

BROKEN MEN

SOME SECRETS CAN KILL

First 30 Pgs.

OFFICIAL SELECTION
Los Angeles
International
Screenplay Awards
2022

Best Feature Script
New York
International Film
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Best Noir Script
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York
2022

BROKEN MEN

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FADE IN:

INT./EXT. FRANK'S CAR - SOMEWHERE IN BROOKLYN - DAY

A black '78 Caprice with a police light on the dashboard parked on a street lined with modest-looking houses.

DETECTIVE FRANK NEWMAN, 40s, sits behind the wheel, a lit cigarette between his lips, with the weathered face of a seasoned cop in total control of his world and a cold stare that could kick your ass.

Frank keeps his eyes on a dilapidated one-story house on the corner. TWO BLACK BOYS play with a baseball in front of the house.

INT. RICK'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dark, dusty room, sparsely furnished. An old TV on the corner with the volume off shows President Carter giving a speech.

RICK SANTANA, 50s but looking gaunt and twenty years older, sits on a couch by the window with a phone to his ear, an oxygen tank by his side. Rick's eyes are on the black Caprice outside his house.

ALAN (V.O.)

Just to be clear, Rick, this deal is not going to remain on the table for long. Twenty-four hours max.

RICK

Uh-huh.

INT. ALAN'S OFFICE - SAME

A bright room with floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking Manhattan's Financial District. ALAN GLASSER, 50s, monied, sits behind a large desk with a phone to his ear. He has the confident demeanor of a man used to getting what he wants.

ALAN

I could talk to the DA, try to buy another six hours. That'll give you time to talk it over with Louise, and we can get back to them by...

(glances at watch)

...tomorrow evening with an answer. How does that sound?

GLORIA, early 30s, stands by the window, her back to Alan. Gloria has smart, witty eyes, and the sort of beauty that turns heads.

She holds a little glass vial between her fingers, takes a pinch of coke with her long and perfectly manicured nail, sniffs it, closes her eyes and smiles. Alan doesn't notice.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

ALAN

Rick? How does that sound?

Rick grabs a bottle of Scotch resting on the window sill, calmly fills a glass next to it with an inch of the golden brown liquid. He makes sure to get the last drops in and gulps it down.

ALAN (CONT'D)

Rick? Are you there? Hello!

RICK

I'm here, counselor. Don't get your panties all in a bunch. Listen...

(eyes out the window)

...I gotta hot date waiting for me. He gets angsty if I make him wait too long, if you know what I mean.

Alan frowns, no idea what he means.

ALAN

We really need to give them an answer by tomorrow.

RICK

I don't see why not. Gotta go, counselor.

Rick drops the handset on the receiver.

INT. ALAN'S OFFICE - SAME

Alan hangs up the phone, sighs exasperated.

ALAN

This guy. He doesn't give a damn anymore what happens to him.

Gloria leans against his desk.

GLORIA

Would you? The guy's dying, isn't he? If you're not allowed to not give a shit when you're facing death in the face, when can you?

ALAN

I don't know. I think he's protecting his partner.

GLORIA

Loyalty in the face of death. Not the worst thing either.

Alan scoffs. Gloria slides her butt along his desk until she's facing him. Alan notices a smudge of coke under her nostril. He wipes it off with his index finger, sucks on it.

ALAN

Isn't it a bit early for that?

GLORIA

Never is.

Gloria holds Alan's face, kisses his lips. He grips her ass.

INT. RICK'S LIVING ROOM - SAME

Rick peeks out the window, watches Frank get out of his car.

RICK

About fucking time.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Frank walks toward Rick's house. One of the kids throws the baseball and flies in Frank's direction. Frank notices at the last moment and catches it. The kids giggle. Frank's face turns deadly serious, but the kids smile, not falling for it. Frank chuckles and winks at them, throws the ball back. The kids continue playing.

Frank climbs the stoop of the house and knocks on the door.

INT. RICK'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Rick sits slumped on the couch, his eyes half closed as Frank walks in.

RICK
 (flinches theatrically)
 Oh, Jesus, Frank! You scared the
 shit out of me! Don't you know I'm
 fragile here? God!

FRANK
 Door was open.

RICK
 So? You can still knock.

FRANK
 I did. Why's the door open?

RICK
 It's for that damn nurse. I don't
 give her a key. I don't trust her.

Frank looks around the room, not impressed.

RICK (CONT'D)
 You should've called. I could've
 made some coffee. As long as it
 takes me less than two minutes I
 don't pass out.

