

"DOC"

Original Screenplay by
Hank Slaughter

1 **EXT - MIDDLE EASTERN VILLAGE - DAWN**

1

A 6-man Special Forces team is tactically approaching a building in the middle of a small village. The team consists of a CAPTAIN and five NCOs; WOODS, LAWRENCE, FITCH, PHILLIPS, and the team medic, JOHN Paxton, whom they all refer to as "Doc". It is very quiet. No people. No animals. Nothing. We see the CAPTAIN as he keys his mic.

CAPTAIN

Command, this is Voodoo 6. It's a ghost town out here. Are we sure about this intel, over?

2 **INT - OPERATIONS CENTER - CONTINUOUS**

2

COL CLAYTON is in the center of the room, watching live feeds from the team's night vision body cams and aerial coverage from a drone on large monitors.

CLAYTON

Roger, Voodoo 6. We have confirmed with two separate assets. The HVT should be there, over.

CAPTAIN

(radio)

You'd think someone that high up in the food chain would have more security than this. I think we've been played, over.

CLAYTON

Roger that. We may have missed the window. Either way, charlie mike and let's at least get a good recon on that AO, over.

CAPTAIN

(radio)

Roger. Good copy. Voodoo 6 out.

3 **EXT - MIDDLE EASTERN VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS**

3

The captain makes a "rally on me" signal and the rest of the team moves to him, making a tight 360-degree perimeter.

FITCH

Sir? What the hell?

LAWRENCE

Yeah, where is everyone?

(CONT.)

3 CONTINUED:

3

WOODS

Man, I don't like this. Something's wrong.

CAPTAIN

Hey, everyone shut up. You think I don't see it too. Obviously, we got some bad intel from the S-2. Sorry you didn't get to shoot any bad guys in the face, Woody, but the boss just told me to charlie mike and see what we can find. If the HVT was here, maybe they left something behind. So let's find it.

JOHN

Hey, at least no one's shooting back.

The all gasp in mock horror.

WOODS

Really, Doc??

JOHN

What?

FITCH

Dude, you just jinxed us.

LAWRENCE

You're a medic, you should know better than that.

JOHN

Whatever. I don't believe in that crap.

CAPTAIN

OK, Doc; let's hope you're right. Take Woody and Fitch to the east and circle back to our last rally point.

JOHN

Roger that.

(CONT.)

CAPTAIN

Lawrence, Phillips; you're with me going west. Let's give the boss a good area recon so I can give the two shop a ration of shit when we get back.

They all reply positively and split into their two teams. They now move with a little less caution than before. John and his team move towards another seemingly abandoned building to one side of the village while the captain and his team go to the other side. John's team come around the backside of the building, casually looking it over.

WOODS

Hey Fitch; I heard you were in the market for a new place. Bet you could get this place cheap.

FITCH

You think? I wonder what the HOA fees are like.

JOHN

Probably just a couple of goats.

CLAYTON

(radio)

Voodoo 6, be advised; we show two civilian vehicles headed towards your AO with about 20 armed men.

Suddenly the wall next to them explodes behind John, knocking all three to the ground. John, dazed, sits up and looks around to see two enemy fighters coming through the newly formed hole in the wall. John lifts his weapon instinctively and shoots both of them. He gets to his feet and goes to his buddies, finding them both injured. He quickly drops his aid bag and begins to pull out supplies and treat Woods' injured leg. Woods tries to sit up and gather himself.

WOODS

What the hell was that?

JOHN

Shape charge IED. They blew a whole in the wall and tried to come through it. I tagged two of 'em.

(CONT.)

3 CONTINUED: (3)

3

WOODS

Shit!

JOHN

Looks like your new digs just got a
back door added to it.

WOODS

Oh, the HOA board is going to hear
about this shit!

Woods gets shot in the shoulder, screams, and drops to his
back. John is holding the end of the tourniquet in one hand.
With one smooth motion, he quickly draws his sidearm with
his other hand, half turns, and shoots a third enemy coming
around the corner just as he's getting off another shot that
grazes John's arm.

WOODS

Ahh! Sonofabitch!

John examines Woods newly acquired wound as he ties off the
tourniquet on his leg.

JOHN

You're fine. Quit whining.

John reaches into his bag and pulls out a tampon, pressing
it into Woods' hand.

JOHN

Here. I gotta check on Fitch.

John gets up and steps over Woods who has already started
inserting the tampon into the fresh bullet hole. John makes
his way to Fitch who is laying facedown but moving, trying
to get up.

