

Tungsten

written by

Curtis Miles III

16021 Biltmore Ave. #534
Pflugerville, Texas 78660
512-435-1294
cmiles3@gmail.com

FADE IN:

EXT/INT. ENGINEERING LAB/EXPLOSION CHAMBER - DAY

Outside of an engineering test lab is a sturdy metal chamber setup for performing explosion tests. A high-tech prototype of a pipe meter is in the chamber behind thick viewing glass and a protective barrier wall. The meter rotates on a raised platform by 90 degrees, then stops. A whirring sound is heard throughout the rotation. A pressure valve releases and the needle on the meter twitches.

JOHN, 35, average build, very professional-somewhat uptight, stands rigid on the other side of the barrier wearing safety goggles, holding a clipboard, taking notes as he observes.

An appointed engineer from the lab, younger, taller, lean and fit, stands nearby, quietly dividing his attention from the device in the chamber and John.

The robotic whir sound starts again as the platform rotates 180 degrees. A high pressure whistle sound is heard continuous as the meter tips into the red. A few seconds later, the valve releases and the pressure begins to drop as the needle slowly falls out of the red, back to zero.

The engineer steps forward and quietly pumps his fist victoriously. John doesn't react. A moment later, the final rotation whir of the machine is heard just before a split-second glitch sparks and the prototype violently explodes in the chamber. The engineer's elation fades. John turns toward the exit, jotting notes along the way. The engineer shrugs and follows along.

INT. ENGINEERING LAB - DAY

John walks around the engineering lab mostly looking down at his clipboard. The engineer has been talking to him this entire time, but he doesn't really begin to listen until he stops to observe another piece of equipment.

ENGINEER

...so she was frustrated, but it was a lot of fun. You know, maybe you and your wife should come by for D&D night sometime.

John continues to view the equipment as he responds.

JOHN

I don't have a wife.

Slightly embarrassed, the engineer glances at his ring finger.

ENGINEER

Sorry, I... I don't know, maybe I need more coffee. The last audit, only a few months ago, I thought I saw you wearing a... Maybe I was mistaken.

JOHN

I had a wife. Things didn't work out.

Not wanting to pry, the engineer tries to move on.

ENGINEER

How are we looking so far?

JOHN

No major surprises. We're pretty much done. Only a few non-compliance notes you'll need to review and adjust, but overall most of the standards are met.

ENGINEER

Great. We'll have the team focus on the notes and conclude this. I'm just glad it's done.

John signs a sheet on the clipboard, the engineer signs as well, and John hands him a page for his records.

ENGINEER (CONT'D)

Hey, if you're in the area a few more hours, we're all set here. It's happy hour - Come with - First round's on me. You in?

JOHN

Thanks, but tonight I usually go into the studio to record my podcast.

Hands in his pocket, clipboard under his arm. John's eyes wander as he tries to wrap up the small talk before he departs.

ENGINEER

Come on, it's thirsty Thursday and there's a great new spot that...

The engineer's voice trails off in John's mind as he begins to pay attention to a sibling dispute between two children. A boy of about 6, and a girl about 8.

The little boy stomps his feet and moves his arms dramatically toward the girl.

BOY

No! We gotta go play basketball!

Calm and reserved, she looks down at a phone as she tries to explain to him.

GIRL

We can't go right after, we have to stop at the store.

Overly dramatic, he holds his head and is frantic with his arms.

BOY

There's no time! We're gonna spend 30 hours in the store and then its gonna be too dark to go!

The little girl shrugs like she's not concerned. The adult male standing with them, holding the little girl's hand, finishes the sign-in form at the reception desk.

ADULT MALE

Calm down you guys, or we'll just go straight home and only have time-out.

They both groan and protest unhappily at the unfair possibility, but keep their words to themselves. John looks away and the engineer's voice returns.

ENGINEER

...if you're a single man, but don't have the freedom to let loose, what's the justice in that?

JOHN

You know, you're right. I'm in, let's go.

INT. BAR - LATER

John and the engineer cheers and knock back a shot glass. Jump cut to the two sitting next to each other at the bar nursing whiskey glasses. The engineer drank a bit more than John and slurs slightly while telling a joke.

ENGINEER

My cousin went to jail and says to me, "I'm innocent, you NEED to believe me." I tell him, "We all know why you keep going to jail. I NEED you to understand that it's 2019. There's easier ways to meet other men.

The engineer chuckles hard. John laughs slightly.

ENGINEER (CONT'D)

My brother always laughs at that one. What about you? Any close family?

John pauses, a bit uncomfortable. He stirs his glass for a second. The engineer frowns, sensing the discomfort.

JOHN

I don't usually like to talk about it. But...

John holds up his glass, grins and shakes the ice in it before taking a drink. The engineer smiles, ready to listen.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I had a sister. Just one - Older. We were very close. But she took a dark path, got involved with some bad people and... and she was murdered.

The engineer's eyebrows raise as it sinks in.

ENGINEER

So the rumor is true.

John looks at him questioning. He sips his drink waiting for his next words.

ENGINEER (CONT'D)

My colleague saw you at the last audit and mentioned he followed your case. O-or your sister's case? Something about a murder, a suicide...some crazy stuff. Conspiracies, viral videos and sex trafficking. Said it was a high-profile case.

John stands up, grabs his coat and leaves cash under his whiskey glass.

JOHN
I just want to move on.

John checks the time.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Which is why I do the podcast.

John exits the bar.

INT. RECORDING BOOTH - NIGHT

John sits in a small recording space wearing headphones. Laptop and notepad on either side with a microphone in the middle. A red light visible above him. He leans into the mic.

JOHN
For our next segment - Karma.

A thin, college-age, male appears in the viewing glass panel outside the door. He waves to get John's attention. John nods.

JOHN (CONT'D)
If it does exist, why is it a bitch?

The red light clicks off. The male enters.

MALE
Closing soon. Please wrap up.

JOHN
OK. Oh-hey... Any word on that pop filter?

MALE
Uh, supplies are coming in Friday, I'll check then.

JOHN
Thanks.

The male leaves. The red light clicks back on. John looks at the clock on his cell phone. Sees the notification reading "one missed call." He puts the headphones back on.

EXT. HOME DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Sitting in his car, John swipes over a few pictures of women on a dating app, before closing it and staring at the one missed call again. His finger hovers over the call back button, but he decides against it and exits the car.

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Wide shot of the dining area as John enters frame in the empty house and drops his keys on the table before flicking the lights off and heading upstairs.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - LATER

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)
(softly)
John... It's 3am.

The voice speaks to John from across the room. His eyes open slowly. The images around him gradually go from blurry to clear as he awakens.

JOHN
(longing)
Marla?

Eyes open, the voice clearly speaks to him from the alarm clock.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)
(robotic-sounding now)
John... It is 3:01 A.M.

John rubs his face as the alarm clock continues to repeat in the background.

CUT TO:

INT. HOME OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

John sits at his desk with a small lamp on. While his computer is booting on, he looks over and picks up the framed family photo of a younger version of John, two adults behind him and a young woman a bit taller than John standing next to him.

Focused on the young woman, his sister-Marla, John lingers on the photo a moment, then glances at his cell phone. Without picking it up, he unlocks the screen and hits dial on the missed call from earlier. Ringing is heard on speaker before voicemail and the sound of John hanging up.

John's attention shifts to the monitor just before an incoming text is heard. "Meet me at the diner" it reads.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

John is fully-dressed again and zips up his jacket.

Before leaving, John opens a drawer, retrieves a gun and conceals it in a holster under his shirt.

EXT. DINER - NIGHT

The night is quiet. From outside the window, the place looks empty as John approaches.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

The door chimes as John enters. A sleepy waitress looks out from the kitchen annoyed. John takes a few steps, looking around. No one else in sight.

ROMAN, 62, a tall, heavy, older and weathered Latin man walks out from the restroom area. He walks with a limp as one of his legs seem to be artificial. He makes eye contact with John and points to the only table with a coffee cup on it, as he walks there and sits. John takes a seat across from him.

The waitress approaches. John notices and points to Roman's coffee. The waitress nods and turns back toward the counter.

ROMAN

It's late.

JOHN

You called?

Roman sighs, stirring his coffee.

ROMAN

Somebody knows something.

JOHN

That's vague.

Roman shifts in his seat uncomfortably.

ROMAN

They re-opened the case. There's fresh eyes looking into new evidence.

John looks down and balls his fist. The waitress places a cup of coffee in front of him. He looks up and feigns a smile. She briefly feigns a smile back at him before walking away.

JOHN

What evidence?

ROMAN

I don't know. Some new witness.

JOHN

New witness? This is bullshit, right?

ROMAN

I don't know.

A pause. John stirs his coffee. He side-eyes Roman.

JOHN

I don't want to be connected to this.

Roman furrows his brow.

ROMAN

What, are you gonna shoot me?

JOHN

What are you talking about?

Roman leans back and scoffs at John.

ROMAN

Either you got a hard-on for me, or you tucked a pistol in the front. You don't know shit about guns, John! You're gonna shoot your little dick off.

John doesn't react. Instead he sips his coffee.

ROMAN (CONT'D)

What do you wanna do?

JOHN

Figure out who he is. Find out what he knows. Isn't that what you do?

ROMAN

And then?

A pause. John stares at his coffee.

JOHN

I don't know yet.

Roman downs the last of his coffee and stands.

ROMAN

Think about it.

Roman exits. John continues to sit, thinking to himself.

EXT. DINER - NIGHT

Roman walks away from the diner toward a dark color van parked nearby. The side door slides open. DETECTIVE YORI YOSHIDA, 34, tattoos along her sleeve, youthful energy, provocative blouse with visible cleavage. She greets Roman.

DET. YOSHIDA

Roman, back so soon?

ROMAN

Fuck you, pig.

Det. Yoshida pouts at him, amused.

DET. YOSHIDA

Aww... You're hurting my feelings.

ROMAN

Sorry. Detective - Pig.

DET. YOSHIDA

What did you get? Anything good?

ROMAN

Nothing.

Roman retrieves a voice recorder from his jacket and hands it to Detective Yoshida. She shakes her head, accepting the device. He walks away.

DET. YOSHIDA

Til next time!

She waves at him smiling. He holds up his middle finger without looking back.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. EX-WIFE HOUSE - DAY

John stands outside the door of a nice mid-size family home in a friendly, well-kept suburban neighborhood. A well-manicured lawn and garden are within view. John rings the doorbell once more.

XAVIER, 38, a tall black male, fit like an Olympian, opens the door wearing business attire.

XAVIER
Hey John. Come on in.

Xavier opens the door wider for John to enter. A plump but swift cat scurries out the door. Xavier scrambles but barely misses it before it races out the door.

XAVIER (CONT'D)
Mitzy! Wait- Dammit!

KAREN, 36, John's ex-wife, fit, very attractive and relaxed, dressed in 'athleisure-wear,' approaches the doorway. Amused by Xavier and the cat.

KAREN
Don't worry about Mitzy, she just likes to wonder sometimes. She'll come back when she's hungry.

JOHN
(mumbling)
Or when she's not in-heat.

Karen embraces and kisses Xavier on his way out.

XAVIER
(to Karen)
I'll see you tonight.

XAVIER (CONT'D)
(to John)
Later John.

