. Very sad indeed.

Jake strokes his chin.

JAKE
That leaves us with your brother -
Matthew. Do you know where he is?

Damian shakes his head no - on the verge of full panic.

JAKE
It wasn't until very recently that
we discovered Matthew served in the
Gulf.
(turns toward Russo)
Did you ever thank him for his
service?

RUSO
Can't say that I did.

JAKE
Well, we didn't know. I suppose we
can be forgiven for that oversight.
(to Damian)
Where is Matthew?

DAMIAN
I don't know.

JAKE
Such a shame. You were doing well.

Jake reaches over and removes Damian's wedding ring from his
left ring finger, his left wrist still bound to the chair.

JAKE
It'll be in the way.

Jake slips the wedding ring into his pocket.

JAKE
(to Russo)
Steven, one finger please.

Russo, with an evil smile on his face, approaches Damian.

Jake walks towards a wall safe on the other side of the room -
starts turning the dial on the safe.

JAKE
(to himself)
I try to be patient and I receive
deceit in return. So predictable, I
should really learn. Oh, and
Damian, don't move or Steven will
break your neck.

Russo re-binds Damian's right hand to the arm of the chair
and then shoves a gag into his mouth.

DAMIAN
(muffled)
No! No! No!

Damian violently shakes his head back and forth in an attempt
to free the gag as Russo places his hand firmly on top of the
center of Damian's left hand.

Russo violently SNAPS Damian's ring finger back almost to the
point where it touches the top of Damian's hand.

Damian's grotesque SCREAM is muffled by the gag. He bounces
up and down in the chair. His face becomes beet red.

Jake, holding an IPAD he retrieved from the safe, returns to
his chair in front of Damian.

JAKE
I am sorry that it was necessary to
redirect your attention in such a
barbaric manner.

Peterson removes Damian's gag.

DAMIAN
Oh, God! Oh, God - it hurts.

JAKE
Please, Damian, you can whimper but
you must control the noise level or
I am going to have Steven replace
the gag. Do you understand?

Damian gasps for air as he nods his head. He closes his jaw
tight to prevent a scream from escaping - writhes in pain.

JAKE
You know, in all those dreadful
Mafia movies they always depict
individuals in your position having
their fingers severed off in some
manner. They have it wrong.
(MORE)

JAKE (CONT'D)

When you severe a finger it tends to go numb very quickly. On the other hand, when you break the same finger, the poor victim wishes for it to be amputated merely to stop the pain. A bit ironic, don't you think?

Damian doesn't respond.

JAKE

Suit yourself. Maybe it's best that you gather your thoughts for awhile. I do have some photos to share with you, more of a brochure really.

Jake swipes his finger across the IPAD screen to reveal a picture of a middle aged man, stripped down to his shorts, his body slashed in a thousand places. His eyes frozen and wide open.

JAKE

I think it important that you see some of Steven's handiwork.

Jake places the IPAD on Damian's lap. Damian's eyes bounce frantically as he stares at the horror.

JAKE

You know he wasn't even dead yet. Steven was letting him die through a slow bleed, only cutting him in one place at a time, waiting until the previous wound started to clot.

Jake leans over and swipes the IPAD - another man strapped to a chair with a face of death.

JAKE

Ah, this unfortunate gentleman. You see, Steven dipped the poor man's fingers - one at a time in lighter fluid. Like this --

Jake imitates the motion of sticking a finger in a bottle.

JAKE

Then he lit it, making sure to extinguish it just before the gentleman passed out from the pain. Then he would do the next finger, then the next.

(MORE)

JAKE (CONT'D)
When that didn't work, he just
started to randomly light parts of
his body.

Jake closes his eyes as he remembered the day.

JAKE
Oh the smell was horrific.
Thankfully, he finally died.

Damian lowers his head.

JAKE
So far, you've merely risked a
single finger.
(points at the IPAD)
I think you would agree a bargain
by comparison.
(beat)
Once again. Where is Matthew?

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

A row of modest townhouses - similar size and color, each
with their own narrow driveway.

SUPER: LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA: ONE WEEK EARLIER

INT. DAMIAN'S TOWNHOME/KITCHEN -DAY

Damian, dressed in a business suit, sips coffee at a dinette
table as he studies the screen on his notebook computer.

AMANDA CLARKE (29), long auburn hair, perfect face, toned
figure, enters. She wears work out/fitness clothes - holds a
prescription pill bottle in her hand.

AMANDA
You forgot your pills.

DAMIAN
(not looking up)
Um, yeah. I know. I'm trying not to
take them anymore.

Amanda places the pill bottle on the table next to Damian
then goes to the refrigerator - removes a juice.

AMANDA
So the panic attacks are gone?

DAMIAN
Yeah, sure - for the most part.

Damian looks towards Amanda. She's not buying it.

DAMIAN
It's just that taking the pills
makes me feel weak.

AMANDA
Well, you know you don't get enough
sleep or exercise for that matter.

DAMIAN
I didn't mean physically weak.

A look of confusion crosses Amanda's face.

DAMIAN
Mentally.

AMANDA
Take them with you just in case.
It'll make me feel better.

Amanda pulls her hair back into a pony tail - secures it with
a hair band.

DAMIAN
You're working today?

AMANDA
Yeah, Theresa called in sick. I got
to run her Zumba class.
(pointing at the pills)
So?

Damian reluctantly grabs the pill bottle - checks his watch.

DAMIAN
Oh crap. I gotta go.

INT. DAMIAN'S CAR/DRIVEWAY - DAY

Damian removes the prescription pill bottle from his pocket,
studies it for a moment - pops it in the glove compartment.

EXT. DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES STREET - DAY

Jammed with cars. Large office buildings climb to the sky on
both sides of the street. Pedestrians fill the sidewalks.

A tall, glass framed, office building shimmers in the morning
light. The sign on the door reads: PRIME TRUST INVESTMENTS.

INT/EXT. DAMIAN'S CAR (TRAVELLING) - DAY

Damian drives by the front of the Prime Trust building and turns into entrance of an underground parking garage.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - DAY

Damian pulls into a space. His modest sedan stands out like a sore thumb amongst the luxury cars that fill the lot.

INT. PRIME TRUST BUILDING/LOBBY - DAY

Various men and women in business attire make their way to their offices - the hustle and bustle of a business day.

Damian nods and says obligatory good mornings to several of them as he makes his way through the lobby. They respond in kind. It is clear that Damian has no close personal relationships here - business acquaintances only.

INT. DAMIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Damian flicks on the lights as he enters a modern business office - clean, sleek furniture.

He places his briefcase on top of a desk next to a framed photo of Amanda. He stares at it for a moment as he runs his finger around the perimeter of the frame.

Damian takes a seat at the desk and boots up his computer.

INT. LAS VEGAS, GOLDEN NUGGET CASINO - DAY

MATTHEW CLARKE (32) stands at the end of a craps table, a cigarette clenched in his teeth. His streaks of gray hair, beard stubble and pale skin tone makes him look older.

A CRAPS DEALER stands next to Matthew. A STICK MAN pushes two red dice towards Matthew.

STICK MAN

Coming out.

Matthew pushes two piles of black chips on to the PASS LINE.

As Matthew cups the dice in his right hand, a tattoo on the inside of his forearm becomes visible. It's a red coat of arms with a blazing sun on top with the lettering: "1st Bat, 32nd" - underneath.

Matthew rattles the dice in his right hand and tosses them to the back of the craps table.

STICK MAN

Seven, a pass line winner.

Matthew stares at the dice - stoic, joyless.

The Craps Dealer places two large piles of black chips on the table in front of Matthew. Matthew flips him a chip as a tip.

CRAPS DEALER
Nice one. You're on quite the roll.

MATTHEW
You should know better than anyone
that all rolls are temporary.

CRAPS DEALER
So, why not just walk away?

MATTHEW
I'm just killing time.

Matthew removes a beer bottle from under the table railing - gulps it down.

MATTHEW
You know, before it kills me.

INT. FITNESS CENTER/WORK OUT ROOM - DAY

Rhythmic music beats out as Amanda leads an aerobics class - a mixed group of men, women, young and old.

The music stops. Amanda takes a towel from a railing and wipes the sweat from her face.

AMANDA
Alright. Great work out everyone.
Drive home safely.

The class attendants exchange small pleasantries with Amanda as they make their way out of the room.

Amanda goes to the corner of the room and removes her cell phone from her duffel bag. She hits the call button.

AMANDA
(into cell phone)
Hey you. Are you going to make it
home in time for dinner?

INT. DAMIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Damian's at his desk. He checks his watch: "5:00 PM."

DAMIAN
(into cell phone)
Yep.
(MORE)

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
I just need to clean a few things
up and I'll be on my way.
(listening)
I love you too.

Damian hangs up and starts to assemble some papers to put in his briefcase. The desk phone BUZZES. Damian picks up.

DAMIAN
(into phone)
This is Damian Clarke.
(grimaces as he listens)
Yes, of course. I'll be right up.

INT. PRIME TRUST BUILDING/ELEVATOR - DAY

The doors close. As the elevator ascends, Damian wipes sweat from his brow - checks the pulse on his neck.

Damian fumbles in his pocket - can't find what he's looking for.

DAMIAN
Damn it - the car.

Damian takes several deep, calming breaths as he stares at his reflection in the glass panel on the front elevator wall.

DAMIAN
(mouthing)
Relax.

The number 25 illuminates on the elevator panel. The doors glide open.

INT. PRIME TRUST BUILDING/EXECUTIVE SUITE - DAY

Damian walks down an expensive office suite. It has marble tiled floors and walnut paneling adorned with art work.

He reaches a secretarial station that guards the last office in the suite. It's manned by KAREN, (late 20s), farm girl face but dressed in Wall Street clothes.

DAMIAN
Hey, Karen. Mr. Carlson asked me to see him.

KAREN
Yes, of course. He's on the phone.
It'll just be a minute.

Karen points to a chair.

KAREN

Why don't you have a seat - relax.

DAMIAN

Thanks, but I prefer to stand.

Damian paces back and forth. Checks his pulse again. Takes some breaths.

KAREN

Are you alright?

DAMIAN

Yeah, fine. I just forgot to take some medication. Left it in the car.

KAREN

I'm sure there's time for you to --

The BUZZ of an office intercom interrupts.

KAREN

I'm sorry. Maybe not. He's ready.

Damian gives Karen a friendly wink and then forces an exhale as he approaches two large, closed, walnut doors. He lightly taps on one and enters.

INT. CARLSON'S OFFICE - DAY (DUSK)

A large, luxurious office - ornately furnished. One wall is a floor to ceiling window providing a view of the city skyline.

WARREN CARLSON (46), well dressed, sculptured hair, with the face of a leading man and the body of a linebacker, sits in a high top, black leather chair at his desk - phone to his ear.

Carlson motions for Damian to take a seat in a chair in front of his desk. As he waits, Damian eyes the pictures of Carlson with famous people placed throughout the office.

CARLSON

(into phone)

You will definitely find this place to your liking.

(listening)

Very good. I will see you then.

Carlson hangs up. He opens a desk drawer and removes a manila folder. As he stands up, he slides the folder towards Damian.

CARLSON

You're going to be working late.

Carlson walks to the window and looks out over the city - streetlights just starting to come on. Damian is busy fumbling through the contents of the folder.

CARLSON

That's the latest research report on Eden. They're a mid sized bio medical company. Are you familiar with them?

Carlson turns around. He sees that Damian's hands are trembling as he pours through the contents of the folder.

CARLSON

Are you alright?

DAMIAN

Um - yeah, fine. I'm just feeling a little light headed.

CARLSON

I really can't afford a lack of focus on this. Should I get someone else?

DAMIAN

I'm fine. Yes, I've heard of them. They're in the third phase of trials for a hepatitis drug.

Carlson studies Damian for a moment and then returns to over looking the city.

CARLSON

I want a complete financial overview. Everything from what they're worth if they're liquidated to the potential upside if the trials are successful.

Damian wipes a bead of sweat from his brow.

DAMIAN

Are we thinking of acquiring them?

CARLSON

(sarcastic)

No, I'm interested because I have hepatitis.

DAMIAN

Sorry. Anything else?

CARLSON

I'm having dinner at Fitzgerald's tonight at eight o'clock. It's in Malibu. Bring me what you have there - no later than nine o'clock.

DAMIAN

Tonight?

CARLSON

Yes, of course tonight.

Damian looks at his watch - a look of disappointment comes over his face.

CARLSON

I assume that this will not be a problem for you.

DAMIAN

Well, it's just that I promised Amanda that --

CARLSON

I wasn't asking a question. It was just a polite way of saying just fucking do it.

Damian swallows hard.

DAMIAN

Nine o'clock?

CARLSON

Precisely.
(motions towards the door)
You need to get on it.

DAMIAN

Yes, Sir.

Damian gets up - heads towards the door.

CARLSON

And do give my apologies to Amanda. She does deserve better. More of your time that is.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Damian sweating profusely, labored breathing, approaches his car. He opens the passenger side door, flips open the glove compartment and removes a bottle of pills.

He removes the cap and taps out three pills into his hand and gulps them down like a thirsty man getting a needed drink.

INT. DAMIAN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Damian enters data into an Excel spreadsheet on his computer.

A TAP on the door frame. It's JOEL WINDSOR (30), blonde wavy hair, green eyes, dressed too casually for a business office.

JOEL
You don't look very happy.

DAMIAN
(looking at his computer)
Wow, you're still here. That's got to be some kind of record.

JOEL
We had a little virus attack. But, being the extraordinary system administrator I am, all fixed now.

Damian doesn't react - buried in his assignment.

Joel walks to a small metal file cabinet - hoists himself on top of it. He starts to bang his heels against the front of the file cabinet like a bored child.

DAMIAN
(perturbed)
Really?

JOEL
You know, you could benefit from some counseling. You're a classic workaholic.

DAMIAN
And how is it you're the only person working here that gets away without being one?

JOEL
You really want to know?

DAMIAN
No, I really want to work.

JOEL
Too late - you asked. Remember the settlement with Bill Nelson?

DAMIAN

Not really.

JOEL

Well he got paid two million dollars because Carlson was dumb enough to make some homophobic remarks at a company off site event. The day before he fired Bill.

DAMIAN

What does that have to do with you?

JOEL

After Prime Trust paid off the settlement, Carlson was beside himself. So, the fool fires off an e-mail to every manager in the firm telling them, and I quote - this is the last time I am going to make a payment for fag fraud - keep them off the payroll. The dude really has some anger management issues. Anyway, his little mistake is my ticket to job security.

DAMIAN

How did you get the e-mail?

JOEL

Who's a system administrator?

DAMIAN

I don't really think you're supposed to be doing that.

JOEL

I only do it for self preservation.

Damian points at his computer.

DAMIAN

I really need to get this done.

INT. LAS VEGAS, GOLDEN NUGGET CASINO/MAIN FLOOR - NIGHT

A bluish-gray haze of cigarette smoke permeates the room.

Matthew sits at a blackjack table. He looks haggard - almost catatonic. He stares at two large stacks of one hundred dollar chips on the table in front of him.

Across from Matthew is MEL, the dealer, (60) heavy, cue ball bald - wears a white shirt and bow tie. Mel scans the room - makes sure that a Pit Boss is not within ear shot.

MEL
(in a hushed tone)
You're already down eight grand.
Just walk away, man.

Matthew takes a drag from a cigarette - stares at the chips.

Matthew stuffs his hands into the right pocket of his jeans and removes a wad of crumpled bills. As he straightens the bills out he counts the total - not much.

Matthew folds the bills and stuffs them into his shirt pocket then pushes all of the remaining chips into the betting circle on the blackjack table.

MATTHEW
Deal.

Mel stares at Matthew.

MEL
Matt, you sure?

Matthew points at the deck, motions for Mel to deal.

Mel deals Matthew two cards - face down. Mel deals himself two cards, one down and one up - the ACE OF SPADES. Mel peers at his face down card and then turns it over - the KING OF HEARTS.

MEL
Blackjack. House wins.

Mel slides the stack of chips from Matthew's end of the table and places them in the house chip rack in front of him.