Frank grabs a framed picture from a coffee table. It shows a
 BOY and a GIRL, teenagers, smiling on a beach. Frank puts the
 frame back on the table, peeks out the window.

RICK (CONT'D)
 Tell me you're not on the hunt for
 shit-holes under the BQE. This
 gotta be the worst neighborhood to
 raise a family, the dealer in drag
 across the street notwithstanding.

Frank switches the TV off. He gives Rick a piercing look.

RICK (CONT'D)
 Don't give me the hairy eyeball
 like I just fucked your mother.
 I've been rotting away in this shit-
 hole for two months and you haven't
 been here once. Seven years
 together on the beat and you act
 like I already gave my big Adiós
 and you've moved on.

FRANK
 I'm here now.

RICK
So you finally decided to honor me
with your presence because?

FRANK
I wanted to hear it from you.

Rick nods.

RICK
I gotta think about my family,
Frank.

FRANK
So you already took the deal to
screw me over.

RICK
You knew the risks. So don't act
like some teenage boy who just
fucked his girlfriend in the ass
and discovered his dick ain't that
clean no more.

FRANK
Go to hell, Rick.

RICK
Yeah, well, just a matter of time,
buddy. Just a matter of time.

On cue, Rick has a nasty fit of cough, pants for air,
reaching for the oxygen tank.

RICK (CONT'D)
Water!

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Frank holds a glass under the faucet and turns it open. Brown
water sputters out. He waits for it to clear, fills up the
glass.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Frank walks in holding the glass. He suddenly stops. The
couch is empty. Frank turns. He drops the glass and it
shatters on the floor. In one quick movement, Frank pulls out
his gun and aims it at RICK standing by the window, casually
holding a gun in one hand.

FRANK

Rick, put it down!

RICK

You know, this facing-your-maker-any-day-now thing, it has its perks. For one, no one tells me what to do anymore. So fuck you.

FRANK

Rick...

RICK

Did you know if I do this Louise and the kids still get seventy-two percent of my pension? I actually looked into it.

FRANK

Rick, please, just don't.

RICK

Diane's due day can't be far away, right? Unless you got no problem with your new baby girl remembering you as plexiglass dad, then this is it, brother.

Rick gives Frank a faint, sad smile. Frank slowly lowers his gun, his eyes tearing up.

FRANK

Rick, let's just talk.

RICK

I'm tired, Frank. No more talk.

Rick puts the gun inside his mouth and pulls the trigger. The back of his head blows off as he drops to the floor. Frank shuts his eyes close as tears start to roll down his face.

EXT. STREET - SAME

The two kids, startled by the gunshot, run away as fast as they can.

INT. FRANK'S CAR - STREET - NIGHT

Frank stares out the window with tearful eyes, gulps from a small bottle of Jack Daniels.

INT. FRANK'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

The door opens, Frank walks in. DIANE rushes to the door, puts her arms around Frank. Diane, early 30s, black, with quick and agile movements, full of life, a warm smile, and bright, intelligent eyes. She is also very pregnant.

DIANE

Oh, Frank, I'm so sorry.

Frank holds her tight, closes his eyes, savoring the moment.

DIANE (CONT'D)

God, how horrible. Who found him?

FRANK

The nurse, I think.

DIANE

God. At least it was her and not Louise. Or the kids.

Frank nods. Diane winces, her hand on her pregnant belly. He gives her a worried look. She smiles.

DIANE (CONT'D)

Tanya's been kicking all day.

Frank sighs with relief. He caresses her belly.

DIANE (CONT'D)

Are you sure you're okay, baby? I know how much Rick meant to you.

Frank nods, unconvincingly. He grabs her head by the neck and gently kisses her lips.

FRANK

God, I love you so much.

Diane smiles tenderly and Frank holds her face between his hands and kisses her again passionately.

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

Boxes of VHS players and TVs stacked against the wall. Frank and ELIJAH walk through the warehouse. Elijah, 20s, black, with a nasty scar the length of his left cheek, has a perennial smile, as if life couldn't get any better.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - ROOFTOP - SAME

VINCENT LAMONT looks through the viewfinder of a camera attached to a zoom lens on a tripod. Vincent, 30s, is black, fit and clad in a slick color-coordinated attire. A man comfortable in his own skin and extremely sure of himself.

The door behind him swings open. Elijah and Frank step out.

ELIJAH

Yo, V! You get off watching the neighbors fuck?

VINCENT

Depends on the chick, Elijah.