Xavier exits and drives away. Karen escorts John into the kitchen area where she continues chopping vegetables.

KAREN
Eggplant?

JOHN
No thanks.

John takes a seat on one of the bar stools.

KAREN
What brings you by, John?

JOHN
Not much. Just in the area, thought I'd stop by and check on you.

KAREN
Oh yeah?

JOHN
Yeah... Everything, alright?

KAREN
Yeah. Everything's good. You good?

JOHN
Y-yeah, I'm, all... Everything's all good with me too.

Karen slices an apple in half. She takes a bite out of one half while nodding at John. She hands John the other half. He accepts and holds it.

KAREN
Good... Good, good.

She takes another bite out of her apple.

JOHN
So, uh... Any visitors or odd calls lately?

Karen raises her eyebrows, chewing, thinking before she swallows.

KAREN
You know, I have been getting a lot more robo-calls lately.

JOHN
Well, I don't mean, like-

KAREN
-What DO you mean, John!? What is all of this about? Why are you here?

John sighs. A pause.

JOHN

I heard they're re-opening Marla's case.

KAREN

Heard? So, you don't actually know? Heard from who?

JOHN

A reputable source. It's definitely happening.

Karen sighs, visibly frustrated already.

KAREN

So...?

JOHN

So!?

John scoffs.

KAREN

So what!? So they open the case. Okay... What does it matter?

JOHN

Do you really want to go to court again!?

KAREN

No! And I don't have to. I'm not your wife anymore. I don't have anything to say to-you or for-you.

John gets up and just as he's about to walk away, she mentions.

KAREN (CONT'D)

I did get a call recently.

John stops, turns and stands listening.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Detective Yo... Yoshi? Y- Ugh, the one with the tits. Detective Tits called me a few days ago.

JOHN

What did she say?

KAREN

They have a statement from a new witness and they're following up on leads. That's it.

JOHN

Following up on leads? Did she say who the witness was, or where they came from?

Karen stands and walks John closer toward the front.

KAREN

Yeah, she said his name was Genie, and he came from a lamp. I said I wish I didn't have to get involved with any of this...

She holds up her empty ring finger.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Oh, look - It came true!

John is near the front door, ready to leave without protest.

JOHN

Alright, I'm going.

Karen hands him a bundle of envelopes.

KAREN

Here, this is the last of your old stuff. That should be all of it.

John takes a moment to sift through it in his hands. Carefully maneuvering the apple between his fingers.

KAREN (CONT'D)

If you're not going to eat that half, I'll take it.

JOHN

I'm sure you would.

John tucks the envelopes under his arm and holds up the half-apple.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I'll keep it. Enjoy your eggplant.

KAREN

Bye John.

John exits the house.

INT. ROMAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

The camera follows the path of a power cable connected to the wall for Roman's computer. Roman's legs come into frame making visible the house arrest bracelet attached to his ankle. Roman talks aloud to a young woman through his smart speaker while he plays online blackjack on his desktop computer.

ROMAN

Sweetheart, sweetheart, I know, I know... it's going to be okay.

LIA, 27, very emotional, speaks through sobs to Roman over the smart speaker.

LIA (V.O.)

But how!?

ROMAN

Trust me, you're gonna be a great mom. It's in your genes. That's why I married your mother. It wasn't just those birthing hips she had.

Lia and Roman laugh together. Lia calms.

LIA (V.O.)

How do I know if I'm ready?

ROMAN

Lia, sweetheart, you're never ready. No matter how much you plan, life just happens. But you're strong, and you're not alone. Daddy's here.

Lia gets worked up again.

LIA (V.O.)

Yeah, you're all the way over there!

ROMAN

I told you, I'm... I'm working on it.

Roman twirls a pen between his fingers over a notepad with various details about John. Detective Yoshida's card rests on top of the notepad.

ROMAN (CONT'D)

You have my word that nothing is gonna stop me from being there when little Romie comes into this world.

Lia laughs.

LIA (V.O.)

Dad, I told you, I haven't decided on a name yet.

ROMAN

I know sweetheart, I'm just sayin. That's a good strong name in case you wanna use it. That's all.

The cards on the computer screen show Roman has two kings (20). The sexy Ukrainian girl flipping the cards, pulls a jack and an ace (blackjack). She smiles, shrugs and collects the cards. Dealer wins. Everybody else loses.

ROMAN (CONT'D)

Fuckin bitch!

(to Lia)

-Oh no, not you sweetheart. Sorry, I...

There's a knock at Roman's front door.

ROMAN (CONT'D)

Listen sweetie, I gotta go.

LIA (V.O.)

But-

ROMAN

-I gotta go baby, we'll talk later. Love you, bye.

The smart speaker call ends. The knocking continues. Roman covers the notepad, stands and approaches the door. He picks up a bat before he gets to the door and peeks through the peephole. It's John. Roman opens the door.

JOHN

You know, you really should give a woman the right to choose.

ROMAN

That's my daughter.

John stands there in the doorway silent, staring at Roman. A pause. Roman silently stares back at John.

Roman continues to hold the bat with a tight grip. After a moment, Roman allows John to enter.

John walks in carrying a backpack over his shoulder. Roman puts the bat down, following behind John who notices the Ukrainian woman on screen of the online blackjack game.

JOHN

I heard they all cheat. The crooks that run these games, they let you win a little so you think you have a chance. Then, they drain you dry with fap-bait smiling at you the whole time.

ROMAN

I drain myself dry because of that fap-bait. What's it to you?

JOHN

Those girls? They don't give a fuck about that game OR your money. There's even a video of one, smell-checking her cooch in between hands.

ROMAN

Noted. What's in the bag?

John reaches around, unzips the bag and pulls out a CPAP mask, handing it to Roman.

JOHN

I audited a medical equipment manufacturer and they had extras of these prototype masks. Real, high-end product. I got the fattest one to fit your face.

ROMAN

How thoughtful.

Roman examines the mask, impressed.

JOHN

Seriously, it should help. This company is doing big things to improve apnea treatment.

Roman continues to marvel at the product.

ROMAN

Not bad... Thanks. What's the occasion?

John adjusts the backpack along his shoulder.

JOHN

Thanks for the heads-up that night.
I just came from Karen's and she
confirmed it. You know, you also
have to start going to sleep
earlier to re-

ROMAN

-Jesus, John! I said thank you. You
wanna tuck me in too before I use
it? Have a seat.

Roman sits at his computer desk. John remains standing.

JOHN

Thanks, but I have to keep moving.
Just dropping off along the way.

John turns to go. Roman hesitates before speaking up.

ROMAN

One sec...

John stops and turns back. Roman shuffles through a cluster
of papers on a table nearby. He retrieves a coffee-stained
loose notebook page with hand-written notes transcribed
through it. He hands the paper to John.

ROMAN (CONT'D)

I got some intel on that witness.
Not much, but something to work
with.

John examines the various notes on the page.

JOHN

How is Gracy-Amb's and Peacemill
related?

ROMAN

I don't know all the details. I
don't even know who the guy is. I'm
just piecing together clues. That's
all I got so far. What will you do
if you find him?

JOHN

Just talk. I want to know what he
thinks he saw.

ROMAN

If the case is open, they'll find someone to close it on. Don't be reckless and make yourself an easy mark.

John folds the paper and stuffs it in his pocket before turning to leave.

JOHN

You almost sound like you care.

Another long pause as the two stare at each other silently for a moment. John exits the apartment. As soon as the door closes, Roman walks over and locks it. Roman then uncovers his notepad and picks up Detective Yoshida's card.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

CHIEF BRUCE BABINEAUX, an older black male, gritty, realistic, no BS attitude, sits behind a large oak desk, writing notes while listening to a fast-talking, sleek-suit wearing, high-end cufflinks and leather shoes-sporting, District Attorney, ADRIEN SCHULTZ. DA Schultz paces comfortably around the chief's office as he speaks.

DA. SCHULTZ

Three years ago is like a hundred years ago to witnesses. Memory is fallible. We need something solid.

CHIEF BABINEAUX

Are you saying we don't have a case?

DA. SCHULTZ

Not, what I said. I said we need something solid. Evidence, per se. I'll win this - No worries there - But some sort of proof would help us lock it down.

CHIEF BABINEAUX

We'll contact you with anything we get.

DA. Shultz nods at the chief and knocks on his desk with a knuckle before walking out of his office. Chief Babineaux stands and signals out of his window for Detective Yoshida to approach.

Detective Yoshia leaps from her desk, walking toward the chief's office. Along the way, she passes by DA Schultz and winks at him. He flirtatiously bites in her direction.

DET. YOSHIDA
Hiya chief!

Chief Babineaux leans over his desk as he speaks.

CHIEF BABINEAUX
Yori, tell me you have something.

DET. YOSHIDA
Uh... I have something...?

Chief Babineaux sighs.

DET. YOSHIDA (CONT'D)
Oh, if you mean do I, 'have-have'
something, then - Yes.

The chief looks up at her with a raised eyebrow.

DET. YOSHIDA (CONT'D)
I have a confidential informant
keeping me in tune with any related
activity.

CHIEF BABINEAUX
Play it straight - Only focus on
what we can use. I trust you; we
just need something solid.

DET. YOSHIDA
As opposed to liquid or gas?

Un-amused, Chief Babineaux stares blankly and doesn't respond.

DET. YOSHIDA (CONT'D)
I'm on it, chief!

MALE OFFICER (O.S.)
Hey Yoshida!

Det. Yoshida turns toward the voice and Roman is visible through the chief's window, entering the police station. She turns back to face the chief with a wide smile.

DET. YOSHIDA
Speak of the devil.

EXT/INT. EXECUTIVE AIRPORT PARKING LOT - DAY

AUTOMATED VOICE (V.O.)
 You have arrived at your
 destination.

John parks and picks up his phone, swiping away the map and checking his email to re-confirm that he is at the correct location. He is. A notification appears from a dating app, showing a young woman interested in meeting. He reviews her pictures and is interested. He messages a quick response to her. John exits the car and walks toward the executive airport entrance.

INT. EXECUTIVE AIRPORT RECEPTION - DAY

John approaches the receptionist, pulling out his clipboard and audit forms.

RECEPTIONIST
 Hi, how can I help you?

JOHN
 I'm looking for... Flight
 Fastbuilders, LLC or Mr. Daniel
 Benson.

RECEPTIONIST
 Hangar 8A.

She uses her pen to point down at a location on a map overlaying the reception desk. She then gestures where it would be located outside.

JOHN
 Thank you.

John follows her direction and walks outside carrying his clipboard.

EXT. EXECUTIVE AIRPORT HANGARS - DAY

John walks past pilots and other airport crew wearing orange vests, driving around the tarmac and carrying planes and other equipment. A ways from him, he can see a private jet with a black Mercedes-Benz SUV parked beside it. A tall, slim, model-looking woman, wearing shades and escorting a large black-fur poodle, exit the jet and enter the Mercedes.

AIRPORT CREWMAN
 Heads up!

A crewman in an orange vest yells out to John. Breaking from the distraction, John hears the crewman and reacts just in time to duck as the wing of a small aircraft passes over him. John looks back to see the crewman staring at John, shaking his head.

John walks past an open hangar to his right. Crewman work on an open aircraft with parts and tools for repairs. John continues past to see another open hangar to his left where an instructor stands speaking in front of a small group. Just outside of that hangar is a small aircraft with two young guys spraying water and cleaning the side.