JOHN

Fitch? You alright man?

He helps Fitch to roll over and sees that he has a nasty
wound to the side of his face and one eye is missing.

FITCH

Doc? Doc?

JOHN

I'm right here, brother. I got you.

(CONT.)

FITCH

Doc, I can't see shit man.

John pours water over Fitch's face to irrigate the wound. Fitch begins blinking his one good eye, trying to see. He looks at John who is doing a quick examination to see if Fitch has any other wounds. He doesn't.

JOHN

I said I got you. Can you see better?

FITCH

Just shadows.

JOHN

Can you see that new hole in the wall?

FITCH

Kind of.

John pulls Fitch's sidearm out of the holster and presses it in his hand.

JOHN

OK, cool. Any shadows come through that hole, aim center of mass and double tap 'em.

FITCH

Roger that. How's Woody?

JOHN

He's good. Leg's busted up. He's about five meters to your three o'clock. Don't shoot him.

FITCH

I'm not making any promises. Where are you going?

JOHN

Gonna check on the other guys.

John stands and for the first time checks his own arm wound. He grimaces as he tests his range of motion. Then checks his M4 and quickly moves back around the building. He sees a truck with a machine gun mounted in the bed has pulled into the previously deserted street. It is firing towards the

(CONT.)

building where the rest of the team was headed when they split up. Another truck loaded with enemy fighters is barreling down the road and into the village. John raises his rifle and shoots towards the first truck. The machine gunner jumps, startled, and turns to redirect his fire towards John.

JOHN

Oh shit! Bad idea.

John dives behind some nearby cover as machine gun bullets hit all around him. He peeks out and sees that his other teammates are now able to return fire at the machine gun. The captain sees him and John signals that his comms are out and then signals that he's coming to them. The captain adamantly signals "NO". John ignores him and charges towards their position through a hail of bullets. He dives into cover near the others.

CAPTAIN

Paxton! What are you doing?! I said
"No. Do not come over here!"

JOHN

Sorry, boss; my comms are out. I
couldn't hear you.

CAPTAIN

I know that. I was signaling to
you. I waved you off.

JOHN

Really? I must have missed that.

Phillips runs over and slides into cover next to them and drops an empty magazine from his rifle. He has blood all over his face and chest.

PHILLIPS

I'm out!

John tosses him a full magazine.

JOHN

Holy crap, are you OK?

PHILLIPS

What? The blood? Don't worry it's
not mine.

(CONT.)

3 CONTINUED: (6)

3

He holds up a bloody bayonet and grins at John.

JOHN

Is everyone else OK?

PHILLIPS

Lawrence stepped in a hole. I think he blew out his knee. But he can still shoot like a son of a bitch.

CAPTAIN

What about you guys?

JOHN

IED took out a wall in the back of the building. Jacked up Fitch and Woody both pretty good but I'm OK.

He indicates the wound on John's arm.

CAPTAIN

OK? What about that?

JOHN

I'm OK.

A hail of bullets from another direction hit as the truckload of bad guys arrives. They all start returning fire. Lawrence hobbles out from inside the building with his sniper rifle. He braces against the door jamb and fires three quick shots, dropping three bad guys with clean head shots.

PHILLIPS

Told ya.

LAWRENCE

Will you ladies stop chit-chatting and shoot these motherfuckers?!

John peeks from the cover and sees that the second truck has veered towards the other building where Woods and Fitch are hiding.

JOHN

Oh crap! Larry; take out that fifty cal!

Lawrence is still methodically shooting the hoard attacking from the flank.

(CONT.)

LAWRENCE

Uh, sorry...I'm a little busy here,
Doc.

John peeks again. The other truck is unloading and starting to go towards the other building.

JOHN

Shit! Phil...cover me!

Phillips lifts and shifts his fire as John jumps out from behind the cover and charges towards the truck with the machine gun. The gunner is shocked and tries to turn the gun on John. John is at a dead sprint and the gunner can't shift the gun fast enough. As the gunner is turning, two bullets from Phillips rifle hit him in the chest and he drops just as John arrives at the truck. John and another bad guy both jump in the bed at the same time. John moves faster and kicks him in the groin and drawing his sidearm at the same time and double taps the bad guy. John spins the gun around and begins spraying the enemies approaching the opposite building. They scatter like cockroaches, some are hit and others dive for cover. John shifts fire again, shooting at the group attacking their flank. Many of them are hit and drop while others try to take cover. A few attempt to shoot back and are hit by Phillips and Lawrence as well. John is hit again but this time his vest takes the brunt of it, knocking him to one knee. He gets back on his feet, catching his breath, and continues to alternate firing the machine gun between the two groups, killing many of them. Over this we hear the award citation being read.