Vincent turns to Frank, points at the camera. Frank doesn't move. Vincent insists. Frank walks over, takes a quick peek.

INSERT VIEWFINDER:

A large nest with two hawks perched up under a window sill.

BACK TO SCENE

FRANK

You're into nature now?

VINCENT

Why not? Mo'fuckers are efficient predators, deserve to be admired.

Vincent shoots Elijah a look. Elijah nods and walks away.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

I thought you was grieving, detective. Your partner being dead and all. Didn't expect to see you up and about so soon.

Frank glares at Vincent.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

So it was true. Your man Santana, in the end, he was just a rat.

FRANK

Santana was looking after the people he cared for. Not something you'd understand.

VINCENT

And you understood, huh? But up to a point, no? I mean, if you thought he was so fuckin' noble why then convince him to bite the bullet?

Frank shoots Vincent a murderous look.

FRANK

I'm out, Vincent. I'm done. I don't work for you. You don't contact me. If I see any of your dogs again I'll shoot first, fuck the questions later.

VINCENT

Having a kid's clouding your judgment. I've seen it before. A man sees himself holdin' a baby, he wants a clean pair of hands. The thing is, in this here business, some shit ain't never rubbing off.

FRANK

We meet again it's gonna end ugly.

Vincent scoffs, unimpressed.

VINCENT

Rarely do we say how or when it ends, detective. And the end's always gonna be ugly. Just ask Santana.

Vincent turns back to his hawks as Frank walks away looking crossed.

EXT. RIVERFRONT - DAY

An empty pier overlooking the Manhattan skyline.

SUPER: "FIVE MONTHS LATER"

Frank and DETECTIVE BANE walk toward GUILLERMO, 20s, Latino, extremely thin with sunken eyes, jittery. A junkie.

Bane, 50s, an unassuming face with a frozen smirk, as if about to crack a smile that never comes. He keeps his hands in his pockets, calm, like he's just there for the ride.

GUILLERMO

(points at Bane)

Who the fuck's that, homie?

Frank moves quickly, punches Guillermo across his face. Guillermo falls down. Bane looks on, amused.

FRANK

You recycling intel now, Guillermo?

GUILLERMO

What? I ain't recyclin' shit!

FRANK

You said Aguilar was using that same building six months ago!

Guillermo struggles to his feet.

GUILLERMO

Listen, man, Aguilar knows you checked out that place. That's why his cholos are usin' it again. He think he fooled you before, man.

Frank turns to Bane. Bane shrugs. Could be.

FRANK

If you're fucking us, we're done. And I'll make sure Aguilar knows how you've been spending your time.

GUILLERMO

What? C'mon, man you can't do that!

FRANK

Try me.

Frank walks away, fuming. Bane smiles at Guillermo.

GUILLERMO

And who the fuck are you, homie?

BANE

Me? You've heard of the good-cop bad-cop routine?

Bane kicks Guillermo in the groin. Guillermo goes down.

BANE (CONT'D)

We're short of good cops.

EXT. OLD INDUSTRIAL BUILDING - DAY

Frank and Bane run crouched alongside the building with their guns out. Frank gives a signal to Bane. Bane nods and rushes to the closest window and peeks inside. He rushes back.

BANE

Lotta cake and lotta cooks. If it ain't Aguilar's bakery someone's been stealing his recipes.

FRANK

Okay. Let's call it in.

EXT. OLD INDUSTRIAL BUILDING - LATER

Several police cars parked at both ends of the street. A dozen UNIFORMED POLICEMEN, guns out and divided into two groups, approach the main entrance from opposite directions.

Frank and Bane lead one of the groups. Frank gives a signal to the leader of the opposite group. The leader in turn nods to a ROOKIE COP holding a metal ram. The rookie approaches the door, slams the door open with the ram. All men rush in.

BANE

Police!

FRANK

Nobody fucking move!

EXT. VINCENT'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - SAME

Vincent sits on a chair at the edge of a pool. He bends over a small glass table and snorts on a line. His doorbell rings.

EXT. VINCENT'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

SID, black, early 20s, slim and girl-like beautiful, stands by the door as it opens.

VINCENT

The fuck are you?

SID

I'm Sid. Jimmy sent me.

Sid reaches under his shirt, pulls out a thick package, hands it to Vincent. Vincent weighs it, his eyes on Sid.

VINCENT

It's hot out here. Wanna beer?

SID

Yeah, a'ight.

Vincent moves aside, Sid walks in. Uneasily, Vincent makes sure no one is watching. Satisfied, he closes the door.