In an isolated area off to the right, a large double-sized hangar stands with the letters "8A" atop the closed entrance. John walks toward the pedestrian door and enters.

INT. HANGAR 8A - DAY

Inside the hangar, the whiff of weed smoke in the air is potent. Surprised by the smell and on official business, John fans in front of his face with the clipboard. Standing at the entrance, he calls out.

JOHN
Hello!? Mr. Benson?

Looking around the room, John sees there are no aircrafts in this hangar. Instead, the entire hangar is filled with shelves of miscellaneous aircraft and other mechanical parts. Two immobile conveyors line the back walls. A wide open area near the entrance has a large, old, rusty barbecue grill and a few propane tanks nearby. John calls out again.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Mr. Daniel Benson, of Flight
Fastbuilders?

DANIEL BENSON JR., a young man, 26, long-dark hair tied up into a man-bun, full-unkept beard, walks out from behind one of the shelves wearing long shorts, flip-flops and for some reason, a green lab coat. A vape pen between his fingers of one hand, a cell phone in his other hand. He is frequently distracted by checking his cell phone as he speaks.

DANIEL
Uh, Mr. Benson was my dad. You can
call me...

A long pause and puff on his vape pen.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
...Mr. Benson.

JOHN
Is your dad around? We have an
audit scheduled for his
manufacturing facility today.

DANIEL
Uh... My dad died like... two years
ago. What manufacturing facility?

JOHN
(confused)
Um... Flight Fastbuilders LLC. This
is shown as the location for the-

DANIEL
-Ohhh! Yeah, Flight Fastbuilders.
Yep, yeah, that's here.

JOHN
Where?

DANIEL
Here!

Daniel opens his arms wide and gestures around the room. John
doesn't see anything related to what he would usually audit.

JOHN
Uh... Hmm.

Daniel smacks his palm to his forehead.

DANIEL
Shit! That audit is today? I
completely forgot. Aw, man, you
must be John, um... I forgot your
last name.

JOHN
Yes, I'm John.

Daniel tucks his vape and cell into his lab coat pockets.

DANIEL
I'm so sorry. Shit. I... I, uh, I'm
not ready. Is there any way I can
reschedule?

JOHN
Listen, I don't really see anything
we could test.
(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

Notes show this is the first audit here and, just looking around I can report so many violations. I'll save us both some time and-

DANIEL

-Wait, wait, please. Look...

Daniel walks over to the barbecue pit and opens the top. There is a hole in the cover, the top is heavy to remove and inside there is a cylindrical opening, with only hardened cement along the edge.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

This isn't much, but it's the um, uh, uh, it's the... um, furnace! My dad made it.

JOHN

Uhhh... That's disturbing and only leads to more potential citations.

DANIEL

Wait, um...

Daniel sighs.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

I'll be honest, I don't really know what I'm doing.

JOHN

I'm surprised.

DANIEL

When dad died, I thought I could handle things for him, but I'm barely figuring it all out.

John clicks his pen closed and tucks the clipboard in his bag. He stands looking at Daniel and around at the facility.

JOHN

How old was he and how did it happen?

DANIEL

51. I thought it was like a cancer or something. He didn't talk or tell me much about what was wrong. It was kidney or some type of organ failure though.

JOHN
Did he drink?

DANIEL
Yeah, but I know people who drink a hell of a lot more than him that should be dead instead. You know, it's not...

JOHN
We don't have to talk about it, if-

DANIEL
-No, its... It's ok.

Daniel shakes his head.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
He was a good man, and a great dad. He never hurt anybody. Even when he did drink. He was a happy drunk.

JOHN
I understand. Tell me about what he used to make.

Daniel begins to give John a tour, walking him through different areas and between shelves.

DANIEL
I remember he used to sell these airplane accessories.

JOHN
Wait, he was already selling them?

DANIEL
Uh...

JOHN
Don't worry about it. I'll pretend I didn't hear that. Go on.

DANIEL
Thanks. I'm not too familiar, but it was something to do with safety equipment for the plane.

Daniel picks up a small component from a shelf and leads them out of the aisles into the open area.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
My grandfather started this business during the war.
(MORE)

DANIEL (CONT'D)

My dad worked alongside him after serving, and picked up where he left off. I, uh, I...didn't listen enough. Now, I'm just fucking up what they built.

John puts a hand on Daniel's shoulder and nods.

JOHN

Yeah, you are.

Daniel looks at John, concerned.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Get your shit together. I'll come back in a few days. Have a prototype ready and try to find your dad's old audit reports.

Relieved, Daniel nods. John walks toward the exit.

DANIEL

Yeah, definitely. I will.

JOHN

Focus. We'll figure something out.

DANIEL

Thank you. Thank you.

John nods, then exits the hangar.

EXT/INT. EXECUTIVE AIRPORT PARKING LOT/JOHN'S CAR - DAY

John sits in his car, ready to drive off when he gets a message from the dating app. It's the girl from earlier, "Trivia Night, see you soon" winky-face. John grins.

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE - EVENING

Bryce Vine "Drew Barrymore" plays on the smart speaker over jump-cuts:

Sounds of shower running; Foggy silhouette view of John dancing in the shower.

John standing in his closet, moving to the music, sifting through different hanging shirts.

John stands in his mirror wearing jeans and an open shirt as he buttons it up.

Fully-dressed, he sprays a dash of cologne, then sniffs himself.

John throws on a jacket as the scene transitions.

EXT. TRIVIA NIGHT BAR - NIGHT

The music overlays the scene, fading out as John parks outside the bar.

INT. TRIVIA NIGHT BAR - NIGHT

John walks into a rowdy bar full of nerds and young professionals. He orders a pint at the bar as he pulls out his phone and looks around, holding up the picture. He scans the room until he sees a woman waving at him from a table of three people. It's the girl from the app. John grabs his beer, lays down cash and walks over.

MONOBINA THAKUR, 29, petite, very attractive, Indian-American female, leans over to whisper something to her friend, then stands to give a welcoming hug to John.

JOHN

Mo-no-bina?

MONOBINA

You said it right!

She high-five's John and they all clap impressed. She gestures over her shoulder to her girlfriend, out of John's view.

MONOBINA (CONT'D)

(mouthing silently to her friend)

I'm going to fuck him.

MONOBINA (CONT'D)

(to John)

Most people don't get it right the first time. Still, you can call me Bina.

JOHN

Nice to meet you, Bina. You look great.

MONOBINA

Thank you! This is my friend Helen and her boyfriend, Mark.

John shakes hands with the friends.

JOHN
Hello everyone. Good to meet you.

MARK
What are you drinking?

JOHN
Oh, a heff.

MARK
Good stuff. You know, we should get
a pitcher on the next round. Bina,
you like a heff?

HELEN
What's a heff? Is it like an IPA?

Mark shakes his head and kisses Helen on the cheek.

BINA
Yeah, is it a light beer?

John offers his glass to Bina.

JOHN
Here, try it. See if you like it.

Bina smiles, accepting John's glass and taking a sip. She
nods.

BINA
Mmm, pretty good. I'm in.

HELEN
(to John)
You know, when you let someone else
drink from your glass, it's like
sharing a kiss?

JOHN
Good thing I'm not shy.

Bina nudges Helen playfully and giggles.

INT. TRIVIA NIGHT BAR - LATER

John and Bina sit alone on a couch in a small side room away
from the main bar area. Trivia continues without them. The
two take a shot and then squeeze a lime in their mouth.

JOHN
 So you finished your residency in
 Houston, and now you're building
 your practice here?

Bina giggles and nods; tipsy, but attentive.

BINA
 Uh huh.

JOHN
 Do you have any family here or is
 everyone back home in Houston?

Bina crosses her legs, tosses her hair back and licks her
 lips before responding.

BINA
 Well, I consider this home now, and
 all of my friends here are like
 family.

John nods, listening while also checking her out. She smiles
 and blushes, seeing his eyes move across her.

BINA (CONT'D)
 Umm... Helen and I have known each
 other since high school. Mark is
 basically like a little brother.
 And my best friend, Leslie, is like
 the hot big sister, guys would
 chase...

She leans in close as she speaks. John follows her lead and
 they kiss. Making-out on the couch. Their lips linger on one
 another for a moment.

BINA (CONT'D)
 You wanna, um...?

JOHN
 Yeah... Do you?

She nods immediately.

EXT. TRIVIA NIGHT BAR - MOMENTS LATER

John and Bina walk out of the bar toward the parking lot.

JOHN
 I can drive.

BINA

No, it's okay. I'll drive. Come with me.

JOHN

Are you sure? I mean, I don't mind. I know you had a few more drinks than I-

BINA

-Oh yeah, no I'm fine.

She giggles briefly. John puts his keys back in his pocket and follows Bina to her car. She leads John by the hand, walking in front of him.

Near her car, she trips over her heel. John catches her. She tries to play it off, leaning her back against the car, and pulling him in to make-out some more. After a moment, John pulls back a bit.

JOHN

You alright there?

BINA

Yes, yeah, just a clumsy heel. Ergh...

She brushes it off with a laugh and pulls him back in to keep kissing. He pulls back again after a moment.

JOHN

Good, good... I just, uh... I mean, my car is right there. Really, I'm good to dr-

BINA

-I'm fine!

A pause. Serious and silent for a moment. Suddenly, they both burst into laughter together.

JOHN

I know you're fine.

John steps closer and kisses Bina long and slow.

BINA

You calling me a lightweight? I can handle a lot more than that.

JOHN

Show me.

Bina bites her lip and taps his butt.

BINA

Get in.

JOHN

I will.

Bina walks around the car, tripping again on her heel along the way, but recovering without help before she could fall. John opens the passenger door and takes a seat.

EXT/INT. BAR PARKING LOT/ BINA'S CAR - NIGHT

Bina stumbles into the car. John furrows his brow. She goes to put the keys into the ignition, but drops them. When she leans forward to reach for them, she bumps her head against the steering wheel.

JOHN

Uh, maybe I should just drive. Come on. Let me-

BINA

-Dammit! I said I'm fine! Just, give me a sec.

Bina continues to fumble with the keys. She misses the keyhole for the ignition much longer than a sober person usually would. John looks concerned.

JOHN

Seriously, you shouldn't-

BINA

-Please! Stop.

Bina enters the key and starts the ignition.

BINA (CONT'D)

I got this.

She takes a moment. She opens the mirror on the sun visor and the little light comes on. In the light, John notices on the dashboard flyers and business cards atop of headshots for an attractive model in her early thirties. The business card and captions for the headshot read 'Gracy-Amb's - Leslie K.'

JOHN

Who's this?

Bina pauses from touching up her make-up in the mirror to look over at John.

BINA

Why?

JOHN

Uh, because it's all over your car
and I recognize Gracy-Amb's.

BINA

Are you saying my car is dirty?
Look, I'm not filthy or anything,
I'm just busy.

JOHN

What? No, I said I recognize Gracy-
Amb's.

BINA

Because of Leslie? She's pretty,
isn't she?

JOHN

Uh, sure, but that's not... I just
heard Gracy Amb's-

BINA

-That's her modeling studio. Yeah
she's pretty, but its not like
she's a doctor or saving lives or
anything.

JOHN

Who?

BINA

Leslie!