Matthew gets up - wobbles as if he had been hit in the chin. His hands shake as he gulps down the remainder of his beer.

MATTHEW
(false bravado)
So, that's what a ten thousand
dollar beer tastes like.

INT. LAS VEGAS, GOLDEN NUGGET CASINO/BAR - NIGHT

Matthew leans against a video poker bar. A BARTENDER approaches and places a bottle of beer in front of Matthew.

BARTENDER

Any luck?

MATTHEW

It's not a matter of luck. It's simple math. Not really a strong subject of mine.

The bartender - confused - walks away. Matthew's phone cell RINGS. He removes it from his pocket as he gulps down half the beer. He hits the answer button.

MATTHEW

(into phone)

Hey, Steve.

(listening)

Yeah, I'll have your money. Plus the vig.

(listening)

The deal was I got till tomorrow night.

(listening)

Oh, yeah - fuck you too.

Matthew ends the call and slides the phone back in his pocket. He gulps down the remainder of his beer.

INT. FITZGERALD'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A fancy restaurant. Carlson and DOCTOR JOHN SAUNDERS (60), sit at a table in the corner. Saunders pours back the last of his drink and then stares at his empty glass.

DR. SAUNDERS

I think another toast is order.
Scotch?

CARLSON

No, I'm fine.

DR. SAUNDERS

Well, hope you don't mind if I do.

Saunders raises his glass to catch the attention of a server.

Damian arrives at the table. He carries a folder in his hand.

DAMIAN

Excuse me. I apologize for the interruption.

Saunders, obviously buzzed, extends his hand towards Damian.

DR. SAUNDERS
Doctor John Saunders. I do medical
research for --

Carlson's eyes narrow.

CARLSON
Not appropriate, John.

A look of confusion crosses Damian's face as he shakes
Saunders hand.

DAMIAN
Um - my pleasure.

Damian hands Carlson a folder.

DAMIAN
I believe you were expecting this.

Carlson looks at his watch. It reads: "9:05".

CARLSON
I believe I said nine o'clock -
precisely.

INT. LAS VEGAS, GOLDEN NUGGET CASINO/HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Matthew staggers into the room - visibly drunk. He has a
nearly full beer bottle in his hand. He wobbles a bit and
holds his hand up against the wall to steady himself as he
gulps down the remainder of the beer.

He wipes the beer residue from his mouth with his shirt
sleeve and then falls into the bed.

Matthew stares at the ceiling for a moment and then removes
the cell phone from his pocket. He scrolls through the
contacts - stops at: "Damian Clarke". His finger hovers over
the call button. He hits it and it RINGS.

CUT TO:

INT/EXT. DAMIAN'S CAR/405 FREEWAY (TRAVELLING) - NIGHT

The RING TONE from Damian's cell phone emanates from the car
speaker. He hits the answer call button on his steering
wheel.

DAMIAN
Hello.
(beat)
Hello. This is Damian.

There is no answer and then just the sound of the DIAL TONE.

CUT TO:

INT. LAS VEGAS, GOLDEN NUGGET CASINO/HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Matthew tosses his phone aside and slides open the drawer on the night stand next to the bed. He removes a semi-automatic pistol and an ammo clip.

Matthew slams in the clip, places the gun in his mouth and wraps his lips around the barrel. Sweat beads on his forehead. His hand trembles on the trigger.

Matthew's cell phone RINGS. His chest heaves up and down from heavy breathing as he puts both hands on the gun to steady it. He brings his knees up to his chest. Tears stream down his cheek. The phone is still RINGING and then stops.

Matthew clenches his eyes closed. He squeezes the trigger.

The gun JAMS.

MATTHEW

Fuck!

Matthew's hand falls to the bed. His breathing slowly returns to normal. His eyes blink a few times and then close.

BEGIN DREAM:

EXT. AFGHANISTAN, MOUNTAINS OF KUNAR PROVINCE - DAY

Matthew dressed in Army camouflage and a fellow soldier, THOMAS (23), huddle behind a large rock shielding themselves from incoming mortars. Forty feet away from them a stranded Army radio emits STATIC transmissions.

MATTHEW

We've got to get the radio.

Another mortar round WHISTLES over their heads.

THOMAS

I dropped it. It's my job.

MATTHEW

Let's bet on it.

Matthew removes a coin from the pocket of his fatigues.

MATTHEW

Heads or tails.

THOMAS

Heads.

Matthew flips the coin in the air, grabs it and slaps it on top of his wrist. He removes his hand to reveal the result.

MATTHEW

Heads. I lose.

THOMAS

Let me go. I fucked up.

Matthew scoots out from behind the rock and darts towards the radio. Just as he reaches the radio, a mortar round hits the rock where Thomas sat, vaporizing him in an instant. Matthew shields his eyes from the blast.

END DREAM:

INT. LAS VEGAS, GOLDEN NUGGET CASINO/HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Matthew bolts up in bed, trembling and sweaty. He looks to his right and can see the glow of his cell phone next to the pistol. He grabs his phone - hits a button.

CELL PHONE VOICE

You have one unheard message. To hear this....

Matthew enters his password on the phone.

DAMIAN'S VOICE

(through phone speaker)

Hey - um, Matthew. I see you called.

(beat)

It's been a long time. Um, not sure what you wanted. I'll - I'll, um wait for you to call back.

Matthew hits the end button and places the phone on the night stand. He grabs the pistol, removes the clip and places them in the drawer. Leans back and closes his eyes.

INT. DAMIAN'S HOME/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Damian, clad in a T-shirt and sweat pants sits on a sofa and sips coffee as he works the newspaper crossword puzzle.

Amanda, wearing running clothes and a bit sweaty, enters through the front door.

DAMIAN

Well, there you are.

Amanda walks over and gives Damian a kiss on the top of the head and then heads off towards the kitchen.

DAMIAN
(calling out)
I was going to run with you.

AMANDA (O.C.)
I didn't want to wake you. You
needed the sleep.

Amanda re-enters with a bottle of water in her hands. She unscrews the cap as she takes a seat on the sofa by Damian.

AMANDA
What time did you finally get in?

DAMIAN
A little after ten.
(beat)
Look, I'm sorry about dinner.

Amanda turns sideways on the sofa and leans gently against Damian. Damian fondles her hair.

AMANDA
Don't worry about it.

Amanda takes a long sip of water.

AMANDA
You going to Andy's today?

DAMIAN
Yeah. I thought I would pick up
some burgers and we'd have lunch at
the park. Wanna come?

AMANDA
No. I got things to do. Besides,
you know Andy loves brother time.

DAMIAN
Speaking of brothers, I got a call
from Matthew last night.

Amanda sits upright - turns around.

AMANDA
He didn't want money again did he?

DAMIAN

No. Well, I guess I don't know. He really didn't leave a message. Just called and hung up.

Amanda gets up, walks over to the window and stares outside as she finishes her water.

DAMIAN

What's wrong?

AMANDA

I don't know. You already pay for Andy's rent and God knows what else. Now Matthew calls and I'm pretty sure that --

DAMIAN

I haven't seen him in two years. He was probably just checking in.

Amanda turns - gives Damian look of disbelief then returns her gaze back outside.

INT. ANDY'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Damian enters a small, one bedroom apartment - modest furnishings. He peers down the hall.

DAMIAN

(shouting)

Andy, you almost ready?

ANDY (O.S.)

Almost. Just a minute. Just got done with my shower.

ANDY CLARKE, (26) physically fit but mentally challenged stumbles into the room. He is a large man with the face of a child. He is naked other than an old tattered beach towel wrapped around his waist. His dark brown hair is soaking wet.

Andy gives Damian a hug - the water from Andy's chest and arms transfer to Damian's shirt.

Damian breaks the hug and tousles Andy's hair.

DAMIAN

Get dressed, buddy. We're going to eat at the park.

ANDY

(excited)

Okay - okay. I'll hurry.

Andy rushes back towards the bedroom, trips on the way.

INT. LAS VEGAS, GOLDEN NUGGET CASINO/HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Matthew holds a duffel bag as scans the room to make sure he has everything.

He walks to the room door and swings it open. A fist lands squarely on his chin knocking him to the floor. Steve Russo and RAY (40), extremely overweight, enter the room.

RUSSO

You seem like you're in a bit of a hurry, Matthew. I bet you didn't even remember to check out.

Russo hovers over Matthew - places his cowboy boot on the side of Matthew's head and starts pressing.

RUSSO

You got my ten grand you worthless little prick?

MATTHEW

I still got till tonight.

Russo presses on Matthew's head a little harder.

RUSSO

I've changed the terms. So, you don't have it?

MATTHEW

No.

Russo removes his boot from Matthew's head. He pulls up a chair and takes a seat. He lights a cigarette - tosses the burnt match on top of Matthew.

RUSSO

Get the fuck up.

Matthew gathers himself - stands up, a bit wobbly.

RUSSO

What am I going to do with you? Oh, shit - I'm being rude.
(points towards Ray)
This is Ray.

Matthew gives Ray a weary glance. Ray remains stoic.

RUSSO

Ray, I forget. What did I do to the last loser that tried to fuck me out of money?

RAY

Cracked their skull.

MATTHEW

I'll get the money.

RUSSO

No, you won't. But you're going to earn it.

(to Ray)

How many pick ups today?

RAY

Five in all. And then we got the warehouse tonight.

RUSSO

(to Matthew)

Well, Matty boy, it's your lucky day. Seems that I got some work for you. You're going to be Ray's wing man on his rounds.

MATTHEW

That'll square us?

RUSSO

(laughing)

Fuck no, you moron. You think I pay ten grand a day? It's a small down payment. But it might put you back in my good graces.

(to Ray)

You all set?

Ray nods. Russo gets up from the chair. Exhales smoke directly in Matthew's face.

RUSSO

You do exactly as Ray says. You understand?

Matthew nods.

EXT. CITY PARK - DAY

Damian and Andy eat burgers and fries on a weather worn picnic table in the middle of the park.

DAMIAN

You need to wipe your mouth, buddy.
You're dripping sauce.

Damian hands Andy a napkin. Andy wipes his face and then moves it from side to side for Damian's inspection.

ANDY

Did I get it?

Damian nods. As Andy struggles to suck out the last drops of his chocolate shake from a mangled straw Damian collects the trash from their lunch.

ANDY

Can we go to the store?

DAMIAN

Sure. What for?

ANDY

I met a girl - Jeannie - in the complex. She's just like me. I want to buy her a necklace.

DAMIAN

Who? Never mind. Why do you want to buy her a necklace?

ANDY

Because she has a neck and there's nothing on it I think.

Damian nods - can't beat that logic.

ANDY

So, have you heard from Matthew?

DAMIAN

No - no I haven't. I think he's still out in Nevada.

ANDY

On one of his special Army jobs?

DAMIAN

Yeah. It's probably that.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF LAS VEGAS, DESERT HIGHWAY - NIGHT

A black sedan with dark tinted windows travels down a desert highway. The sedan's headlights pierce the darkness.

INT. BLACK SEDAN (TRAVELLING) - NIGHT

Ray drives. Matthew, in the passenger seat, stares with dead eyes, out the passenger window at the desert as it rolls by.

RAY
What the fuck are you staring at?

MATTHEW
Nothing.
(beat)
It looks like Afghanistan.

RAY
Hey, I need you to be focused. You remember the plan?

MATTHEW
Yeah. What's not to remember?

RAY
Tell it back to me.

MATTHEW
I knock on the door. I tell them that we got the stuff in the car --

RAY
The package. Tell them we have the package in the car. Not the fucking stuff.

MATTHEW
Christ - the package. Then I tell them I got to see the money first. I go in, make sure they have it all. If they do, I walk them out, give you a thumbs up. You pop the trunk open. They drop the cash in the trunk and take the coke out. We drive away. Close enough, cowboy?

Ray nods. Matthew returns his gaze to the desert.

INT. DAMIAN'S TOWNHOME/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Amanda removes forks and knives from a kitchen drawer - grabs two plates from the cupboard.

Damian enters. He has Chinese take out food.

AMANDA
Oh good, just in time.

Damian walks over and gives Amanda a peck on the lips and places the food on the counter.

DAMIAN
Aren't I always?

AMANDA
(laughing)
No, almost never.

Damian gives Amanda a playful slap on the butt. Amanda opens the food containers and starts filling the plates.

AMANDA
So, how was the park?

DAMIAN
Fine. Andy had a good time.
(beat)
Other than that he misses Matthew.
I really don't know what to tell
him anymore.

AMANDA
Why don't you just tell him the
truth? Maybe that would make him
miss him less.

Damian grabs an egg roll from the plate - takes a bite.

DAMIAN
I know the truth. I still miss him.

Amanda gives Damian a quizzical look - picks up the plates and heads towards the living room.

DAMIAN
It's a brother thing.

EXT. SMALL WAREHOUSE BUILDING - NIGHT

Ray's sedan pulls up on a gravel driveway adjacent to a metal warehouse. Dust fills the air when it comes to a stop.

INT. RAY'S SEDAN - NIGHT

Ray winces - taps the center of his chest with his fist.

MATTHEW
You alright?

RAY
Yeah, I'm fine. Just pay attention
to your job.
(MORE)

RAY (CONT'D)
(strained breathing)
You ready?

Matthew nods.

RAY
Okay, it's right there.

Ray points at an entry door on the side of the warehouse.
Matthew takes a large breath. Exits the car.

EXT. SMALL WAREHOUSE BUILDING - NIGHT

As Matthew nears the entry door, a security light turns on illuminating the area.

Matthew knocks on the door. After a few moments, DRUG DEALER ONE, (late 20s), skinhead, opens the door. He and Matthew exchange words and then both enter the warehouse.

Ray exits the sedan - taps his chest again. Something's wrong but there is no time for worry.

Ray removes plastic gloves from his suit pocket and puts them on as he quietly walks to the side of the warehouse. He crouches down in the shadows.

Matthew, Drug Dealer One and DRUG DEALER TWO, (late 20s), Hispanic, carrying a metallic briefcase, exit the warehouse.

Matthew gives a thumbs up sign towards the sedan. The trunk pops open as Matthew and the two Drug Dealers approach.

BANG - BANG - BANG - shots fired from behind Matthew. He turns around. Drug Dealer One and Two lie on the gravel, blood oozing from their torsos.

MATTHEW
What the fuck!

Ray approaches from the side of the warehouse. Smoke pours from the gun in his hand. The car remote is in his other.

BANG - BANG - a shot into each of the drug dealers heads.

MATTHEW
Jesus Christ! What's going on?

RAY
How much did they say was in there?

MATTHEW
All of it. A hundred thousand.

RAY

Good. Put it in the trunk.

Matthew bends over and picks up the metallic suitcase. Ray breathes heavy - struggles a bit.

Matthew looks in the open trunk. Not a sign of cocaine anywhere. He closes the trunk.

MATTHEW

What happened to the deal?

RAY

There was no deal. These dumb fucks were skimming money from us.

(points at the bodies)

This was the repayment.

Ray, still wearing plastic gloves, bends over and searches the bodies. He finds a semiautomatic pistol in the waist band of Drug Dealer One. He grabs it, stands up and pulls back the slide to load a bullet from the cartridge.

Ray winces again - taps his chest with a closed fist. Starts to cough as he points the gun at Matthew.

RAY

Sorry, kid. You shouldn't have fucked Russo.

An odd smile comes across Matthew's face. He takes a few steps back and then extends his arms as far as they can go, exposing his chest. He looks to the sky - sees the stars.

MATTHEW

(shouting)

Finally, it's over!

Ray extends his arm. Just as he gets the gun in firing position, he wobbles and clutches his chest.

MATTHEW

Just fucking do it! Shoot me you fat fuck!

Ray's knees buckle and he hits the ground. As he keels over on his side, he keeps the gun pointed at Matthew.

Ray clutches his chest. BANG - he fires. The bullet whistles over Matthew's head.

Ray takes a gasp - passes out. His gun falls to the ground.

Matthew's chest heaves up and down as he gasps for air -
adrenalin rushes through him. He falls to his knees.

MATTHEW
(screaming at the sky)
Fuck!

Matthew stares at Ray's body as he regains his calm. After a moment, he crawls over to Ray's body and takes the car keys from Ray's hand.