NARRATOR

(voice over)

While on a mission to seek and gather vital intelligence, Sergeant First Class Paxton's team was ambushed by an improvised explosive device which severely wounded two team members. Ignoring his own wound, Sergeant Paxton provided life-saving care to his teammates while killing three enemy combatants. He then proceeded to charge through a hail of small arms fire from an overwhelming force to make his way to the rest of his team. After checking on them, Sergeant Paxton again charged

(MORE)

(CONT.)

3 CONTINUED: (8)

3

NARRATOR (cont'd)
through enemy gunfire to commandeer
their heavy machine gun. He was
again struck by enemy fire but
continued to expertly fire the
machine gun, killing over 30 enemy
combatants and protecting both
elements of his team from being
overrun.

DISSOLVE TO:

4 **EXT - AWARDS CEREMONY - DAY**

4

The team is gathered on a stage. The other members of the team have Bronze Stars pinned to their chest. Lawrence on crutches, Fitch with an eye patch, and Woody in a wheelchair also have Purple Hearts. John is standing at attention as the rest of the citation is read and COL Clayton pins another medal on John's chest.

NARRATOR
(voice over)
His medical expertise and weapons
proficiency saved the lives of at
least two team members. Sergeant
First Class John Henry Paxton is
hereby awarded the Distinguished
Service Cross for his extraordinary
actions above and beyond the call
of duty. Sergeant Paxton's actions
reflect great credit upon himself,
the 7th Special Forces Group, and
the US Army.

Clayton completes the pinning of the medal next to John's own Purple Heart and steps back to salute John. John returns the salute with parade ground sharpness. They shake hands and Clayton begins to applaud along with the rest of the team and the spectators. LAURA, John's pregnant wife and also in uniform, is among them.

DISSOLVE TO:

5 **INT - JOHN'S HOUSE - MORNING**

5

8 YEARS LATER

John is now a civilian paramedic and he's getting ready for work. In the house we see mementos and photos of John's and

(CONT.)

5 CONTINUED:

5

Laura's military careers including certificates of retirement for both of them. Laura is getting breakfast together for their daughter, CARLA. John comes into the kitchen as Laura and Carla are looking at a costume magazine and having a conversation.

CARLA

But Mommy...it's so pretty.

LAURA

Honey, I didn't say "no". I said "we'll see".

CARLA

That's the same thing as "no".

JOHN

We'll see about what?

LAURA

Her Halloween costume.

CARLA

Daddy; can I be Jasmine?

Laura takes the magazine and holds it up for John to see. The picture shows an adult model wearing a very sexy and revealing Jasmine costume.

JOHN

I think that's something mommy should wear...all the time.

Laura smacks him with the magazine.

LAURA

Stop it! You are no help. I was telling Carla that these are grown-up costumes. They're not for kids.

CARLA

But "Aladdin" is a kids movie. Why can't I dress up like someone in a kids movie?

Laura and John look at each other, trying not to laugh.

JOHN

She has got a point.

(CONT.)

5 CONTINUED: (2)

5

LAURA

Well...maybe we can find one for a pretty little girl instead.

CARLA

In my size? That looks just like that one?

LAURA

Like I said; we'll see. We'll see what we can find.

John smiles at Carla over his coffee cup and winks at her. She smiles back.

CARLA

OK.

She gets down from her chair and starts gathering her things for school. The school bus pulls up outside and honks.

LAURA

Oh, hurry. There's the bus.

Carla quickly kisses John on the cheek.

CARLA

Bye, daddy. Love you!

JOHN

Love you too, Squirt.

Laura follows Carla to the front door and stands to watch as Carla runs to the bus. As she gets on the bus, she turns back and waves at Laura who waves back. Laura turns and goes back to the kitchen. John has picked up the magazine and is flipping through it.

LAURA

Great. Now I have to find a Jasmine costume that doesn't make our 8-year old daughter look like a cheap hooker.

John has returned to page with the Jasmine model and holds it up.

JOHN

Trust me; any hooker that looks like this is NOT cheap.

(CONT.)

5 CONTINUED: (3)

5

Laura snatches the magazine away from him and smacks him again, laughing.

LAURA

Stop it. And I don't want to know
how you know about cheap hookers.