JOHN

Oh, okay...?

BINA

Don't play dumb now. I see how
you're looking at her picture.

JOHN

What?

BINA

You wanna fuck her. Don't you?

JOHN

What!?

BINA

Get out.

JOHN
(confused)
W-what?

BINA
I said, get the fuck out! Go ahead-
Take one of her pictures with you
and beat off to it at home, you
fucking prick.

Bina shoves John, pushing for him to get out. He reads Gracy-Amb's on one of the cards and decides to pocket it as he climbs out of her car. As soon as he closes the passenger door, she peels off. She stops abruptly, almost hitting a passing car driving through the parking lot. The other car honks at her.

John stands in the parking lot alone for a moment. John walks over and enters his own car.

EXT/INT. BAR PARKING LOT/ JOHN'S CAR - NIGHT

He pulls the card out of his pocket and digs through his glove compartment for the paper Roman gave him with the notes. John sighs, thinking a moment. John turns on his car and drives away.

EXT. GRACY-AMB'S STUDIO - NIGHT

John parks his car outside of a discreet-looking brick building, matching the address for the studio on the Gracie-Amb's business card. A familiar-looking black Mercedes-Benz SUV is in the lot also. John walks around the building to look for an entrance.

Around the corner, a cat leaps out toward John. He catches it and it purrs in his hands. He pets it, then sets it down.

Light shines behind a lone metal door ahead of the small courtyard. John enters.

INT. GRACY-AMB'S STUDIO - NIGHT

John slowly wanders through a narrow hall toward the visible open doors ahead to the right. Inside, music plays from a smart speaker on a table nearby. An experienced-looking model poses in various positions over furniture in front of a white photo-screen. A photographer silently snaps multiple pictures rapidly while gesturing directions in between shots.

John stands at the doorway, scanning the room for clues. He recognizes the model is the same woman he noticed getting off the jet at the airport. He looks down at the business card again and looks around until he sees a casually dressed woman in glasses standing aloof and approaches her.

As John gets closer, the photographer points to her and then a standing light fixture. Without noticing John, she immediately follows the photographer's non-verbal instruction and shifts the light, tweaking open the enclosure, making it brighter.

MODEL

It's hot.

The model complains. Without looking away from his camera lens, the photographer snaps his fingers. The woman, walks toward the thermostat on the wall behind John. Their eyes meet and linger on each other a moment, and they smile.

JOHN

Hi.

RACHEL, 33, cute, modest, casual, bookish, responds while adjusting the thermostat.

RACHEL

Hi... Can I help you?

JOHN

Um, yeah, I'm looking for...
Leslie?

RACHEL

Oh. Uh, that's her right there. But obviously, she's kinda busy. We're the only ones in the studio this late. If you're here to lock-up, Marceau has a key. And, of course, Leslie... She owns the place.

JOHN

No, no. I just wanted to ask Leslie about something.

RACHEL

Is it personal? Like are you two...

JOHN

Oh, no, it's not like that. Uh...

RACHEL

Well... While she's busy, maybe I can help?

John and Rachel quietly walk out of the studio area into the hall.

JOHN

What happens here at this studio?

Rachel gives a soft chuckle.

RACHEL

Um... We do headshots, casting calls... I mean, what is this about?

JOHN

This place connected to Vegas or anything sketchy or related to any investigations potentially?

RACHEL

We do exhibit in Vegas a few times a year, but it's mostly just Leslie that travels. I hear she has her own private jet, that lucky bitch.

JOHN

Does Leslie have any ties to law enforcement?

RACHEL

I... Don't know...

Rachel raises an eyebrow at John.

JOHN

Sorry, I know I sound crazy. It's just... I have a friend dealing with some legal thing and he mentioned checking out this place and Peacemill for info that might be helpful.

RACHEL

Peacemill! I know that place! That's the cop bar by the courts.

JOHN

Wait, why do you know that?

RACHEL

I always hear Leslie's friend talk about it. He calls it the "Rumor-Mill."

John nods, making a mental note.

JOHN
Ah, ok. Thanks... uh?

RACHEL
Rachel. And you are?

JOHN
I'm John.

They shake hands.

RACHEL
Pleased to meet you, John.

JOHN
A pleasure, indeed.

RACHEL
Here's my card...

She flips it over and jots her number on the back.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
It's actually Marceau's, but here's
my number. Text me if you have any
other questions or anything.

John grins and accepts her card. She drew little hearts where
the dashes would be.

JOHN
Rachel... Thank you.

John tucks her card in his chest pocket and exits the studio.
Leslie, inside the studio, noticed John standing outside the
door and follows him with her eyes as he leaves.

EXT. GRACY-AMB'S STUDIO - NIGHT

John enters his car and drives away. A sedan parked nearby,
turns on its headlights and Det. Yoshida discreetly follows
John's car.

EXT. PEACEMILL BAR - NIGHT

John rounds the side of the bar toward the entrance. He can
see the courthouse only about a block away and police
vehicles parked nearby.

INT. PEACEMILL BAR - NIGHT

A K-Pop trot song, "Goodbye" by Hong Jin-Young, plays loud inside the bar over the sound system. John hears it and stops; wondering if he entered the wrong bar.

BARTENDER

Ha ha! You're in the right place.
Come on in! Don't be shy.

John walks over to the bartender pointing up; curious.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)

Walker's had a few.

The bartender nods toward the direction of an officer, in uniform, dancing and twerking to the song while trying not to spill his bottle of beer. A few other cops nearby, some in plain clothes, dance and cheer him on. John takes a seat at the bar.

JOHN

Scotch on the rocks.

The bartender talks while making his drink.

BARTENDER

He's ready to retire early and
caught a lucky break closing
several cases at once.

John continues watching them dance while sipping his drink.

JOHN

Ok...

BARTENDER

Last bust was a raid on a Korean
massage parlor. Drugs, sex slaves,
you name it.

JOHN

Uh huh...

Walker is on the dance floor, grinding, sandwiched between two females. John continues to sip his drink.

BARTENDER

Apparently, they were playing this
song in the parlor the night of the
raid.

John grabs his drink and stands from his seat.

JOHN

Ha. Thanks.

John raises his glass to the bartender then begins walking around. John passes the dance floor and the crowd, moving through to the next room passed pool tables and into a room where there's a lounge and a few people sitting on couches watching a UFC fight.

John leans against the wall sipping his drink. He scans the room for any clues. John slowly walks the hall looking at pictures on the wall. A black and white photo of a group of cops at a local precinct. A more recent photo of an officer and his partner standing next to their cruiser.

MALE COP (O.C.)

John!

An officer calls out from the main bar area. John turns his attention to him.

MALE COP (CONT'D)

Hey John, I knew that was you.

John doesn't recognize him.

MALE COP (CONT'D)

(slurring)

Ah, don't worry. I'm not surprised you don't recognize me. I was one of the original officers you harassed when you thought we weren't doing our job.

John takes a step back, holding out his palms.

JOHN

Look, I don't want any trouble. I'm just-

MALE COP

-Just what? Huh!?

The cop is drunk and swaying as he speaks. He wobbles as he steps closer to John, spilling a bit of his beer on John's shirt.

MALE COP (CONT'D)

Trying to fuck shit up again!?

People hear and start to notice. DA. Schultz, sees the two from inside the billiards room and comes over, throwing an arm over the cop's shoulder.

DA. SCHULTZ
Whoa, hey buddy. Everybody's
welcome here. Let's uh, get you
some water. Okay?

DA. Schultz escorts the officer away, but side-eye's John as they go. John steps aside then turns the corner toward the restroom.

INT. PEACEMILL RESTROOM - NIGHT

John enters the restroom and leaves his drink on the counter while he uses the urinal. While standing there, a toilet flushes from the stall and a dark ominous figure emerges. GERALD, AKA 'G', tall, black male, long dirty dreadlocks, walks over to the sink and starts washing his hands.

GERALD
(to John)
Lucky you, my shit don't stink.

John turns his head to see the man and immediately recognizes the person that murdered his sister. John zips up, but stands there, frozen.

GERALD (CONT'D)
You thought I was dead? Nah...

JOHN
Wh... What are you doing here?

GERALD
Settling unfinished business.

Gerald exits the restroom. John rushes after him.

INT. PEACEMILL BAR - NIGHT

John charges up to Gerald and grabs his jacket.

JOHN
Wait, what the fuck is going on
here?

GERALD
I don't know. You tell me... John.

John feels someone grapple his hands behind him and shackle them in handcuffs. Det. Yoshida leans into view from behind John and speaks.

DET. YOSHIDA
John, you are under arrest for
witness tampering.

JOHN
What!? What witness?

DET. YOSHIDA
Him.

Det. Yoshida looks over at Gerald. John's skin turns pale.
He's speechless. She leads him away.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

Det. Yoshida sits across from John in a small metal room. She
bats her eyes, waiting for him to speak.

JOHN
I don't know what you want me to
say.

Det. Yoshida pouts. John crosses his arms and raises an
eyebrow.

DET. YOSHIDA
John, you'll find its so much
easier when you just tell the
truth. Get it off your chest.

She gestures a release from her chest that only brings
further attention to her bust and cleavage. John is
unaffected.

JOHN
There's nothing to tell.

Det. Yoshida smacks her lips and touches her dimple as she
rattles off theories.

DET. YOSHIDA
I get it... Really, I do. You miss
Marla - That's reasonable. She's
your big sister.

John frowns as he listens to the detective.

DET. YOSHIDA (CONT'D)
What happened to her was tragic,
and none of us wish that upon
anyone, but we all want the same
thing - Justice for Marla.

John is skeptical, but listening. He doesn't speak.

DET. YOSHIDA (CONT'D)
Around the time of her death, you
were sighted in Vegas, fairly
regularly. You even frequented
areas near where her body was
found.

JOHN
What are you saying?

DET. YOSHIDA
I haven't said anything. Is there
something you want to tell me?

JOHN
Look I don't know what G said to
you, but that's your guy. You need
to arrest that man for Marla's
murder.

DET. YOSHIDA
Slow down, cowboy. First of all, if
you have some evidence, please,
feel free to share.

A pause. John looks away. She expected that reaction.

DET. YOSHIDA (CONT'D)
Second of all, who is G?

JOHN
Who is- What!? Your witness! That's
G!

Det. Yoshida becomes annoyed.

DET. YOSHIDA
If you're referring to a man named
Gerald, all of our sources show
that he is dead. Been that way for
years. There's no coming back from
that.

John appears concerned and not sure how to respond.

DET. YOSHIDA (CONT'D)
Speaking of witness... Why were you
bothering our witness?

JOHN
I didn't know he was your witness.

DET. YOSHIDA
Then why were you at Peacemill?

JOHN
I...

A pause.

JOHN (CONT'D)
I guess, I...

Before John responds, the door bursts open and a loud, aggressive voice speaks up.

XAVIER
Thank you detective, I'll take it from here. John, don't say another word. What charges have you tried to force upon my client?

Det. Yoshida rolls her eyes and stands from the table. Responding with a bit of attitude.

DET. YOSHIDA
Your 'client' was tampering with a witness in a criminal investigation.

XAVIER
Oh really? Would that hold up in court?

Det. Yoshida looks away and doesn't respond.

XAVIER (CONT'D)
I didn't think so. Come on, John. Let's get you home.

