

The Merc

written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. JUNGLE - NIGHT (FANTASY SEQUENCE)

South America in the middle of the summer.

A Jungle Fortress with Guard Towers on every corner cuts through everything.

ARMED GUARDS look around nervously.

THWAP!

INT. JUNGLE FORTRESS - NIGHT

A Guard falls out of the tower, a bullet hole in his head.

His body hits the ground with a thump.

SOLDIERS sprint over to the corpse.

GUARD TOWER

An Armed Guard watches the commotion.

A hand covers his mouth. A knife expertly slashes his throat.

The body is silently lowered to the floor.

JACKSON STONE (mid 40s) emerges from the darkness, a bloody knife in his hand.

Jackson is tall, powerfully built, remarkably handsome with a beautiful head of hair.

He puts the knife into a sheath.

An M-134 mini gun with a backpack attachment is strapped to him tightly.

Two Colt 45 pistols are in hip holsters.

A silenced assault rifle with a scope dangles from a strap.

He takes the mini-gun out and looks at the gathering below.

INTERIOR

The guards look at the body.

RATATATATAT!

Jackson's mini-gun unloads a maelstrom of bullets, taking out most of the guards.

A Guard looks up and sees Stone. He opens fire.

More Guards follow suit.

GUARD TOWER

Jackson drops to the floor, bullets whizzing by him.

Everything but him gets hit.

He drops the mini-gun pack and pulls out a grenade.

INTERIOR

The grenade lands right in the middle of guards.

BOOM!

Body parts litter the ground.

JACKSON STONE (O.S.)
Time to skip like a stone.

Jackson leaps to the ground, landing like a superhero. His eyes turn to a bunker, his rifle pointed at it.

A half dozen Guards pour out of it.

Jackson holds the trigger and casually kills them.

Guards drop every time he does.

CLICK!

Jackson drops the rifle and surveys the scene.

EL JEFE (O.S.)
So The Company really wants me
dead, huh?

ESTEBAN "EL JEFE" SANCHEZ (mid 50s) walks out. He's short, overweight with an epic beard. El Jefe smokes an expensive cigar and points a Desert Eagle Pistol at Jackson.

JACKSON STONE
You shouldn't have ripped them off.

Jackson's hands touch his knife.

EL JEFE
I am EL JEFE! I do what I want!

JACKSON STONE

This doesn't end how you think it
does, Jefe.

EL JEFE

Well, right now I want you TO DIE!

El Jefe's finger moves to the trigger.

BANG!

El Jefe looks and sees a hole in the wall where Jackson was.

THUMP!

El Jefe looks down and sees a knife in his chest.

EL JEFE (CONT'D)

Impossible!

He collapses to the ground, dead.

JACKSON STONE

You can't always get what you want.

Jackson stares at his corpse for a moment.

MIKE BROOKS (V.O.)

Isn't that the plot of "American
Ninja Eight?"

INT. JACKSON'S OFFICE - DAY (PRESENT DAY)

A massive executive office with high-end furniture, a private bathroom and a majestic view of the New York City skyline.

Memorabilia, two Colt 45 pistols, an ornate knife and photos of Jackson Stone in the military dot the walls.

Jackson is behind a massive, expensive executive desk. He's in a Tom Ford suit custom tailored for him.

Across from Jackson is MIKE BROOKS (mid 60s). Old money and big power radiates off of him.

NICK DUNN (O.S.)

Sometimes life can be stranger than
fiction, right boss?

Standing in a corner of the office is NICK DUNN (mid 30s), a sales representative. He's a younger version of Jackson in a cheap suit.

JACKSON STONE

Right.

MIKE BROOKS

It's almost too good to be true.

JACKSON STONE

I lived it, unfortunately. It was supposed to be in and out... and it turned out to be a lot of ins.

MIKE BROOKS

So brass tacks time. What can you do to get my security teams under budget in Africa? I have three hundred guys on ten mines and the only answer X-Water says is more, more, more.

JACKSON STONE

You have the right amount of guys. X-Water is just sending over their worst in hopes you bleed enough in the mine to overpay for more.

MIKE BROOKS

So what do you suggest?

JACKSON STONE

I can have your X-Water teams replaced in a week with guys with twice the skills.

NICK DUNN

And at a significant cost savings.

Mike looks around.

MIKE BROOKS

Send the offer over and I'll see if I can talk my board into it.

Jackson smiles.

Everyone shakes hands.

NICK DUNN

(to Mike)

I'll walk you out.

Nick and Mike walk out.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.)

That story works best on rich guys
and beautiful women.

Stone pulls out a bottle of expensive Scotch and a high ball
glass. He pours himself a drink.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I've gotten more pussy and made
more deals talking about El Jefe in
the jungles than anywhere else.

(looks at the bottle)

It's also complete bullshit.

(takes a swig)

To the world I'm Jackson Stone,
former black ops bad ass turned
private security CEO to the rich
and powerful.

(puts his feet on the
desk)

In reality I am just a guy who
couldn't make it through one
semester of community college.

(looks at a knife on the
wall)

I found that knife at an antique
show. A guy on Craigslist turned it
from old and rusted to spectacular.

(looks at the military
paraphernalia)

Soldier of Fortune magazine has a
great classified section and guys
don't mind money from an anonymous
PayPal account.

(looks at the pistols)

I got those at a gun store. They
turned them into real nail drivers
for not as much cash as you'd
expect them too.

(takes a drink)

Everything in here is curated very
carefully to present the image of
Jackson Stone to the heads of
industry and people who need
private security across the world.

(looks around)

It's crazy to think fifteen years
ago I was just another loser
killing time at a big box store.

Jackson takes a long drink.

INT. BIG BOX STORE SECURITY DESK - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Super: 15 years ago.... Big Timber, Montana.

We see a younger Jackson Stone, aka Stanley Gerdling sitting at the podium of a security desk. He's overweight, balding and has an awful mustache.

A SMALL BOY and his MOTHER walk past Stanley and into the store. Both have the same thought. What a fucking loser.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.)
That's me before all this.

Note: Jackson Stone's younger self will be referred to as Stanley in flashbacks.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Jesus Christ... I look like I'm
about to go invade Poland.

GUS BRANCH (mid 50s, manager) walks up to Stanley with a mop and bucket.

Gus is extremely overweight, a devilish smile on his lips.

GUS BRANCH
Some kid puked in aisle five.

STANLEY GERDLING
And?

GUS BRANCH
I need you to clean it up.

STANLEY GERDLING
I'm not the janitor.

GUS BRANCH
Paco called in sick and it's slow.

STANLEY GERDLING
Do I have to?

GUS BRANCH
I'll give you ten extra minutes for
lunch today.

Stanley grabs the mop. A look of defeat comes over his face.

AISLE

Stanley walks into the aisle and looks around.

Vomit and other bodily fluids are all over the floor.

He looks at it, his stomach churning.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.)

I was born Stanley Howard Gerdling.

Stanley mops it up, one hand covering his mouth.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I did a couple semesters of junior college and decided to go find myself before going back. Four years later I was here... finding myself cleaning up whatever came out of that kid.

INT. STANLEY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A tiny studio apartment in need of painting.

Posters of bad action movies several decades old are taped onto the wall. DVDs of similar films are scattered all over.

An old desktop computer, propped up on milk crates, is shoved into a corner.

Stanley lies on a twin bed, staring at the ceiling.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.)

Every night I wondered what I could do to change my life. It seemed like I was helpless.

INT. HENRY'S BAR AND GRILL - NIGHT

Stanley and DENNIS SASSO (late 20s) are in a corner booth.

Dennis is short with a shaved head and a goatee. The stench of failure surrounds the two.

Empty appetizer trays and cheap beers are on the table.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.)

That's my only friend, Dennis. We worked at the store together.

A WAITRESS (early 20s) walks over to them with a large plate of nachos. She's remarkably attractive.

STANLEY GERDLING

God, I can't stand Gus.

The Waitress places the nachos down and walks away. Both men watch as she does. She can sense it... and it disgusts her.

DENNIS
We could kill him.

Both take long drinks from their beers.

STANLEY GERDLING
We'd have to beat Diabetes to it.

Stanley takes a drink from his beer.

DENNIS
I bet you could change your life if
you put your mind to it.

The two eat the nachos.

Stanley looks around after a moment. Inspiration hits him.

INT. STANLEY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Stanley types on his computer.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.)
I thought I was too old to go back
and do the things I pictured I'd be
doing when I was eighteen.

He looks at the posters on his walls. All of them have the same thing written in tiny ink at the bottom.

"Filmed in Hollywood, California."

A desire to be them comes over him.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I always thought I'd be the man.
The guy who got the girl, always
had the right thing to say and when
the chips were down always won.

His eyes turn back to the computer. The monitor has the physical requirements to be a Special Forces Soldier on it.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
So I thought about enlisting and
testing my mettle.

He glances at the age. He's several years past their recommended age parameter... and a hundred pounds heavier.

INT. BIG BOX STORE SECURITY DESK - NIGHT

Stanley sits at the podium. He glances around the store.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.)
I couldn't join up... but I decided
I wasn't going to let that stop me.

He sees Dennis, ringing someone up at the cashier's desk.

His eyes spot Gus walking towards him with a mop and bucket.

Stanley looks around, dread all over his face.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I decided right then and there that
I would never mop up anyone's shit
ever again.

Gus places the mop and bucket by him.

GUS BRANCH
Paco called in again.

A big shit eating grin comes over his face.

Stanley kicks over the bucket and flips Gus off.

Water spills over the floor.

STANLEY GERDLING
Clean that.

Stanley walks out.

Dennis sees Stanley walk out and smiles.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.)
That was the day Stanley Gerdling
died and Jackson Stone was born.

INT. STANLEY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The apartment is empty.

Stanley stands by the kitchen counter looking at a large amount of cash.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.)
I sold everything I owned, emptied
every bank account I had and cashed
in the shitty 401K my job had set
up when I started.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Stanley walks up to a beater sedan with a large military Duffel bag. "Gerdling" is stamped onto it.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.)
 My dad left my mom when I was
 young. That bag was the only thing
 I had of this.

He places the bag in the trunk and looks at the building.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 I was going to California to be
 like my heroes. Fat Stanley wasn't
 going to get on that poster.

INT. STANLEY'S CAR - NIGHT (DRIVING)

Stanley watches as the California highway disappears and San Francisco appears.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.)
 I couldn't afford to live in an
 apartment so I decided that my car
 would become my new home.

He exits, driving towards a nearby big box store.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 It wouldn't be for long.

Stanley pulls in and parks. He looks around.

There's nothing but homeless people and other vagabonds.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 I went to sleep thinking about all
 the things I wanted.

Begin Montage:**INT. GYM - DAY**

Stanley works out with weights for several months.

A PERSONAL TRAINER shows him what to do. He goes from a dumpy loser to a jacked He-Man over several years.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.)
For nearly two years I worked out
like a maniac to go from being the
guy who bought the poster to being
the guy on it.