John gets up and starts getting his gear together for work.
Laura goes to her work-from-home computer and starts working
on a spreadsheet.

JOHN

Any plans today?

LAURA

I need to get these invoices
submitted into the system so that
Dylan can get the sub-contractors
paid by the end of the day. Plus I
need to get some things at the
store and get back before Carla
gets home from school.

JOHN

I can stop by the store on my way
home if it can wait until after my
shift.

LAURA

Umm...yeah, I guess. I may just
order a pizza for me and Carla
tonight.

JOHN

OK. Text me your list. I gotta run.

He bends down and gives Laura a very chaste but loving kiss
on the lips.

JOHN

I love you.

LAURA

I love you more.

JOHN

I love you most.

LAURA

Be safe.

(CONT.)

5 CONTINUED: (4)

5

JOHN
I'm always safe.

John grabs the rest of his kit and leaves as Laura goes back to work.

6 **EXT - FIRE STATION - DAY**

6

John pulls up to the station and parks his truck. His partner, AJ JONES (male, 60s) comes out to meet him holding two coffee cups.

AJ
Mornin', sunshine. I got in early and did the checks. I told the other crew they could go ahead and take off as soon as you got here. It should be a slow day.

John stops in his tracks.

JOHN
Seriously? You're gonna jinx us like that?

AJ
Oh, that jinx crap is all bullshit.

JOHN
Really? You think so? I could tell you stories.

AJ
Kid, when you start telling ME stories, I'll start thinking about hanging it up. Here. Quit whining. It's too pretty a day.

John takes a cup of coffee from AJ.

JOHN
Thanks. It is nice out here. We should be on the golf course.

AJ
Well, tomorrow's an off day. Wanna try to book a tee time if the weather holds?

John and AJ enter the station and head to the crew area. The other crew is leaving after their shift and exchange greetings with them as they pass.

JOHN

I'll have to check with Laura first. I may get stuck going costume shopping tomorrow.

AJ

Oh right. Halloween.

JOHN

Yeah. And Carla picked out a costume this morning but I think she was looking at a Victoria's Secret catalog.

AJ

What? She's 8!

JOHN

I know but she found an adult Jasmine costume. You know; from "Aladdin"? Anyway, Laura said she couldn't wear that one but maybe we could find a kids version of it. So now instead of a generic pirate princess costume, we have to track down a very specific Jasmine costume for a third grader.

AJ

That sounds fun.

JOHN

Fine then; you go and I'll play golf.

AJ

Oh, hell no!

They are interrupted as the alarm sounds. The previous crew looks back at them and waves, relieved that they just clocked out.

JOHN

Seriously?! I told you. You jinxed us.

(CONT.)

7 CONTINUED:

7

John drops his gear and they both rush out to their rig. John gets in the driver's seat and starts it up. AJ climbs in the other side, answers the radio, and checks the information posting on the screen of their on-board computer.

AJ

Dispatch; this is medical unit 8
responding to call.

DISPATCH

(radio)

Roger. Understand unit 8
responding.

Their ambulance pulls out of the station along with a ladder truck and a command car. We see the vehicles rushing to the scene through traffic.

8 **EXT - BURNING HOUSE - DAY**

8

The vehicles come down the street of a very run down neighborhood. Junky cars line the street. They pull to a stop in front of a house with flames billowing out one of the windows. A couple of police cars have already arrived at the scene. There are many on-lookers watching it burn as a few people stagger out of the front door. Several of those coming out of the building see the police and run away despite the officers' attempts to help and provide first aid. A nearby tree has also caught fire. The firefighters start hosing down the house as John and AJ go over to a police cruiser blocking the street. Phillips, John's old Army buddy from the Afghanistan ambush, is now a cop and gets out of the cruiser to greet them.

JOHN

Hey, Tim! Any idea what happened?

PHILLIPS

Don't know for sure but a safe bet
is they blew their lab.

AJ

Meth lab?

PHILLIPS

Probably. Or coke lab. Or heat
lamps for their weed farm. Hell,
maybe all of the above. We've had
(MORE)

(CONT.)

8 CONTINUED:

8

PHILLIPS (cont'd)
our eyes on this neighborhood for a
while now. They make or sell pretty
much everything.

A KID (male, 18) comes from around the back of the house,
coughing and hacking and drops to his knees in obvious
distress. John, AJ, and Phillips run to him to assist and
start examining him for any other wounds or burns.

AJ
Take it easy, kid. We got you.