John stands and the two exit.

INT. XAVIER'S CAR - NIGHT

Xavier drives as John sits in the passenger seat.

JOHN
Can you give me a heads up on what just happened?

XAVIER
I just saved your ass, that's what.

JOHN

Thanks, but I meant how did you know where I'd be?

XAVIER

You and Karen may not be together, but she still cares about your well-being. She told me to check up on you since she was worried after your chat. When I left the office and saw your car at Peacemill, I checked and thought there's only one other place you could be.

JOHN

I feel like something strange is happening.

XAVIER

Something is strange right now, and its you. What are you so worked up about that old case for?

John sighs.

JOHN

I don't know... I-

Sirens sound, flashing blue and red lights signal behind Xavier's vehicle. He pulls over. An officer walks over to Xavier's window.

XAVIER

Hi.

OFFICER #1

License and registration.

XAVIER

What is this about officer?

OFFICER #1

License and registration.

Xavier complies.

XAVIER

What did I do?

The officer doesn't respond and walks back to his vehicle. He looks at his computer, and talks with his partner sitting in the passenger seat.

JOHN
I don't like this. Something's not right.

XAVIER
You telling me.

The officer walks back to Xavier's car.

OFFICER #1
Step out of the vehicle.

XAVIER
What!? Why?

OFFICER #1
I'm only going to say this one more time. Step out of the vehicle.

XAVIER
No! I practice law, I know my rights. I have a right to know what I'm being pulled over for.

The officer steps back and leans over his shoulder to say something over his radio to his partner. John notices that the officer doesn't have his body cam on. John also looks back to see the officer in the passenger seat turning off and removing his body cam. He then sees him cocking his handgun.

John leans over to encourage Xavier.

JOHN
You should get out. Just do what he says. Trust me.

Xavier looks at John concerned, but decides to go along with it.

XAVIER
(to the officer)
Okay. Okay. I'm coming out.

Xavier steps out of his vehicle with his hands up. The officer's partner exits his vehicle and walks over to the other side of Xavier's car. Hand hovering over his pistol.

XAVIER (CONT'D)
Now you want to tell me what this is all about? Huh?

John leaps out of the car with his cell phone on record. The flashlight and little red recording dot from the phone is bright and pointed at the officers.

JOHN

Yes, please tell us what this is all about.

Officer #2 takes a step back and puts his hands on his hips.

OFFICER #2

Get back in the vehicle. This does not concern you.

JOHN

I have a right to record. There's no reason I shouldn't, is there?

Officer #1 looks annoyed. He pauses a moment before responding.

OFFICER #1

You were driving with your lights off a few minutes ago, before you turned them on. Then you made a rolling stop at the last stop sign. This is your first and last warning. Drive carefully.

The officer returns the license and registration to Xavier, then walks back toward his cruiser with his partner following behind.

John and Xavier get back in the car as the police vehicle drives away. They sit in silence for a moment as Xavier puts his papers back in the glove compartment. Xavier begins to drive.

After a moment of silence.

XAVIER

My car has the lights that turn on automatically when it's dark.

JOHN

I know. Most new cars do.

A pause.

JOHN (CONT'D)

We also haven't passed any stop signs yet.

Xavier nods, still only looking at the road. A pause.

XAVIER
Thanks John. Let's get you home.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. AIRCRAFT FIELD - DAY

John and Daniel Benson Jr. stand in an open field. In the distance behind them is the executive airport and hangars. The two stand there staring up while wearing safety goggles.

DANIEL
So, you don't smoke at all?

JOHN
Not really, but definitely not while I'm on the job.

DANIEL
Like, do you have anything against it?

JOHN
No. It's more about focus and keeping my head clear to avoid mistakes. What I do affects everyone's safety.

DANIEL
Oh right, right... Man, I guess I haven't worked for another company in a while.

A skydiver lands in the grass field in front of them. Upon safe landing, the parachute slowly falls, covering her. John and Daniel walk over toward the diver.

Daniel helps her get the parachute off and shows John a device attached to the chute. Seeing the device in-tact, John makes notes on his clipboard.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
(to the diver)
Thank you for your help.

DIVER
Yeah, no problem Dan. See you around.

The diver walks off toward the airport hangars. Daniel detaches the parachute from the harness and bag.

JOHN

I'm not too familiar with this. The pack and chute appear to be standard. Explain again how this works.

DANIEL

They are. The fabric, packaging, all of that fits regulation as usual.

Daniel points to a small electronic meter device attached to the pack.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

This is what sets it apart. Using our custom parachutes or installed properly on an existing pack, these measure altitude and velocity, and will deploy automatically at the perfect timing - 100%.

JOHN

Impressive. What's the failure rate?

DANIEL

Original prototypes back in early development, when my grandfather was still working it out, about 13%. Nowadays, it's 0%, unless you're really REALLY trying to make it fail, i.e. - break it.

John nods, making notes on his clipboard.

JOHN

Not bad, Mr. Benson.

DANIEL

Dan is fine. You know, I can setup a jump for you if you want to test it first-hand.

JOHN

No, no, no, no, no... Haha, I'll take your word for it. Thanks for setting up this demonstration on short notice. This helps.

DANIEL

Thanks for giving me another chance. I really owe you. If you ever need anything, let me know.

JOHN
Sure, sure. Sign here.

John holds out the clipboard for Daniel. He signs. John hands him a copy.

JOHN (CONT'D)
You said you found the old audit reports?

DANIEL
Oh, yeah. They're in the hangar.

JOHN
I'll need a copy for my records. In the meantime, you're back in business.

DANIEL
Awesome! You don't know how happy I am to hear that. Thanks again. Let me get you those reports.

Daniel leads them back toward the hangar. John's cell alerts him of a text from Rachel: "Lunch?" He replies: "Sounds good."

INT. - TAPAS BAR - DAY

A live band plays "En Barranquilla Me Quedo" by Joe Arroyo. Patrons eat, laugh, and a few dance to the music. Roman sits at a small table to himself. A waitress refreshes his cup of coffee.

ROMAN
(in Spanish)
Thank you, beautiful. If I wait for my food any longer, I may have to bite your skinny legs.

The waitress laughs.

LATIN WAITRESS
(in Spanish)
Oh, no! It's on the way. I promise. Can I get you anything else?

ROMAN
(in Spanish)
No, thank you.

She walks away. Roman sips his coffee. John enters, sees Roman and sits at his table.

JOHN

Hi.

ROMAN

Hi John. You're not my preferred lunch date, but whatever. You following me now?

JOHN

No, actually. Lucky coincidence. I just left from having lunch nearby.

The waitress comes by to check on John. He shakes his head.

ROMAN

If you're not hungry, what do you want?

JOHN

I want to know what kind of bullshit you're trying to pull on me.

ROMAN

I don't like your attitude.

JOHN

You're going to like me a lot less if you don't start talking.

ROMAN

About what?

JOHN

About what!?

The waitress sits Roman's plate of food in front of him and walks away. Before Roman could put his fork in it, John spits on Roman's food. Roman shifts to holding the fork like a knife, but stops himself and pounds his fist on the table.

ROMAN

What the fuck!? You little bastard! You're really testing my patience.

JOHN

Why are the cops on me?

ROMAN

If you're as shitty to them as you are to me, I'm not surprised.

JOHN
Seems like they're looking at me
for Marla's murder.

ROMAN
What? You're being paranoid.

JOHN
Am I? Then why is G walking around
like a fucking living ghost?

ROMAN
Shit John, come on... G's dead. You
feeling okay?

JOHN
Fuck you Roman! G is the new
witness.

ROMAN
Slow down, you're talking crazy. G
is dead. Why would I lie to you
about that? He threatened me and my
daughter too. You think I want Lia
all the way in fucking Florida
while I'm stuck here?

JOHN
I saw him with my own eyes.
Something's not right. You think
they know about Vegas?

ROMAN
Shut up. And no... I'm sure of it.

John points at Roman.

JOHN
I swear to God, Roman... If you're
setting me up, clear my name or not
- I'll tell them everything about
you. You knew this guy. You were in
with him and his people. YOU knew
those girls, and it was your plan
to go back that night.

ROMAN
You done?

John calms a bit and leans back.

ROMAN (CONT'D)

Go wring out your tampon and take a break. I don't know what's going on, but I'll find out.

JOHN

I'm serious-

ROMAN

-Get outta here. You're too emotional right now. I'll figure it out.

John huffs. He then stands and walks away. Roman pushes the plate away from him and thinks to himself. Confused, but calm. Roman calls his daughter from his cell.

LIA (V.O.)

Hello?

ROMAN

Hey mija. I don't want to worry you, but we need to talk.

INT. UPSCALE CONDO - DAY

The camera crawls forward from the living area toward an open door toward a bedroom. The sound of loud moaning and sex is heard from inside the room.

DET. YOSHIDA (O.S.)

Yes, yes, yes, right there!

The camera continues to crawl toward the open door.

DET. YOSHIDA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Oh my god! Oh my god! Yes! Right there! I'm cumming! I'm cumming!
Yes!

CUT TO:

INT. UPSCALE CONDO/ BEDROOM - DAY

Det. Yoshida lays in bed, spooning up against DA. Schultz. He sits up, shirtless, smoking a cigarette.

DET. YOSHIDA

You ever think about quitting?

DA. SCHULTZ

Nope.

DET. YOSHIDA
It's really bad for you. Plus, your
kisses would taste better.

DA. SCHULTZ
I'm okay with it. You good?

DET. YOSHIDA
Um... Sure.

CUT TO:

INT. UPSCALE CONDO/ CLOSET - DAY

DA. Schultz, is in the closet, facing the camera as he
dresses. Open closet door in the background.

DET. YOSHIDA (O.S.)
Maybe we could do sushi tonight.
The dragon rolls are so yummy at-

DA. SCHULTZ
-Sorry, can't. I'm busy tonight.

DET. YOSHIDA (O.S.)
Oh... Okay. This weekend?

DA. SCHULTZ
Eh, we'll see.

CUT TO:

INT. UPSCALE CONDO/ LIVING ROOM - DAY

DA. Schultz is standing at the open doorway, waiting for Det.
Yoshida to leave. She steals a quick kiss.

DET. YOSHIDA
Call me later?

DA. SCHULTZ
Sure... If I have time.

He closes the door, walks into his living room, commands his
smart speaker to turn on the news, then keeps walking toward
the kitchen.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)
Wildfires rage on for the third day
in California...

DA. Schultz is in the kitchen boiling water to make tea. He takes out a small plate and spreads peanut butter on a piece of bread and puts it on the plate. He pours the boiling water into a mug and steeples the tea bag. He blows at the hot tea as steam rises.

He walks into the living room holding his tea and plate of bread He takes a bite of the bread and swallows before picking up the cup of tea.

He goes to take a sip of the tea.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Three years ago today, a young woman named Marla was murdered. Her case remains cold as the original suspect, an innocent man by the name of Brandon Ulrich, was wrongfully charged and amidst police pressure, committed suicide.

DA. Schultz burns his lip, spits out his hot tea and drops the cup.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Chief Babineaux sits at his desk, listening to a barrage of insults from the Ulrich family. Brandon's brother, JUSTIN, speaks on their behalf as their mother sit beside him, holding back tears.

JUSTIN

All we hear on the media is 'Justice for Marla,' but where is justice for Brandon?