INT. TRUCK STOP SHOWER - NIGHT

Stanley looks into the mirror.
An electric razor is in his hand.
He looks at it and then himself.
Stanley quickly shaves off his mustache.
His eyes focus on a bottle of Rogaine.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.)
It turns out with a little work I
wasn't that hard on the eyes.

After several months his face and body change. A full head of
hair emerges as his body goes from fat to lean.

INT. JUJITSU STUDIO - DAY

The mats are overflowing with bad ass BJJ BLACK BELTS
grappling. A stern INSTRUCTOR oversees them.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.)
I started martial arts, to sharpen
my body in ways the iron couldn't.

Stanley walks out onto the mat, a white belt awkwardly tied.
He taps knuckles with a Black Belt. Moments later Stanley is
tossed onto his ass and quickly submitted.
He and the Black Belt go again. The result is the same.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I think I enjoyed this the most out
of everything I did. Every Tuesday
and Thursday I got to practice
strangling some really nice guys.

Over several years we see Stanley go from a pudgy guy getting
his ass kicked to a muscular He-Man giving out a healthy
supply of ass-kickings.

Stanley and the group take a group photo.

He's genuinely happy.

INT. LARGE PUBLIC LIBRARY - NIGHT

Stanley types on a computer.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.)
I trained my mind when I wasn't
training my body.

Over several years military terms, tactics, and the life of a special operations soldier come up.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I wrote out my new life as a story
and quickly memorized it. I wrote
like him, I spoke like him... after
a while I dreamed like him.

INT. GUN RANGE - DAY

A dozen GUN ENTHUSIASTS shoot guns.

Stanley stands at the end. He shoots a small .22 caliber hand gun down range.

A FIREARMS INSTRUCTOR (mid 70s) observes him.

Stanley presses a button and his target comes up. Nothing.

STANLEY GERDLING
I've got Stormtrooper aim today.

SHOOTING INSTRUCTOR
Being a good shooter is about good
habits like proper aiming and
breath control.

STANLEY GERDLING
Any tips?

SHOOTING INSTRUCTOR
Just practice your ass off.

Stone reloads his pistol.

He goes from hitting nothing to hitting everything dead center. The Instructor is pleased.

INT. STANLEY'S CAR - NIGHT

Stanley intently reads "Creating a Role" by Stanislavski in the front seat.

A half-dozen books are in the passenger seat.

The topics of most of the books are military related.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.)

I remember watching "Barry" on HBO once. I thought if I was going to change my life and become someone new, I needed to create him. So I thought... why not create the part?

INT. GYM - DAY

Well over 500 pounds is loaded onto a barbell.

The Personal Trainer watches as Stanley approaches it.

PERSONAL TRAINER

You got this.

Stanley nods and grips it. His hips explode and he pulls the load easily.

He slams it to the ground and screams.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.)

I wish I would've been this dedicated when I was a younger man.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

Several miles off the beaten path.

Cars scream down a highway in the distance.

A handful of military tactic books are on the hood of Stanley's car.

Cones are set up in a low rent tactical course.

Stanley runs through it holding a stick like a gun.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.)

I trained practical skills and tactics. At first I set up my own course, to get the movement down.

His foot plants the wrong way and he falls down awkwardly.

STANLEY GERDLING

Damn it.

He goes from moving awkwardly and falling down to moving through expert courses flawlessly.

INT. PAINTBALL COURSE - DAY

Five WEEKEND WARRIORS move in formation. All of them have red arm bands tied to their arm.

A paintball gun fires in the distance quickly.

The Warriors look down.

All of them have yellow paint on their chest.

Stanley emerges, a yellow armband on his arm.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.)

I treated this like my job but it never felt that way.

INT. MMA GYM - DAY

Stanley sloppily hits mitts with an MMA INSTRUCTOR.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.)

I couldn't just do Jujitsu.

Stanley is tired quickly.

MMA INSTRUCTOR

It looks easy, doesn't it?

STANLEY GERDLING

On TV those guys punch forever and never break a sweat.

MMA INSTRUCTOR

You'll get there one day.

He goes from hitting the mitts sloppily to expertly over time.

INT. GYM BATHROOM - NIGHT

Stanley is alone in the bathroom.

A STEROID DEALER approaches him.

Stanley hands him an envelope full of cash.

The Dealer hands Stanley a bag. He walks away.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.)
My body couldn't take all this
training and remain healthy.

Stanley opens the bag, revealing Steroid Bottles and needles.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
After a while I stopped using them
but to get to where I needed to go
I took that one shortcut.

He injects himself with the steroids over the years.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
The only thing I was missing was a
new name. Stanley Gerdling had a
past that I didn't need anymore.
Any name I picked had to have a
sense of legitimacy too it, too.

EXT. NATURE TRAIL - NIGHT

JOGGERS of various ages are all over the path.

Stanley passes them, his shirt covered in sweat.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.)
I did a FOIA request on a dozen
names to figure out the person I
could be. I settled on a name that
would make my story perfect.

Stanley stops to take his pulse.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Jackson Stone sounded pretty bad
ass, too, so I went with that.

EXT. SKID ROW - NIGHT

Stanley parks his car. He pops open the trunk and takes out his Duffel bag.

He empties the Duffel bag into a nearby garbage can.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.)
 Everything that tied me to him had
 to be destroyed.

A handful of the HOMELESS watch him curiously.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 He was a real guy.

His hands pull out a small screwdriver and he takes the
 license plates off the car. He tosses them into the can.

Stanley takes out a can of gasoline and a pair of road
 flares. He places both in his pockets.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 My story was that Jackson Stone was
 recruited of Delta Force by the CIA
 as a covert operative.
 (soaks the car in
 gasoline)
 The real Jackson Stone went AWOL,
 so if anyone really looked into
 they'll assume I was given a burn
 notice and blacklisted.
 (pours the rest into the
 garbage can)
 People will believe a lie if it
 smells like the truth.

Stanley lights one of the flares and tosses it into the car.

He lights the other and tosses it into the garbage can. His
 eyes focus on them for a moment.

He walks away holding the Duffel bag.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 That day Stanley Gerdling was
 officially dead as far as I was
 concerned. No one else seemed to
 notice... or care.

The garbage can and the car light on fire.

INT. PAWN SHOP - DAY

The results of broken dreams, unfulfilled potential and
 unsolved burglaries are all over.

Stanley stands around a counter, tapping his foot.

A CLERK comes up to the counter with a manila folder.

Stanley hands him an envelope full of cash.

The Clerk hands Stanley the folder.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.)
Five hundred dollars got me all the
pedigree information I would need
to stop being me and become him.

Stanley opens the folder up.

Everything in it says "Jackson Stone."

INT. SECURITY COMPANY - DAY

A large, ornate lobby of a military contractor.

Jackson Stone sits on a leather couch, tapping his foot impatiently. He's in a cheap seat.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.)
Through a connection at the range I
got an interview for a private
military contracting job.

A SECURITY MANAGER (mid 40s) walks over to Jackson with a large smile on his face and a folder in his hands.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
This was the test. I could fake it
with skills but could I fake it
when the shit got real?

The Manager hands Jackson the folder.

SECURITY MANAGER
Welcome aboard, Mister Stone.

JACKSON STONE
I'm grateful for the opportunity.

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - DAY

Super: Saudi Arabia, six months later

A convoy of black SUV's flies down the highway.

Traffic parts for them as they go.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.)
 We were sent to escort some oil
 executives to and from a meeting
 with the King.

A Camel walks onto the highway.

The SUV's slow down.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Nothing was supposed to happen.

BOOM!

A rocket flies out of nowhere and takes out the lead SUV.

Two beaten up trucks filled with TERRORISTS approach the
 convoy screaming bloody murder.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 If skid row is where Stanley
 died... it was Saudi Arabia where
 Jackson Stone was born.

The SUV's empty as Jackson and a dozen armed MERCENARIES
 exit. Bullets fly early and often from both side.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 This was the day I had known was
 waiting for me. The day when I had
 to put up or shut up.

The Terrorists take out a handful of the Mercenaries. Several
 more sprint and run away.

Jackson ducks in front of one of the SUV's.

HEAD TERRORIST
 If you lay down your weapons we
 will let you walk away.

Several of the Mercenaries run away.

Jackson puts in a new magazine. His eyes survey the
 battlefield and turn to the half dozen men remaining.

JACKSON STONE
 On me.

They look at him and nod.

Jackson surveys the scene.

A dozen terrorists armed with AK-47s glare back at him.

He turns the safety off and fires twice.

Two Terrorists fall dead.

A hail of bullets come down range.

Jackson ducks behind the car, a bullet whizzing by.

He reaches to his waist and pulls out a smoke grenade.

His hand tosses it to his left.

Smoke arises.

Terrorist machine gun fire pelts the smoke.

Jackson runs right, his eyes focused on his enemy.

BANG!

One Terrorist dead.

Jackson spots the enemy caravan and sprints towards it.

BANG!

Another Terrorist dead.

The Terrorists aim at Jackson.

Bullets fly by as he sprints behind an enemy vehicle.

He rolls to the ground and spots and several Terrorists ducking down.

His gun empties, killing them.

The Mercenaries open fire beginning the counter attack.

Jackson spots the Head Terrorist and pulls the trigger.

CLICK!

He tosses the rifle aside and reaches for his sidearm.

A Terrorist jumps over the vehicle, landing on Jackson.

Jackson quickly locks the Terrorist in a triangle choke, squeezing the life out of him.

SNAP!

The Terrorist's neck is broken.

Jackson lets go and gets to his feet, taking his pistol out.

He spots the Head Terrorist running away.

Jackson carefully aims his sidearm at him.

BANG!

The Head Terrorist falls down, dead.

The Mercenaries look at him like the God of War himself.

Several OIL EXECUTIVES exit the SUV's and look around.

Their eyes look at Jackson in admiration.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.)
 Jackson Stone was born out of the
 crucible of combat, bathed in
 blood, sweat and tears.

The Mercenaries look at Jackson like the god of war himself.

JACKSON STONE
 Let's get to the airport.

Everyone nods.

They get back into the SUV's and take off into the distance.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.)
 After that day I could write my own
 ticket. After several years I did.

INT. JACKSON'S OFFICE - DAY

Everything needs to be painted or repaired.

Jackson and a REALTOR look around.

REALTOR
 It needs a lot of work.

JACKSON STONE
 That's one way of putting it.

REALTOR
 The good news is that the landlord
 is desperate for a new tenant.

Jackson looks around.

JACKSON STONE
I'll take it.

Jackson's office is renovated and turned into his current office. He sits behind the desk and smiles.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.)
Stone Security started out on a wing and a prayer. I didn't think I'd ever have one employee. Now I have two hundred just in this office alone.

INT. STONE SECURITY - NIGHT

Over a decade the office goes from empty to fully occupied.

A large banner indicating the "Best Fiscal Year Ever" is tacked to a wall. It's Christmas time.

All of the STONE SECURITY EMPLOYEES look at Jackson.

Everyone has a glass of champagne in their hand.

JACKSON STONE
Just remember how you feel when you get your bonuses next week, OK

Everyone laughs.

INT. JACKSON STONE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The New York City Skyline shines through a large window.