KID
Yeah, I'm good, man. Just a lot of
smoke. The fire was set in the
front.

JOHN
Set? What do you mean set?

KID
Those fucking Aztecas. They're
trying to burn us out.

PHILLIPS
You think someone set the fire on
purpose?

KID
Man, I know they did. Snuck in the
front door and lit that shit.

JOHN
Anyone else in the house?

KID
I don't think so. I was in the
back. We didn't get no fire back
there. Just hella smoke. I heard
some people in the front yelling
but I just ran out the back.

John gets up and heads towards the back of the house.

PHILLIPS
Doc! Where're you going?

(CONT.)

8 CONTINUED: (2)

8

JOHN

Just gonna check the back. See if
anyone needs help getting out.

AJ

Don't go in that house, John.

JOHN

I'm just gonna take a quick peek in
the back yard.

PHILLIPS

Well, wait for me then.

John jogs over to the side of the house and looks around the corner. Phillips comes up behind him just as we see a suspicious looking guy, LEON, going the other way away from the house and into the alley.

JOHN

Hey!

LEON looks back for a moment then runs down the alley.

PHILLIPS

Stop! Police!

Phillips takes off after the kid. John hears a noise behind him. A part of the burning tree collapses on top of the house and knocks down part of the house on top of his partner.

JOHN

AJ!!

John runs back to help AJ. He starts pulling away debris and discovers the kid impaled on a piece of framing and very obviously dead. John keeps digging and yelling for his partner.

JOHN

AJ! AJ! Say something! Are you OK?

Other firefighters rush over and start pulling back debris and calling for AJ

9 INT - HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM

9

John, Phillips, and a couple of other firefighters are waiting and pacing. DR. COOPER comes through the double

(CONT.)

9 CONTINUED:

9

doors and looks around the room.

DR. COOPER
Is there a John Paxton here?

John rushes to the doctor.

JOHN
Yes. That's me. How is he?

DR. COOPER
Hi, I'm Dr. Cooper. Mr. Jones has
authorized me to update you on his
medical condition.

JOHN
And?

DR. COOPER
And he's OK for now. Both legs were
fractured and there is some spinal
damage. We're just not sure how
extensive that is just yet. Once he
wakes up and is able to give us
some feedback, we'll know more.

JOHN
When will that be?

DR. COOPER
Well, the anesthesia will start
wearing off soon but he won't be
completely lucid for at least
another couple of hours. Then he'll
probably just want to sleep for the
rest of the night. I'll be checking
on him first thing in the morning.

JOHN
Tomorrow??

DR. COOPER
Look, Mr. Paxton; he's out of the
woods now. Whatever his prognosis
is, it's not going to change
between now and tomorrow. Let's let
your partner get some rest and
start fresh in the morning.

(CONT.)

9 CONTINUED: (2)

9

JOHN

OK. Thank you.

DR. COOPER

Besides; you look like you could
use some rest yourself.

Dr. Cooper leaves as Phillips and the other firefighters
approach. John stares at the doctor walking away down the
hall.

PHILLIPS

What'd he say?

JOHN

He said AJ's still knocked out but
he's fine for now. We'll know more
tomorrow.

PHILLIPS

He's a tough sonofabitch.

JOHN

Yeah, he is.

10 INT - FIRE STATION - DAY

10

It's two days later. John is in the break room with other
firefighters. Ping pong table, TV, kitchen area. John is
waiting by the microwave for his popcorn to finish. The
shift COMMANDER comes in with John's new partner, Daniela
"DANI" Larson (female, 30s, physically fit).

COMMANDER

And this is our common area.
Anything left in the fridge after
your shift will likely be thrown
out. Maybe even during your shift
if your name's not on it.

He points to two FIREFIGHTERS who have stopped playing
ping-pong to observe what's going on.

COMMANDER

The table there is for recreational
use only. No wagering is allowed.

FIREFIGHTER #1 smiles and holds out his hand. FIREFIGHTER #2
hands him a ten dollar bill.

(CONT.)

10 CONTINUED:

10

FIREFIGHTER #2

Crap!

FIREFIGHTER #1

Ha! I told you he was going to say
that. Happens every time.

The captain has turned toward John.

COMMANDER

And here's the guy you need to
meet. John Paxton; senior
paramedic. This is Dani Larson;
your new partner.

JOHN

Senior? AJ Jones is senior.

COMMANDER

Fine; "acting" senior paramedic.

Dani puts out her hand. John takes it.