CHIEF BABINEAUX

We're working on it. We have resources assigned for bringing justice-

JUSTIN

-Resources my ass! You've been telling us the same shit since the beginning. It's been two years since his death, and your department ruining our lives.

CHIEF BABINEAUX

Look, we settled your civil suit to help your family move on. We're d-

JUSTIN

This isn't about money! My brother is still dead. That woman's killer is still free. What are you doing about that!?

CHIEF BABINEAUX

We're doing everything we can. We'll keep you informed on any updates.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION -DAY

The Ulrich family walks away from the chief's office. He closes the office door behind him. His desk phone rings. The chief presses the button to answer on speaker.

POLICE RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)

Chief, there's another reporter on the line asking if you could make a statement.

CHIEF BABINEAUX

No comment.

Chief Babineaux presses the button to end the call. As a flurry of calls flood in, the chief closes the blinds to his office and pulls out a bottle of liquor. He pours himself a drink.

A loud knocking bangs on his office door. The chief quickly puts away the bottle and glass. He opens the door. DA. Schultz bursts into his office, closing the door behind him.

DA. SCHULTZ

Hear me out, I have an idea.

DA Schultz sniffs the air.

DA. SCHULTZ (CONT'D)

Johnny Walker black? Pour me one too.

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE - DAY

John walks down the stairs and enters his living room area. Just as he picks up the TV remote, the doorbell rings. He opens the door and Karen stands there.

JOHN
Hey Karen.

KAREN
Hi. Can I come in?

John steps aside to let her enter.

JOHN
Want some tea?

KAREN
Sure.

They walk into the kitchen.

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE/ KITCHEN - DAY

John pours hot water into two cups with tea bags inside. He hands a cup to Karen and steeples the bag of his own. Karen sits on a bar stool looking down at her cup. Silence for a moment.

KAREN
I...

John sips his tea, listening. Karen sighs.

KAREN (CONT'D)
W-why... do...

Karen covers her face with her palm for a moment, then sighs again.

KAREN (CONT'D)
How can I help you John?

JOHN
I don't know yet. I know the cops are trying to find a way to close their case by making it seem like I was involved. I need to find some way to clear my name, before they go too far.

KAREN
Help me understand again, what were you involved with back then?

John smiles at Karen.

JOHN

You're trying to find a reason why somehow this is my fault.

KAREN

No. I'm trying to understand why all of these years later, this is still something I'm dealing with.

JOHN

I didn't call you over. You showed up at my house.

KAREN

Damn it, John! I'm trying to help.

JOHN

Look, I'm just as lost as you are right now.

KAREN

There's no use sitting around waiting for shit to happen. Let's backtrack a bit. What happened back then?

JOHN

I told you everything before.

KAREN

You told me 'everything' about Vegas?

JOHN

Everything worth telling.

KAREN

That! That cryptic shit. That's why I couldn't do this anymore.

JOHN

You keep thinking I cheated on you, I keep telling you I didn't.

KAREN

I don't care where you put your dick. I care that you kept lying to me.

JOHN

I wasn't lying to you!

KAREN

Then why did you keep going to Vegas so much? Don't say 'work' again. You're such a shitty liar.

John takes a deep breath. He squeezes the bridge of his nose as if he has a sudden headache.

JOHN

...You're right.

Karen sets down her cup of tea. Her eyebrows raise.

JOHN (CONT'D)

There was an audit at first.

Karen rolls her eyes.

JOHN (CONT'D)

But... But every time after that, it wasn't for work. I was looking for Marla.

KAREN

In Vegas?

JOHN

I met a guy out there. Roman. He told me to check with some bail bondsmen, so I left a picture with them. Later I got a call from Roman saying he actually recognized her.

KAREN

Wait, slow down. So, how did you meet Roman?

JOHN

Him? Chatting at a card table.

KAREN

Then, how did he see Marla?

JOHN

That's the thing. He was a professional gambler. So, he practically lived in Vegas. Which is how he knew some 'less than common' things.

KAREN

So, he was a criminal? You were hanging out with a criminal?

JOHN

I was trying to find Marla! The cops weren't! They were stuck on charging that Brandon Ulrich guy.

KAREN

(calmly)

How did he recognize Marla?

JOHN

I was back home when he called and told me he saw her at a house party.

KAREN

A house party?

JOHN

...The kind of party hosted by a drug dealer who's known for trafficking women.

KAREN

John!?

JOHN

We were already going through so much and you kept telling me to let it go, but, but, but I couldn't. I didn't want to involve you. I didn't know if I could trust Roman, so I had to go and see for myself.

A pause.

KAREN

Can you trust him? Roman?

JOHN

I don't know. But, I saw her.

KAREN

Marla?

JOHN

Yeah.

A pause.

KAREN

H-how, how did she look?

JOHN

Weak. Strung out. I don't know what he did to her, but I saw the piece of shit that was keeping her.

KAREN

Why don't you tell the cops?

JOHN

I did! They said they didn't have enough.

KAREN

And now?

JOHN

And now he's their new witness!

Karen sinks in her seat confused.

KAREN

(mumbling to herself)
...the fuck?

JOHN

I don't know. I'm still trying to figure things out myself.

Karen checks her watch and stands.

KAREN

Sorry, I, I gotta get going. I'll be in touch.

They walk toward the front door. She steps out, but turns back for a moment.

KAREN (CONT'D)

...thank you.

John nods. She walks away. He closes the door.

EXT. CHICA BONITAS STRIP CLUB - EVENING

Roman steps out of a sedan from a rideshare service.

ROMAN

Hey buddy, thanks for the lift.
Take it easy.

He walks around the parking lot toward the front entrance where a conspicuous woman in a trench coat calls out to him.

TRENCH COAT WOMAN
 Hey papi, got a light?

Roman stops from passing her, turns to retrieve a lighter from his pocket and hold it up for her. She reveals herself to be Det. Yoshida, holding out her badge instead of a cigarette.

ROMAN
 Detective... If you're looking to moonlight, I'll put in a word for you. Jimmy's not a fan of sour milk or a cottage cheese box, though. So, your chances are slim.

DET. YOSHIDA
 Funny, funny. Have you forgotten what you're supposed to be doing?

ROMAN
 Those tits ain't gonna watch themselves. Step aside and I'll get to it.

Det. Yoshida steps in his way.

DET. YOSHIDA
 Roman. If you expect us to keep up our part of the deal, you have to keep up yours. Or is commuting your probation and travel restrictions no longer important? Can Lia really wait another year or two to deliver? I guess you could always wait for the next one.

Roman gets in her face. Aggressive.

ROMAN
 While you're out here flashing your badge and tits, I'm doing my part! Is Gerald really your new witness? You know how fucking stupid that is!? He's a dangerous man. You're making a mistake.

Det. Yoshida stands her ground, pointing her finger in his face.

DET. YOSHIDA
 Gerald is dead! Justin, our old suspect, is dead! And in case you forgot, Marla is dead! Get your head out of your ass and focus.

(MORE)

DET. YOSHIDA (CONT'D)

John will say anything to get the target off of his back. Besides, they recovered Gerald's body and he's nearly a foot shorter than Marcus - Our new witness.

A few guys walk past the two of them and enter doors to the strip club, behind Roman and Det. Yoshida.

DET. YOSHIDA (CONT'D)

Stop dicking around. Next time we talk, you better have something new to say. Otherwise, deal's off. Have her send you pictures if you want to see your grandson.

Det. Yoshida storms off to her car in the parking lot. Roman takes a moment, then enters the club.

INT. CHICA BONITAS STRIP CLUB - EVENING

Roman walks in. The guys in front of him pay a cover. The hostess sees Roman, winks and waves him in. Roman sees a familiar face on the couch getting a lap dance. The guy raises a glass. Roman approaches the bar and the cocktail waitress pours him his usual - rum and cherry coke.

ROMAN

Thanks, doll. Jimmy in?

COCKTAIL WAITRESS

Let me check.

She steps toward the back. He watches her ass bounce every step of the way. JIMMY, 57, an old-fashion gentlemen, fit for his age, comfortable, but classy dresser, walks out from the back, holding his balls at the same line of sight as the waitress's ass.

JIMMY

Hey, hey, hey pal - My eyes are up here!

He goes to shake Roman's hand, who refuses and dismisses his gesture.

ROMAN

I don't wanna touch your ball hand.

JIMMY

Ayyy, come here!

Jimmy wraps his arm around Roman anyway and pats him on the shoulder.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

You seem tense.

Jimmy messes with Roman and starts giving him a shoulder rub. Roman shrugs him off.

ROMAN

Eh, come on. Ease it with your cannoli-tugging hands.

They both laugh as Roman settles into his seat at the bar. He sips his drink and looks around. A woman dances on the main stage to the music while others trot around the pole on the smaller platforms in other corners of the club.

ROMAN (CONT'D)

All's well?

JIMMY

No complaints.

A cocktail waitress walks over holding a tray. Jimmy reaches down and places a bucket of ice on the tray with a vodka bottle hanging out of it.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

(to the waitress)

Check on the VIP rooms, will ya?

The girl nods and walks away. Turning heads as she goes.

ROMAN

Been to Vegas lately?

JIMMY

Not unless I have to. What's up?

ROMAN

I heard G is back.

JIMMY

Uh huh?

ROMAN

I'm serious.

JIMMY

Romie, he's dead.

ROMAN

How do you know for sure?

JIMMY

Look, I'm not into the macabre, but enough people gave me details enough to not doubt it. He's either dead or playing one hell of a disappearing act.

ROMAN

Hmm...

Jimmy places a token on the bar in front of Roman.

JIMMY

Grabs some smokes, have a drink and watch some tits. Seems like you need to relax a bit.

Roman picks up the token and examines it.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

They restocked the machine near VIP. Help yourself.

Roman downs the rest of his drink, then takes the token as he walks toward the back. The cigarette vending machine is in the hall just before the corner toward the VIP rooms. Moaning and grunts can be heard from outside in the hall, even over the music blaring from the main stage area.

Roman drops the coin in the machine. A pack of cigarettes drop. He leans down and reaches for them. While kneeling, a knife appears around Roman's throat. A tall black figure presses it firm on his neck from behind him. Roman drops the cigarette pack on the floor and raises his hands.

GERALD

Hello, old friend.

Roman doesn't speak. He feigns confidence though shaken.

GERALD (CONT'D)

I hear you've been missing me lately.

ROMAN

How?

GERALD

No rest for the wicked.

ROMAN

They said-

GERALD

-Remember what I said? I would gut you if you ever went to the cops. All the shit I did. All the shit you did. ...and now you're a rat?

Gerald stabs Roman in the gut. His legs give out on him.

GERALD (CONT'D)

If I find Lia, she's next.

Gerald moves unnaturally as he walks away. Not a limp, but not normal, either. Roman sees him walk out the back door exit. Roman cries out. One of the girls comes by and screams. Jimmy rushes over. The scene goes silent as people panic. Jimmy calls EMS.

EXT. CHICA BONITAS STRIP CLUB - NIGHT

Roman gets lifted into an EMS transport while Jimmy and others look on. Red and white emergency lights flash throughout. Roman fades out of consciousness.

EXT/INT. GRACY-AMB'S PARKING LOT/ JOHN'S CAR - NIGHT

Rachel and John sit in his car eating take-out. "Eat Pray Love" by Dynamic Duo plays low over bluetooth in the background.