A massive penthouse with expensive furniture, a fully stocked mini bar filled with expensive liquor and a massive television. High-end artwork dots the walls.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.)
It cost me ten percent above market but the view is so worth it.

A trail of clothes from a man and two women lead to the--

BEDROOM

Jackson looks out the window, observing the skyline, in nothing but a pair of boxers. The reflection of the light makes him look like a god-damn Greek god.

A box of condoms is on the floor. It's mostly empty.

MODEL (O.S.)
Come back to bed, Jackson.

He turns and looks at a king-sized bed.

Two INSANELY BEAUTIFUL MODELS (mid 20s) are under the covers.

They look at him with a come hither look.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.)
Eat your heart out, Stanley.

End Montage.

INT. JACKSON'S OFFICE - DAY (PRESENT)

Jackson sits behind his desk, typing on a laptop.

A spreadsheet is on the monitor.

KNOCK KNOCK!

Nick walks in with a folder in his hands and a massive smile on his lips.

JACKSON STONE
Is that what I think it is?

Nick hands it to him.

NICK DUNN
Guess who now is providing
international security for Paxtel
Mining and Manufacturing?

Jackson smiles.

JACKSON STONE
How did you get a meeting with him?
I've been trying for years.

NICK DUNN
My wife's best friend is married to
their CFO. They invited us to a
barbecue and we got talking.

JACKSON STONE
I'm impressed.

Nick leaves the room.

Jackson opens up the folder.

Nick walks back into the room.

NICK DUNN
Do you think El Jefe survived that
knife to the chest?

JACKSON STONE
What?

NICK DUNN
Your story.

JACKSON STONE
Oh, right.

NICK DUNN
I've always been curious about it.

JACKSON STONE
You don't see me looking over my
shoulder, do you?

Nick shrugs and walks out.

JACKSON STONE (V.O.)
El Jefe was a composite for three
different South American gangsters
I heard stories about.

Jackson takes out a pen and signs a sheet of paper.

KNOCK KNOCK!

RACHEL BEARD (mid 30s), Jackson's secretary, walks in. She's
short and stocky.

RACHEL BEARD
Mister Stone?

JACKSON STONE
What's up Rachel?

RACHEL BEARD
I confirmed your reservation at The
Emerald Chef tonight.

JACKSON STONE
I almost forgot. Thank you.

RACHEL BEARD
Who's the lucky girl?

JACKSON STONE
She's a lawyer I met at the gym.

RACHEL BEARD

Good luck.

INT. CHICO'S BAR AND GRILL - NIGHT

A dive bar listed in magazines as a historic place to visit.

Older pictures of celebrities long forgotten dot the walls.

Dennis and his wife MARTHA (mid 40s) eat wings.

Dennis hasn't aged gracefully.

He looks outside and sees The Emerald Chef through the window. His eyes focus on Jackson walking inside it.

DENNIS

No way.

Martha looks over.

MARTHA

What?

DENNIS

I saw someone who looked like the Chad version of an old coworker.

INT. THE EMERALD CHEF - NIGHT

A three Michelin star restaurant.

RICH PEOPLE and CELEBRITIES are everywhere.

Stone sits in a corner booth with CHERYL SANDERS (late 20s).

She's tall, curvy and drop dead gorgeous.

A meal that costs as much as a car payment is in front of them. A fancy bottle of French Wine is nearly empty.

JACKSON STONE

It was the Army, Ranger School and then everything else after that is classified... or on my Linked In.

CHERYL

That sounds like an amazing life story. Has anyone ever wanted to make a movie about your life?

JACKSON STONE
God no. I like my privacy.
(beat)
So I made the mistake of Googling
you this afternoon.

CHERYL
You find anything bad?

JACKSON STONE
Just that you're an attorney.

CHERYL
Guilty as charged.

JACKSON STONE
Can you sue someone for me?

CHERYL
I'm in criminal defense. If you
ever kill someone, I can help.
(beat)
Excuse me for a moment.

Cheryl walks away to the bathroom.

Stone admires the view when a FRENCH WAITER walks up to him.

FRENCH WAITER
Do you need anything else, sir?

Jackson turns and smiles.

JACKSON STONE
Just the check.

The French Waiter hands the check to him.

Jackson hands him American Express Black Card.

FRENCH WAITER
Very good, sir.

The French Waiter walks away.

Cheryl walks back over.

CHERYL
The bathroom here is much nicer
than my apartment.

JACKSON STONE
My company has done work for the
owner in the past.

The French Waiter walks back with the check.

Stone grabs it, signs it and hands it back to him.

FRENCH WAITER

Thank you, sir.

The French Waiter walks away.

CHERYL

Thank you. I was going to offer to split it but--

JACKSON STONE

How about a night cap somewhere and you get the first round?

CHERYL

That sounds lovely. Where?

JACKSON STONE

There's a great speakeasy a couple blocks from here, if you don't mind the walk.

CHERYL

Let's go.

EXT. THE EMERALD CHEF - MOMENTS LATER

Cheryl and Jackson walk out. She clutches his arm.

Several ARMED BODYGUARDS bull rush past them. A half dozen PAPARAZZI aim their cameras sprint after them.

CHERYL

What the hell?

JACKSON STONE

Celebrity incoming.

A small crowd gathers around.

Jackson and Cheryl walk to the edges.

All eyes turn as reality TV star STEPHANIE DASH (mid 20s) walks to the entrance.

She's short, curvy and in a dress that's a size too tight.

Everything about her is in that gray area between naturally beautiful and enhanced via plastic surgery.

A handful of HANGERS ON follow her.

JACKSON STONE (CONT'D)
Welcome to the price of fame.

Jackson looks at the crowd when he spots a DERANGED FAN (late 40s) sprinting towards Stephanie.

His eyes spot a small caliber pistol in his hand.

Jackson's hands forcefully push Cheryl behind him.

JACKSON STONE (CONT'D)
GUN!

The Bodyguards look around, drawing their weapons. No one sees the Deranged Fan.

Jackson charges at him.

The Fan slips and hits the ground, the gun bouncing over to Jackson. Jackson's foot secures it to the ground.

Bodyguards and a pair of POLICE OFFICERS tackle Jackson to the ground.

EXT. POLICE PRECINCT - NIGHT

Stone walks out, rubbing his wrists. He looks around and sees Cheryl, waiting patiently.

JACKSON STONE
Thanks for talking to them.

CHERYL
Welcome to being a criminal defense attorney, Jackson.

They look at each other for a long moment. He grabs her hands and passionately kisses her.

JACKSON STONE
I owe you a nightcap.

CHERYL
Your place?

He smiles.

INT. JACKSON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jackson and Cheryl are in bed, under the covers.

Their clothes are on the floor.

JACKSON STONE
That was magnificent.

CHERYL
Thanks.
(looks around)
I'm normally not this sort of girl.

JACKSON STONE
It's alright. Normally I don't get
arrested on a first date.

He kisses her lightly.

CHERYL
I'm going to be very disappointed
if you don't call me.

JACKSON STONE
You can yell at me in the morning.

They kiss passionately and make love.

INT. RYKER'S ISLAND MEETING ROOM - DAY

El Jefe is seated in a chair, an orange prison jumpsuit hanging off him. A large bandage is on his neck.

He's exactly the same as Jackson's fantasy.

El Jefe looks around impatiently.

KNOCK KNOCK!

Cheryl walks into the room with a suitcase in her hands.

EL JEFE
I'm glad I pay you by the hour and
not by the minute.

CHERYL
My apologies, Mister Sanchez.
Traffic was not pleasant this
morning to get here.

EL JEFE
As long as I'm not being billed for
your poor choice in commute.

CHERYL

Obviously not.

(beat)

Is there anything I can do to help you while you're here? I know your commissary account is stocked but--

EL JEFE

The food here is terrible. I'd kill for something that's edible.

CHERYL

If we're lucky I can spin your lovely accident into house arrest with sufficient bond.

EL JEFE

House arrest?

CHERYL

You'd be confined to a residence, wear an ankle monitor and all of our meetings would be wherever your men happen to be. Obviously surrendering your passport comes with any release.

El Jefe laughs and claps his hands.

EL JEFE

This country is amazing.

CHERYL

If I can talk the district attorney into it, where can I tell them you'd be staying?

EL JEFE

I have property here and my men can guard it.

CHERYL

We have the sympathy factor going in, which is good, and saving the state some costs in this economy isn't the worst idea?

EL JEFE

I get more sympathy for being stabbed?

CHERYL

They want a live body for trial.

El Jefe pulls down his shirt, revealing a massive faded scar on his chest.

EL JEFE

I should get a lot of sympathy for this, then courtesy of your Central Intelligence Agency.

CHERYL

I bet there's a great story behind that we might be able to use.

EL JEFE

I brought a gun to a knife fight.
(looks around)
I wouldn't be surprised if the CIA was planning to murder me in my cell. They're the reason I was in this country in the first place.

CHERYL

I contacted the warden and have asked for you to be put into protective custody.

EL JEFE

What do I do until then?

CHERYL

Stay safe, OK?

INT. JACKSON'S OFFICE - DAY

RING!

Jackson stares at his phone. Every line is lit up.

He takes his cell phone out.

He has three hundred missed calls, almost as many voicemails and two hundred emails that are brand new.

KNOCK KNOCK!

Rachel walks into the room.

RACHEL BEARD

I just got a call from TMZ asking for comment from you.

JACKSON STONE

Ever hear of Stephanie Dash?

RACHEL BEARD
I follow her on Instagram.

JACKSON STONE
Great.

He sighs and leans back.

RACHEL BEARD
What happened?

INT. RYKER'S ISLAND TELEVISION ROOM - DAY

INMATES watch TV.

El Jefe walks in and sits down.

TELEVISION ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
And in today's craziest story,
comes from "Follow the Dash" star
Stephanie Dash and a psycho fan.

Footage from the incident comes up.

El Jefe spots Cheryl and watches.

A SKINHEAD (mid 20s) sits down next to him.

EL JEFE
Can I help you?

SKINHEAD
I heard you can move some weight.

El Jefe turns and looks at him. His eyes go back to the TV.

EL JEFE
Tell your boss that he shouldn't
send a pawn to do a king's job.

The Skinhead walks away.

INT. JACKSON'S OFFICE - DAY

Stone takes a deep breath.

JACKSON STONE
Some nutter showed up and dropped
his gun. It slid to my foot and
then I got dog piled.

RACHEL BEARD
Mister Cooling is here.

JACKSON STONE
Send him in.

Rachel exits. After a moment PR flack WILLIAM COOLING (mid 70s, British) walks into the room.

Elegance and grace radiate off him.

WILLIAM COOLING
I assumed you would need a little bit of my assistance.

JACKSON STONE
I need this to go away.

WILLIAM COOLING
Then all three of us should talk.

JACKSON STONE
Three?

Stephanie Dash walks in.

PERCY HARRIS (mid 50s, Stephanie's lawyer) follows her in.

Rachel walks in, exasperated.

RACHEL BEARD
I told her--

JACKSON STONE
It's alright.