INT. GOLDEN NUGGET CASINO/HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Matthew frantically stuffs clothes into a duffel bag. He scans the room to make sure he's not leaving anything.

INT. GOLDEN NUGGET CASINO/PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Matthew approaches Ray's sedan, It's parked next to a beat up, used Chevy Tahoe.

Matthew hits a key remote and the trunk of the sedan pops open revealing the metallic briefcase. He scans the parking lot to make sure no one is looking before grabbing the briefcase and closing the trunk.

He opens the back door to the adjacent Chevy Tahoe and tosses his duffel bag and the metallic briefcase inside.

Matthew stares at the sedan keys still in his hand.

MATTHEW
Fuck you.

Matthew tosses the keys into a nearby trash bin and gets in the driver side of the Tahoe. A puff of gray smoke spews from the tail pipe as he turns the ignition.

INT. MOTEL SIX/HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Matthew, sits in a chair, duffel bag at his side as he stares at the open metallic briefcase, stuffed with bundles of cash, that sits in the center of the bed.

He removes his cell phone from his pocket, scrolls through the contacts and hits call.

MATTHEW
(into cell phone)
Hey Casey, it's Matthew.
(listening)
Look, something happened.

CUT TO:

EXT. SMALL WAREHOUSE BUILDING - NIGHT

The security light casts a shadow on the corpses of two drug dealers and Ray's body that lay on the desert floor.

A sedan pulls up - dust spews in the night air. The driver door opens - it's Russo. He sizes up the scene.

A COUGH from Ray disturbs the silence. Russo walks over to Ray - bends down in a crouch.

RUSO
Ray, did you get yourself shot?

RAY
(weakly)
No. Heart attack.

Russo looks around.

RUSO
Where's Clarke?

RAY
(struggling)
Got - got away. With the car... the money.

RUSO
You have no idea where he went?

Ray COUGHS again, then shakes his head no. Russo walks over to the corpses of the drug dealers - kicks them with his boot to make sure they're gone.

RAY
I need a Doctor.

Russo removes his cell phone from his pocket - hits call.

RUSO
(into the phone)
I found Ray. He's in bad shape.
Clarke got away - with the money.
(listening)
What do you want me to do?
(listening)
Got it.

Russo puts the phone back in his pocket. He removes a glove from his pocket and puts it on his right hand. He walks over to the corpse of one of the drug dealers and removes a handgun from his waist band.

RAY
(struggling - coughing)
Steve, you've got to get me to the
hospital.

Steve hovers over Ray.

RUSSO
Sorry, Ray.

Russo aims the gun at Ray's head.

RUSSO
Well, not really.

Ray's eyes widen - BANG - a bullet through his forehead.

CUT TO:

INT. MOTEL SIX/HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Matthew - still in the chair.

MATTHEW
(into cell phone)
That's pretty much it. I'm ready.
I'm leaving first thing tomorrow.
(listening)
I know. But I got to get some sleep
first. I'll see you in a few days.

INT. PRIME TRUST BUILDING/CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

A large conference room with thirty or so fold up chairs
aligned in rows, occupied by Prime Trust STAFF.

Damian addresses them from a podium. Many of the staff rudely
whisper among themselves as Damian speaks. He doesn't exactly
command the room.

DAMIAN
So the new benefit plans should be
available to all employees by the
end of the month.

INT/EXT - CHEVY TAHOE ON INTERSTATE 15, (TRAVELLING) - DAY

Matthew's squints at the sun through a bug splattered
windshield. His cell phone RINGS. He removes it from his
shirt pocket. Looks at the Caller ID screen - it's "RUSSO."

Matthew rolls down the passenger window as he checks his rear
view mirror - confirms that no one is behind him.

Matthew flicks the cell phone out the passenger window. A smile crosses his face as he looks at the rear view mirror and watches the phone bounce on the asphalt shoulder.

INT. GOLDEN NUGGET CASINO/POKER BAR - DAY

Russo is at the bar - cell phone to his ear. A BARTENDER stands attention behind the bar. Russo takes the phone away from his ear - stares at it.

RUSO
(screaming at the phone)
You are so fucking dead!

Russo takes a deep breath, puts his cell phone in his shirt pocket and drops a hundred dollar bill on the bar.

RUSO
(to the Bartender)
You make sure to call me if he shows up.

The Bartender nods as he scoops up the bill.

INT. PRIME TRUST BUILDING/CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Damian is still at the podium addressing the staff.

DAMIAN
So, I think that almost does it.
Are there any....

Carlson enters the room from the back. The murmurs among the staff stop - an uncomfortable silence.

DAMIAN
Questions?

Carlson approaches the podium.

CARLSON
Do you mind?

DAMIAN
No - no, of course not.

Damian steps aside.

Carlson rubs his chin with his hands as he peers at the Damian's briefing material.

CARLSON
Let's see, what pearls of wisdom was Damian dropping on you today?

Carlson flips through the briefing material. The staff members sit quietly - uncomfortably.

CARLSON

Ah. I see there has been some changes in our dental plan. I really must attend these meetings more often. I wouldn't want something to happen to my dental insurance.

Carlson opens his mouth widely - CLICKS his perfectly straight white teeth together several times.

A nervous laughter - tension relief - peppers the room. Carlson's smile evaporates. He glowers at the staff.

CARLSON

I just got the reports from last quarter. We were down six percent. Does anyone know why?

The room is silent. Staff members avert their eyes so as to avoid direct contact with Carlson's.

CARLSON

Really? No one? Where are the financial wizards I pay so well?
(points to the back row)
You know, don't you?

TONY WILLIAMS (35), points at his own chest.

WILLIAMS

(silent mouthing)
Me?

CARLSON

Yes - you.

Carlson waves for Williams to stand. Williams, shakes like a dead leaf on a tree as he rises up from his chair.

CARLSON

Last quarter you recommended that Prime Trust increase its investment in oil.

WILLIAMS

Yes, I did but --

CARLSON

How did that turn out?

WILLIAMS

Um, well, Sir - as you know,
there's been a thirty percent drop
in oil prices.

CARLSON

Yes, as I well know. Stay standing,
Mr. Williams.

Carlson paces back and forth in the front of the room.

CARLSON

We are a hedge fund. We invest to
make money. When we lose money we
lose clients. You all understand
that simple equation - yes?

Carlson glares at the staff as they nod yes. There is dead
silence in the room other than the sound of Carlson jingling
his keys in his pocket.

CARLSON

Six - fucking - percent. Hmmm, what
could be the problem? Perhaps I
have failed as a manager - not
provided enough motivation, or
maybe ...

(beat)

Fear. Yes, fear. I think it drives
all of us. I don't know why I
didn't think of it until just now.
It's so obvious.

Carlson returns to the podium.

CARLSON

Do you agree, Mr. Williams?

WILLIAMS

Sir?

CARLSON

Please keep up. The question was
fear - is it motivating? Like the
fear of losing one's job.

WILLIAMS

(trembling)

Um - yes, I suppose.

CARLSON

I agree. You're fired.

WILLIAMS
But, Mr. Carlson. I couldn't have
known that --

CARLSON
Please, no begging. It's a horrible
way to go.

The room is dead silent. Williams clumsily makes his way
through the chairs and out the door. The door SHUTS.

CARLSON
(to the staff)
I hope you all found that
motivating.

EXT. ANDY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Matthew stands in front of the door - hesitating. He takes a
breath and then knocks.

A moment passes - there is no answer. Matthew turns to walk
away just as the door opens.

ANDY
Matthew?

Matthew turns towards the door. Andy rushes him and gives him
a crushing bear hug.

ANDY
I knew you would come back!

Matthew pats Andy on the back of his shoulders.

MATTHEW
Easy, Andy. You're going to crush
me.

INT. CARLSON'S OFFICE - DAY

Carlson is at his desk reading some briefing material in a
folder. There is a light KNOCK on the open door. It's Damian.

DAMIAN
You needed to see me?

Carlson doesn't look up. He just motions with his hand for
Damian to take a seat in the chair in front of his desk.
Damian complies - waits a moment.

CARLSON
You're sure the numbers on Eden are
correct?

Damian points at the folder in front of Carlson.

DAMIAN
I ran them twice and even had --

CARLSON
Oh Christ, are they correct or not?

DAMIAN
They are correct.

Carlson leans back in his chair.

CARLSON
I want you to do a buy out
analysis.

Damian raises his eyebrows.

CARLSON
Yes?

DAMIAN
It's just that they're at a fifty
two week low and they are running
out of cash. They haven't had a
successful trial in three years.

CARLSON
How about you let me worry about
the risk.

DAMIAN
Of course.

CARLSON
I'm still waiting on research from
other analysts. Timing is going to
be very sensitive.

DAMIAN
Yes, sir. Anything else?

CARLSON
Remember, not a word on this to
anyone. You understand?

DAMIAN
Of course.

INT. ANDY'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Andy watches cartoons on TV.

Matthew is at the dinette table writing a note. The metallic briefcase is on top of the table. Matthew stuffs the note in an envelope, opens the lid of the briefcase and tosses it in.

MATTHEW

Andy.

ANDY

Yeah.

MATTHEW

I'm leaving some important stuff in your bedroom closet. I need you to tell Damian next time you see him.

ANDY

Okay.

Matthew carries the metallic briefcase to the

BEDROOM

And opens the closet door. He slides the briefcase in the corner of the closet and covers it with a blanket.

A smile crosses Matthew's face as he scans the messy room. It's so Andy. There are several stuffed animals on the bed - wrestling posters on the walls.

Matthew spots a GI Joe action figure on top of the dresser. It stands at attention right next to a 8" by 10" photo of a younger Matthew dressed in his military formals.

Matthew picks up the picture and stares at it for a moment - a look into his past. He puts it down and enters the

LIVING ROOM

And sits on the sofa next to Andy, transfixed by the cartoons.

MATTHEW

Don't forget to tell Damian about the closet.

ANDY

Uh-huh.

MATTHEW

I got to go soon.

ANDY

Another special mission?

MATTHEW
Yeah, sort of.

INT. RESIDENTIAL COMPOUND/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jake sits in a leather recliner and sips a drink as he watches television.

INSERT TELEVISION SCREEN

A REPORTER stands with a microphone. In the background is the warehouse, a police cruiser and crime scene tape. Policemen mill about. Black tarp covers three bodies.

REPORTER
In an apparent drug deal gone wrong, three men were shot to death at a warehouse fifteen miles off the Strip. At this time, police have not released the identities of the dead men.

BACK TO SCENE

Russo enters through the front door. Jake mutes the television.

JAKE
Have you found him?

RUSSO
No, I'm pretty sure he's ditched his phone. But don't worry. He'll show up somewhere.

Jake swirls the brandy in his glass and takes a slow sip.

JAKE
For your sake, he better. No one steals from me. I would be hard pressed to forgive you if you let him slip away. Nothing personal. It's just business.

RUSSO
Yeah. I get it.

INT. TOWNHOME/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Damian enters through the front door - looks like a beaten man. He hangs his suit coat on the closet door knob.

DAMIAN
I'm home.

There is no answer. Damian walks into the

KITCHEN

Amanda feverishly cuts vegetables over the kitchen sink.

Damian notices three place settings on the dinette as he goes over to Amanda - gives her a kiss on the back of her neck.

DAMIAN

Do we have company?

AMANDA

(sarcastically)

Oh yes, just a wonderful surprise.
The prodigal brother has returned.

DAMIAN

What are you talking about?

AMANDA

Matthew is here - out on the patio.

Amanda angrily chops up the last of the celery.

DAMIAN

Matthew? My brother Matthew?

AMANDA

No, Saint Matthew. Yes, of course
your brother.

Amanda tosses the collection of her vegetables into a bowl.

DAMIAN

Do you know what he wants?

AMANDA

Well, so far, only dinner.
(beat)

But you know there's always more.

Amanda removes three glasses from the cabinet. Takes them to the dinette table. Damian heads towards the patio.

EXT. TOWNHOME/OUTDOOR PATIO - NIGHT

An eight-foot by ten-foot slab of concrete encased by a redwood fence.

Matthew, looks at the night sky over the back of the fence as he watches his cigarette smoke cascade away in the breeze.

Damian enters through a sliding glass door. He pauses for a moment as he stares at Matthew's back.

MATTHEW
Well, say something.

Matthew crushes the butt of his cigarette underneath the heel of his shoe.

DAMIAN
Sorry. I was just surprised is all.

Matthew turns around. Damian walks over and gives him a hug.

DAMIAN
You look --

MATTHEW
Like shit?

DAMIAN
I was going to say older.

Damian points to two lawn chairs in the corner of the patio. He and Matthew both take a seat.

DAMIAN
It's good to see you. I mean, it has to have been two years. The last time you --

MATTHEW
Don't worry, I don't want anything.

DAMIAN
I wasn't worried.

Matthew gives Damian a look of disbelief.

DAMIAN
Maybe a little.

Matthew laughs.

DAMIAN
How long are you going to be here?

Matthew takes out another cigarette - lights it.

MATTHEW
I'm just passing through.

DAMIAN
Are you still - um, you know...

MATTHEW

Gambling?

Damian nods.

MATTHEW

Let's just say I quit recently.
Running out of money has a way of
helping that along. That and
fucking the wrong people.

DAMIAN

I don't understand.

MATTHEW

Believe me, you don't want to.

DAMIAN

Is there anything I can do?

MATTHEW

There isn't. It ain't really
fixable this time. But I could use
a good night's sleep.

DAMIAN

Yeah, sure.

(beat)

You need to see Andy before you go.

MATTHEW

I saw him already - before I came
here. We're good. I promise.

Matthew removes a small piece of paper from his shirt pocket
and hands it to Damian.

MATTHEW

Look, I'm going to have to be
invisible for awhile. I'm going up
to Big Bear. If there's an
emergency, call that number. His
name is Casey. He'll know how to
get a hold of me.

DAMIAN

What happened to your phone?

MATTHEW

I don't have a phone.

DAMIAN

You called - the other night.

Matthew nods.

DAMIAN
What did you want?

Matthew turns his face away - takes a deep drag on his cigarette and exhales it into the night air.

MATTHEW
I really don't know.

Damian stares at Matthew - he's never seen him like this. A moment passes.

MATTHEW
Well, are you going to feed me or what?

Damian stands up.

DAMIAN
I believe that we are.

Damian heads towards the door. Matthew follows.

MATTHEW
Oh, and a beer wouldn't hurt either.

INT. DINER/BOOTH - NIGHT

Russo sits in a booth as he nurses a beer and watches AARON DAVIS (25), rail thin, nerdy looking, work his note book computer in the seat across from him.

Davis turns the screen around so it is facing Russo. The screen displays a red coat of arms with a blazing sun on top with the lettering: "*1st Bat, 32nd*" - underneath.

DAVIS
Did his tatoo look something like that?

RUSSO
Yeah, that's it. What is it?

DAVIS
It's the symbol for a military unit. The First Battalion, Thirty Second Field Artillery. How old do you think he is?

RUSSO
I don't know - maybe thirty.

Davis rapidly taps on the keyboard.

DAVIS
(staring at his screen)
Hmmm - that puts him in Iraq or
Afghanistan.
(beat)
Jesus Christ, this dude may have
been involved in some pretty nasty
shit over there.

RUSSO
Impossible. He's a lightweight.

DAVIS
If you say so.

Davis closes the laptop.

DAVIS
Okay, it's a start. Give me a
little time to research it. It's
still kind of like a needle in a
haystack and I got finals tomorrow.

Russo gulps back the remainder of his beer, stands up and
removes his wallet from his back pocket.

RUSSO
I need it by tomorrow night. If I
don't get it by then, you're cut
off. You understand?

Davis nods. Russo removes a twenty dollar bill from his
wallet and drops it on the table.

RUSSO
And don't steal the tip from the
waitress.

INT. TOWNHOME/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Damian, Amanda and Matthew sit at the dinette table - empty
plates in front of them. Amanda drinks the last of her wine.

MATTHEW
So Damian couldn't have been no
more than seventeen, just a scrawny
little shit.