RACHEL

Thanks again for dinner. When we work late, I forget to eat and this is perfect, because I really need to get out of that place for a while.

JOHN

I love the egg rolls at this place. I could eat them any time. More rice?

RACHEL

No, haha. You're gonna make me fat.

John shrugs, chewing on a piece of sweet & sour chicken.

JOHN

A whole week, huh?

RACHEL

Yep.

Rachel stops eating and looks at John.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Oh, are you gonna miss me?

John shrugs.

JOHN
Maybe.

RACHEL
Okay...

John looks out toward the building. A fortune cookie hits him in the face. He turns to her. She is holding in a laugh. He takes an ice cube from a cup and tosses it down her blouse. She shrieks and they both laugh.

She reaches for the ice, he pulls it back. Ice spills all over the car. They try to catch some, but end up grabbing empty air. She manages to catch one piece, glosses it over her lips, then leans in as they kiss.

John runs his hand through Rachel's hair and they look into each other's eyes. John looks down.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
What?

JOHN
I'm still dealing with some things related to my sister's case. I just don't want you to get caught up in any of it.

RACHEL
Oh, uh... Is there anything I can do?

JOHN
No. Just trust me, I guess.

RACHEL
I do.

A pause.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
You should get home. I'm going back in to finish up.

JOHN
Yeah, okay.

Rachel exits the car and walks toward the studio. John drives away. From the shadows in a car nearby, Det. Yoshida gets ready to follow John, but notices DA. Schultz walking toward the studio. She quietly get out and follows DA. Schultz.

A window peeking in lets her see inside the studio. DA. Schultz walks up to Leslie, embraces and immediately begins sucking on her face and groping her. After a moment, Leslie leads DA. Schultz to the other side of the room, out of the range of view. Det. Yoshida is disgusted and returns to her car.

INT. JOHN'S CAR - NIGHT

John drives as an unknown number shows up on his in-car bluetooth. He answers. A nervous and frantic sounding female voice speaks out.

UNKNOWN CALLER (V.O.)

H-hello? John?

JOHN

Yeah, who's this?

UNKNOWN CALLER (V.O.)

Is this John?

JOHN

Yes. Who is this?

LIA (V.O.)

My name is Lia, I'm Roman's daughter. I think you know my dad, Roman?

John pauses.

LIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

H-hello? Are you there?

JOHN

Y-yeah, I'm here. What's going on?

She struggles to contain her emotions.

LIA (V.O.)

I'm just... It's my dad. I don't know. I tried to call him, but he's not answering and he always answers. I tracked his phone and it shows it's at a hospital.

She sobs quietly.

LIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 I don't know what to do. I'm sorry.
 I know you don't know me, but I'm
 worried about him. Can you please,
 please, please, do me a huge favor
 and check if he's there?

Her quiet sobs continue. John takes a moment to respond.

JOHN
 Okay. Okay... Which hospital?

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

John parks outside near the hospital emergency entrance.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Jump cut - John talking to the front desk clerk; John walking around the halls looking at different signs; John entering frame on the hospital wing that appears to be correct; John finding Roman's room and entering.

INT. ROMAN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

John enters the room, walking over to Roman's bedside. Roman lays up in bed, semi-conscious. Bloody bandages are patched and wrapped around his abdominal area.

John appears concerned and stands over Roman. Roman's eyes open and he sees John.

ROMAN
 John?

JOHN
 Hi.

ROMAN
 What're you doing here?

JOHN
 Lia called me.

Roman closes his eyes and sighs.

JOHN (CONT'D)
 Don't worry, I didn't say anything
 to make her worry even more.

Roman lets out a sigh of relief.

ROMAN

If I knew he was still alive, I
would have killed him myself.

John pulls up a chair and sits beside Roman.

JOHN

That night...

ROMAN

Nothing happened.

JOHN

When we went back for G...

ROMAN

Nothing happened. Come on...

JOHN

Something would have happened
though.

ROMAN

You don't know that.

John leans back in the chair and covers his face.

ROMAN (CONT'D)

Marla was already dead and as far
as we knew, so was he.

JOHN

Being dead is a good way to get the
cops off you.

Roman breaths heavy. John adjusts his oxygen and positioning
to make him more comfortable.

ROMAN

I should've told you to let it go.
We knew Marla was gone, but I... I
took us back there anyway.

JOHN

Marla was ignored and overlooked by
the good guys. If I had to be the
bad guy to get justice for her, so
be it.

ROMAN

What good has chasing ghosts done?
You end up like Pac-Man, in a black
void, going from dot to dot.

A pause.

ROMAN (CONT'D)
If G is working with the cops, he's covering his tail somehow. It would help to know what his endgame is.

John gestures toward Roman's injury.

JOHN
Seems clear he wants to get away with murder.

Roman exhales deeply, then winces.

JOHN (CONT'D)
For what it's worth, I appreciate you looking out for me.

Roman appears uncomfortable as Det. Yoshida appears in the doorway behind John.

DET. YOSHIDA
Harassing our informant now too?

John looks at Roman, surprised. Roman doesn't look him in the eye. Det. Yoshida stands on the other side of Roman's hospital bed.

JOHN
Informant?

ROMAN
You should have let it go, John.

JOHN
You're a snitch, Roman?

John slowly steps backwards out of the room.

ROMAN
John...

JOHN
Seriously!?

ROMAN
I'm seeing my fucking grandson, John! It's about family! You, of all people, should understand.

John steps out of the room, down the hall, toward the hospital exit.

DET. YOSHIDA

Someone's unhappy.

(to Roman)

As for you, here's the bottom line... I need something I can use, and so far, you haven't given me much.

Det. Yoshida browses the room. She pokes Roman's wound, he winces and scowls at her. She walks around him.

DET. YOSHIDA (CONT'D)

We know you both were in Vegas around the date of Marla's murder. We know Gerald was found dead around that time too - *AND* no one has a stronger motive than either of you. At this point, I don't give a fuck which of you go down for this. I'm closing this case for good.

ROMAN

Look at me, you dumb cunt. I don't know who your *witness* says he is, but he's the fuckin problem.

Det. Yoshida rolls her eyes.

DET. YOSHIDA

The doctor said you'll be discharged at the end of the week. Details from Vegas by then, or trade that anklet for shackles.

She exits.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

John walks to his car in the parking lot. It's surrounded by a few cops and one with a drug-sniffing dog standing by. John stops short of approaching, but an agent flashes a DEA badge in his face.

DEA AGENT

Is this your car?

John stands quiet, looking at them. The officer with the dog allows it to approach John's car, and it barks. He reaches into John's gas tank and pulls out a small white bag.

DEA AGENT (CONT'D)

I'll be your ride this evening.

The DEA agent cuff's John and leads him away. DA. Schultz sits in the dark, in a car nearby, watching everything.

INT. JAIL - NIGHT

Lights flash, taking John's mugshot. The clank of the jail cell is heard. John sits in a cell thinking. Two other cell mates play cards nearby.

GUARD (O.S.)
(to John)
Inmate! On your feet.

INT. JAIL / MEETING ROOM - NIGHT

John sits in a small room across from a frustrated Xavier.

JOHN
We both know it wasn't mine.

XAVIER
I believe you, but this is not looking good. They really have it out for you.

JOHN
What do you suggest?

XAVIER
Seems like this drug charge is to buy them some time. Maybe they're waiting on something from a witness or an informant.

JOHN
Oh.

XAVIER
The only way this could get worse is if-

DA. Schultz bursts into the room with a mischievous smile across his face.

XAVIER (CONT'D)
Hey! Attorney-Client privilege. You can't be in here.

DA. SCHULTZ
Actually, this is perfect. You're going to want to review this anyway.

DA. Schultz hands Xavier a piece of paper.

XAVIER
Murder!? Of his own sister? And
attempted murder of Gerald - Where
is this even coming from?

DA. Schultz stands, half out the door.

DA. SCHULTZ
Don't shoot the messenger. ...Or
the prosecutor. That would just add
more charges. Hahaha!

DA. Schultz exits. Xavier studies the warrant.

XAVIER
Hmm... It's all circumstantial, but
the worse they make you look, the
stronger their case. We'll need
something equally as strong to
counter these allegations.

JOHN
Their witness... He's not who he
says he is. If we can expose him,
we can expose the truth.

XAVIER
That's going to be a challenge,
given your position.

JOHN
I might need you to do some legwork
for me.

XAVIER
What do you have in mind?

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Roman sits up off the edge of the hospital bed. The doctor
walks in.

DOCTOR
Hello Roman, how are you feeling?

ROMAN
Like a candle in the wind, doc.

DOCTOR
You are feeling burned out?

ROMAN

Nah, I'm ready to get blown.

Det. Yoshida enters the doorway.

ROMAN (CONT'D)

Well, lookie-here. Ask and ye shall receive.

DOCTOR

You're good to go. I'll see you in a few weeks.

The doctor leaves. Det. Yoshida walks in.

ROMAN

Lucky you. I'm ready to talk.

INT. COURT RECORDS OFFICE - DAY

Xavier approaches the clerk behind the counter.

XAVIER

I'd like to request some public records.

INT. OFFICE SPACE - DAY

Xavier combs through various documents spread out over a desk. He highlights details regarding Marla's death, Gerald's suicide record, and the latest police reports related to that investigation.

INT. ROMAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Roman speaks to Lia through the smart-speaker while browsing through pictures of models on Instagram. Lia speaks through tears.

LIA (V.O.)

How could you!? You said you had a plan! You said you'd be here!

ROMAN

I know, and I'm sorry sweetheart, but I had to make it right.

A knock on his door.

LIA (V.O.)
 (in Spanish)
 Right for who!? We're your family!
 You selfish asshole!

ROMAN
 Love you, sweetheart. I gotta go.

Roman ends the call and answers the door. Xavier stands before him.

CUT TO:

INT. ROMAN'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Roman and Xavier sit around a small table, talking.

ROMAN
 So they already locked him up, huh?
 They'll pull him out soon enough.

XAVIER
 Why's that?

Roman shows Xavier his house arrest ankle bracelet.

ROMAN
 Probably the only reason they felt like not doing the paperwork right away, and locking me up already. They know where I'll be.

Xavier appears confused, trying to piece it together.

ROMAN (CONT'D)
 I implicated myself. Told Det. Tits everything was on me. Soliciting the girls; attempted murder on G... Whatever they would have charged John with.

XAVIER
 There's no way to attempt murder on someone that was supposedly dead.

ROMAN
 What are you talking about?

Xavier hands Roman a file of papers. Roman reads through it.

XAVIER

John had a few theories and said to talk to you for more info. I found something interesting.

ROMAN

That *is* interesting... I've got an idea for you too, then.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Xavier approaches Det. Yoshida's desk. She notices him, appears annoyed, then continues looking down at her paperwork.

XAVIER

I have something for you.

DET. YOSHIDA

Your client will get his day in court.

XAVIER

No. You're going to want to be here for this.

Det. Yoshida looks up at Xavier, confused.

EXT. EXECUTIVE AIRPORT TARMAC - DAY

A jet parked on the tarmac revs up and prepares for departure. Leslie get's out of her Mercedes-Benz SUV and steps up the open stairway into the jet. Xavier, dressed as a flight attendant, discreetly nods to the crewman loading the baggage. Xavier takes Leslie's hand to escort her on to the plane.