Rachel leaves.

STEPHANIE DASH
I hate waiting, Mister Stone

PERCY HARRIS
Percy Harris, I represent Miss Dash in most of her affairs.

JACKSON STONE
Please sit.

Stephanie sits down, as does her lawyer.

JACKSON STONE (CONT'D)
How can I help you all?

STEPHANIE DASH

I wanted to thank you for saving my life last night.

JACKSON STONE

You're welcome. Can you make this go away now?

STEPHANIE DASH

Nice to meet you too.

JACKSON STONE

Unless you prefer to discuss my company providing your personal security then I would prefer to leave this as a funny story.

STEPHANIE DASH

We want to use the footage from last night for the show and I need you to sign off on it.

PERCY HARRIS

It's a simple release you'd be paid for, quite handsomely.

STEPHANIE DASH

We crafted a series of talking points for you to use at the press conference this afternoon.

Jackson puts them back in the folder and hands them back.

Stephanie and her lawyer are surprised.

JACKSON STONE

The service entrance will keep the paparazzi away from you.

STEPHANIE DASH

May I ask why?

JACKSON STONE

I don't want to be part of your circus, no offense.

STEPHANIE DASH

Think of everything that could happen if this goes well. You have a spin off, you have--

JACKSON STONE

I'm not interested, ma'am.

Stephanie is upset.

Percy looks at her and shakes his head.

PERCY HARRIS

Thank you for your time, Mister Stone. We appreciate it.

Percy and Stephanie leave.

WILLIAM COOLING

Could you be less of an asshole to one of my biggest clients?

JACKSON STONE

I just want to run my business in peace, Will.

WILLIAM COOLING

I'll craft a generic statement and send it over later for your approval, if that's alright.

JACKSON STONE

Thank you.

William leaves.

Rachel walks in.

RACHEL BEARD

Is it bad that I got a selfie with her, Mister Stone?

JACKSON STONE

More power to you.

RACHEL BEARD

You told me to remind you of your lunch date 20 minutes before.

JACKSON STONE

And?

RACHEL BEARD

It's 20 minutes before.

Jackson walks out of the room.

INT. RYKER'S ISLAND PHONE BANK - DAY

El Jefe glares into the receiver of a payphone.

EL JEFE

Tell the lower third that they need
to add a hundred pounds to the leg
press. Three reps tomorrow.

(beat)

Tell Oscar to do the work out.

EXT. PATIO - DAY

Jackson sits at a table far from the rest of the CUSTOMERS.

His eyes are focused on a menu in his hands.

He looks up and sees Cheryl in the distance.

Stephanie's mother KATHRYN DASH (mid 50s) sits down across
from Jackson.

She looks like her daughter but more artificial.

A plastic surgeon's knife has been kind to her face.

KATHRYN DASH

So you're the man my daughter had
such interesting words about.

Jackson puts his menu down and looks up.

JACKSON STONE

How can I help you?

KATHRYN DASH

I'm Kathryn Dash.

JACKSON STONE

I'd say it was a pleasure but--

KATHRYN DASH

Percy sent over a second copy of
the paperwork. I'd strongly advise
you to take a second look at it.

Jackson looks around.

JACKSON STONE

Where's the camera crew?

KATHRYN DASH

I didn't want to make this weird.

JACKSON STONE

It's already weird.

KATHRYN DASH
You know why I'm here.

JACKSON STONE
Just blur my face out and--

KATHRYN DASH
You know nothing of television.

JACKSON STONE
Don't care to, either.

KATHRYN DASH
This could make you a household
name for years to come. You could
make millions off it.

JACKSON STONE
I'm not hurting right now.

KATHRYN DASH
You were made for television.

Jackson contemplates it for a moment.

JACKSON STONE
No.

Kathryn looks deeply into his eyes.

KATHRYN DASH
You don't want to screw with me.

JACKSON STONE
Or else.

KATHRYN DASH
Or else what?

JACKSON STONE
You're supposed to threaten me with
an "Or else." You're not very good
at making threats.

KATHRYN DASH
I've ruined people for less.

JACKSON STONE
Ever been on the business end of a
Soviet era machine gun?

KATHRYN DASH
I'm the Kalashnikov of social
media, Mister Stone.

JACKSON STONE
 OK... I'll make this simple for
 you. Go fuck yourself.

Kathryn has never been insulted like that.

KATHRYN DASH
 You'll regret that.

Cheryl walks up behind Kathryn. She waits for a moment.

JACKSON STONE
 And I've got a lunch date.

Kathryn turns around and walks away.

Cheryl sits down.

CHERYL
 I'm shocked there wasn't a camera
 crew following her.

JACKSON STONE
 The daughter brought her lawyer to
 my office this morning.

CHERYL
 And?

JACKSON STONE
 And this was another "show up on
 our show or else." I'm shocked they
 didn't call you.

CHERYL
 I've been busy with clients.

JACKSON STONE
 Anyone exciting?

CHERYL
 Just paperwork involved in getting
 a South American drug dealer onto
 house arrest.

JACKSON STONE
 That sounds fun.

A BISTRO WAITER walks over.

BISTRO WAITER
 (to Jackson)
 Your guest has arrived.
 (MORE)

BISTRO WAITER (CONT'D)
(to Cheryl)
Would you like to see a menu?

JACKSON STONE
The lady will have the number four.
I'll have the eight, extra spicy.

BISTRO WAITER
Very good.

The Bistro Waiter walks away.

Cheryl glares at him.

CHERYL
I can order for myself.

JACKSON STONE
The number four is amazing.

INT. JACKSON'S OFFICE - DAY

Jackson types on his computer.

Rachel walks in with a folder.

JACKSON STONE
What's up?

RACHEL BEARD
A courier dropped this off for you
while you were at lunch.

She hands him the folder.

He opens it up and pulls out paperwork.

RACHEL BEARD (CONT'D)
Are you being sued?

JACKSON STONE
Stephanie Dash and her people
really want me to go on that show.

RACHEL BEARD
That sounds exciting.

JACKSON STONE
Am I the only who doesn't want to
be famous?

RACHEL BEARD
You must be, Mister Stone.

Rachel walks out.

Jackson pulls out a bottle of Scotch and a glass.

He pours himself a glass.

His hands toss the paperwork into the trash.

JACKSON STONE
Here's to Stanley staying buried.

He takes a sip.

Nick walks in.

NICK DUNN
We've got a problem.

JACKSON STONE
Who's cancelling?

NICK DUNN
Fifth and main.

JACKSON STONE
That's just storage.

NICK DUNN
Remember Marcus?

JACKSON STONE
I remember firing him.

NICK DUNN
Guess who rented part of it out
without telling anyone?

Jackson puts the drink down and grabs his jacket.

JACKSON STONE
I'll handle it.

NICK DUNN
You don't have to.

JACKSON STONE
Part of being the owner is doing
some personal quality control every
now and again.

NICK DUNN
Don't you pay people to do that?

JACKSON STONE
They'll never be as thorough as the
guy who signs their checks.

Jackson and Nick leave.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

SECURITY GUARDS and GOONS stare at each other.

Everyone is armed.

One of El Jefe's goons, OSCAR HERNANDEZ (mid 20s) is in the middle, staring down one of the Guards.

OSCAR HERNANDEZ
Do you know who our boss is?

SECURITY GUARD
Does it look like I care?

Oscar looks at the guard menacingly.

JACKSON STONE (O.S.)
You should, Mister Jefferson.

Jackson walks up to the two of them.

OSCAR HERNANDEZ
Who the fuck are you?

JACKSON STONE
(points up)
You see the sign?

Oscar looks up and sees a sign indicating "Jackson Stone Security, Limited."

OSCAR HERNANDEZ
You work for Jackson Stone?

JACKSON STONE
I am Jackson Stone.

OSCAR HERNANDEZ
Your boy said you knew that we were
renting some space.

JACKSON STONE
I'm assuming you mean my former
employee, Marcus Weathers.

OSCAR HERNANDEZ
I paid him ten grand a month--

JACKSON STONE
Then you need to kindly ask him for
your money back.

OSCAR HERNANDEZ
I need my stuff back.

JACKSON STONE
I can send in my men to get it.

OSCAR HERNANDEZ
You don't lay a hand on our stuff.

JACKSON STONE
Which cartel do you work for?

OSCAR HERNANDEZ
I work for *El Jefe*.

A chill goes down Jackson's spine.

JACKSON STONE
That means the boss.

OSCAR HERNANDEZ
I've had enough of this.

Jackson's body tenses up.

Oscar takes out a pistol.

Jackson kicks it out of his hand.

The pistol flies through the air, bouncing off the head of
one of the Goons and back into Jackson's hand.

Jackson is shocked.

JACKSON STONE
I didn't expect that.

The Goons raise their guns.

The Security Guards do the same.

OSCAR HERNANDEZ
We want what's in that room.

JACKSON STONE
I'll call the police and have them
take it out.

OSCAR HERNANDEZ

You do that and you don't walk away
from here.

Jackson presses the magazine release on the pistol.

The magazine falls out, bouncing off the ground.

Jackson pulls the slide back, ejecting the bullet inside.

Oscar stares him down.

Jackson tosses the gun away.

JACKSON STONE

If you want it that bad, you can
ask me kindly.

OSCAR HERNANDEZ

I bet you can't do that fancy kick
again, Mister Stone.

Jackson holds his finger up.

Oscar nods.

Jackson takes his suit jacket and tie off. He hands them to
one of the Security Guards.

JACKSON STONE

If you're feeling froggy.

Oscar charges.

Jackson hits him flush with a no look, behind the back elbow.

Oscar stumbles back, his nose broken.

Jackson kicks Oscar square in the nuts.

Oscar screams in pain, falling down.

One of the Goons approaches Jackson tentatively.

Jackson points to his watch.

The Goon charges.

Jackson pieces him with up a combination of punches, grabbing
the Goon's head in a Muay Thai clinch and caving his face in
with knees.

The Goon falls to the ground, out cold.

JACKSON STONE (CONT'D)
Anyone else?

The Goons turn and run away.

INT. PERCY HARRIS'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The corner office in a Top 100 law firm.
Percy sits behind a massive executive desk.
Stephanie and Kathryn sit in front of him.

PERCY HARRIS
You can take a horse to water but
you can't make him drink.

KATHRYN DASH
He's the only who's ever said no.

STEPHANIE DASH
Maybe he doesn't need the money?

KATHRYN DASH
Jeff Bezos is the richest man in
the world and even he wants more.

PERCY HARRIS
Maybe he doesn't want the lifestyle
of your family.

KATHRYN DASH
He turned me down. I should've
brought the camera crew with me.

STEPHANIE DASH
We don't need them around all the
time, mother.

KATHRYN DASH
It would've been a highlight for
the show, easy.

STEPHANIE DASH
I don't want to relive it. Maybe we
can let it go and use what we have.

KATHRYN DASH
The episode with the raw, exclusive
footage is going to be viewed by
untold millions. He's the missing
link to this story.

PERCY HARRIS

Have you thought about not being in the spotlight so much? Someone pulled a gun on you.