Amanda stands up - clears the dirty dishes from the table.
Starts to rinse them in the sink.

DAMIAN
I was sixteen.

MATTHEW
Whatever. Anyway, these punks had him and Andy circled. I sneak up from behind and take the biggest guys legs out with a baseball bat. They all fucking scramble like I was Rambo or something.
(to Damian)
They never bothered you again did they?

DAMIAN
No, they kept their distance after that. I'm pretty sure they thought you were insane.

Matthew gulps back some beer.

MATTHEW
They were probably right.

Amanda finishes her rinsing.

AMANDA
Well, I'm going to bed. I didn't sleep well last night.

Damian starts to get up.

AMANDA
No, you stay here and chat with your brother. I'm sure you have a lot more to talk about.

Amanda leans over and kisses Damian on the side of his head.

AMANDA
(to Matthew - feigned politeness)
As always, it was good seeing you.

MATTHEW
I know better. But thanks for saying so anyway.

Matthew gives Amanda a wink. Amanda sneers back at him and heads up the stairs.

A moment passes. Matthew points the bottom of his beer bottle towards the stairs.

MATTHEW
You guys still doing good?

DAMIAN
Yeah, we are - for the most part. I think she thought we'd be in our own house by now - you know, there would be more money.

Matthew scans the room.

MATTHEW
Looks to me like you're doing fine.

DAMIAN
Not as fine as I promised. I was supposed to be further along by now. It's the - um, ...

MATTHEW
So you're still having the panic attacks.

Damian nods.

DAMIAN
I've tried getting off the meds. I want to be, well - stronger I guess.

MATTHEW
Yeah, don't we all.

DAMIAN
What about you?

MATTHEW
Meaning?

DAMIAN
Have you ever gotten treatment?

MATTHEW
Oh, you think I'm damaged from the war - PTSD or some bull shit. Look, I was fine when I got out.

DAMIAN
Were you fine when you got in?

Matthew gives Damian a - don't go there - look.

DAMIAN

You know, we've never really talked about it - the Canal. Mom and Dad.

MATTHEW

And I don't want to start now.

Matthew gets up from the table - walks into the living room.

INT. TOWNHOME/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Matthew drops to his knees then lays outstretched on the carpet - stares straight up at the ceiling. Damian follows him into the room.

MATTHEW

Man, I'm so God damn tired.

Matthew closes his eyes - yawns. He's losing the battle to stay awake. Damian stares at him with pity.

MATTHEW

Hey, is it okay if I crash on the sofa? Promise, I'll be out of here first thing in the morning.

DAMIAN

You know you can stay as long as you need.

MATTHEW

(yawning)

Yeah, I know. Thanks.

Matthew's eyes close - another yawn. Damian locks the dead bolt on the front door. He opens a closet door - removes a pillow and a blanket - tosses them on top of the sofa.

DAMIAN

There you go.

Damian starts up the stairs.

MATTHEW

Hey, Damian.

DAMIAN

Yeah.

MATTHEW

(eyes closed)

Mom would have been proud of you. Especially the way you've taken care of Andy.

Damian freezes in place.

DAMIAN
Get some sleep.

Damian quietly finishes his climb up the stairs.

INT/EXT. CHEVY TAHOE ON FREEWAY (TRAVELLING) - DAY

Matthew drives, sunglasses on and a cigarette butt clenched between his teeth. The radio plays COUNTRY MUSIC.

Matthew sings along - messes up the words. He spots a freeway sign ahead that reads: CA 330 NORTH - BIG BEAR LAKE.

INT. DAMIAN'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - THE NEXT DAY

Damian descends the stairs. Looks at the sofa. The blanket he left Matthew neatly folded with the pillow on top.

INT. RESIDENTIAL COMPOUND/DINING ROOM - DAY

Jake and Russo sit across from each other at a cherry wood dining room table. Jake sips coffee as he reviews computer screen print outs.

JAKE
You're boy is certain of this?

RUSSO
Yeah, pretty much. His brother, Damian lives in L.A. I got an address for him. He's married, no kids - works for some investment firm.

JAKE
(as he reads)
What about the youngest brother?

RUSSO
Couldn't get a location for him.

JAKE
(looking up)
There's nothing about the parents in here?

RUSSO
Davis says they're dead - years ago.

JAKE
And still no luck with Matthew?

RUSO

No.

JAKE

Okay, you know what to do.

RUSO

Yeah. I'll head out tomorrow. You need anything else from Davis?

Jake takes a sip of coffee - ponders the question.

JAKE

No. Just make sure that there are not any bread crumbs that lead here.

Russo nods.

INT. DAMIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Damian's on his cell phone.

DAMIAN

No, you deserve a girl's night out. I'll be fine. I got to work late anyway.

(listening)

Yeah, I'm good. Joel is stopping by with some dinner later. Don't worry - have fun.

(listening)

Love you too.

Damian ends the call. He interlocks his fingers and cracks his knuckles as he stares at his computer screen.

EXT. LAS VEGAS/APARTMENT - DAY

A studio apartment. It's a bit of a shit hole. Bits and pieces of electronic and computer equipment haphazardly strewn about the room.

Russo sits in a beat-up chair - watches as Davis, rubber tourniquet around his bicep, pushes a syringe attached to a needle in a vein on his arm.

DAVIS

Thanks, man. I really needed this. So, the research paid off?

RUSO

Yeah. You did a good job.

Davis' eyes flutter - something's wrong. He tries to speak but instead, thick foams of saliva come out of his mouth. His eyes spread wide open. He slumps back - dead.

Russo walks over to the kitchen counter and picks up Davis' laptop computer. As he starts out to door he looks at Davis' lifeless body.

RUSO

Too easy.

EXT. CABIN/BIG BEAR LAKE - DAY

The tires of Matthew's Chevy Tahoe make a CRUNCHING sound as the car brakes at the top of a steep gravel driveway leading to a modest cedar cabin.

Matthew exits the driver door. He scans the pine trees that surround the cabin - inhales deeply to take in their scent.

INT. CABIN - DAY

Cedar walls adorned with mountain memorabilia. The furniture is worn and rustic. One large room serves as the kitchen, dining and living room area.

Matthew enters and tosses his duffel bag in the middle of the beat up dining room table. He spots a phone on the kitchen counter. Walks over to the counter - dials.

MATTHEW

(into the phone)

Hey, Casey. It's me. I made it.

INT. DAMIAN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Damian is at his desk working the computer keyboard as he looks at a spreadsheet on his computer screen.

Joel enters - a pizza box in one hand, two cans of soda in the other. He places them on the desk - pulls up a chair.

Joel snaps open a soda, takes a slice of pizza from the box.

JOEL

Eat.

Damian takes a slice and a can of soda. Joel points at the computer as he takes a large bite.

JOEL

What's that?

Damian quickly closes the file on the computer screen.

JOEL
Geez, must be top secret.

DAMIAN
It's an acquisition cost out.

JOEL
In English.

DAMIAN
Prime Trust is going to make a rather large buy on a certain company's stock. Kind of like a hostile takeover.

JOEL
(with mouth full)
Wow, sounds violent. Go on.

Damian grabs a bite.

DAMIAN
I have to estimate the cost as the buy volume goes up. You know, the first lot of shares will probably cost us a ten percent premium. The second lot fifteen percent and the....

JOEL
Got it - the share cost goes up as the buy out proceeds. And you got to get an estimate together of the total spend.

DAMIAN
(surprised at Joel's acumen)
Um - yeah, I guess. But it's a little more complicated than that.

JOEL
So whoever owns those shares now is going to make a huge windfall.

Damian nods in agreement.

CUT TO:

EXT. BIG BEAR LAKE, MEETING HALL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Matthew leans up against his Chevy Tahoe as he smokes a cigarette. He stares at his shadow caused by the flood light affixed to the front of the Meeting Hall.

MAN'S VOICE (O.C.)

Hooah!

Matthew turns to see CASEY (late 30s), full sleeve tattoos on both arms wearing a camouflage baseball cap approaching - his arms extended.

They give each other a bro-hug and rugged slaps on the back before disengaging.

CASEY

When was the last time I saw your
sorry ass? Kunar Province - right?

MATTHEW

You're memory still sucks. It was
Korangal Valley.

CASEY

Ah yeah, that fucking nightmare.

Matthew tosses his cigarette onto the asphalt.

MATTHEW

Weren't they all?

Casey nods.

CASEY

Great to see you, Matthew. I wasn't
sure you were going to come.

Matthew tilts his head towards the meeting hall.

MATTHEW

So, how many in there?

CASEY

Well, it ain't exactly nuts to
butts - a couple of dozen.

Matthew kicks some gravel with his boot.

CASEY

Come on inside. You got more
friends than you think.

CUT TO:

INT. DAMIAN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Damian grabs another piece of pizza. Joel notices a University of Michigan brochure on the corner of Damian's desk. He points at it.

JOEL
What's that?

DAMIAN
Ah, nothing really. They're looking for business teachers. I was just curious.

JOEL
Cause you want to teach.

DAMIAN
Well, not right now.

JOEL
Liar. You know, Benjamin Franklin said doing the same thing, over and over again and somehow expecting different results was the very definition of insanity.

DAMIAN
That was Albert Einstein.

JOEL
Ah - yeah.
(beat)
He was gay you know.

DAMIAN
(laughing)
No he wasn't! He was married.

JOEL
Okay, how about this - Socrates said - we are what we repeatedly do.

DAMIAN
That was Aristotle, not Socrates.

JOEL
Now Aristotle was gay. I am fairly certain of that. You've seen the robes those guys wore.

DAMIAN
Who could argue with that logic.

JOEL
So, did Matthew leave?

DAMIAN

Yeah. Probably just in time. Amanda isn't fond of him being around.

Joel takes a gulp of coke.

JOEL

How so?

DAMIAN

Well, there's been a few times - maybe more than a few - that I've bailed him out of a gambling debt.

JOEL

Well, she's probably got a point.

DAMIAN

I know.

JOEL

Why is it? I mean, why haven't you just cut him off. You don't owe him anything.

DAMIAN

I owe him everything.

Joel raises an eyebrow.

DAMIAN

I don't like to talk about it.

JOEL

C'mon - you can't just drop that and not fill me in. Christ, I think I'm your only friend. Who else would you tell?

Damian drums his fingers on the desk - thinks about it. He picks up a piece of pizza.

DAMIAN

Maybe after we eat.

CUT TO:

INT. BIG BEAR LAKE, MEETING HALL - NIGHT

A group of twenty or so, mostly men sit in metal fold up chairs. Matthew sits in the last row - fidgeting. Casey stands at a rickety podium at the front of the room - scanning a piece of paper.

CASEY

Alright, we still got four hundred
in the treasury. If someone hits a
rough patch, let me know.

Casey checks his watch.

CASEY

Shit, meeting's almost over.

Casey looks up and catches Matthew's eye.

CASEY

Okay, time to meet a new member.

Matthew shakes his head. Casey gives him a wink.

CASEY

Just introduce yourself, soldier.
We all know you've done harder
things than that.

Matthew hesitates - then stands up and approaches the front.
He's nervous - an emotion he's not use to.

MATTHEW

I'm Matthew Clarke. I have a
gambling problem.

THE CROWD

(in unison)

Welcome, Matthew.

CUT TO:

INT. DAMIAN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

An empty pizza box in the middle on the desk. Damian and Joel
are nursing the last of their sodas. Joel listens intently.

DAMIAN

We just got out of the show. My Dad
was suppose to pick us up.

BEGIN FLASHBACK: MASON CREEK, MICHIGAN - 13 YEARS AGO

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - DUSK

A modest movie theater on a small town main street.

A YOUNG MATTHEW (17), YOUNG DAMIAN (15), YOUNG ANDY (11) and
their MOTHER (36) all heavily clad in winter clothing, wait
under the marquee. Snow is falling. It's the dead of winter.

The Mother looks up and down the street.

DAMIAN (V.O.)
As usual, he didn't show - drunk
somewhere. Anyway, there was still
about a half hour or so of light
left so we decided to walk home.

EXT. DOWNTOWN SIDEWALK - DUSK

The snow is a bit lighter now. The Mother holds Andy's hand as they walk down the sidewalk venturing. Damian walks alongside.

Matthew trails twenty feet behind, smoking a cigarette.

DAMIAN (V.O.)
My Mom didn't care for Matthew's
smoking. She hated the smell, so he
always stayed a bit clear. You know
- downwind. Anyway, we eventually
get to the canal.

EXT. STREET CORNER/CANAL OPENING - NIGHT

The lights from downtown are now like dots in the distance.

The Mother, Andy and Damian stop walking and look to their right towards the Mason Creek Canal. It parallels the sidewalk - thirty feet away.

DAMIAN (V.O.)
We get to the canal. It's frozen
over solid during winter - always.
It's a good short cut home,
otherwise you got to walk an extra
half mile to the canal bridge.

The Mother tugs on Andy's mitten covered hand and she, Andy and Damian detour from the sidewalk and trudge through the snow covered ground towards the banks of the canal.

YOUNG MATTHEW
(yelling)
It's too dark.

Without turning around, Damian waves for Matthew to follow.

YOUNG MATTHEW
Hey!

EXT. CANAL - NIGHT

Mother, Young Andy and Young Damian reach the edge of the canal and walk onto the ice - appears to be solid as a rock.

YOUNG MATTHEW
(calling out)
God damn it - stop! We should go to
the bridge.

No one heeds Matthew's warning. The Mother wraps her arms around Andy's shoulder as they pretend to skate.

About twenty feet later, the ominous sound of the ice CRACKING. The Mother firmly grabs Andy's hand, turns around and sees Matthew standing on the edge of the canal. Her face says it all - this was a mistake.

In an instant, the ice breaks and the Mother, Andy and Damian are swallowed up by the icy water.

EXT. CANAL/UNDERWATER - NIGHT

Dark, icy water. Damian frantically searches for the opening as he pounds his fist on the ice shelf above him. The Mother holds Andy's mitten covered hand as she does the same. The mitten slips off, separating them.

Despite their efforts, the canal currents take The Mother and Andy further away from the opening created by the crack.

A WHOOSH of water signals Matthew's dive into the water. He frantically waves his arms about trying to locate anyone in the dark waters.

EXT. CANAL/ABOVE WATER - NIGHT

Matthew, with right arm around Damian's torso, emerges and makes his way to the edge of the ice. With Matthew's help, a weakened Damian manages to crawl onto the ice shelf.

Damian rolls on his back. The frost from his heavy breath fills the air. Matthew goes back into the water.

DAMIAN (V.O.)
I felt paralyzed. I thought for
sure I was going to die.

Damian rolls over and faces the street off in the distant. He spots a couple walking their dog.

YOUNG DAMIAN
(screaming)
Help! - Help!

Matthew reemerges from the ice with an unconscious Andy. His face blue - the look of death. Damian - on his stomach - slides towards the opening and helps Matthew remove Andy from the water.

YOUNG MATTHEW
Give him some air!

Matthew returns to the water. Damian starts mouth to mouth resuscitation on Andy. After a moment, Andy spurts up water.

Matthew emerges once again from the water. He takes a large breath of air and goes back down. In the distance, the sounds of SIRENS permeate the air.

END FLASHBACK:

INT. DAMIAN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

JOEL
Oh My God. That's what caused
Andy's disability?

Damian nods.

JOEL
What about your Mom?

Damian shakes his head no. Damian looks away.

JOEL
You okay?

DAMIAN
My Dad, drunk out of his mind,
gets there right about the same
time as the paramedics. He takes
Matthew aside - they're talking but
I can't quite make it out. All of a
sudden he starts beating Matthew -
in the face - badly. By the time
the paramedics pulled him off,
Matthew was unconscious.

JOEL
Beat him? Why?

DAMIAN
Because Matthew chose to save me
and Andy rather than his wife.

JOEL
He told you that?

DAMIAN

Not exactly.

(beat)

He left it for Matthew in his
suicide note. A week later.

JOEL

Jesus Christ.

DAMIAN

So Andy and I go live with my
Grandpa. Matthew joined the army.

Damian takes the last sip of his soda.

DAMIAN

That's about the time my panic
attacks started. I didn't even know
what they were called till years
later.