INT. PRIVATE JET - DAY

Xavier enters the cockpit and speaks to the pilot.

XAVIER

Keep it stalled. We're ready.

Daniel, dressed as a pilot, gives Xavier a thumbs up.

DANIEL

Roger that.

Daniel steps out of the cockpit to address the passengers.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Ladies and gentlemen, this should be a pretty smooth flight. So everyone, relax, uh, chill out, and make sure your baggage is securely stored above you.

Xavier stands out of sight, near the open entrance stairway.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
(to Leslie)
Miss, please secure your baggage.

Leslie ignores Daniel and continues leaning over to speak with DA. Schultz, across from her. Daniel approaches, standing between them.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Miss... I said, you need to secure your baggage.

DA. Schultz stands up for Leslie.

DA. SCHULTZ
There's nothing wrong with her bags. Go back to the front.

Daniel opens the storage and retrieves Leslie's bag. He opens it and a brick of cocaine is found inside.

DANIEL
Oh, sorry, is this yours then?

Daniel escorts Leslie and DA. Schultz off the plane. Xavier follows behind them.

At the bottom of the jet's stairs, Det. Yoshida is there waiting with handcuff's ready. A crewman stands by an open luggage with more bricks of cocaine inside. Several officers and police cars surround the jet.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Xavier walks into Chief Babineaux's office and closes the door. The police chief doesn't look happy to see him.

CHIEF BABINEAUX
You better have a damn good reason for being here.

XAVIER

You want to close the Marla case for good, right? I have something for you to consider.

Chief Babineaux sits at his desk.

CHIEF BABINEAUX

I'm listening.

FADE TO:

FLASHBACK FROM VEGAS

INT. CHEAP MOTEL - NIGHT

Gerald stands over an overweight, half-naked man on the bed. He strikes down hard with a tire-iron several times. Each contact splashes more blood onto Gerald's clothes and around the room.

GERALD

Where's the fuckin money!?

The bloody and beaten man, groans in pain, but raises his arm to point. Marla, dressed provocatively, weak and strung-out, stands in the corner looking down and away. Gerald searches through the guy's pants and personal items until he retrieves a wad of cash.

Gerald nudges for Marla to get out. She complies, standing outside the door. Across the parking lot, discreetly watching from inside a car, sit Roman and John. John's eyes widen when he sees Marla.

JOHN

(to Roman)

That's her! That's Marla! We need to-

ROMAN

-Whoa, whoa, hold on-

JOHN

-But that's her! We found-

John goes to get out of the car, but Roman locks the door and holds him back.

ROMAN

-Fuckin, wait a second. Look...

Gerald walks out of the motel room, still holding the bloody tire-iron. He closes the door and looks around. He notices Roman and John watching him across the lot. He grabs Marla by the arm and rushes away with her.

John again tries to exit the car, but Roman holds him back.

JOHN

Let me go! That's-

ROMAN

-It's too dangerous, John! He could-

John breaks away from Roman and gets out of the car. He runs across the lot, and around the corner just in time to see Gerald hastily drive away.

EXT. DESERT MOUNTAIN - NIGHT

Gerald drags a body wrapped in a tarp from the back of his car. Along the mountain path, he stumbles and the body rolls out from the tarp, stopping against a rock. He walks down the hill and stands over it. It's Marla's lifeless body. Gerald looks down at the body, then leaves the tarp and walks back up the hill to his car.

INT. DINER - DAY

Gerald sits at a diner, one leg shakes continuously. He looks out the window and watches as a police car strolls by. A man, similar age and appearance as Gerald, enters and sits in the booth across the table from Gerald.

MAN

Sup' G? You wanted to talk?

GERALD

Yeah... Let's go for a ride.

INT. GERALD'S CAR - EVENING

Gerald drives the two along a rocky desert road in the middle of nowhere. The man in the passenger seat appears nervous.

MAN

What, uh... Where we going G?

Gerald parks the car on the side of the desert road and pulls out a knife. Blood can be seen splashing on the passenger window.

CUT TO:

EXT. SECLUDED DESERT ROAD - EVENING

Gerald jacks up one side of the car, removes a wheel and places the man's body under the axle.

He grabs a plastic bag from the open trunk, switches wallet, ID, and other identifying personal documents with the contents of the man's pockets, then kicks the jack from under the support of the car.

The car falls on the body, decapitating it. Gerald picks up the head, puts it in the plastic bag and walks away, abandoning the car and body at the scene.

INT. DIVE BAR - NIGHT

Gerald sits at the bar sipping a drink. On the television, a story appears about the cold case of a missing murder victim, Marla.

TELEVISION (V.O.)

It's been three years since the body of a young woman, named Marla, was found in the Nevada desert mountains.

The news gets Gerald's attention. The bartender listens to the story while polishing glasses.

TELEVISION (V.O.) (CONT'D)

After the suicide and exoneration of the police's primary suspect, her former rehab counselor, the investigation turned to another look at their previous suspect - Gerald.

The screen displays an image of Gerald and a description of his height, weight, hair and other physical details.

TELEVISION (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Although his deceased body was found, decapitated in the desert, due to a freak roadside maintenance accident - Police still wonder if he may have been Marla's killer.

The bartender studies the suspect on screen with his eyes, then scrutinizes Gerald sitting at the bar. Gerald acknowledges the bartender's suspicion by shaking his head and gesturing that he still has his head.

GERALD

(to the bartender)

We don't all look alike.

Gerald then slides his ID across the bar. It reads a different name, height, and other descriptions from the suspect on the news.

TELEVISION (V.O.)

Without any new leads, police have considered performing an autopsy on each of the bodies involved, in hopes of finding more information to help conclude this heart-wrenching tragedy. The families continue to grieve; Hoping that someday, the killer will be brought to justice.

The bartender hands back the ID, seeming convinced, but still skeptical. Gerald sips the rest of his drink, then stands and exits the bar.

EXT. CORNER STORE - NIGHT

Gerald walks over to a payphone and dials.

CHIEF BABINEAUX (V.O.)

Police Department, Chief Babineaux speaking.

GERALD

...H...

A pause.

CHIEF BABINEAUX

Hello?

GERALD

Hello. I have some information about the Marla investigation that may be worth looking into. You may want to hold off on the autopsies until you've looked into John - The victim's brother.

END OF FLASHBACK

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Gerald walks into the police station in his current disguise. Moments later, he is being escorted out of Chief Babineaux's office, short-hair, shoes off and in handcuff's. Inside on the chief's desk is a wig of dreadlocks and a pair of boots with heels stuffed inside.

Xavier walks away from the chief's office as the scene transitions.

EXT. JAIL - DAY

John is released from custody. Free and clear of all charges. He walks out the gates toward Xavier waiting by his car.

EXT/INT. JAIL/ XAVIER'S CAR - DAY

John exhales deeply. Xavier grins at John.

JOHN

Thanks for picking me up.

XAVIER

No problem. How you feeling?

JOHN

Like getting some real food.

They both laugh at the moment.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Did Roman really take responsibility for everything?

XAVIER

Well, they could only charge him for what he truly did have involvement in.

(MORE)

XAVIER (CONT'D)

They dropped anything that clearly
Gerald was responsible for.

Xavier drives as he speaks.

XAVIER (CONT'D)

Still, it was enough to get his
parole revoked.

JOHN

Damn... No more house arrest? Seems
a bit unfair. He deserved to visit
his daughter.

Xavier smiles.

XAVIER

I'm not at liberty to say much, but
he was one step ahead of us.

INT. ROMAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

From inside Roman's apartment, a continuous knocking is heard
at the door.

DET. YOSHIDA (O.S.)

Roman, open up! You knew we were
coming today.

After still no answer.

DET. YOSHIDA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

(to landlord)

Open it.

Keys jangle before the door opens wide to a dark and
seemingly unoccupied apartment. Det. Yoshida enters looking
around, puzzled.

DET. YOSHIDA (CONT'D)

Roman!? Where the fu...

Det. Yoshida sees the ankle monitor, light still active and
blinking, wrapped around a big-veiny dildo, suctioned to a
chair.

DET. YOSHIDA (CONT'D)

Shit!

INT. FLORIDA HOSPITAL DELIVERY ROOM - DAY

Lia holds her father's hand with a vice-grip as she breathes and pushes to the doctor's instructions.

DOCTOR #1
Keep pushing.

DOCTOR #2
Continue to breath.

DOCTOR #1
You're doing great, Lia.

LIA
Ahhh!

ROMAN
Owww! Yeah, you're doing great,
sweetheart.

After a few minutes of this, the sound of a baby crying is heard. Lia cries and lets out a big sigh of relief.

CUT TO:

INT. FLORIDA HOSPITAL DELIVERY ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The doctor has Lia's baby cleaned and wrapped up in a bundle. She carries the baby boy to Lia and she holds him close. Roman smiles at Lia and the baby.

ROMAN
I told you sweetheart, nothing was
gonna stop me from being here for
you.

LIA
Thank you, dad. I love you.

ROMAN
I love you, too.

LIA
What will you do now?

Daniel walks into the room and stands by the door. He gives Roman a signal.

ROMAN
Well, sweetie... I gotta catch a
flight.

(MORE)

ROMAN (CONT'D)

For your own sake, I can't say exactly where I'll be, but I'll visit Cuba, Barbados and a few other places. I'll give you a call and send something for the baby wherever we land. Te amo, hija.

LIA

Te amo, papa.

Roman kisses Lia and the baby, then exits with Daniel.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. CEMETERY - DUSK

Dressed in all black, Karen and Xavier stand together accompanying John as he walks over to a gravestone. Looking down it reads:

"Marla Zedek 1981-2017, Daughter, Sister, Explorer, Wanderer, Loving Soul."

John stands over the stone for a moment in silence. Karen turns and places a hand on John's shoulder. John nods to her and Xavier. The two walk away, giving him a moment alone.

The silence continues for a pause.

JOHN

(to Marla's gravestone)

I know what you'd say... Took me long enough. Ha. Yeah, well. Yeah...

John sighs.

JOHN (CONT'D)

There's no way I could have given up on trying. You deserved better- I deserved better, and you would have done the same. I'm sure.

John sighs again. Silence as a cold wind blows through.

JOHN (CONT'D)

We got him, Marla. Justice is done... I miss you. Rest in peace.

John kisses his fingers then touches Marla's gravestone.

John turns to walk away. Xavier and Karen are ahead waiting for him. Just ahead also, Rachel stands, waiting for John as well.

FADE TO:

INT. RECORDING BOOTH - NIGHT

John sits in the recording booth, leaning into the microphone. Aside for a bottle of water, there are no notes, papers, or anything extra around him in the studio. The red light above is on.

Rachel sits in a small chair in the corner, listening to him.

JOHN

(into the microphone)

...in resolution, all things true,
reveal themselves in due time. And
in the wise ancient words of Justin
Timberlake - What goes around,
comes around, goes back around,
yeah. Thank you for listening.
Goodnight.

Rachel smiles as she stands, ready to go. John switches off the red recording light. Outside of the booth, he flicks off the light switch for the booth. John and Rachel exit the scene. "Unknown Brother" by The Black Keys, plays as the scene fades.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END