KATHRYN DASH

It's how we keep the lights on.

STEPHANIE DASH

Stupid drama for the mouth breathers keeps us relevant. The moment we stop videotaping stupid shit like that is the day the money stops.

PERCY HARRIS

Yes ma'am.

STEPHANIE DASH

You'd think a handsome guy who runs a security company would want to be on television.

PERCY HARRIS

He said no. Twice.

KATHRYN DASH

This guy is a combination of Rambo and Brad Pitt but he's content to just be a guy behind a desk. It doesn't feel right.

(beat)

Call the investigator. I want some leverage to get him on it.

PERCY HARRIS

I'll have someone tail him and put together a profile on him.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

A chain coffee store.

Customers lounge around.

A CASHIER (female, late 20s) is behind the counter, yawning.

Jackson walks in and up to her.

JACKSON STONE

Can I get four large coffees?

Dennis walks in. He gets in line behind Jackson.

CASHIER
Thirty Dollars.

Jackson reaches into his wallet and hands her cash.

JACKSON STONE
Where's your bathroom?

Dennis looks up. He recognizes that voice.

CASHIER
Around and to the left.

Jackson walks to the bathroom.

Dennis's eyes follow him as he walks away.

CASHIER (CONT'D)
Can I help you?

Dennis turns to the cashier.

DENNIS
Can I get a mocha latte?

CASHIER
Eight dollars.

Dennis reaches into his wallet and takes out a credit card.

He swipes it on the card reader.

His eyes look around and he walks to the bathroom.

BATHROOM

Jackson washes his hands.

Dennis walks in.

DENNIS
Stan?

JACKSON STONE
Excuse me?

DENNIS
Holy shit!

Jackson looks up and sees Dennis in the mirror.

Dennis smiles.

Jackson's face turns into a singular expression: Oh shit.

JACKSON STONE

I think you have me confused with
someone else.

DENNIS

I need to take whatever supplement
you're taking, man.

Jackson wipes his hands off with a paper towel and tosses it
into a garbage can. His eyes quickly look into the mirror and
at the stalls.

DENNIS (CONT'D)

What the hell happened to you?

Jackson walks up and locks the door.

DENNIS (CONT'D)

I know it's been a while but--

Jackson grabs Dennis by the collar and throws him against the
wall. His forearm goes onto Dennis's throat.

JACKSON STONE

I'll make this nice and easy,
Dennis. Stan is dead. I buried him.

Pure fear comes over Dennis's face.

Jackson looks him right in the eyes. Dennis can feel the
violence radiating off them.

JACKSON STONE (CONT'D)

If you tell anyone you saw me I
swear to Christ I will hurt you and
everyone you care about.

Dennis's lip quivers.

JACKSON STONE (CONT'D)

Nod if you agree with me.

Dennis nods.

Jackson lets go. He adjusts Dennis's collar back to normal.

His hands reach into his wallet and he places several hundred
dollars in Dennis's hand.

DENNIS

I--

JACKSON STONE

Buy yourself a better shirt.

Jackson unlocks the door and walks out.

Dennis's eyes follow him as he leaves.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - MOMENTS LATER

VERNE STANSON (mid 50s, detective) stands several feet from the door way. In his hands is a folder with Jackson's photo attached to it.

Verne is short, overweight and balding with an impressive walrus mustache.

Jackson walks out with a four coffees in a carrier.

Verne watches as he leaves.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Jackson walks down a busy street.

Verne follows him discreetly.

Jackson doesn't notice.

INT. RYKER'S ISLAND VISITOR'S ROOM - DAY

El Jefe sits at a table.

Oscar is across from him, his face bruised up.

EL JEFE

I should see the other guy, right?

Oscar looks away.

EL JEFE (CONT'D)

Who?

OSCAR HERNANDEZ

We tried to get the stuff and the guy I rented the space from did it behind his boss's back.

EL JEFE

So you should've paid them off!

OSCAR HERNANDEZ

Their boss showed up.

EL JEFE
Why is he still breathing?

OSCAR HERNANDEZ
He wasn't a normal guy.

EL JEFE
Was he bulletproof?

OSCAR HERNANDEZ
He kicked it out of my hand.

EL JEFE
And then what, it bounced off of
one of your idiots and right back
into his hand?

Oscar looks away.

EL JEFE (CONT'D)
I knew a man who could do that.
(beat)
What is his name?

OSCAR HERNANDEZ
Jackson Stone.

EL JEFE
Describe him to me.

OSCAR HERNANDEZ
He was tall, in good shape and--

EL JEFE
Really good-looking?

Oscar nods.

EL JEFE (CONT'D)
I saw Jackson Stone die.

OSCAR HERNANDEZ
Maybe it was his identical twin.

EL JEFE
Who also has his same exact name?

OSCAR HERNANDEZ
I don't know but he fucked me up
and then he fucked Paco up.

EL JEFE
Describe him to me.

Oscar talks.

El Jefe doesn't listen, his mind wandering.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

A motorcycle speeds through the jungle at impossible speeds.

The REAL JACKSON STONE (badass secret agent, mid 30s) is on it. He's tall, blonde, impossible handsome and looks absolutely nothing like our Jackson Stone.

Bullets whiz past him.

Several Jeeps full of armed Goons chase him.

El Jefe is in one of them.

EL JEFE
Get him!

EXT. JUNGLE DOCKS - DAY

The Real Jackson Stone ditches the bike and sprints towards a speed boat.

The Jeeps pull up, Goons piling out. Guns are aimed.

Gunfire splashes all around the Real Jackson Stone as he jumps into the boat.

The Real Jackson looks up and spot El Jefe.

El Jefe smiles and reaches for his pistol.

His hand stops.

A knife is in his chest.

His eyes see the Real Jackson Stone flipping him off.

REAL JACKSON STONE
(loudly to El Jefe)
The company sends its regrets!

The Boat roars to life, taking off.

El Jefe sees blood pouring down his chest. He falls down.

A Goon points a missile launcher at the boat.

WHOOSH!

The Boat explodes.

El Jefe smiles.

A guard hands him a cigar.

El Jefe lights it up and takes a big puff.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE STADIUM - DAY (PRESENT DAY)

A van marked "Stone Security" is parked on a corner.

Jackson walks up to it and knocks on the back door.

From a distance Verne pulls out a small digital camera and takes a picture of Jackson.

The door opens up.

Jackson gets inside.

INT. COMMUNICATIONS VAN - DAY

Monitors display video feeds from all over a stadium.

Several TECHNICIANS observe them.

TYLER GRETZKY (mid 30s) is in charge. He's short but muscular with a large Marine Corps tattoo on his forearm.

Jackson hands out coffee to the men.

TYLER GRETZKY
Thank you, Mister Stone.

JACKSON STONE
I was around and thought you guys
might need some refreshment.

TYLER GRETZKY
It's appreciated.
(takes a drink of the
coffee)
So is it true you're going to be on
"Follow the Dash" this season?

INT. PERCY HARRIS'S OFFICE - DAY

Percy receives a text message from Verne.

VERNE STANSON (TEXT)

I've got nothing so far. Only a day or so in but usually something pops up quickly.

PERCY HARRIS (TEXT)

Keep digging. Have to be thorough on this one.

INT. COMMUNICATIONS VAN - DAY

Jackson looks around, uncomfortable.

JACKSON STONE

She stopped in once.

TYLER GRETZKY

My wife is obsessed with that show. If you play your cards right you could marry Fugly Dash.

JACKSON STONE

There's more than one of them?

TYLER GRETZKY

There's four of them, plus mom.

JACKSON STONE

The mother's a real piece of work.
(looks at monitors)
How's everything looking?

TYLER GRETZKY

Everything is going smoothly.

JACKSON STONE

Any word from inside?

TYLER GRETZKY

Nothing to report.

Jackson looks at the monitor. He sees Verne take a picture of the van. His eyes focus on him.

JACKSON STONE

Walk me through your perimeter.

INT. KATHRYN'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Obscenely priced furniture is all over the room.

Posters for six seasons of "Follow the Dash" are mounted on the walls.

A sheet of paper marked "Renewal Status Change Notification" is on a table.

STEPHANIE DASH

They can do this?

KATHRYN DASH

We can sign as many extensions as possible but there's always an exit clause for the network.

STEPHANIE DASH

I keep worrying that this will be the end. I mean what do I do?

KATHRYN DASH

It's why we'll get that security guy on camera. That episode will spike ratings and we'll get renewed. Don't worry.

INT. HANK STEIN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

HANK STEIN (mid 60s) sits behind a small executive desk in a tiny office reading a newspaper.

A law degree with lots of dust on it is the only thing on a wall.

Hank's hair is thin and gray, thick glasses dominate his face. His beard has some vestiges of color still in it.

KNOCK KNOCK!

Hank looks up as Jackson walk in.

HANK STEIN

Did we have an appointment scheduled and I forgot?

JACKSON STONE

Shirley said you were free and I need some advice.

HANK STEIN

I'm your outside counsel, not your shrink. I'm here for when you don't want the lawyers who work for you to know something.

JACKSON STONE
I need a little outside counsel
right about now.

Hank stands up and closes the door.

HANK STEIN
You're on the clock.

Hank walks back to his desk.

JACKSON STONE
I pissed off the wrong person.

HANK STEIN
I saw you on the news.

JACKSON STONE
Her family wants me on their stupid
show and won't take no for an
answer. I think they're digging
into my past.

HANK STEIN
So?

Jackson looks in either direction.

JACKSON STONE
If they dig they're going to find
out that Jackson Stone didn't exist
until about fifteen years ago.

HANK STEIN
What?

JACKSON STONE
My real name is Stanley Gerdling. I
sort of... you know.

Hank gets it. His hands reaches into the desk and pull out a
bottle of high-end whiskey. Two glasses follow.

HANK STEIN
This isn't good.

Hank pours glasses for the both of them.

JACKSON STONE
I'm trying to figure out how to
handle all of this.

Hank takes a drink.

HANK STEIN

What do they want?

JACKSON STONE

They want me to come on their show for a couple episodes about all it.

HANK STEIN

And if someone digs a little bit they'll figure it out.

Jackson takes a drink.

HANK STEIN (CONT'D)

Stolen Valor is a crime but it's the least of your worries. Right now the key is to figure out how much fraud you've committed.

JACKSON STONE

Everything is predicated on Jackson Stone being who I said he is.

HANK STEIN

Then the truth will get you sued into the next century.

JACKSON STONE

I have a thousand people who draw a check from me across the globe. I have to make this right for them.

Hank takes a long drink.

HANK STEIN

How much of your old life still exists? I'm talking social media, jobs, photos, you name it.

JACKSON STONE

My Linked In is all I have for the social media. Mom is dead, could never find the old man and two jobs plus three-odd semesters of junior college transcripts.

HANK STEIN

As an attorney I can't tell you to destroy evidence. What I can tell you is to see if you can pay for anyone's silence who might be able to be honest.

JACKSON STONE

Do you think I can buy my way out
of this?

HANK STEIN

How many actual people knew this
Stanley fellow?