INT. CADILLAC - STREET - SAME

A golden brown Cadillac speeds down the street. Loud music plays on. Elijah drives, smiling, not a worry in the world.

EXT. VINCENT'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Vincent plunges into his chair. He grabs a can of beer from a cooler and tosses one to Sid. Sid snaps it open, takes a sip, glances at the lines of cocaine on the table.

VINCENT

Have some snow. It's primo shit.

SID

Nah, I'm good.

Sid looks around, eyes the pool.

VINCENT

You swim?

Sid scoffs, shakes his head, as if swimming was for losers.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

What? You don't know how?

SID

Fuck, yeah, I know how. I was a lifeguard at Coney Island last summer.

VINCENT

That's cool. Sit in the sun all day, check out Rican pussy bounce their tits around, get your whistle blown once in a while. Not a bad summer life, huh?

Sid nods with a self-satisfied smirk.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Sure you don't wanna cool off?

SID

Nah. I gotta get goin'.

Vincent shoots him a provocative smile.

VINCENT

Chill, youngblood. There's plenty of time.

EXT. VINCENT'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

The Cadillac pulls up at the curb. Elijah climbs out, walks up the stoop, knocks on the door. He peeks through a window.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Elijah trudges along the open driveway, stops next to a tall wooden fence surrounding the backyard.

ELIJAH

Yo, V. You there?

Elijah stands on his toes, looks over the fence.

ELIJAH'S POV: Vincent hastily pulls up his pants. Sid naked with his arms against the wall, his legs spread apart.

Elijah hides behind the fence, as if he's seen a ghost. He darts away, shocked.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Elijah rushes down the street. The door to the house bursts open. Vincent rushes out, hurries after him, catches up.

VINCENT

Yo, Elijah, wait! It ain't what you think, bro. We had a swim. We were just drying off. That's all. C'mon, man. Where you goin'?

ELIJAH

Man, I didn't say nothin'. Gotta get back, is all. Just brought your wheels. Check ya later, a'ight?

Vincent watches Elijah rush away down the street.

INT. VINCENT'S HOUSE - LATER

Vincent bolts in, slams the door behind him. He takes in a deep breath. He looks out the window.

EXT. VINCENT'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Sid, his clothes on, leans over the glass table snorting a line of cocaine. Vincent rushes out of the house and kicks Sid on the side. Sid falls down, glares at Vincent.

SID
Man, what I do?

VINCENT
Get the fuck out of my house!

SID
What the fuck did I do?

VINCENT
I said get out, you fuckin' cunt!

Sid gets up, looks at Vincent, crossed.

SID
Better a cunt than an asshole.

Vincent punches Sid in the face. Sid falls inside the pool with a big splash.

VINCENT
You better be gone when I come out!

Vincent dashes back inside his house. Sid flaps his arms around. He sinks beneath the water's surface, comes out for an instant, gasps for air. He tries to scream.

INT. VINCENT'S HOUSE - SAME

Vincent walks in, slams the door behind him. He slides down against the wall, squats on the floor.

VINCENT
Fuck! Fuck, fuck!

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Vincent sits on the bed, bends over the side table, snorts on two lines of cocaine. He winces, rubs his nose. It got a kick. He leans back, closes his eyes. He seems desperate. He looks out the window.

VINCENT'S POV: The pool is empty, no sign of Sid.

Vincent sighs, somewhat relieved.

INT. SWIMMING POOL - UNDERWATER - SAME

Sid's body lies at the bottom of the pool, his eyes wide open, his lifeless face frozen in terror.

INT. JAZZ CLUB - BAR - NIGHT

Slow night. Few patrons scattered on the tables, smoking, drinking. A BLACK PIANIST plays a jazz tune.

Frank sits by the counter, smokes a cigarette. PETE, 60s, the heavy-set, comforting bartender, brings him a glass of beer.

Frank looks at a framed photograph hanging on the wall of Frank, Rick, and Pete, wearing police uniforms, smiling. Pete notices.

PETE

Hard to believe it's been almost
six months since Rick...

Frank sips his beer, determined to avoid the subject. Pete gives out a sad sigh.

PETE (CONT'D)

Diane's having a show tomorrow
night. First one in three months.

Frank stubs his cigarette in an ashtray.

PETE (CONT'D)

Listen, I don't know what it is to
lose a child. So I can't even
imagine what you and Diane are
going through. But I do know about
loss. And if Diane is ready to put
this behind her...

FRANK

(scoffs)

This?

PETE

Yes, if she wants to come here and
have a show, we should support her.