Damian gets up and grabs his suit jacket from the hook on his
closet - puts it on.

DAMIAN

But I do know this. I was the one
that decided to take that short cut
that night.

(beat)

So yeah, I owe him.

There's a pause as Joel takes this in. Damian motions towards
the door with his head.

DAMIAN

C'mon. Let's get out of here.

EXT. BIG BEAR LAKE, MEETING HALL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Men mill about saying their good byes. Matthew and Casey are
off in one corner of the lot - smoking. Casey spots JACKSON
(50), screams grease monkey, walking towards a tow truck.

CASEY

(calling out)

Hey, Jackson.

Jackson stops - turns towards Casey.

JACKSON

(calls back)

Yo. What up, Casey?

Casey waves Jackson over.

CASEY

(As Jackson nears)

This is Matthew Clarke. He's pretty handy with a wrench. You still got that opening at the station?

Jackson extends his hand. Matthew takes it.

JACKSON

Come by tomorrow morning. I could use a hand.

INT. CARLSON'S OFFICE - DAY

Carlson sits at his desk. He's on the phone.

CARLSON

When in the fuck are you going to know?

CUT TO:

INT. EDEN COMPANY RESEARCH LAB/HALLWAY - DAY

John Saunders, dressed in a white lab coat, stands with a cell phone to his ear as he peers through a glass wall watching lab staff go about their work.

SAUNDERS

(into phone)

It's not like you can set a precise timetable on these things. We're mutating genes for Christ sakes.

INTERCUT BETWEEN CARLSON AND SAUNDERS

CARLSON

That's unfortunate. I work by precise time tables. It is the very nature of my business. I thought you understood that.

SAUNDERS

I just need a little more time.

CARLSON

That's all you have - a little. I'm leaving for New York tomorrow. I expect some real information by the time I get back.

Carlson slams the receiver down.

INT. TOWNHOME/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Amanda places garments in a suitcase that sits on the corner of the bed. On the other side of the bed, Damian studies the screen of a laptop propped up on his knees.

Amanda closes the suitcase - scans the room.

AMANDA
That should do it.

Damian looks up.

DAMIAN
That's a pretty big suitcase for a two day seminar.

AMANDA
Well, there's work out clothes - casual clothes, something for dinner with the girls --

DAMIAN
I was kidding.

Amanda cozies up on the bed next to Damian.

AMANDA
Ah, you're going to miss me aren't you?

Damian puts his arm around Amanda's shoulder.

DAMIAN
I will. But I'm glad you're getting your certificate.

AMANDA
It's only a couple of days. I'll call you when I can. You know, I won't be reachable a lot. Can't have our phone on in sessions.

DAMIAN
Yeah, sure.

AMANDA
Don't you have any women here while I'm gone.

DAMIAN
Damn - really?

Amanda playfully slaps Damian on the shoulder - jumps out of bed and heads towards the bathroom.

AMANDA (O.C.)
Watch it, mister.
(beat)

Amanda re-enters the bedroom - foamy toothbrush in mouth.

AMANDA
Oh, and you wanted me to remind you
that you got the meeting with
Andy's case worker tomorrow.

DAMIAN
Yep - got it.

AMANDA
How'd you swing the day off?

DAMIAN
Carlson's going to be in New York.
He said I could work from home.

INT. ANDY'S APARTMENT- DAY

Damian and Andy finish up eating burgers at the dinette table. The sound of RAIN can be heard.

DAMIAN
So, what did you think of your new
case worker?

ANDY
(mouth full)
Kind of fat.

DAMIAN
That's not very nice.

ANDY
I don't think she means to be.
Probably just can't help it.

DAMIAN
(laughing)
No, I meant it's not nice to call
people fat?

ANDY
Oh.

Andy takes a huge chug of soda. Damian stands up and grabs his jacket from the back of the chair.

DAMIAN
Okay, I need get going.

Damian walks over and gives Andy a hug.

ANDY
Want my umbrella?

DAMIAN
No, I'll use my coat.

ANDY
That's retarded.

Damian chuckles - ruffles Andy's hair.

DAMIAN
It is. But don't use that word.

EXT. TOWNHOME/DRIVEWAY - DAY

It's raining hard. Damian exits his car and dashes towards the front door.

INT. TOWNHOME/FRONT FOYER - DAY

Damian shakes the rain off his jacket through the open front door - closes the door and hangs the jacket in a closet. He flips on a light switch and enters the

LIVING ROOM

And jumps back - startled, as he spots Russo sitting in a recliner - a gun in his right hand. Damian raises his hands in the air.

DAMIAN
Oh my God. Don't shoot. Please, you
can take anything you want.

RUSSO
(dismissive)
Yeah, I already know that.

Russo points his gun at a chair.

RUSSO
Sit down.

Damian, legs trembling, obliges - never taking his gaze off Russo.

RUSSO
You're Damian Clarke?

DAMIAN

Yes.

RUSO

Your brother owes me a hundred thousand dollars. He didn't happen to leave it with you did he?

DAMIAN

A hundred thousand? No of course not. Look, --

Russo raises the gun and points it at Damian's head.

RUSO

Are you sure?

DAMIAN

My God, yes - I promise.

RUSO

(as he stands up)
That's a shame.

Russo walks over to an end table and picks up a framed portrait of Damian and Amanda on their wedding day?

RUSO

This your wife?

Damian nods.

RUSO

Where is she?

DAMIAN

Gone - for a few days. She went on a work retreat - to get her license. Look, please - we can work something out.

LEE, (30), African-American, athletic build creeps up behind Damian - there's a cloth in Lee's hand. Russo continues to admire Amanda in the portrait then points it towards Damian.

RUSO

How the fuck did a piss ant like you land someone like her?

DAMIAN

I, - I don't know.

Russo gives Lee a nod. At that moment, Lee jumps forward, throws his forearm around Damian's neck and presses an ether soaked cloth in his mouth. Damian struggles - his legs and arms flailing to no avail.

RUSO
 (as Damian starts to fade)
 I mean, she's extremely fuckable.
 And you seem kind of - well,
 pathetic.

Damian's eyes make their last flutter - he's under.

RUSO
 (to Lee)
 Pull the van in the garage.

INT/EXT. WHITE VAN ON INTERSTATE 15 (TRAVELLING) - DAY

Russo is at the wheel. The sun is dropping low in the sky. Lee is in the passenger seat.

There is no back seat to the van. Instead, it is a metal cage. Damian, unconscious, lays prone on the van floor. His wrists and hands are bound together by duct tape.

RUSO
 We're about an hour out. You gave
 him enough to keep him under?

LEE
 We're good for at least another
 two.

INT. JACKSON AUTO REPAIR AND GAS/SHOP AREA - NIGHT

Casey sits on an old folding chair - sips a beer. Matthew lays on a dolly, underneath the carriage of a car.

CASEY
 So, the job's working out?

MATTHEW
 (from underneath car)
 Yeah. It helps pass the time. Keeps
 the mind busy.

CASEY
 Have you called your brother?

MATTHEW
 (grunting)
 Fucking wrench. No, I haven't.

CASEY

I don't want to preach, but part of the program involves the family. Healing wounds - that kind of stuff.

Matthew slides out from underneath the car. He stands and Casey hands him a beer.

MATTHEW

All of my wounds are self inflicted.

CASEY

Wasn't talking about your wounds, friend.

(takes a gulp)

Was talking about theirs.

MATTHEW

Believe me, they're better off without me.

INT. RESIDENTIAL COMPOUND/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Damian is in the center of the room. His legs and left hand bound with duct tape to the frame of the chair. His left index finger grotesquely swollen and misshapen from Russo snapping it earlier.

There is panic on Damian's face. Jake leans in once again.

SUPER: PRESENT DAY

JAKE

Once again, where is Matthew?

Damian, jaw clenched, face reddened, weakly shakes his head as a tear streaks down his cheek.

JAKE

I had judged you as a quicker study, Damian.

(calling back)

Steven, another finger please.

DAMIAN

No please! Please, I beg you.

Damian is losing control - hyperventilating. Russo cracks his knuckles as he approaches - a sadistic smile on his face.

JAKE

Or perhaps two fingers.

DAMIAN
I have a plan. Please....

JAKE
A plan?

Russo places his hand firmly down on Damian's right arm and looks back towards Jake for the go ahead.

DAMIAN
To pay you back. I can take care of Matthew's debt.

JAKE
One moment, Steven.

Russo grimaces and then steps aside. Jake approaches Damian and once again takes a seat close to him.

JAKE
But what about justice? What have you conjured up in that regard?

Damian shakes his head - he's clearly confused.

JAKE
You don't understand, do you? Your brother stole from me. There are penalties to be paid. If Matthew stole money from a bank, do you think he's off the hook merely by returning the money after he is caught? I mean, what kind of society would we have if we allowed criminals to pay the piper with the very goods they stole from the piper in the first place. It would be anarchy.

Jake stands up.

JAKE
Sadly, many crimes have innocent bystanders. In this case it's you.
(to Russo)
Be prepared for another finger, Steven.
(to Damian)
Where is Matthew?

DAMIAN
(stammering)
I'll pay you triple. In return, you don't punish Matthew.

Peterson pauses for a moment - he's curious.

JAKE

I'm sorry. Do you have three hundred thousand dollars stowed away somewhere?

DAMIAN

I can get it for you. That is, I know a way that it can be made - easy.

JAKE

A way it can be made? Okay, because I like you, I'll humor you. Consider it a last request.

Jake sits back in the chair, taps Damian on the knee.

JAKE

Now tell me, young man. How will you triple my money?

Damian takes the deepest breath of his life.

DAMIAN

I work for a large hedge fund in Los Angeles - Prime Trust. A hedge fund is --

JAKE

I know what a hedge funds is, Damian. Stupidity is not a prerequisite for my line of work. Continue.

DAMIAN

We're going to acquire a large share of a certain company's stock. Only two people know about it.

JAKE

You being one?

Damian nods.

DAMIAN

They'll be a huge run up in price once we start purchasing the stock and the market gets wind of the takeover. You buy enough shares before that and you could easily triple their value.

JAKE
Or more, I suppose.

DAMIAN
Well, yes - but you have to be
careful because the SEC monitors
for --

JAKE
Insider trading. Again, Damian.
We're mobsters - not morons.

DAMIAN
Sa - sa - Sorry. I didn't mean it.

JAKE
And what's the name of this company
- the one your firm's acquiring?

DAMIAN
I'll tell you when I get back to
Los Angeles.

RUSSO
Yeah, that'll work. You want
another finger, Jake?

Damian squirms in his chair.

JAKE
(to Damian)
Relax. Now why won't you tell me?

DAMIAN
Because I think you might kill me
once you have the information.

JAKE
Hmmm - an excellent point. I might
indeed.

Jake leans back in his chair - contemplates.

JAKE
I must say you have piqued my
interest. Insider trading.
Fascinating.

Jake taps Damian's damaged finger. Damian flinches.

JAKE
You know the price for double
crossing me?

Damian nods.

Jake stands up. He removes Damian's wedding ring from his vest pocket - examines it.

JAKE
This obviously won't fit anymore.
At least for awhile.

Jake drops the ring in Damian's shirt pocket.

JAKE
Steven, do you still have Doctor
Westbridge on retainer?

RUSSO
Yeah, boss.

JAKE
Please have him take care of
Damian's hand before you take him
back to Los Angeles.
(to Damian)
Steven will take you home. You will
need to be blindfolded - at least
for awhile. I'm sure you
understand. He will also give you a
burner phone. Only use it to
contact us with the information. I
expect to hear from you soon.
(to Russo)
Make sure you keep track of our
young man.

Russo nods. Jake walks away, then stops.

JAKE
And, Damian.

DAMIAN
Yes?

JAKE
Don't play me for a fool on this. I
will not be so generous next time.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT

A white van pulls up in front of Damian's townhome. Damian exits from the passenger side - a cast now on his left hand.

RUSSO (O.C)
Here's the phone. Don't fuck it up.

A cell phone is tossed from inside the van to Damian who snatches it with his right hand. He closes the van's passenger door and it drives away.

INT. SANDRA'S CAFE RESTAURANT - DAY

A modest coffee shop with a counter and a just a few tables.

The setting sun spreads rays of light through the cafe illuminating the dust in the air.

Damian and Joel sit at a table in the corner. Joel is inspecting Damian's damaged hand.

JOEL
God, it looks horrible.

DAMIAN
Well, thanks for that. I wasn't sure.

JOEL
How did you do it?

DAMIAN
We had dinner last night - here. I was coming out of the rest room and a man slammed open the door catching my finger.

JOEL
What the fuck are you talking about? We didn't --

DAMIAN
That's the story I need to tell Amanda. I hate to ask, but you got to cover for me.

JOEL
Why? Oh my God, You weren't fooling around were you?

DAMIAN
If that works - okay. Now, will you cover for me?

Joel leans back against the back of the booth - stares at Damian with suspicious eyes. Damian checks his watch.

DAMIAN
She's on her way home now. Yes or no?

JOEL
Okay - okay. I'll cover for you.
But make the restaurant Pierre's -
the one on Sixth street.

Damian gives Joel a what the fuck look.

JOEL
I am a man of high taste. Who would
believe that I agreed to have
dinner at this dump?

Damian smiles for the first time in a long time.

INT. TOWNHOME/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Damian enters through the front door - closes it behind him.

DAMIAN
(calling out)
I'm home.

AMANDA (O.S.)
I'm upstairs. Could you please
bring a towel up? I need one for my
hair.

Damian opens the downstairs linen closet and removes a white
terry cloth bath towel and then starts up the --

STAIRS

He then enters the

BEDROOM

From Damian's vantage point he sees Amanda in the --

BATHROOM

Her torso wrapped in a large white bath towel. Water drops
slowly slide down her tanned calves as she leans forward,
stares at the mirror and applies lotion to her face.

Damian just stares at her.

AMANDA
(calling out)
Damian, I need the towel.

Damian enters the bathroom - tosses the towel on the counter.

DAMIAN
I got it.

AMANDA
(startled)
Jesus! You scared me. I thought
you were still downstairs.

Amanda takes the towel, wraps it over her wet hair. She notices the cast on Damian's hand.

Amanda reaches out - cradles Damian's cast in her hand.

AMANDA
My God! What happened?

DAMIAN
Stupid accident. I had dinner with
Joel last night. When I was coming
out of the rest room some goon
swung the door open - caught my
finger.

AMANDA
Does it hurt?

DAMIAN
Like you wouldn't believe. But I
got pain meds at the ER. It'll be
fine.

AMANDA
You've got to be more careful.

Amanda gives Damian a gentle hug and a kiss on the cheek and then enters the:

BEDROOM

Damian follows. Amanda plops on the bed and starts to apply lotion to her hands, wrists and elbows.

DAMIAN
So, how was the seminar?

AMANDA
It was great. Met some nice people.
I only got one more session to go
before I get my license.

Damian takes a seat on the corner of bed - starts to caress Amanda's calf. She pulls it forward.

AMANDA
But, God - I'm exhausted. I can't
wait to sleep.

INT. CARLSON'S OFFICE - DAY

Carlson looks over the skyline - his cell phone face up in his hand.

CARLSON
You're sure this time.

SAUNDERS
(through cell phone
speaker)
Positive. The trial results will be
announced at the end of the month.
They're just buttoning things up.

CARLSON
You've done well, John. Keep a low
profile.

Carlson ends the call.

CARLSON
(yelling)
Karen.

Karen enters.

KAREN
Yes, Mr. Carlson.

CARLSON
Get me Anderson, Travers and Clarke
in here.

KAREN
Yes, Sir.

Karen exits. Carlson goes to a wet bar in the corner of the office and pours himself a glass of brandy. He swirls it and then takes a sip. A satisfied smile crosses his face.

INT. CARLSON'S OFFICE - DAY - LATER

Carlson, ANDERSON, (40), TRAVERS, (50) both wearing expensive business suits, and Damian sit around a small table.

There are laptop computers and spreadsheets on the table.

ANDERSON
(staring at his laptop)
So, before the market closes
tonight, Travers will buy a hundred
thousand sell options. That'll
guarantee a low open.
(MORE)

ANDERSON (CONT'D)
(to Travers)
You all set?