Jackson ponders it.

JACKSON STONE

A couple of people I worked with
back in the day.

HANK STEIN

Find them, find any employment
records and see if you can get them
purged from the system.

(beat)

Were you ever in your yearbook in
high school?

JACKSON STONE

We never had one.

HANK STEIN

Did you look like this back then?

JACKSON STONE

Not even close.

HANK STEIN

Then you need to find the pieces of
anyone who can put this all back
together and get them to be quiet.

(looks into his drawer)

I have a non-disclosure agreement
that you can use for this somewhere
in here.

INT. VERNE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Verne looks through photos of Jackson all over his desk.

Across from him is his assistant, BRAD TORKELSON (mid 30s).

Brad goes through a handful of receipts.

BRAD TORKELSON

There's even a blog that mentions a
story he apparently tells.

Brad hands Verne a sheet of paper.

Verne reads it.

VERNE STANSON
Either this guy has covered every
single aspect of his life or--

BRAD TORKELSON
He's the real deal.

Silence.

VERNE STANSON
One thing is bothering me.

BRAD TORKELSON
All the records came back clean.

VERNE STANSON
What about the pedigree info?

BRAD TORKELSON
His credit score doesn't start
until about fifteen years ago.

VERNE STANSON
He was in the Army and then the
Agency. All my contacts there said
nothing so where's there's smoke--

BRAD TORKELSON
There's a CIA operative.

Silence.

VERNE STANSON
Did you follow up with the coffee
clerk? I didn't get a chance.

BRAD TORKELSON
He and another customer got into a
fight in the bathroom.

VERNE STANSON
What?

BRAD TORKELSON
For fifty dollars she gave me his
name. Dennis Sasso.

VERNE STANSON
Anything on him?

BRAD TORKELSON
He lives in Montana.

Verne ponders it.

VERNE STANSON

Do a FOIA request on him for his records and see what comes up.

BRAD TORKELSON

We know what'll come out. All those black bag guys have their records expunged once they get recruited.

VERNE STANSON

Do it anyways. Let's cover all our bases on this one.

INT. JACKSON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Jackson stares at his computer.

On his monitor is Dennis's Facebook profile.

Jackson pulls up a search engine. He searches for "Shop-Mart in Montana."

A news article comes up from many years ago about the store burning down. He reads it.

All of the store's computers were lost in the fire. Nothing was backed up.

He searches for "Gus Branch." The man's obituary comes up.

Jackson pulls up Dennis's Facebook profile again.

He sees a steady stream of posts indicating he and Martha having a "Date Night" at Henry's.

He books a ticket to Montana.

INT. HENRY'S BAR AND GRILL - NIGHT (SEVERAL DAYS LATER)

Nothing has changed about the bar since we last saw it.

Dennis is in the same booth.

Wings and a plate of nachos are in front of him.

Several empty beer bottles are on the table.

Jackson walks in and sees Dennis.

Dennis is frightened as Jackson sits down.

JACKSON STONE
So you didn't buy a better shirt.

DENNIS
Please don't hurt me.

JACKSON STONE
I'm sorry about that.

Silence.

DENNIS
Now you remember who I am.

JACKSON STONE
It's a long story.

DENNIS
We've got time.

JACKSON STONE
You told me I could change my life.
I did.

DENNIS
Congratulations.

JACKSON STONE
I just need you to stay quiet about
knowing me.

Jackson reaches into his pocket and hands Dennis a check.

Dennis looks at it. His eyes open wide.

DENNIS
Our friendship was worth more than
I thought, apparently.

JACKSON STONE
Don't be like that.

DENNIS
You didn't say goodbye. One day
we're working at Shop-Mart, the
next day you're gone with no trace
that you ever existed.

JACKSON STONE
I'm sorry.

DENNIS

I'll stay quiet about who you are.
I just wish you'd have said
something to me. I tell my wife
about all the great stories of us,
here, and how I prayed you found
some peace in your life.

JACKSON STONE

I was in a bad place.

DENNIS

You should've said something. After
a while I just assumed you killed
yourself and no one found the body.

JACKSON STONE

Stanley is dead. I killed him.

DENNIS

I can see that.

JACKSON STONE

I wanted to call you for the
longest time but that was the past.

Dennis takes out a handful of bills from his wallet and puts
them on the table.

DENNIS

And obviously your future is more
important than that.

(finishes his beer)

Take care of yourself.

Jackson looks around contemplatively.

INT. PERCY HARRIS'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Percy is behind his desk, typing on his laptop.

Verne walks in with a folder in his hands. He tosses it onto
Percy's desk.

VERNE STANSON

This guy is pretty clean.

PERCY HARRIS

Seriously? He doesn't pass the
smell test as far as my client is
concerned, Verne.

VERNE STANSON

This guy is as clean as anyone I've ever run. It's amazing.

PERCY HARRIS

That's not good.

VERNE STANSON

We pulled his FOIA request and his date of birth doesn't match.

PERCY HARRIS

Some desk jockey could've typed it in wrong.

VERNE STANSON

I did a reverse image search on Google of his face. Everything we know came up but on page one hundred we found something.

Verne hands Percy a photo of Jackson among the BJJ Black belts. Percy looks at it intensely.

PERCY HARRIS

This looks an awful lot like him.

VERNE STANSON

That's Jackson Stone at the same time he was in the CIA doing black bag work overseas per his website.

PERCY HARRIS

If you take off the weight and shave him then... maybe?

VERNE STANSON

I called the school. Master James was very nice. A guy named Stanley from Pisswater, Montana spent two years training there.

PERCY HARRIS

Where was this photo taken?

VERNE STANSON

San Francisco.

Verne hands him a photo of Jackson going into the coffee shop. He hands him another of Dennis following him.

VERNE STANSON (CONT'D)
This is Dennis Sasso. He's from
Montana and apparently got into a
fist fight with Mister Stone in a
bathroom there.

PERCY HARRIS
Maybe he said something?

VERNE STANSON
The cashier didn't say anything.

PERCY HARRIS
Keep digging on this Dennis guy.
Maybe he's our missing link.

INT. JACKSON'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jackson and Cheryl sit a table.

The remnants of a home cooked meal and a moderately expensive
bottle of wine are on the table.

CHERYL
So we're at this stage, huh?

JACKSON STONE
What stage?

CHERYL
The "we're comfortable but don't
have a label" stage.

JACKSON STONE
I'm not seeing anyone else.

CHERYL
Neither am I.

JACKSON STONE
So we're... official?

CHERYL
We are.

They clink glasses.

JACKSON STONE
How was your Day?

CHERYL
I'm defending Esteban "El Jefe"
Sanchez of the Juarez cartel.

JACKSON STONE
Sounds like a charmer.

CHERYL
He's claiming all sorts of crazy
shit with the CIA and the feds
aren't playing ball.

Jackson gulps.

JACKSON STONE
Really?

CHERYL
He had a scar on his chest that he
swears came from some James Bond
type. Every time I see him he shows
it off to me.

Jackson takes a big glass of wine.

INT. JACKSON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Cheryl is asleep in bed.

Jackson stands by his window, staring at his phone. He's
reading an article on El Jefe from a fringe conspiracy blog.

El Jefe is quoted as saying he killed a CIA agent named
"Jackson Stone" during a botched assassination.

Jackson looks at the words "Jackson Stone" and his heart
stops for a moment.

JACKSON STONE
Fuck me sideways.

Cheryl wakes up.

CHERYL
Everything OK?

Jackson turns to her.

JACKSON STONE
Sorry... waiting on an email.

Cheryl goes back to sleep.

Jackson looks back out the window.

INT. VERNE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Verne and Brad look at Dennis's Facebook profile on a laptop.

VERNE STANSON
Are you sure it's him?

BRAD TORKELSON
I went back to the barista and they
pulled the video. It was a match.

VERNE STANSON
How much did that cost?

BRAD TORKELSON
A hundred dollars.

VERNE STANSON
I'll add it to their bill.

Silence.

BRAD TORKELSON
What do we do now?

VERNE STANSON
We've gotten everything the client
wants. If they want to talk to the
man, they can send do so on their
own time.

INT. JACKSON'S KITCHEN - DAY

Jackson cooks an omelet for Cheryl.

JACKSON STONE
This is one of the few things my
mother taught us: her special meat
and vegetable omelet.

CHERYL
It smells delicious. It'll make
this afternoon easier to handle.

JACKSON STONE
Another appointment with El Jefe?

CHERYL
The judge was dumb enough to give
me a hearing.

JACKSON STONE
You're supposed to zealously defend
your client, right?

CHERYL
I've got a good ability to judge
which of my clients are guilty and
which ones aren't

Jackson puts the omelet on her plate.

JACKSON STONE
And?

CHERYL
I'll breathe a little easier when
the jury convicts him, even if it's
a loss on my record.

She takes a bite. It's delicious.

JACKSON STONE
I'm going to get a couple of my
guys do give you round the clock
protection, just in case.

CHERYL
Why?

JACKSON STONE
He's a bad guy.

CHERYL
You're overreacting.

JACKSON STONE
You're the one who hopes he's
guilty at the end of the day.

CHERYL
I'll be fine, Jackson.

INT. KATHRYN'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

All of Verne's findings are on a large table.

Kathryn, Stephanie and Percy look at it.

KATHRYN DASH
I knew there was something wrong
about this guy.

STEPHANIE DASH

I don't see what you're seeing.

KATHRYN DASH

I've got a sixth sense for bad men
and he isn't it.

PERCY HARRIS

A couple of small things that don't
add up aren't enough to ruin a guy.

KATHRYN DASH

I bet you give this to TMZ and
they'll pull out the stops to ruin
him... for the right price.

STEPHANIE DASH

Just because he said no isn't a
reason to do this.

KATHRYN DASH

He told me to go fuck myself. NO
ONE does that to me. I've come too
far and put up with too much for a
guy like him to insult me.

PERCY HARRIS

We don't have a smoking gun.

KATHRYN DASH

Then I want you to go find one.

Percy nods and leaves.

STEPHANIE DASH

What is this all about, really?

KATHRYN DASH

Respect.

STEPHANIE DASH

What are you, the Godfather?

KATHRYN DASH

Everything we have, everything we
have built, is because I never
backed down. I'm going to show him
and the world what happens when you
cross the Dash.

STEPHANIE DASH

This is a bit much, mom.

INT. JACKSON'S OFFICE - DAY

Jackson types on his laptop.

KNOCK KNOCK!

Mike Brooks walks in.

JACKSON STONE
My secretary must be on a break.

MIKE BROOKS
I wish this was just a social call.

Jackson stands up and they shake hands. Both men sit down.

JACKSON STONE
Did something happen that Nick
didn't inform me about?

MIKE BROOKS
Someone named Percy Harris left me
a voicemail wanting to know the
nature of our business.

JACKSON STONE
This isn't what you think.

MIKE BROOKS
What is it?

JACKSON STONE
I was involved with some celebrity.

MIKE BROOKS
You bang a movie star or something?

JACKSON STONE
Stephanie Dash's people want me on
their show and I said no.