FRANK

Yeah, I get it, Pete. I'll be here.

LAURA, 20s, Latino and pretty with ample breasts, sidles up, a purse on her shoulder.

LAURA

Me voy, Pete. Nos vemos mañana.

PETE

Me voy, me voy. You shouldn't even
be here this late.

Laura winks at Frank, shoots him the kind of smile that makes men weak at their knees, then exits.

PETE (CONT'D)

Jesus, Frank. Really?

Frank shrugs. Pete shakes his head, disappointed.

PETE (CONT'D)

You are stepping all over what's most important to you...

FRANK

Oh, yeah, and what's that?

PETE

Your marriage.

FRANK (CONT'D)

My marriage. Right

PETE (CONT'D)

Yes. And you act like you don't even care.

Frank drinks down his beer, stares at the empty glass.

FRANK

You know, you're starting to sound like my old man and it's giving me the creeps.

PETE

You never even met your old man.

FRANK

I know. That's what's so creepy.

Frank and Pete chuckle.

INT. VINCENT'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Smoke-filled room. A TV with a Yankees vs Tigers game on. LEON sits on a couch next to TRICK, both black, in their 20s, strong-built, arms covered in tattoos. Leon smokes a joint. A Yankees player makes a run.

LEON

Fuck, yeah, baby!

TRICK

We're gonna whip some Detroit ass tonight, dawg.

JIMMY, 30s, black and heavy-set, a playful smile constantly on his face, sits next to them, shakes his head. Vincent watches from a one-seater, takes a puff from a joint.

VINCENT

Hey, Jimmy, 'bout Sid, how long's he been doing work at the bottom?

JIMMY

Sid? Two, three months. Why?

VINCENT

Take him off the errands. Get him to do some real shit, learn the ropes. Tell him I say so.

JIMMY

A'ight, V. I'll tell him. If I ever see the little shit again.

Vincent looks at Jimmy, startled.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Mo'fucker was supposed to get me some fried chicken. Never showed.

Vincent ponders on that information with a worried look.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

It's happened before, though. Probably god sidetracked fuckin' some chick. Dawg's a pussy magnet.

Jimmy chuckles. Vincent nods, not convinced. His doorbell rings.

EXT. VINCENT'S HOUSE - SAME

Elijah stands by the door, waiting. The door opens. Vincent steps out.

ELIJAH

Yo, V.

Vincent gives Elijah a hard look, blocks the door.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)

Look V, earlier today, I shouldn't 've left like that, man. But it was late, and I'm behind with some wheels at the shop, is all.

Vincent nods, not convinced at all.

VINCENT

What you think you saw, Elijah, it didn't happen.

ELIJAH

No, I know that, V. Shit, man.

VINCENT

We go way back, Elijah. You know me. Sid and I, we just took a swim, like I told you.

ELIJAH

I know, man. It was hot as shit today. You were takin' a swim. I ain't thinkin' noth'n of it.

Vincent stares at him. Elijah smiles nervously.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)

So we cool?

VINCENT

Yeah. We cool.

Vincent and Elijah clasp hands, bump shoulders, and Vincent pulls Elijah in to hang with the guys.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

The men sit around the TV. The Tigers hit a home run. Jimmy jumps off his seat.

JIMMY

Yeah, baby! Tigers are takin' some New York pussy for a ride!

Jimmy makes a little dance, gives the finger to Trick and Leon. Vincent laughs. Elijah pretends he does too.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Jimmy walks in, a grin on his face. He grabs a slice of pizza from an open box, takes a big bite. He glances out the window as he munches. Something catches his attention.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Vincent turns to Elijah.

VINCENT

So how much you got on the game?

ELIJAH

Nah, I ain't in on it. I owe enough
as is.

Vincent seems surprised.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)

It's cool. I got it covered.

VINCENT

You better, dawg. Dmitri ain't one
bookie to fuck around with. You
know Crazy Snook down in Canarsie?
Dmitri sliced his nose in two
'cause he owed him two grand.

Jimmy comes back, a half slice of pizza in his hand.

JIMMY

Yo V, somethin's in your pool.

EXT. VINCENT'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - LATER

Vincent comes rushing out of the house followed closely by
his men. He looks at Sid's body at the bottom of the pool,
stunned. All eyes are on Vincent. Vincent snaps out of it,
turns to his men.

VINCENT

The fuck y'all starin' at? He came
in today, brought me my shit, we
had a beer or two.