TRAVERS
Good to go.

ANDERSON
I'll buy five percent of the shares
when the market first opens. I'll
get a read of price volatility
then. If everything looks good,
we'll buy in ten percent blocks
throughout the day.

Anderson points at the spreadsheets on the conference table.

ANDERSON
(to Damian)
This was top notch analysis.

Damian nods in appreciation.

CARLSON
(to Anderson)
No. I don't want any breakers on
this. Buy all that is available.

TRAVERS
Sir, are you sure? We really ought
to track the price changes - you
know, dip our toes first.

CARLSON
We don't make the returns we do by
dipping our fucking toes.

A TAP on the door jam. It's Karen.

CARLSON
(irritated)
What?

KAREN
Sorry. I just got a call from Tony
William's wife. He's in the
hospital. He - um, he tried to kill
himself.

CARLSON
Who the fuck is Tony Williams?

Travers, Anderson and Damian exchange glances - how could he
not know?

DAMIAN
(almost in a whisper)
You fired him. Last week.

CARLSON
Ah, yes. Don't know how I forgot.

KAREN
Did you want me to send anything?

CARLSON
Yeah, send him a pacifier.
(off of Karen's look)
Fine - flowers or whatever. You
decide.

Karen walks off.

CARLSON
(to the group)
Now, all of you - leave. You have a
lot of work to do.

INT. DAMIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Damian's at his desk - types on his keyboard. A screen containing stock information for EDEN CORPORATION is displayed on the screen.

DAMIAN
(mutters to himself)
Ask price of nineteen fifty.

Damian walks over and closes the door. He grabs his briefcase from the floor, places it on his desk - opens it. He removes the burner phone that Russo had given him.

His hand now trembling, Damian flips the top of the phone open and presses call.

DAMIAN
It's me. The company is Eden Bio-Medical. The stock symbol is EDN. Buy all your shares now.
(listening)
Yes - now! We're initiating the buyout first thing tomorrow. I'll call you tomorrow with the sale point.

Damian hangs up - puts the phone back in his pocket. He starts to breath heavily - quickly turns towards his waste basket and vomits violently.

INT. BIG BEAR LAKE/MEETING HALL - NIGHT

Two dozen folks in attendance. Matthew sits in the back row - listens as a VETERAN (60) speaks.

VETERAN

So, the family didn't want to see me. Basically, I'm dead to them.

(voice breaking)

I can't blame them. It's on me....the worst thing is that I know they're probably better off.

Matthew gets up and walks towards the door.

EXT. BIG BEAR LAKE/MEETING HALL PARKING LOT- NIGHT

Matthew lights a cigarette as he removes his wallet from his back pocket. He takes out the picture of him, Damian and Andy. He stares at it as he smokes.

INT. DAMIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Damian sits at his desk, frozen, as he stares at his computer terminal. CNBC's Stock Market Report is streaming. A CNBC ANCHOR (50) distinguished looking talks to a ROBERT MEADOWS (40), richly clothed - jet black hair.

INSERT COMPUTER SCREEN

CNBC ANCHOR

Prime Trust's move on Eden Bio Medical has the stock rocketing to new highs today. Currently trading at a shade over twenty six dollars a share, up more than thirty percent from the previous close.

A chart appears on the screen behind the anchor showing the rise in the stock price.

CNBC ANCHOR

With me is Robert Meadows, Health Sector analyst for Goldman Sachs. Robert, are you surprised.

MEADOWS

Shocked. The stock has been on a fifty two week slide. It's been a relatively small player in the field and hasn't issued a new drug in several years.

BACK TO SCENE

Damian mutes the computer sound and then removes the burner phone from his briefcase - hits the call button.

DAMIAN
(into the phone)
How many shares did you buy?
(listening)
That's more than we agreed on.
(listening)
Fine - fine! Just sell them all
now. You'll clear a half a million.
(listening)
No. We're done.

Damian ends the call. He trembles. Beads of sweat form on his face. He stuffs the burner phone in his pocket and hurries out the door.

INT. PRIME TRUST LOBBY - DAY

The main elevators slide open. Damian hustles out, not noticing Joel talking to a COWORKER as he makes his way towards the lobby doors.

JOEL
Damian?

Damian slips out the glass doors. Joel follows.

EXT. PRIME TRUST BUILDING - DAY

Damian walks rapidly down the busy downtown sidewalk, weaving in and out among the pedestrians. Joel is not far behind.

JOEL
Damian!

Damian reaches the opening of a small city park.

EXT. CITY PARK - DAY

Damian sits on a bench - his face in his hands. Joel approaches.

JOEL
Couldn't you hear me?

Damian looks up.

JOEL
Jesus, you're as white as a ghost.
What in the hell is going on?

Joel takes a seat alongside Damian.

DAMIAN
I just became a criminal.

INT. RESIDENTIAL COMPOUND/DEN - DAY

Jake sits behind a mahogany desk. He's on the speaker phone. Russo stands at attention in the corner of the den.

JAKE
How much did we clear?

MAN ON PHONE SPEAKER
Five hundred and twenty two
thousand.

JAKE
Thank you.

Jake presses the end call button.

JAKE
(to Russo)
Seems we've found ourselves a
little gold mine.

Russo nods in agreement.

EXT. CITY PARK - DAY

Damian and Joel - still on the bench. Damian removes the burner phone from his pocket.

DAMIAN
Well, at least it's over.

Damian tosses the burner phone in a trash bin.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Tony Williams sits propped up in a hospital bed. as he eats dinner from a tray. He hasn't shaved in several days. Damian, dressed in a business suit, sits in a chair a few feet away.

SUPER: ONE WEEK LATER

WILLIAMS
It was nice of you to come by. You
were the only one that --

DAMIAN
Really, it was no problem. It was
on the way home.

Tony examines the bandages on his wrists.

WILLIAMS
You know, in an odd way I think
Carlson did me a favor.

DAMIAN
A favor? Really?

WILLIAMS
(as he cuts his chicken)
I hated that job. I hated him. But
I sure loved the money. I would
have ever left on my own.

Damian nods - he gets it.

INT. TOWNHOME/KITCHEN - DAY

Damian and Amanda sit quietly as they eat breakfast. Their
forks scraping against their plates is the only sound.

AMANDA
You're awful quite. Something on
your mind?

DAMIAN
It's nothing.

AMANDA
Damian.

Damian puts down his fork - hesitates.

DAMIAN
I know you don't want to hear this.
But I hate my job. I hate
California. I want to go back to
Michigan. I want to teach.
(a crack in his voice)
I just can't do this anymore. It
was a mistake.

Amanda stares at Damian. There is no compassion in her eyes.

AMANDA
No.

Amanda goes to the sink and starts rinsing her plate, cup and
utensils. She scrubs much more furiously than needed.

AMANDA
(with back to Damian)
This isn't just about you. I have a
life here - a job.

DAMIAN
You're a fitness trainer. There are
jobs back in --

Amanda turns around.

AMANDA
I'm not going back to Michigan and
neither are you. You promised me a
better life than the one we left.

Amanda turns back around - faces the sink, cries. Damian
walks over and puts his hands around her waist.

DAMIAN
Ssssh, okay, okay.

Amanda knocks Damian's hands away.

AMANDA
It's not fair. You promised.

Amanda wipes a tear from her eye.

DAMIAN
I know.

Damian goes to the dinette table and grabs his jacket from
one of the chairs.

DAMIAN
I got to get to work.

Amanda continues her furious scrubbing of the dishes. Damian
heads to the door.

DAMIAN
I love you.

Damian pauses for a moment and then leaves. The door SLAMS
shut behind him. Amanda hurls a plate against the wall.

INT. DAMIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Damian's at his desk. The daily CNBC stock television show is
streaming on his computer monitor. The sound is on mute.

Joel TAPS on the door frame.

JOEL
Haven't seen you in awhile. You
hiding from me?

DAMIAN
Who wouldn't?

Joel laughs as he points at Damian's cast.

JOEL
So, how's the hand?

DAMIAN
Getting better. It's still hard to
use the computer.

JOEL
So how about lunch today?

Damian checks his watch.

DAMIAN
Yeah - why not. Half hour?

JOEL
You got it.

Joel leaves. Damian turns back to his computer monitor and
flinches - something's caught his attention. He taps the
keyboard to turn the sound on.

INSERT COMPUTER SCREEN

An ANCHOR for CNBC's Market Watch show talks. On the upper
corner of the screen a framed insert that reads: "EDEN BIO-
MEDICAL, UP 59%."

ANCHOR
Big news in bio medical. The Eden
Corporation announced that their
drug trials for the treatment of
hepatitis have been successful and
that they are fast tracking FDA
approval. The stock is up nearly
sixty percent as we near the middle
of the session. In other news --

BACK TO SCENE

Damian taps the mute button and leans back in his chair.

DAMIAN
How did he know?

Damian looks at his desk. Spots a manila folder on the corner of his desk. He grabs the folder and opens it. On the inside cover - in Damian's handwriting - it reads: FITZGERALD'S RESTAURANT - 9:00."

DAMIAN
What was his name?

Damian closes his eyes - thinks.

DAMIAN
C'mom, c'mon - what was it?.

Damian's eyes open. He moves towards his keyboard.

INSERT COMPUTER SCREEN

The main Google search page. We can hear the TAP of the keys as the search dialogue box fills with: "JOHN SAUNDERS, EDEN CORPORATION."

We hear another TAP when Damian hits the enter key.

On the left side of the screen several blue links to articles and information about John Saunders. On the right side of the screen a picture with the caption: "DOCTOR JOHN SAUNDERS, HEAD OF RESEARCH, EDEN BIO-MEDICAL."

BACK TO SCENE

Damian leans back his chair as he stares at the computer.

DAMIAN
Oh my God.

Damian picks up the receiver from his desk phone and hits the call button.

DAMIAN
Hey, let's go now.

INT. SANDRA'S CAFE - DAY

Damian and Joel sit in a corner booth. A WAITRESS stands next to the booth.

WAITRESS
It'll be right out.

The waitress picks up the menus and walks away.

JOEL
I don't know why you insist on coming here. I despise this place.

DAMIAN
I found something out.

JOEL
They lost their health permit?

DAMIAN
No. Not the restaurant - about
Carlson. You remember the buy on
Eden Corporation?

JOEL
The violent take over?

DAMIAN
Hostile.

JOEL
Whatever.

DAMIAN
Anyway, I never thought the company
looked all that good. But Carlson
was hell bent on buying.

JOEL
So?

DAMIAN
They're up sixty percent today. Out
of nowhere, they had a successful
drug trial for some kind of
hepatitis medicine.

JOEL
Well, I guess that's why he makes
the big bucks.

The waitress comes by and drops off two ice teas at the
table. Damian waits to talk until she leaves.

DAMIAN
Carlson had inside information. I'm
sure of it.

JOEL
How would you know that?

DAMIAN
Remember that night I had that
assignment - the one where I had to
meet Carlson at Fitzgeralds?

JOEL
Now see, there's a place I could
eat at.

DAMIAN
Joel!

JOEL
Sorry - go on.

DAMIAN
He was having dinner with Doctor
John Saunders who just happens to
be the head of research for Eden
Corporation.

JOEL
So he had dinner with a Doctor.

DAMIAN
No, there's got to be more to it
than that. It's too much of a
coincidence.
(beat)
If only I could get on his
computer.

A moment passes.

JOEL
I could.

INT. DAMIAN'S TOWNHOME/BEDROOM - NIGHT

The room is dark. Damian lies in bed staring at the ceiling -
the wheels are spinning. Amanda sleeps soundly next to him.

INT. ANDY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Damian enters and immediately freezes as he spots Russo
leaning against the kitchen counter.

Jake sits at a dinette table directly across from Andy who's
in deep in concentration as he studies two playing cards he
holds in his hand.

DAMIAN
What are you doing here?

ANDY
Damian!

Andy starts to get up. Jake gently grabs his forearm.

JAKE

No, please finish your hand, Andy.
You don't want to lose your
concentration.

ANDY

Mr. Jake is teaching me to play -
to uh, play - uh, what was the name
of the game?

JAKE

I know that you remember, Andy.

ANDY

Um - blackjack. That's it. Mr. Jake
is teaching me to play blackjack.

JAKE

Very good. Now study your cards,
just like I told you.

Andy pulls the cards close to his face.

JAKE

(to Damian)

It is reassuring that I can count
on your punctuality. That's an
admirable personality trait.

DAMIAN

You have no right to be here!

JAKE

Sssh, sshh - there will be time
for all of that. Let Andy finish
his hand.

(to Andy)

Okay, what have you decided?

Andy raises both eyebrows - sucks in his lower lip.

ANDY

I will - um, stay.

JAKE

Very well.

Jake turns over his cards exposing a ten and an eight.

JAKE

Let's see - I have eighteen. Can
you beat that?

Andy turns over his two Kings.

JAKE
You win. Very impressive.

ANDY
Can we play again?

JAKE
No, not now. Your brother and I
have some business to discuss and I
sense he is quite anxious to get to
it. Correct, Damian?

DAMIAN
Andy, why don't you go to Jeannie's
for a little while - watch some TV.

ANDY
Okay.

Andy stands to leave. Jake looks towards Russo.

RUSSO
She's fine - just another retard.

DAMIAN
(stunned)
How did you know about Jeannie?

JAKE
We know everything. Let that be a
caution to you.

Damian's eyes narrow. He motions to Andy.

DAMIAN
Go ahead, buddy. I'll come get you
in a bit.

ANDY
Alright.
(to Jake)
Thank you for teaching me to play
blackjack.

JAKE
My pleasure, Andy. You're a very
good student.

Andy lumbers away. Jake motions towards Damian.

JAKE
Please, come sit down.

DAMIAN
I'll stand.

JAKE
(with a menacing look)
But I prefer you to take a seat.

Damian keeps his eyes on Russo as he takes a seat.

JAKE
What did you do with the phone we
gave you? We've tried to make
contact.

DAMIAN
I threw it away. The deal was done.

JAKE
I have decided that we're going to
continue our investment strategies.
I must say, they worked out much
better than I could have ever
expected. And the fact of the
matter is, I can see no reason to
stop. There is little risk and much
to gain.

DAMIAN
This was supposed to be a one time
thing. That was the deal.

JAKE
Yes, that may be true. But deals
change.

DAMIAN
There's not going to be another
Eden.

JAKE
But you still know what your firm
plans to buy or sell - yes?

DAMIAN
Yes.

JAKE
All I expect is advanced
notification of those trades. I
will not hold you accountable for
the results. I am a fair man.

DAMIAN
What if I say no?

Jake leans back in his chair - scans the apartment.

JAKE

I think we both know where my leverage is.

Damian's eyes widen.

JAKE

Yes, I would hurt Andy. Seems cruel, I know. But you must agree it's an effective incentive. Yes?

Damian let's the question hang as he stares hard at Jake.

JAKE

You haven't even asked how I knew you would be at Andy's today - precisely at eleven. Aren't you curious?

Damian nods.

JAKE

You've been watched. Your wife has been watched. Andy too. That's how we knew about Jeannie for instance.

DAMIAN

You had no right to do that. I paid you back.

JAKE

Here is the new arrangement. Either you continue our business dealings or I will have Andy killed.

(beat)

Do you believe that I have the ability to do that?

DAMIAN

Yes.

JAKE

And that I would be willing?

DAMIAN

Please, I beg you. Let it go.

JAKE

Mercy is not an advantageous trait to have in my line of business.

Jake reaches in his inside suit jacket pocket and removes a burner cell phone and spins it on the table. Damian stares at it until it comes to a stop.

JAKE
Do you understand?

Damian nods then buries his head in his hands.

DAMIAN
Yes.

JAKE
Very good. I look forward to
hearing from you.

Jake stands up from the table - straightens his suit jacket. He looks at Damian, hunched over the table - desperate.

JAKE
There is one more thing. It's about
your wife.

Damian raises his head - his eyes narrow.

JAKE
There isn't really a delicate way
to put this, so I will just be
blunt. She's fucking your boss.