MIKE BROOKS
Don't want your fifteen minutes of
fame?

JACKSON STONE
I'm fine without it.

MIKE BROOKS
Good because I told him where to
shove it.

JACKSON STONE
Thank you.

MIKE BROOKS

I just wanted to make sure you weren't involved in anything shady.

JACKSON STONE

I just deal in security, Mister Brooks. Nothing more.

Mike stands up.

MIKE BROOKS

That's all I needed to know.

They shake hands.

Mike leaves.

Jackson turns to his laptop.

KNOCK KNOCK!

Rachel walks into the room.

JACKSON STONE

You just missed--

RACHEL BEARD

Mister Brooks.

JACKSON STONE

What's up?

RACHEL BEARD

I've got emails from counsel at the Mumkey Corporation and FMX. They've been contacted by a lawyer and--

JACKSON STONE

Refer it to legal.

Rachel nods and walks out. She closes the door behind her.

Jackson takes his cell phone out and calls Cheryl.

INT. CHERYL'S OFFICE - DAY

Cheryl types on a laptop.

Her cell phone rings.

"Jackson Stone" is on the Caller ID.

CHERYL

Hey you.

INTERCUT BETWEEN CHERYL AND JACKSON.

JACKSON STONE

I need your legal expertise.

CHERYL

What's happening?

JACKSON STONE

The Dashes are using their attorney to reach out to some of my clients.

CHERYL

What did your lawyers say?

JACKSON STONE

I wanted an outside opinion first.

CHERYL

Maybe they're doing a background check in case you change your mind.

JACKSON STONE

Why call my clients?

CHERYL

Probably to make sure you're not being a Blackwater to some local indigenous population.

JACKSON STONE

I told them no. Emphatically.

CHERYL

They're persistent, I suppose.

JACKSON STONE

You free for dinner tonight?

CHERYL

I've got the El Jefe hearing in two hours and another six of paperwork after it.

JACKSON STONE

Text me if you're bored.

Both hang up.

INT. PERCY HARRIS'S OFFICE - DAY

Percy is behind his desk observing AMBER FITZSIMMONS (mid 40s, attorney). She's reading from a file folder.

AMBER FITZSIMMONS
This is interesting stuff.

PERCY HARRIS
My client has a wild hair up his
ass about this guy.

AMBER FITZSIMMONS
If you release it they will be
sued, I can guarantee that.

PERCY HARRIS
You're my libel consult for my
malpractice insurance.

AMBER FITZSIMMONS
I'd say you're in the clear if not
for one loose end.

PERCY HARRIS
What's that?

AMBER FITZSIMMONS
If you had something that this guy
isn't square, you avoid it all.

PERCY HARRIS
I emailed this guy but he didn't
email me back.

AMBER FITZSIMMONS
If he can substantiate at least one
thing on this then the rest will
come out, probably.

PERCY HARRIS
Thanks, Amber.

AMBER FITZSIMMONS
You won't be thanking me when I
send you the bill for this.

PERCY HARRIS
Your bill gets tossed onto mine to
Miss Dash, technically.

AMBER FITZSIMMONS
Now I don't feel so bad.

Amber leaves.

Percy pulls up Dennis's Facebook profile. He sees regular check-ins at Henry's.

PERCY HARRIS

I'm curious what about this place
keeps him going there.

He pulls up a travel website and books a flight to Montana.

EXT. COURTROOM STEPS - DAY

Cheryl and El Jefe walk outside.

A handful of El Jefe's Goons are behind them.

An ankle monitor is on his ankle.

EL JEFE

You are a miracle worker.

CHERYL

I didn't conjure up five million
dollars for your freedom.

EL JEFE

Thank you.

CHERYL

You're confined to the address you
gave to the court. Violate it and
that five million goes away and you
go back inside.

EL JEFE

I understand.

INT. JACKSON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Jackson goes through some mail.

A courier package is buried underneath it all. He opens it up
and sees paperwork from Percy Harris.

INT. EL JEFE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A mixture of things about Jackson Stone and the CIA agent
from his memory are all over a bulletin board.

A sketch of the Jackson Stone from El Jefe's memory, and a picture of the real one, are in El Jefe's hands.

It's not even close.

EL JEFE

Plastic surgery has come a long way, hasn't it?

He hands both of them to Oscar.

OSCAR HERNANDEZ

(points to Jackson)

He's the guy.

(points to the Real Jackson)

Never seen him before.

EL JEFE

It's the eyes.

OSCAR HERNANDEZ

It could just be a coincidence.

EL JEFE

Or he's hiding in plain sight.

INT. HENRY'S BAR AND GRILL - NIGHT

Dennis finishes up a beer.

Percy sits down across from him.

DENNIS

Can I help you?

PERCY HARRIS

Since you didn't respond to my email, Dennis, I thought I should stop in and say hi.

DENNIS

You must be the lawyer.

Percy takes out a photo of Jackson from his website and places it in front of Dennis. He takes out a photo of Jackson with the BJJ black belts and places it next to it.

Dennis looks at them for a moment.

Percy watches Dennis look at them.

PERCY HARRIS
Who is he, really?

Dennis pushes the photos back to him.

PERCY HARRIS (CONT'D)
I can make it worth your while.

Percy reaches into his briefcase. He takes out a large pile of cash and places it front of Dennis.

Dennis stares at it for a long time.

Another large pile of cash is slammed down.

Dennis nods.

DENNIS
So what do you want to know about my old friend Stan?

PERCY HARRIS
Stan?

DENNIS
This is going to take a long time to talk about.

Percy places another stack of cash down.

PERCY HARRIS
Your time is valuable.

DENNIS
I knew him back when he was Stanley Gerdling. We worked at Shop-Mart over on Main Street.

PERCY HARRIS
How did you meet him?

DENNIS
You know the losers who no one liked when you were in high school?

PERCY HARRIS
That was you two.

DENNIS
He was my best friend growing up.

PERCY HARRIS
Do you have any photos of him from back then?

DENNIS

A whole shoe box full.

Percy reaches into his briefcase and places down several more piles of cash.

INT. JACKSON'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jackson watches a violent action film on his television.

The paperwork from Percy is next to Chinese takeout.

Jackson's phone buzzes. He looks down and sees several emails from clients.

INT. CHERYL'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Cheryl digs through several boxes marked "Property of the United States Government" on her desk.

CHERYL

My tax dollars can't pay for organization, apparently.

KNOCK KNOCK!

El Jefe walks into the room.

CHERYL (CONT'D)

Mister Sanchez.

EL JEFE

I called the bond agent and told him I was going to see my lawyer.

He puts his ankle on her desk. The light is green.

CHERYL

You should've called.

EL JEFE

I like talking to you.

CHERYL

How can I be of service?

EL JEFE

I wanted to see how the case was going so far.

CHERYL
(points to boxes)
The government finally complied
with discovery so I'm seeing the
extent of their case.

EL JEFE
What do you think so far?

CHERYL
It's not good.

EL JEFE
I have faith in you.

CHERYL
We've got time to build a case to
refute this, at least.

He sees a photo of Jackson and Cheryl.

EL JEFE
Who is that?

CHERYL
I'd say my boyfriend but that
sounds so old-fashioned.

EL JEFE
He is a handsome man.

Several of El Jefe's men walk in.

CHERYL
That's Jackson.

EL JEFE
What does he do?

His men look at her aggressively.

El Jefe takes a pistol out of his lower back and places it on
her desk.

EL JEFE (CONT'D)
I insist.

INT. PERCY HARRIS'S OFFICE - DAY

Percy and Kathryn are behind Percy's desk looking into a box.

KATHRYN DASH
It's all here?

PERCY HARRIS
Everything you paid for.

KATHRYN DASH
I can't wait to see the look on his
face when he sees that we know.

KNOCK KNOCK!

Jackson walks into the room with the paperwork.

KATHRYN DASH (CONT'D)
We were just talking about you.

JACKSON STONE
I spoke to my attorneys and we want
changes before we'll sign this.

She turns to Percy and nods.

He exits the room.

JACKSON STONE (CONT'D)
Shouldn't you have your attorney
here for something like this?

KATHRYN DASH
I'm sorry but that offer is no
longer valid.

Kathryn pulls out a copy of Jackson's check. She takes out
more documents and photographs of him as Stanley.

Her hands slowly place them on the desk.

Jackson looks at her and then at them.

Oh shit.

Everything that can tie him to Stanley is out there.

She places a thumb drive on the table.

JACKSON STONE
I'll appear on your show for free.

KATHRYN DASH
I want two million dollars. Cash.

JACKSON STONE
I'm not that liquid. This is going
to take some time.

KATHRYN DASH
That's not my problem.
(points to thumb drive)
That's your problem.

JACKSON STONE
I'll see what I can do.

KATHRYN DASH
Meet me at the docks tonight with
it and the box, this drive and the
other are all yours.

JACKSON STONE
I need a week, easy to--

KATHRYN DASH
After midnight this goes up to the
highest bidder. Maybe you get it,
maybe you don't.

JACKSON STONE
What about the originals?

KATHRYN DASH
They'll stay with Percy until the
show airs. Then you get them.

JACKSON STONE
I'll be there.

INT. JACKSON STONE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jackson has a large amount of cash on a table.

He stares at it for a moment.

RING!

He looks at his phone.

The Caller ID says "Cheryl."

JACKSON STONE
Hey honey.

EL JEFE (V.O.)
Hello Mister Stone.

A chill goes down his spine.

JACKSON STONE

Where is she and what have you done to her?

EL JEFE (V.O.)

She'll be fine as long as you cooperate, Jackson Stone.

JACKSON STONE

Who is this?

EL JEFE (V.O.)

A man tries to kill you and you do not even remember. I'm offended.

JACKSON STONE

El Jefe?

EL JEFE (V.O.)

I've been planning this day for years, Stone.

JACKSON STONE

You've got the wrong guy.

EL JEFE (V.O.)

No I do not.

JACKSON STONE

I swear to God I made it all up.

EL JEFE (V.O.)

When my attorney mentioned her former Army Ranger who had a secret past I got curious.

JACKSON STONE

I made it all up. Just let her go.

EL JEFE (V.O.)

You don't get off that easy.

JACKSON STONE

This is all a misunderstanding.

EL JEFE (V.O.)

No it isn't. You tried to kill me. Now you will pay.

JACKSON STONE

You've got the wrong guy, swear to Christ. I'll help you find the real one, just please don't hurt her.

EL JEFE (V.O.)
You can change your face but you
can't change your eyes.

JACKSON STONE
I'm Stan from Montana. I can--

EL JEFE (V.O.)
ENOUGH!

JACKSON STONE
What do you want from me?

EL JEFE (V.O.)
Two million dollars in cash.

JACKSON STONE
Where?

EL JEFE (V.O.)
One in the morning. The docks.

El Jefe hangs up.

Jackson looks around, frightened.

He goes into a closet and pulls out his old Duffel bag.

His eyes see "Gerdling" on it.

Jackson places the cash into the Duffel bag.

INT. JACKSON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Jackson places the last of the cash into the Duffel bag.

KNOCK KNOCK!