Vincent glances at Elijah. He notices but pretends not to.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

How the fuck did he drown? You'd
think he'd know how to swim if he
was a fucking lifeguard, no?

JIMMY

Who was?

VINCENT

Sid was, nigga'! He was showin' off
how he worked at the beach last
summer. Now he comes and takes a
dive in my pool? Fuck!

JIMMY

Wasn't Sid in juvie last summer?

LEON

Man, that mo'fucker was always jive-talkin'. He said he paid a hundred for them shoes. Those ugly fuckers are bunk, fifty tops.

JIMMY

They ain't worth shit now.

TRICK

You gotta get him out, V.

VINCENT

Are you trippin' nigga'? You thought I was considering not getting him out? You get him out!

Trick frowns, annoyed, takes his shoes off, jumps into the pool.

EXT. VINCENT'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - LATER

Trick and Leon put Sid inside the trunk of a Mustang, then drive off. Vincent and Elijah watch the Mustang disappear.

VINCENT

It's late, Elijah. Best go home.

Vincent walks inside his house. Elijah remains frozen, a worried look on his face.

INT. FRANK'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Frank steps in, slowly closes the door trying not to make a sound. He walks down the corridor.

INT. DINING ROOM - SAME

The light is on. Diane, wearing a nightgown, sits in front of an empty dining table, holds a steaming mug in one hand. Frank walks by. He stops, turns to look at Diane.

FRANK

I'm beat. I'm going to bed.

Diane nods. Frank disappears up the stairs. Diane sips her drink looking miserable.

INT. POLICE STATION - COMMON OFFICE - DAY

Frank sits behind a desk, fills out paperwork. Bane walks in carrying a paper bag.

BANE

I brought bagels, best in town. Not really, they're from the corner dinner, so they're probably a day old. But hey, it's free breakfast.

DETECTIVES GRAFF and MORGAN, both black, in their 50s and overweight, sit behind their desks, looking at Bane.

GRAFF

Breakfast sounds nice.

MORGAN

Are they toasted?

BANE

What? No, they're not... do I look like your fucking mother, Morgan? Get your own damn breakfast.

Graff and Morgan look at each other and shrug. Bane puts the bag on Frank's desk. Frank keeps filling out the paperwork, ignores Bane.

A COP IN UNIFORM comes over.

COP

Detective Newman? The press conference is starting in five.

Frank nods. The cop walks away.

BANE

What? Press conference? Why is this the first I hear about it?

Frank stands up, grabs his jacket from his chair.

FRANK

Get a damn alarm clock, Bane. If you'd been here when you were supposed to, you would've heard about it sooner.

Frank stomps away down the hall. Bane bites on a bagel and rushes behind him. Graff and Morgan snicker.

INT. VINCENT'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Coked up and desperate, Vincent picks up the phone and dials a number on the rotary, lets it ring. The call is answered at the other end.

VINCENT

Jimmy, it's me. We need to talk.
It's about Elijah.

INT. JAZZ CLUB - NIGHT

The place is half-full. Frank sits at the bar, smoking, mid chat with Laura. Leon and Trick walk in. They spot Frank at the bar, make a beeline.

LAURA

I haven't heard from you in a while. Wanna get together later tonight?

Leon and Trick walk over and stand behind Laura. Laura turns.

TRICK

Vince wants you.

FRANK

The lady and I were talking.

LAURA

(to Frank)
I'll see you later.

Leon winks at Laura as she walks away. Frank takes a drag, puts his cigarette down and goes for his beer, but Trick holds his hand.

TRICK

You have a hearing problem or someth'n, bitch? I said, Vince wants you.

Frank GRABS TRICK'S HEAD WITH HIS OTHER HAND AND SLAMS HIS FACE HARD ON THE COUNTER. Trick screams in pain. Leon pulls his gun out and presses it against Frank's flank. Patrons turn and look at events unfold. But Leon's gun is hidden from their sight, so after a few seconds, they lose interest.

LEON

Let's go. You don't want a shoot-out where your lady sings, do you?

INT. WAREHOUSE - OFFICE - NIGHT

Vincent sits behind a large desk. Jimmy sits on a couch, lost in a porn magazine. Frank walks in, followed by Leon and Trick.

VINCENT

Detective Newman, my man. I see you've met Leon and Trick, my new associates. Hope they didn't come off as too soft.

FRANK

(lights cigarette)

I warned you how it ends if we met again.

VINCENT

Chill, detective. This actually concerns you too. You remember my man Elijah, don't you?

Frank takes a drag, uninterested.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

We just got wind, turns out he's been talking to some friends of yours.