DANI

Nice to meet you.

JOHN

Dani?

DANI

Short for Daniela.

JOHN

I'm John. Where you from?

DANI

Born in Maryland but I was a Navy
brat so we moved around a lot.

JOHN

Did you serve too?

DANI

Six years, Navy corpsman.

JOHN

Alright. I was Army. What made you
settle here?

Dani takes a deep breath before answering.

(CONT.)

10 CONTINUED: (2)

10

DANI

My wife was offered a job here.

John does not react in any way. He just maintains eye contact with Dani until the microwave ding startles both of them. They both chuckle.

JOHN

Sorry. Popcorn?

11 **EXT - FOOTBALL STADIUM - NIGHT**

11

A high school football game is just ending. John and Dani have been working medical coverage for the game. Not much to do but be on stand by in case anyone gets hurt. As the game clock expires, they start packing up the rig. John checks his watch.

JOHN

So, you hungry?

DANI

I could eat.

JOHN

Good. I just texted Laura, my wife. She's making lasagna.

DANI

Is that an invitation?

JOHN

Just get in the truck.

They get in and drive away.

12 **EXT - STREET INTERSECTION - NIGHT**

12

John and Dani are stopped at a red light. A minivan is approaching the intersection opposite them. The WOMAN driving looks up too late to notice the red light and blows through it. A large delivery truck coming from the left slams into the van on the passenger side, sending it across the intersection right in front of the ambulance. Without hesitation, Dani hits the lights and blasts the horn, pulling forward just enough to block any other oncoming traffic from hitting the van. Dani jumps out of the driver's seat and runs towards the van. John grabs the radio mic.

(CONT.)

12 CONTINUED:

12

JOHN

Dispatch; this is Medic 8. We just witnessed an two-vehicle MVA at the intersection of South 8th and Collins. We are moving to treat and requesting additional backup.

DISPATCH

(radio)

Roger, Medic 8. Confirmed two-vehicle MVA. South 8th and Collins. Sending another bus now.

JOHN

Roger. Medic 8, out.

John jumps out of the ambulance, grabs his aid bag, and runs over to where the truck has come to a stop. John finds the TRUCK DRIVER sitting in his truck, head in his hands.

JOHN

Hey! You alright? Can you tell me what happened?

TRUCK DRIVER

I had the green light. I know I did. I swear.

JOHN

Ok, I'm not a cop. I don't care about who ran the light. Just tell me what happened.

CUT TO:

Dani runs to the van. The passenger side is smashed in and the driver side door is pinned against a telephone pole. Through the windshield she can see a WOMAN in the driver's seat, still strapped in her seatbelt, some cuts on her face and the airbags have deployed. She is turned sideways trying to reach into the back seat.

DANI

Ma'am? Ma'am? Are you ok? Are you injured?

WOMAN

Help me! Help my baby!

(CONT.)

12 CONTINUED: (2)

12

DANI

Your what?

The woman turns and pleads with Dani through the windshield.

WOMAN

My baby! My son! He's in the back seat.

CUT TO:

John is listening to and assessing the truck driver as he recounts the accident.

TRUCK DRIVER

...and he just rolled through the light right in front of me. I swear my light was green. I tried to hit the brakes but no way I could stop. I knocked him all the way across the street. What if I killed him? Oh shit! Oh shit, oh shit, oh shit!

We hear sirens in the background as fire and police vehicles start arriving on the scene. The driver drops his head into his hands again and starts crying.

JOHN

OK OK; calm down. It was an accident. Sounds like it wasn't your fault. And we don't know about the other car yet. My partner's over there now checking on it.

CUT TO:

Dani has cracked the windshield and is peeling it back. A couple of firefighters from the truck have come over to help and they pull it off. The woman is now hysterical.

WOMAN

I can't reach him! I can't see him. Oh, my god. Christopher! Christopher, baby! Mommy's here. It's OK!

Dani has climbed inside.

(CONT.)

12 CONTINUED: (3)

12

DANI

Ma'am? Ma'am? Look at me. Look at me! What's your name?

WOMAN

What?

Dani moves close to the woman and speaks very softly and gentle.

DANI

What is your name? I'm Dani.

WOMAN

Dani? Your name is Dani?

DANI

Yes, ma'am.

WOMAN

I'm Donna. Donna Lansky

DANI

OK, Donna. And that's Christopher back there, right?

WOMAN

Yes, but I can't see him. Is he OK?

Dani grabs the woman's shoulders and firmly holds her in place.