Nick walks into the room.

NICK DUNN
I thought I was the only one here
tonight. You want to split some
Chinese food?

Jackson looks up.

Nick sees the Duffel bag.

JACKSON STONE
Not the right time.

NICK DUNN
Is everything OK?

JACKSON STONE
What do you think?

NICK DUNN
We should call the cops.

JACKSON STONE
NO! This is about the future of the
company and this is the only way.

NICK DUNN
What happened?

JACKSON STONE
El Jefe.

NICK DUNN
Oh shit.

Nick looks around.

JACKSON STONE
He's got Cheryl and wants two
million dollars for her.

NICK DUNN
Do you have enough?

Jackson looks into the bag.

JACKSON STONE
Not even close.

NICK DUNN
What are you going to do?

JACKSON STONE
I'm going to meet him in an hour at
the Docks. Maybe I can bluff my way
out of this.

NICK DUNN
If anyone asks I didn't see
anything tonight.

Jackson looks at him and nods.

Nick leaves.

Jackson takes his phone out and pulls up a map of the Docks.

He looks at a terrain view. There's no good way in or out.

JACKSON STONE
What would Jackson Stone do?

His eyes turn to the walls.

He spots the pistols and then the knife.

EXT. THE DOCKS - NIGHT

Kathryn, Percy and several armed bodyguards stand around.

Kathryn holds a thumb drive in her hands.

PERCY HARRIS
You sure he'll show?

KATHRYN DASH
He will.

PERCY HARRIS
That's a lot of money.

KATHRYN DASH
It's nothing.

PERCY HARRIS
So why do you want it so badly?

KATHRYN DASH
That prick turned us down.

PERCY HARRIS
You don't have to be here.

KATHRYN DASH
I want that prick to look me in the
eye and see who fucked him.

PERCY HARRIS
You need a mustache to twirl right
about now.

A high-end luxury car pulls up. The trunk opens up.

Jackson exits the car. He's wearing an oversized overcoat
that dwarfs his body.

KATHRYN DASH
In three minutes we'd be gone.

JACKSON STONE
It's in the trunk.

KATHRYN DASH
Fetch my money.

EL JEFE (V.O.)
You mean MY money.

El Jefe and a handful of his men emerge from the darkness.

Jackson looks at him.

EL JEFE
I came here early to make sure you
didn't set up on us.

KATHRYN DASH
Who the hell are you?

JACKSON STONE
Where's Cheryl?

KATHRYN DASH
You can handle whatever business
you have to take care of once he
brings me my money.

Stone takes a couple steps back, surveying the situation.

EL JEFE
You can have whatever he has on him
besides the two million dollars he
will give me.

KATHRYN DASH
You mean the two million dollars
he's going to give me.

JACKSON STONE
Where's Cheryl?

El Jefe whistles.

Oscar emerges from the darkness with her.

Jackson points to the trunk.

JACKSON STONE (CONT'D)
Take the money, leave the girl.

KATHRYN DASH
You'd give up everything for her?

Jackson looks at Cheryl.

JACKSON STONE
Absolutely.

Kathryn takes a small pistol out and points it at Jackson.

KATHRYN DASH
Well I won't.

El Jefe's goons point their guns at Kathryn's bodyguards.

Kathryn's bodyguards point their guns at El Jefe's goons.

JACKSON STONE
Would you guys take half each?

EL JEFE AND KATHRYN DASH
No!

Jackson surveys the scene.

El Jefe unbuttons his shirt and exposes the scare.

EL JEFE (CONT'D)
I remember the day you gave me that
scar with that knife.

JACKSON STONE
That actually happened?

EL JEFE
You should know... you were there.

KATHRYN DASH
He's not the guy you think he is.

EL JEFE
(to Kathryn)
He's exactly the guy I think he is.
(to Jackson)
You can change your body but you
can't change your soul. You will
pay for everything you did that day
to me, my men and my business.

JACKSON STONE
I'm not Jackson Stone.

KATHRYN DASH
He isn't.

EL JEFE
Stop with the lies, gringo!

Jackson drops the overcoat to the ground and pulls out both of his pistols.

BANG! BANG!

El Jefe and Oscar are hit in the chest, falling to the ground. Blood pours out of their wounds.

Cheryl screams and falls to the ground.

BANG!

Kathryn is shot in the head by one of El Jefe's men.

A firefight of epic proportions breaks out.

Jackson sprints to the back of his car.

Cheryl looks at him and runs over to him on instinct.

Jackson emerges from the back of his car, unloading both his pistols at all comers.

Cheryl makes it behind the car.

Jackson ducks behind it.

Bullets fly everywhere.

BEHIND THE CAR

CHERYL

What the shit is happening?

JACKSON STONE

Two blackmailers are fighting over an inconsequential amount of money.

CHERYL

How did this happen?

JACKSON STONE

Can I tell you later?

CHERYL

We might not be alive later.

JACKSON STONE

My real name is Stanley Gerdling. I was born in Montana. I was a rent a cop and lied my way to where I am.

CHERYL

So the Army, the CIA, the--

JACKSON STONE
Totally made up.

CHERYL
Is your hair real?

JACKSON STONE
Rogaine. I keep it underneath my
sink, behind the toilet paper.

CHERYL
The muscles?

JACKSON STONE
Totally real.
(looks up, around)
When I say when, run like hell.

CHERYL
I'm not leaving without you.

JACKSON STONE
We both can't make it.

CHERYL
How are you going to do it?

JACKSON STONE
I'll have to skip like a stone!

Jackson kisses Cheryl passionately.

He steps up and fires his pistols.

Cheryl sprints away.

MAIN AREA

Jackson spots Percy hiding behind a set of barrels.

El Jefe is back on his feet, directing his men towards Percy.

EL JEFE
Nobody leaves here alive!

Jackson looks over and spots Kathryn, dead on the ground. The
thumb drive is in her dead hands.

He sprints over to her body, opening fire on El Jefe's men.

The goons fall to the ground dead.

El Jefe grabs a pistol from one of his men and aims it at
Jackson. He pulls the hammer back.

CLICK! CLICK!

Both of Jackson's guns are empty. He tosses them to the ground and grabs the thumb drive from Kathryn's hand.

EL JEFE (CONT'D)
Don't move, Stone.

Jackson looks over.

El Jefe points a pistol at Jackson's face.

JACKSON STONE
I was working security at a big box store in Big Timber, Montana, when someone threw a knife into you.

EL JEFE
No... I know it was you.

JACKSON STONE
I don't want to die.

Jackson's hand slowly reaches down for his knife.

El Jefe notices.

EL JEFE
I've wanted to do this for years.

El Jefe lowers his gun.

JACKSON STONE
You can't be serious.

EL JEFE
I can--

Jackson quickly throws the knife into El Jefe's chest.

The gun falls out of his hand and onto the ground.

El Jefe looks at Jackson and then slumps to the ground, dead.

NYPD OFFICER (O.S.)
Freeze!

Police surround him.

Percy emerges with his hands up.

Both men are arrested.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

Jackson is cuffed to a desk.

AN NYPD DETECTIVE walks into the room with two cups of coffee. He places one in front of Jackson.

NYPD DETECTIVE
Mister Stone, how are you?

JACKSON STONE
Tired.

The Detective uncuffs him.

NYPD DETECTIVE
I've got a lot of questions.

JACKSON STONE
I bet you do.

NYPD DETECTIVE
There's a lot of dead bodies out on
the docks that need an explanation.

Jackson looks around and takes a deep breath.

JACKSON STONE
It's a hell of a story.

KNOCK KNOCK!

MATILDA SMITH (late 50s, lawyer) walks into the room. She's in a sharp business suit.

MATILDA SMITH
You know better than to talk to
someone without their lawyer in the
room, detective.

NYPD DETECTIVE
Now that you're here Mister Stone
can finish his statement.

The detective and the lawyer exchange looks.

MATILDA SMITH
I'll let you know when you can send
your boss in, detective.

The Detective shrugs. He exits the room quickly.

MATILDA SMITH (CONT'D)

When a junior partner calls at this hour you listen. She asked for a favor and wouldn't take no for an answer in that regard.

JACKSON STONE

This whole thing is a cluster fuck of the highest order.

MATILDA SMITH

The District Attorney himself came down here. That tells you how big of a mess this is.

JACKSON STONE

How do I get out of it?

MATILDA SMITH

Mister Percy Harris has made a statement that you were hired for security for Kathryn, off the books. She was buying drugs, for some reason, and it got violent.

JACKSON STONE

What do I plead to?

MATILDA SMITH

Sign off on a statement and you walk out of here.

JACKSON STONE

Just like that?

MATILDA SMITH

A celebrity is dead and they don't want the press snooping into it.

JACKSON STONE

Fair enough.

MATILDA SMITH

Mister Harris told me that he has some boxes that are your property.

JACKSON STONE

And?

MATILDA SMITH

He'll send them over to you in the morning provided you sign an NDA about all of this.

JACKSON STONE
That's fine.

MATILDA SMITH
How did you get into this mess?

JACKSON STONE
Excuse me?

MATILDA SMITH
The real story doesn't jibe with
the sort of fiction everyone wants
me to sell.

Jackson looks around.

JACKSON STONE
We're under attorney client
privilege, right?

MATILDA SMITH
As long as you aren't using me to
commit a crime or if you want to
waive it for some reason.

JACKSON STONE
Not even Cheryl gets to know?

MATILDA SMITH
Yep.

Silence.

JACKSON STONE
It happened exactly like they said
it did and I'll sign my name to it.

Matilda looks to the one way mirror and motions for someone
to come inside.

The DISTRICT ATTORNEY (mid 50s, male) walks into the room
with a folder full of paperwork.

MATILDA SMITH
We're good.

The District Attorney hands Jackson the folder and a pen.

Jackson takes the paperwork out and signs it.

INT. JACKSON STONE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Jackson walks into his apartment, a large mailer in his hands. He empties the mailer onto a table.

His watch, wallet and the thumb drive rattle onto it.

Jackson's hands pick up the thumb drive. His eyes look at it intently. He takes a deep breath.

KNOCK KNOCK!

JACKSON STONE

It's open.

Cheryl walks into the room.

CHERYL

Hey.

They look at each other for a long moment.

JACKSON STONE

Didn't expect to see you.

CHERYL

After last night I wasn't sure if I wanted to see you, either.

JACKSON STONE

I know you've got a lot of questions about everything.
(grabs her hands, places thumb drive in them)
This is me, warts and all.

CHERYL

What do you want me to do with it?

JACKSON STONE

Everything about me is on there.

Cheryl looks at it for a moment.

JACKSON STONE (CONT'D)

I understand if you never want to see me again after everything that happened, and everything on there.

Her eyes turn to Jackson's fireplace.

She throws the thumb drive inside.

CRACKLE!

Her hands turn the fireplace on.

A roar of flame comes out.

The thumb drive melts.

Cheryl walks over to him and kisses him passionately.

CHERYL

As far as I'm concerned, you're
Jackson Stone.

JACKSON STONE

That's good enough for me.

They make out some more.

FADE OUT.