Frank scoffs, sure it's all bullshit.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Hey, I'm just givin' you the lowdown is all. Word is Elijah's got busted flipping stolen wheels in that repair shop of his. They gave him a choice. Talk or do time. Now it needs to be handled.

FRANK

Then handle it.

VINCENT

I was thinkin' you and your fag new partner can go pay him another visit, no? He pulls on you, you shoot his ass in self-defense. Problem solved.

FRANK

Seems you forgot I don't work for you anymore. You got a rat problem, you solve it yourself.

VINCENT

(scoffs)

Nah, that won't work. Elijah gets caught red-handed, gets a jail-free card if he starts snitchin', and then suddenly he's dead? I'd be suspect número uno. I'll have cops so far up my ass I'll even look blue. On the other hand, he dies in a shoot-out with the police... well, that's just another Tuesday in this city of ours.

Jimmy chuckles. Leon and Trick smile too.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

If Elijah talks we'll all be up shit-creek doing serious time in no time. Difference is, when I'm out I'm back in business. You'll be lucky to get a gig off-hours guarding the expressway diner.

TRICK

Or selling your fag ass. You'll be good at it by then.

Vincent's men chuckle. Frank glances at his watch, stubs out his cigarette directly on Vincent's desk, makes a nasty burn. Vincent watches, not amused.

FRANK

I'm gonna go and pretend none of this was said. And if any of your men come to the club again...

Frank shakes his head. He turns around, walks to the door, ready to leave. Trick follows him.

TRICK

Hey, mo'fucker, we own your...

In one quick move, Frank pulls out his gun and SHOTS TRICK IN THE FOOT. Trick jumps to the floor, squealing. Jimmy and Leon pull their guns out. Frank aims his gun at Vincent.

FRANK

Told you it would end ugly.

VINCENT

This ain't over yet.

FRANK

Tell your dogs to chill, Vincent.
Bullets start flying, guess who's
catching the next one?

Vincent nods at his men. They lower their guns and Frank exits.

INT. GLORIA'S TOWNHOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Gloria stands naked and dripping wet in front of a steamed-up mirror, a towel wrapped around her head. She holds a glass vial of coke between her fingers, takes the cap off. She hesitates for a few seconds, then pours the content down the toilet, flushes it, and throws the vial into the garbage can.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

A large but sparsely furnished room with worn-out wooden floors and walls with patches of peeled-off paint.

Alan sits on a bed reading the newspaper, barefoot, wearing pants and an undershirt. The bathroom door opens. Gloria comes out naked, walks across the room. Alan keeps reading.

Gloria grabs a pair of panties from the foot of the bed and puts them on. She approaches a record player resting on the floor, moves the head-shell onto the rotating record, and a jazz tune starts. She sways her hips with its slow cadence.

Alan gives her an inquisitive look.

ALAN

Well, did you find it?

Gloria frowns, faking ignorance.

ALAN (CONT'D)

The blow?

Gloria shakes her head.

ALAN (CONT'D)

Jesus, Gloria. You finished it all
in two weeks?

GLORIA

Don't be an asshole, of course not.

Gloria slips on a pair of trousers.

ALAN

Okay, we gotta go. Have you seen my watch?

Alan walks toward the bathroom. He steps on something and squeals, falls on the bed grabbing his foot.

ALAN (CONT'D)

Goddammit! Shit!

Alan removes a splinter from his toe, shows it to Gloria, angrily tosses it aside.

ALAN (CONT'D)

Why did you have to move to Brooklyn? I don't understand. This place is a dump. And this neighborhood, there are thieves and dealers on every corner.

GLORIA

Not on every corner.

ALAN

Yeah, very funny. Where's my watch?

Alan looks under the sheets, tosses the pillows aside. He opens the first drawer of the bedside table.

GLORIA

Alan, could you not...

Alan opens the second drawer and freezes. He looks at Gloria, then back at the inside of the drawer. Alan reaches in, pulls out a small plastic container with a dropper inside.

Gloria quickly snatches it from his hand, tosses it back in the drawer, slams it close.

ALAN

What was that?

Gloria swings around, glares at Alan.

GLORIA

Don't go through my things.

ALAN

Wait... was that one of those new pregnancy tests?

Gloria slumps on the bed, defeated.

ALAN (CONT'D)

Why would you even have one?

Gloria gives him an isn't-it-obvious look. Utter shock invades Alan's face.

ALAN (CONT'D)

But... that can't be. You said you were taking precautions.