DANI

Donna. Don't turn. I don't want you to hurt yourself. Christopher looks just fine.

One of the the firefighters hands Dani a C-collar and Dani starts putting it around the woman's neck.

DANI

OK, I'm just gonna put this on as a precaution. Don't wanna take any chances. We're gonna get both of you out of here, OK?

WOMAN

OK.

(CONT.)

12 CONTINUED: (4)

12

Dani is looking in the back and we see CHRISTOPHER (male, 3-4 years old) firmly strapped in his car seat behind the driver's seat. His eyes are wide and blinking as he is looking around. He is scared but quiet. He finally locks eyes with Dani and she talks to him while cutting the woman's seat belt.

DANI

Hi, Christopher. I'm Dani. I'm here to help you. Are you OK?

Christopher nods.

DANI

Are you hurt? Does anything hurt?

Christopher shakes his head. He's on the verge of tears.

DANI

OK, good. Just sit tight for a minute, OK buddy?

CHRISTOPHER

OK.

Donna hears her son's voice and is overjoyed.

WOMAN

Oh, thank God! It's OK, baby. Mommy's here. You're gonna be OK.

CHRISTOPHER

Mommy...I'm hungry.

DANI

You are? Well, let's get you out of this car and get you something to eat. What do you like?

CHRISTOPHER

Pizza!

Dani continues to work on Donna as she talks to Christopher.

DANI

That sounds good.

CHRISTOPHER

Yay! Pizza, pizza, pizza!

(CONT.)

12 CONTINUED: (5)

12

DANI

OK; pizza it is then!

Dani has freed the woman and the firefighters assist in getting her out of the van. As they are putting her on a gurney, Dani hands Christopher - still strapped in his car seat - to one of the firefighters. The woman is crying but overjoyed to see her son is ok. Finally, Dani climbs out. The woman grabs her hand and pulls her close.

WOMAN

Thank you! Thank you so much!

DANI

Don't mention it. I'm just glad you're OK.

John appears and assists in strapping the woman to the gurney. He and Dani begin loading her in the back of the rig.

JOHN

How are we doing over here?

DANI

OK. Vitals are good. No LOC.
Stabilized the C-spine. Possible
right tib-fib fracture.

John climbs in the back as Dani is shutting the doors.

WOMAN

Dani?

DANI

Yes, ma'am?

WOMAN

Thank you again.

DANI

Yes ma'am.

Christopher and his car seat are strapped into a jump seat next to John and Dani closes the doors.

13 INT - JOHN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

13

Laura is cooking in the kitchen and Carla is trying to help as John comes in the door, Dani following.

(CONT.)

13 CONTINUED:

13

JOHN
(in a Ricky Ricardo
accent)
Lucy! I'm home!

CARLA
Daddy!

Carla runs to the door to greet John, hugging him.

JOHN
Hey, Squirt!

He picks her up and gives her a loud kiss on the neck. Carla laughs and squirms. She sees Dani over her father's shoulder. Dani smiles.

CARLA
Who are you?

DANI
Hi. I'm Dani.

JOHN
Dani is my new partner.

CARLA
What about Uncle AJ?

JOHN
He's gonna be OK. But he's still in
the hospital so Dani is helping me
now.

Carla eyes Dani suspiciously.

CARLA
Are you a medic too? Were you in
the Army like my dad?

DANI
Yes, I'm a medic but I was in the
Navy, not the Army.

CARLA
The Navy? Were you on a big ship?

Laura comes in.

(CONT.)

13 CONTINUED: (2)

13

LAURA

Carla; stop asking so many questions. Don't be so nosey.

She turns to Dani, offering her hand.

LAURA

Hi, Dani. I'm Laura. Glad you could make it.

DANI

Hi. And thank you. Although John really didn't give me much of a choice. Sorry were so late.

LAURA

Yeah, he's like that. And don't worry; he told me about the wreck. Everyone's OK?

DANI

Looks that way.

LAURA

Oh, good. Please come in and make yourself at home. I hope you like lasagna.

DANI

Oh, yes. And it smells amazing.

JOHN

You want a drink? Beer? Wine?

DANI

Sure. Beer would be great.

John and Laura go back to the kitchen. Dani is browsing around the living room, seeing John's and Laura's awards and pictures from their Army careers. Carla follows her, still asking questions.

CARLA

So...Navy, huh. My dad was in the Army. Mom too. They got out when I was little so I don't really remember.

DANI

I see.

(CONT.)