Damian's blinks his eyes rapidly, as if he were recovering from a punch.

JAKE
(To Russo)
What was his name again?

RUSSO
Carlson.

JAKE
Ah, yes. Warren Carlson.

DAMIAN
That's not possible.

JAKE
Steven tracked her everywhere she
went. She sees him quite often.

Jake puts his hand on Damian's shoulder.

JAKE

I thought you should know. Well,
that and I believe it might
eliminate any loyalty you might
have to your firm. I wouldn't want
guilt interfering with the quality
of your investment recommendations.

(to Russo)

I believe we should leave now.

Jake and Russo exit. Damian stands up, walks towards the window and as he watches them walk down the sidewalk, Damian opens his wallet and takes out a folded piece of paper - the contact information Matthew had left him earlier.

Damian punches the numbers on his cell phone - hits call.

DAMIAN

(into phone)

Is this Casey?

(listening)

This is Damian - Matthew's brother.
I need you to tell him we're coming
up.

(listening)

I also need the address.

(listening)

It's an emergency. I promise.

INT. ANDY'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - DAY

An open suit case sits in the middle of the bed. Damian's packing - taking garments from Andy's dresser and placing them in the suit case.

He enters Andy's bathroom and after a moment emerges with assorted toiletries - tosses them in the suit case.

DAMIAN

Shoes.

Damian slides open the closet door and reaches down to grab a pair of tennis shoes from the floor. As he does, a blanket slides off an object revealing a metallic briefcase.

DAMIAN

What the....?

Damian grabs the briefcase and tosses it on the bed. He opens the latches and then the lid - slowly. His eyes widen as he views the bundles of bills.

There's an envelope on top of the cash. On the outside it reads: "FOR DAMIAN."

Damian opens the envelope and removes a piece of paper. It Matthew's handwriting it reads: "This is to help out with Andy. I know it's been your burden alone. Hope this makes a dent - Matthew."

DAMIAN
You got to be kidding me.

Damian closes the briefcase and grabs it and the suitcase and hurries out the door.

INT. DAMIAN'S TOWNHOME/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Andy is on the sofa. He sips a soda as he watches TV.

INT. DAMIAN'S TOWNHOME/BEDROOM - DAY

Amanda watches as Damian stuffs some clothes into a duffel bag.

AMANDA
Well, this is kind of sudden.

DAMIAN
Um - yeah. I know. But Matthew just wanted to spend some time with Andy. Thought I'd take advantage of that.

AMANDA
Doesn't sound like Matthew.

DAMIAN
(as he enters bathroom)
Well, I guess not.

Damian emerges from the bathroom with toiletries - tosses them in the duffel bag, turns and looks directly at Amanda.

DAMIAN
I suppose people change when you least expect it - don't they?

Amanda doesn't respond.

DAMIAN
I gotta go.

EXT. DAMIAN'S TOWNHOME/DRIVEWAY - DAY

Andy is getting in the driver's seat. Damian stands outside looking up and down the street.

DAMIAN
Put your seat belt on, buddy.

Satisfied that he's not being watched, Damian enters the car.

INT/EXT. DAMIAN'S CAR - DAY - TRAVELLING

Andy stares out the passenger window as the car as it travels down the freeway.

Damian constantly checks his side and rear view mirrors to see if someone's following - the coast is clear. He hits the cell phone call button on the steering wheel.

DAMIAN
Joel, it's me.
(beat)
I need you to do it.

EXT. BIG BEAR LAKE, CABIN - DUSK

Damian's sedan comes up the gravel driveway leading to a small cedar cabin. The moment the car stops, Andy bursts out of the passenger side door and runs towards the cabin.

DAMIAN
(as he exits car)
Andy - wait!

ANDY
(shouting)
Matthew, we're here!

Just as Matthew opens the front door, Andy stumbles and falls spread eagle in the pine needles that surround the cabin.

Matthew hustles over to help Andy off the ground.

MATTHEW
You alright?

ANDY
I'm fine - really fine.

Andy gets back on his feet and gives Matthew a huge bear hug.

ANDY
I missed you so much. Thank you for
inviting us up.

Matthew watches as Damian opens the trunk and removes Andy's suitcase and his duffel bag. He notices Damian's cast.

MATTHEW

Andy, go on inside. There are sodas
in the fridge.

Andy hustles off. Matthew approaches Damian and grabs the
duffel bag and suitcase from him.

MATTHEW

What happened to your hand?

DAMIAN

Broken finger.

MATTHEW

No shit. I mean how?

Damian exhales hard.

DAMIAN

It's been a long day already. We'll
talk tonight.

Matthew eyes Damian suspiciously.

DAMIAN

I'm starved. You got something to
make for dinner in there?

Matthew nods. They both walk towards the cabin front door.

INT. BIG BEAR LAKE, CABIN - NIGHT

The room is dark other than the light from a television that
is on. Andy is asleep on the sofa.

EXT. BIG BEAR LAKE, CABIN PORCH - NIGHT

MATTHEW

God damn it, Damian. What the fuck
were you thinking!? This was my
mess to clean up!

DAMIAN

You're going to wake Andy.

Matthew walks off the porch and down the driveway twenty
paces - lights a cigarette. Damian follows.

DAMIAN

What did you want me to do?

MATTHEW

Told them where I was.

DAMIAN
They would have killed you.

MATTHEW
Christ, you can be so fucking naive
sometimes. They'll fucking kill me
anyway. You don't know these guys.

Damian raises his cast in the air.

DAMIAN
I don't? Really?

Matthew eyes the cast - gets the point. Nonetheless, Damian
is hot.

DAMIAN
Fuck you, Matthew! We're even.

MATTHEW
Even?

DAMIAN
(screams)
For the canal! For the shit that
Dad did to you! We're even!

Damian turns - heads back to the porch.

MATTHEW
Hold on.

Damian turns around.

MATTHEW
That's bull shit. I never put that
on you and it ain't my fault you've
been hanging on to it.

Damian approaches Matthew and pushes him in the chest hard.

MATTHEW
Easy.

DAMIAN
You didn't have to put it on me.
But you sure as hell could have
helped take it off. We've never
talked about it. You ran off to the
army. And the only time you ever
showed up was to.....

Matthew takes a deep drag.

MATTHEW

I know. I'm sorry. Truly, I am.

Damian stares at Matthew for a moment.

DAMIAN

You know you did exactly what Mom
would have wanted you to do.

Matthew tosses his cigarette on the ground - grinds it into
the ground with his shoe.

MATTHEW

Yeah, you're probably right. Fuck
Dad.

Matthew points to the patio.

MATTHEW

You want a beer?

Damian nods.

INT. JOEL'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A perfectly appointed apartment - clean as a whistle.

Joel sits on a sofa with a glass of wine in his hand. A
laptop computer is on the coffee table in front of him. Joel
places his wine glass down and rubs his palms together.

Joel taps several keys on the key board. A blue screen
appears with: "PRIME TRUST - SYSTEM ADMINISTRATOR."

JOEL

Okay, Mr. Carlson- let's see what
you've been up to.

EXT. BIG BEAR LAKE, CABIN PORCH - NIGHT

Damian and Matthew sit in folding chairs on the porch
drinking beer. Things have calmed down.

DAMIAN

I forgot to mention something.

MATTHEW

What's that?

DAMIAN

I got the briefcase. It's in the
trunk.

MATTHEW

I thought you would have put in
someplace safer by now.

DAMIAN

That would have been impossible
since I just found it today.

MATTHEW

Oh Christ - Andy never told you?

Damian shakes his head no. Matthew sighs.

MATTHEW

He was supposed to right after I
left. I should have known better.

DAMIAN

What in the world made you think it
was safe to leave a hundred
thousand dollars in Andy's closet?

MATTHEW

Technically it was only ninety six
thousand. I needed some to get
started up here.

DAMIAN

(incredulous)

But to leave it in his closet?

Matthew takes a long sip of beer.

MATTHEW

Maybe that was a mistake.

DAMIAN

You think?

INT. SKYLINE HOTEL AND RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A posh restaurant on the 20th floor of a downtown Los Angeles
hotel. Floor to ceiling glass walls provide a panoramic view
of the skyline.

AMANDA

Damian wants to go back to
Michigan. He's frustrated. He says
he's going to give it another try,
but I can tell, he's had it.

Carlson leans back - swirls the ice in his scotch.

CARLSON

And?

AMANDA

I need to know if there's something here to stay for?

CARLSON

Amanda, I was always very clear --

AMANDA

Why haven't you helped Damian more?

CARLSON

What, did you think you were sleeping his way to the top?

AMANDA

How could you say such a thing?

Amanda starts to get up. Carlson grabs her arm as he scans the restaurant concerned about making a scene.

CARLSON

You're right. I apologize. That was out of line. Please - stay.

Amanda acquiesces.

CARLSON

Look, I'm the one that promoted Damian. To a job that he would have never obtained on his own.

(beat)

That was for you.

AMANDA

I never asked you to.

CARLSON

So, I misunderstood you?

AMANDA

(teary)

I don't know anymore. I just thought he would be doing better by now.

CARLSON

Amanda, I'm not the one holding him down. I've done everything I can. You know him. He's risk averse. He has no self confidence. He stutters like a nervous child.

AMANDA
That's enough.

An awkward silence. Carlson spots the waiter coming over. He waves him off.

AMANDA
Well, what about us?

CARLSON
I have been honest from the start.

AMANDA
I know. I just thought...

Carlson gently places his hand on Amanda's forearm.

CARLSON
Let's not make a rash decision. We both need to think.

Carlson moves his hand from her forearm to underneath the table - rests it on top of Amanda's upper thigh.

CARLSON
I reserved a room. Should I cancel?

Amanda gulps back the remainder of her wine.

AMANDA
No.

INT. BIG BEAR LAKE, CABIN/KITCHEN - DAY

The morning sun cascades through the window and casts a light on Damian as he sits at the dining table. He drinks coffee as he stares at photos of Amanda on his cell phone.

Matthew enters from a bedroom - wears jeans, no shirt.

MATTHEW
(yawning)
Good morning.

DAMIAN
Morning.

MATTHEW
Where's Andy?

DAMIAN
Outside - trying to catch a squirrel.

Matthew walks to the kitchen counter and pours himself a cup of coffee.

MATTHEW

Looking at those ain't going to do
you any good. Don't torture
yourself.

Damian doesn't look up - still staring at the photos.
Matthew, cup in hand, pulls up a chair.

MATTHEW

So, what are you going to do?

DAMIAN

I don't know. I really don't. I
love her. I thought that she loved
me.

Matthew gulps back some coffee. He always knew better.

MATTHEW

Uh-huh.

DAMIAN

I really don't know if it's true.

MATTHEW

Yeah, maybe Jake was fucking with
you. How did they say they knew?

DAMIAN

They said that they were tracking
her.

MATTHEW

(concerned)

Tracking? Are you sure they said
tracking - not following?

DAMIAN

Yeah, tracking. What difference
does it make?

MATTHEW

Fuck.

Matthew bolts out the cabin and heads towards Damian's parked car. Damian follows.

DAMIAN

What?

Matthew gets down on his hands and knees - slides his hands on the undercarriage of Damian's car.

MATTHEW

Damn it.

Matthew removes a GPS tracking device that had been fixed to the undercarriage - shows it to Damian.

MATTHEW

They know that you're here.

INT. JOEL'S APARTMENT/KITCHEN - DAY

Joel sips a cappuccino as he looks at the screen of a his lap top computer resting on top of the kitchen counter.

After a few moments, he removes a USB memory stick from the side of the computer and slips it in his pocket.

EXT. BIG BEAR CABIN/DRIVEWAY - DAY

Damian, carrying a duffel bag and a suit case, and Andy approach Damian's car. Matthew follows closely behind.

Damian opens the trunk, tosses in the suitcase and the duffel bag and removes the metallic briefcase - hands it to Matthew.

DAMIAN

(to Andy)

Get in the car, buddy.

Andy turns and gives Matthew a bear hug.

MATTHEW

I'm sorry about cancelling the fishing. We'll do it real soon.

ANDY

Promise?

MATTHEW

Promise.

Andy enters the car. Damian enters the driver side and rolls the window down as Matthew walks over.

DAMIAN

You're sure about this?

MATTHEW

You got a better idea?

Damian shakes his head no.

MATTHEW
Just stall them as long as you can.
I'll talk to you soon.
(beat)
Be safe.

INT. CASEY'S HOUSE/BIG BEAR LAKE/KITCHEN - DAY

Matthew and Casey sit at a dinette table across from each other. Several handguns are on the table. Matthew picks up a Beretta semi-automatic pistol - examines it.

MATTHEW
This will work. How much?

CASEY
Consider it a loaner since you
promised you're returning it to me.
(sternly)
You are aren't you?

MATTHEW
Yeah, no doubt.
(beat)
Can't thank you enough, Casey. I
mean for everything.

CASEY
Just keep your fucking head on a
swivel, soldier.

INT. TOWNHOME/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Damian is on the sofa, stares at the television as he rotates the burner cell phone in his hand.

He picks up to remote and mutes the TV. He hits the call button on the burner phone - puts it to his ear.

DAMIAN
(into phone)
It's me. I'll have the stock picks
in the morning - no later than ten.
(listening)
Yeah, everything's fine.
(listening)
Oh, I just took Andy up to Big Bear
Lake for the weekend.

CUT TO:

INT. RESIDENTIAL COMPOUND - DAY

Jake sits in a sofa reading. Russo hangs up his cell phone.

RUSSO
Everything's fine. We'll get the
stocks tomorrow morning.

CUT TO:

INT. TOWNHOME/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Damian stuffs the burner phone in his pocket. He hears the front door open and close. Amanda enters carrying a small bag of groceries.

AMANDA
You're home already.

DAMIAN
Yeah. Andy wasn't feeling so well.
We had to cut it short.

AMANDA
That's a shame.

Amanda goes to the:

KITCHEN

Places the bag on the counter and then opens the refrigerator.

AMANDA
Ah geez - I forgot the chicken.
(beat)
You okay with left overs?

DAMIAN (O.C)
I'm not really hungry.

Amanda re-enters the living room and puts her hand on Damian's forehead.

AMANDA
You feeling okay?

Damian removes her hand.

DAMIAN
No. Not really.

INT/EXT. CHEVY TAHOE - INTERSTATE 15 (TRAVELLING) - NIGHT

Matthew's at the wheel. Country music plays on the radio. He pulls a cigarette to his lips and takes a long draw.

Matthew passes a road sign that reads: "LAS VEGAS 190 MILES."

He glances at the passenger seat - in the middle - the GPS tracking device he had removed from underneath Damian's car.

INT. DAMIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Damian's at his desk. Joel enters. As he closes the door behind him, Joel tosses an USB memory stick at Damian. Damian snatches it out of the air.

Joel hoists himself up a small filing cabinet.

JOEL

It's all there. His calendar had seven separate appointments to meet Saunders, including the one you went to at Fitzgeralds. There's also several e-mails to Saunders. He uses cooking terms.

DAMIAN

What?

JOEL

For example, there's an e-mail that says - *we still need a few ingredients*. Another one that says something like - *it's still in the oven*. And my favorite was one on the very day Carlson told you that he was acquiring the stock - *the cake is baked*. All in all, not all that hard for someone to connect the dots.

Damian rolls the USB stick in his hand.

DAMIAN

I don't know how to thank you.

JOEL

There's something else.

Joel hesitates and pulls another USB stick out of his pocket.

DAMIAN

And?

JOEL

There are several e-mails between Carlson and - um, and --

DAMIAN

Amanda.

JOEL

You knew?

Damian extends his hand towards Joel - palm up.

JOEL

You sure?

DAMIAN

Yes.

Joel slides off the cabinet, walks to Damian and places the USB stick in his hand.

JOEL

Your call. But if I were you, I wouldn't look at this. They're pretty graphic. There's no sense in torturing yourself with the details.

Joel pats Damian on the shoulder and starts towards the door.

JOEL

I'm here if you need me.

Joel exits. Damian looks at the clock on the wall. It reads: "9:55 AM". He picks up his cell phone - hits call.

DAMIAN

(into phone)

Joel came through. Your good to go.