GLORIA

I am. But math is a bitch. Turns out a five percent chance is still a chance. Who knew?

Alan sits on the floor, buries his head between his hands, desperation setting in. Gloria finds Alan's watch under the blankets and looks at the time.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

We can make it to the second set.

Alan looks up at Gloria and frowns, annoyed.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

You don't have to come.

Gloria stands up, walks in the bathroom and closes the door.

INT. JAZZ CLUB - NIGHT

A JAZZ TRIO of black men plays onstage. Pete prepares a drink behind the counter. Frank walks in and comes over to the bar.

PETE

I saw you walk out with two very serious-looking individuals. It didn't seem like a happy party.

FRANK

Yeah. I took care of it.

PETE

So, you're good?

Frank nods. Pete looks behind Frank and grins.

PETE (CONT'D)

Well, look at you so gorgeous!

Frank turns. Diane stands behind him looking stunning in a tight black dress. Pete walks around the bar to greet her.

PETE (CONT'D)

You'll knock them dead looking like that. Do me a favor. Make sure they pay their tab first.

Diane puts one arm around Pete's arm and smiles.

DIANE

If there's anyone left by the end of the first set.

PETE

Oh, nonsense. You'll be great. You don't know how not to.

Diane walks away, completely ignores Frank. Frank gives Pete a look.

PETE (CONT'D)

What? It's still good you came.

INT. STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Diane walks up to the stage, the audience bursts into applause. Diane smiles, sways her body with a tune's cadence. She starts to sing with a soft, beautiful voice.

INT. JAZZ CLUB - BAR - LATER

Frank watches from the bar as the song ends. People applaud and shout in approval.

DIANE

Thank you. Wow. Please give a round of applause to Dennis Harrison on drums, Tony Malloy on base, and the genial Marc Simbalist on piano. We'll be right back after a short break. Stick around.

Diane and her trio walk off stage. Patrons start to chatter.

EXT. JAZZ CLUB - CONTINUOUS

Frank steps out and lights a cigarette. A taxi pulls over at the curb. Gloria, looking stylish and gorgeous, climbs out followed by Alan. Frank can't help but stare at Gloria. Both completely ignore Frank as they walk inside the club.

INT. JAZZ CLUB - CONTINUOUS

Gloria and Alan walk in and sit at one of the tables near the stage. Laura comes over. Gloria and Alan order something.

AT THE BAR - CONTINUOUS

Diane walks to the bar and sits on a stool by the counter. Pete brings her a glass of wine.

PETE

It was your best set yet.

DIANE

You always say that.

PETE

You can't blame me if you keep getting better. I'm telling you, pretty soon this joint is going to be too small for your talents.

Diane smiles, takes a sip from her drink.

DIANE

I have thought about moving.

PETE

Moving? Moving where? And what about Frank? His job's here.

DIANE

Frank?

(scoffs)

For a bartender you're not very observant.

Pete looks down. He knows what she means.

DIANE (CONT'D)

I was thinking the West Coast, maybe New Orleans. Anywhere that doesn't constantly remind me of...

She stops, suddenly overwhelmed with sadness. Pete gives her a tender smile.

PETE

I know. It's still tearing you up inside, isn't it? But one day the memory of sweet little Tanya will be something you'll be able to cherish again.

Diane's eyes well up. She nods, wipes her tears away. She turns and catches Gloria and Alan at their table. Alan appears to be shouting at her. Gloria rolls her eyes. He slams his hand on the table, stands up, and stomps away.

PETE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

You just need time. You both do.

Diane returns her attention to Pete. She nods.

DIANE

He needs time, huh? To do what? To grieve the death of our daughter? Time to process things, to think? Or is it to screw around with one of your employees when you're not looking?

Pete looks down, again, embarrassed.

PETE

Look, Frank is not as tough as he thinks he is. I mean not really. Outside, on the streets, he can face anything without batting an eye. But this, losing Tanya, it totally destroyed him. He's just a mess. But he loves you more than anything. He knows that. He will see that.

Diane looks at Pete, tears rolling down her cheeks, ruining her make-up. She takes deep breaths, wipes them off.

DIANE

God, how am I gonna have a second set looking like this?

Diane stands up, then sits back down. She suddenly seems upset.

DIANE (CONT'D)

You know, Pete, I know Frank is not as strong as he thinks. I've known that since before we got married. That's one of the reasons I fell in love with him. Because his tough-man act, I knew it was just that, an act. I knew he could be tender, and sweet, and funny. And losing Tanya didn't just destroy Frank, Pete.