(listening)

Be careful.

CUT TO:

INT. CHEAP LAS VEGAS MOTEL - DAY.

A run down piece of crap. Matthew sits in a chair in the corner of the room. He has his cell phone to his ear.

MATTHEW

You know me. I always am.

Matthew closes the phone. On the night stand next to him is the gun he got from Casey and the GPS device. He picks up the GPS device, turns it over and moves a switch from OFF to ON.

INT. RESIDENTIAL COMPOUND/DEN - DAY

Russo sits in a chair with his feet propped up on a desk next to a computer monitor as he reads a magazine.

A BEEP is heard. Russo looks at the computer monitor. It displays a GPS map. A RED DOT blinks.

RUSO
What the fuck?

Russo taps the keyboard and zooms in on the red dot. We can see the word "LAS VEGAS" on the screen.

RUSO
That's impossible.

Russo pulls out a cell phone - hits the call button.

CUT TO:

INT. DAMIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Damian sits at his desk. His office door is closed. The burner phone Russo gave him RINGS. Damian answers.

DAMIAN
Hello.

INTERCUT BETWEEN RUSSO AND DAMIAN

RUSO
(into phone)
Where the fuck are you?

No answer.

RUSO
What's going on? Answer me!

Damian ends the call without saying a word. He flips the phone over and removes the battery.

RUSO
Answer me, you faggot!
(beat)
God damn it!

Russo hurls his phone against the wall. He looks at the monitor and scribbles down the GPS address on a piece of paper. He grabs his car keys and hustles off.

EXT. DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES STREET - DAY

Damian's car pulls into the parking lot of the Federal Building.

EXT. CHEAP LAS VEGAS MOTEL/PARKING LOT - DAY.

Matthew's Chevy Tahoe is parked outside one of the motel rooms. Russo's sedan pulls into the lot.

INT. RUSSO'S SEDAN - DAY

Russo at the wheel. He recognizes the Chevy Tahoe.

RUSSO
You mother fucker.

Russo pulls and parks a few spaces away from the Tahoe. With his hand on his gun in his waist band, he scans the surroundings as he exits his car.

EXT. CHEAP LAS VEGAS MOTEL/PARKING LOT - DAY.

Russo peers through the window of the Tahoe. He can see the metallic briefcase resting in the passenger seat. He tries to open the door - no luck. He feels the barrel of a gun against his neck.

MATTHEW (O.C.)
Don't move.

Russo puts his hands in the air and turns around. Matthew removes Russo's gun from his waistband.

RUSSO
Well, Matthew Clarke as I live and breathe. What fucking worm hole did you crawl out of?

Matthew points towards Russo's sedan.

MATTHEW
I'm going to need a ride.

INT. SEC OFFICE BUILDING/OFFICE - DAY

A modest office - basic government issued. Damian sits in a chair as he watches Inspector CHARLES NELSON (55). Nelson has his back to Damian as he scrolls through pages on his computer screen that sits atop a credenza.

Nelson points to an image of a calendar screen on his computer.

NELSON
Is this the night you saw Saunders
with him at the restaurant?

DAMIAN
Yes.

NELSON
And you'll testify to that?

DAMIAN
Yes.

Nelson continues to scroll through contents on the screen.

NELSON
Got to be a dozen or so contacts
between them before the buy.
(beat)
We've been trying to nail this
prick forever.

Nelson removes a USB stick from the side of his computer then
swivels around in his chair - faces Damian.

NELSON
How did you get this?

DAMIAN
I can't tell you that. But all of
the data on that USB drive is on
the company's servers.

Nelson contemplates.

NELSON
Alright. I'll have a warrant by
tonight. We'll serve it tomorrow.

DAMIAN
I have a favor.

Damian takes a piece of paper off of Nelson's desk - jots
something down.

DAMIAN
That's my number. I need you to
call me before you come. I need to
see it happen.

NELSON
I can't do that.

DAMIAN
Then I can't testify.

Nelson leans back in his chair - tired of the mystery.

NELSON
I'll bite. Why?

INT. RESIDENTIAL COMPOUND/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jake sits on his sofa, nurses a drink as he reads a novel. There's an electronic BEEP coming from a security monitor.

INT/EXT. SEDAN PARKED AT SECURITY GATE - DAY

Russo peers out of the driver seat of the sedan - stares at a mounted security camera. Matthew is crouched in the back seat of the sedan pressing a gun against the back of Russo's neck.

MATTHEW
(quietly)
One bad move and I will blow your head off.

INT. RESIDENTIAL COMPOUND/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jake looks at a security monitor screen mounted on the wall - sees Russo at the gate. Jake presses a button on a console that sits on a table adjacent to him - returns to his novel.

EXT. SECURITY GATE - DAY

The iron gates slowly open. The sedan pulls in.

INT. RESIDENTIAL COMPOUND/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Russo enters followed by Matthew who holds a duffel bag with his left hand and has a gun to Russo's head with his other hand. Jake, with his back towards the door, reads his novel.

JAKE
Did you hear from Clarke?

MATTHEW
Yeah, he did.

Jake snaps his head around - flashes angry eyes at Russo.

JAKE
You brought him here?

RUSSO
Jake, I'm sorry. I didn't have a choice.

Jake stands up and approaches Russo - glares at him.

JAKE
You had a choice. You just didn't
exercise it.

Jake slaps Russo hard against the face. Matthew shoves Russo forward. He keeps his gun trained on Jake and Russo.

MATTHEW
(to Jake)
Where do you keep the money?

JAKE
Certainly not here.

Matthew extends his arm fully - cocks the gun.

MATTHEW
Where is the fucking money?

With Matthew's gun trained on him, Jake walks over to the safe and turns the dial backwards and forwards. A CLICK signals that it is open. Jake opens the safe door.

JAKE
Take what you want.

MATTHEW
I only want what you stole from
Damian. I owed you a hundred
thousand. He made you five times
that. I want the difference.

Jake hesitates. Russo eyes a gun resting on top of the nearby wet bar. He slowly inches towards it.

MATTHEW
(to Jake)
Now!

Russo lunges behind the wet bar, grabs the gun, whirls and fires at Matthew - BANG. At almost the same instance, Matthew snaps his head around and fires - BANG.

Russo is knocked back to the wall. A red hole the size of a quarter is on the center of his forehead. His dead eyes are frozen open. A swath of blood streaks the white wall as Russo slides to the floor.

Matthew breathes heavily from the adrenalin rush as he inspects a flesh wound on his left shoulder. He looks towards Russo's body and takes some deep breathes.

JAKE
Your first kill?

MATTHEW
No.
(beat)
My first civilian.

JAKE
Ah, I see. Will I be your second?

Matthew pulls a chair away from the dining table. He then points his gun at Jake.

MATTHEW
Sit.

Jake complies. Matthew grabs his duffel bag from the floor. Places it on top of the dining table, unzips it and removes a roll of duct tape. He tosses the roll to Jake.

JAKE
There is no need to kill me. In fact...
(points at Russo's body)
I have a job opening.

MATTHEW
Shut up. Do your left hand. Make it tight.

As Jake binds his left wrist to the chair, Matthew goes to the safe. He removes several bound stacks of high denomination bills and places them on the table.

JAKE
I can assure you, I'm no threat.

MATTHEW
You made a half a million dollars
after you fucked with my brother.

Matthew grabs several stacks of bills and tossed them in the safe.

MATTHEW
That's the hundred thousand I took
off Ray.

Matthew grabs one stack of bills - tosses it in the safe.

MATTHEW
That's the ten grand I owed to
Russo.

Matthew grabs another stack of bills - tosses it in the safe.

MATTHEW

That's the vig on the hundred
thousand I stole from you.

Matthew grabs several more stack of bills - tosses them in
the safe.

MATTHEW

That's for your inconvenience.

Matthew removes the IPAD from the safe and then closes the
safe door. He puts the rest of the bundles of cash in his
duffel bag.

MATTHEW

That's for my inconvenience.

JAKE

So, it would seem that we are even.

Matthew walks to the chair and places the gun barrel against
Jake's head. With his free hand he reaches down towards
Jake's taped left wrist and quickly pulls back Jake's ring
finger causing it to SNAP.

Jake's face contorts into a determined grimace. He stomps his
feet on the ground, but he refuses to utter a sound.

MATTHEW

Now - we're even.

Matthew returns to the dining room table and points at
Russo's corpse.

MATTHEW

I trust you have a way to dispose
of that?

Jake continues to clench his teeth - nods affirmative.

Matthew holds up the IPAD.

MATTHEW

I'm keeping this for leverage. You
really shouldn't document your
crimes. It's pretty sloppy.

JAKE

It's my hobby.

Matthew places the IPAD and his gun inside the duffel bag and
then zips it up - flings it over his shoulder.

MATTHEW

Oh, before I forget. The SEC is going to be shutting down Prime Trust. Should any harm come to me, Damian or Andy, another party will provide documentation related to the illegal stock trades you made to the SEC and the FBI.

(beat)

Do you understand?

JAKE

(with a painful growl)

Yes. Completely.

MATTHEW

Good. I'm going to need to borrow the sedan to get out of here. You'll be able to find it though Russo's GPS.

Matthew gives Jake a wink and then walks away.

INT/EXT. CHEVY TAHOE ON INTERSTATE 15 (TRAVELING)- NIGHT

It's a dark night. Matthew drives with one hand on the wheel and the other holding a cell phone to his ear.

MATTHEW

I'm on my way back.

INT. TOWNHOME/MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Damian lies in bed - wide awake staring at the ceiling. Amanda, next to him, sleeps soundly.

INT. SEC OFFICE BUILDING/OFFICE - DAY

Charles Nelson sits at his desk.

NELSON

(into the phone)

We'll be there at three o'clock this afternoon.

(beat)

I'm trusting you on this.

INT. DAMIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Damian's at his desk - on the phone.

DAMIAN

Thank you.

Damian ends the call. Punches a number into the desk phone.

DAMIAN
(into the phone)
Tony - it's Damian.
(listening)
Make sure you watch the news
tonight.

INT. PRIME TRUST BUILDING/ELEVATOR - DAY

Damian is in the elevator as it ascends. He checks his watch.
It reads: "2:45."

INT. CARLSON'S OFFICE - DAY

Carlson's at his desk reviewing a document. Damian enters.

CARLSON
(annoyed)
Did we have an appointment?

Damian doesn't respond - just stares at Carlson.

CARLSON
Well, I'm waiting. Speak your mind.

DAMIAN
You've been sleeping with my wife.

Carlson leans back in his chair. A smirk crosses his face.

CARLSON
Really? Is that what she told you?

DAMIAN
No. I discovered it on my own.

CARLSON
On your own? How is that? I mean,
you are relatively stupid. After
all, that's one of the reasons
she's fucking around. And I'm
probably not the only --

DAMIAN
From your calendar and your e-
mails.

Carlson swallows hard - stares at Damian with contempt.

CARLSON
My calendar and e-mails?

Damian checks his watch. It reads: "2:55."

CARLSON
You little bastard. You broke into
the system?

DAMIAN
Yes.
(sarcastically)
That was probably wrong of me.

Carlson picks up the phone. Hits a call button.

CARLSON
(into the phone)
Get me security.
(to Damian)
I'm not just going to fire you. I'm
going to have you arrested. I hope
for your sake, Amanda is worth it.

DAMIAN
You tell me. Was she worth it?

Carlson puts the phone receiver back down and stands up.

DAMIAN
Answer me, you prick.

Carlson walks towards Damian.

CARLSON
Listen you aggravating, little
shit. Yeah, I fucked your wife.
Hard and often. I would even bet,
that on some nights she came home
and fucked you - while my cum was
still in her. You know, like having
an after dinner mint.

Damian looks at his watch again - "2:58." Carlson gets in
Damian's face.

CARLSON
Did you really think that you could
hold on to someone like Amanda?
You're a weak, whimpering little
boy. How can you blame anyone but
yourself?
(pointing at the door)
Now get the fuck out of my office.
Get the fuck out of my building!

The doors to Carlson's office burst open. Charles Nelson and two other men, MCDONALD and DOMBROWSKI enter.

Nelson shows Carlson a badge.

NELSON
Charles Nelson, United States
Security and Exchange Commission.

Nelson points at the two other men.

NELSON
This is Agent McDonald and
Dombrowski. Several other field
agents are also currently in your
systems department.

Nelson points at Carlson's computer.

NELSON
(to McDonald)
Get that first.

CARLSON
What the hell do you think you're
doing?

NELSON
Mr. Carlson, I have a warrant to
confiscate your records. I also
have a warrant for your arrest. I'm
going to have Agent Dombrowski read
you your rights.

CARLSON
That's outrageous! I'll have your
job. Yours and the little shits
that are with you.

Damian leans over to Carlson's ear.

DAMIAN
(whispers)
Doctor Saunders.

Carlson's face freezes. The realization hits him.

INT. TOWNHOME/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Amanda stands frozen as she stares at the television.

ON THE TV

REPORTER

Warren Carlson, the manager of the Prime Trust hedge fund was arrested today, accused of insider trading in his firm's acquisition of Eden stock. SEC agents have seized company computers along with several personal items from Warren Carlson's executive office.

Amanda plops down on the sofa - dumbfounded.

INT. TONY WILLIAMS HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tony Williams and his WIFE watch TV as they sit on the sofa. The same news report that Amanda was watching is on the TV.

A satisfied smile crosses Tony's face.

WILLIAMS

Well I'll be damned.

INT. TOWNHOME/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Damian enters - Amanda mutes the TV.

AMANDA

Where on earth have you been? I've been calling you for hours.

Amanda points at the television. We see several agents standing outside the Prime Trust building earlier that day.

AMANDA

Do you even know what's going on?

DAMIAN

I do.

Damian walks up the -

STAIRS

And then into the -

BEDROOM.

He grabs a suitcase from the closet tosses it on the bed. Goes to his dresser and starts moving contents from the drawers to the suitcase. Amanda enters.

AMANDA

What in God's name is going on? Why
won't you talk to me?

Damian reaches in his pocket and removes a USB memory stick.
He tosses it to Amanda - she grabs it from the air.

DAMIAN

Those are all of your e-mails to
Carlson. Apparently I was always
plan B.

AMANDA

No.

DAMIAN

Unfortunately for you, plan A is
going to prison.

Damian starts towards the bathroom. Amanda grabs him.

AMANDA

I'm sorry. Damian, please. I was
going to end it.

Damian gently places his hands on either side of Amanda's
head and kisses her forehead. His eyes fill with tears.

DAMIAN

Maybe. But I can't forgive you for
starting it.

EXT. RURAL HIGHWAY IN MICHIGAN - DAY

A modest sedan glides down the highway. It passes a sign that
reads: WELCOME TO MASON CREEK MICHIGAN.

SUPER: ONE YEAR LATER

The sedan pulls into a driveway that leads to a cemetery.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Damian lays flower at a headstone. The markings on the
headstone read: "SARAH CLARKE - B 1957, D 1999." Damian's
eyes tear as he stares at the headstone.

He wipes the tear and then looks at the adjacent headstone.
It reads: "ALLEN CLARKE - B 1954, D 1999."

Damian removes a pill bottle from his pocket. He pops the
bottle cap and slowly pours all the pills out and watches as
they cascade off the top of his father's headstone.

INT. GAS STATION AND FOOD MART - DAY

A bell JINGLES as Damian enters. Damian grabs a soda from the small refrigerated container and walks towards the front counter. It is manned by Matthew.

DAMIAN
Thought I would grab a coke.

MATTHEW
They ain't free you know.

Andy barrels in from a side door - crushes Damian with a hug.

DAMIAN
Hey, Andy.

ANDY
You staying?

DAMIAN
No, on my way to work. It's my first day - remember?

ANDY
Matthew and I are working too. He's kind of a tough boss though.

DAMIAN
Yeah, but a good one.

Damian gives Matthew a wink - exits.

INT. COLLEGE CLASS ROOM - DAY

A modest sized room crowded with students. Damian, with his back to the class, write his name on a dry board.

DAMIAN
I'm Damian Clarke. I'll be your instructor.
(beat)
Welcome to business ethics 101.

FADE TO BLACK