13 CONTINUED: (3)

13

CARLA

So are you a good medic like my
dad? He was a hero, you know.

DANI

Yeah, I'm pretty good.

CARLA

Were you a hero in the war too?

DANI

No. I wasn't a hero. But the Navy
trained me very well.

14 INT - JOHN'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

14

Laura is taking the lasagne out of the oven while John is
opening a couple of beers.

LAURA

When you said you were working late
with your new partner, you didn't
say "Dani" was a woman.

JOHN

Did I not mention that?

LAURA

Very funny.

JOHN

Oh my god. Are you jealous?

15 INT - JOHN'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

15

Dani is sitting in a living room chair with Carla standing
in front of her, giving her the third degree.

CARLA

What does epistaxis mean?

DANI

A nosebleed.

CARLA

What's the largest bone in the
body?

DANI

The femur.

(CONT.)

15 CONTINUED:

15

CARLA
What's the smallest one?

DANI
The stirrup. In your ear.

She reaches out and tickles Carla's ear. Carla giggles and jumps away.

CARLA
OK; I guess you're a good medic.
Pleased to meet you, Dani.

Carla extends her hand and Dani shakes it. Dani's cell phone rings. She stands to answer it.

DANI
Excuse me.

16 INT - JOHN'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

16

John and Laura in the kitchen.

LAURA
I'm just saying that you caught me off-guard. You could have told me that she was a woman. And very... attractive.

Laura takes the lasagna out to the dining room. John mumbles to himself with a smile.

JOHN
I guess there's something else I forgot to mention then.

He picks up the beers and follows Laura.

17 INT - JOHN'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

17

Laura and John come out of the kitchen and start arranging the food on the table. Dani is at the far side of the living room, talking quietly on her cell phone.

LAURA
It's ready. I hope everyone's hungry.

CARLA
I am!

(CONT.)

17 CONTINUED:

17

Carla comes running over to take her seat at the table. Dani wraps up her phone call and joins them.

LAURA
Everything OK?

DANI
Oh, yeah. Everything's fine. That was just Natalie letting me know she landed OK.

LAURA
Natalie?

JOHN
Natalie is Dani's wife. Didn't I tell you she was married? Anyway, Natalie is out of town on business so that's why I invited Dani to have dinner with us.

John is smiling at Laura until she kicks him under the table. Dani is oblivious to their exchange

DANI
Oh my god, Laura; this looks amazing.

18 INT - AMBULANCE - DAY

18

John and Dani are rolling on a call. Lights and sirens. The dispatcher is heard on the radio.

DISPATCH
(radio)
Medic 8, be aware; officer down.
Shots fired. Maintain a safe
distance until cleared by police.

JOHN
Roger dispatch. We're one block out.

Dani slows to a stop. They can hear the gunfire up the street and can see the police cruiser blocking traffic. Several onlookers are watching and filming the scene with their phones.

DANI
How long do we wait?

(CONT.)

18 CONTINUED:

18

JOHN

Wait? I'm not waiting for anything.

DANI

The police have to clear the scene
before we go in there?

JOHN

The police are the ones being shot
at. I'm not waiting for them. They
could be dead before the scene is
safe.

19 **EXT - CITY STREET - CONTINUOUS**

19

John jumps out of the rig and pulls out an aid bag. Dani
jumps out and goes around to intercept him.

DANI

You can't go running in there.
You're doing no good to anyone if
you get shot.

JOHN

And I'm doing no good standing here
either. Don't worry; I'll be
careful.

John goes around her and jogs tactically towards the police
cruiser.

DANI

Shit.

John approaches the police cruiser from behind. One COP is
using the car for cover, weapon drawn. His partner is laying
on the pavement behind him. John hurries to the injured
officer. The other cop turns around, shocked to see John.

COP 1

Who the hell are you?

John ignores him as he examines the wounded officer.

JOHN

Hey, you OK?

COP 2

I think so.

(CONT.)

19 CONTINUED:

19

John finds the cop with a bullet wound to his lower leg. John takes out a large bandage and applies pressure to the wound as he dresses it. Occasional shots can be heard. Two other police cars roll up for back up. They make their way to John and the other cop.

JOHN

Looks like a through and through.
You should be ok.

He gets up and goes to the other cop.

JOHN

Anyone else hit?

COP 1

I don't know. We got a call about a shootout and when we rolled up, someone took a pot shot at us and hit Eddie there. After that, they just went back to shooting at each other. How did you get here so fast?

JOHN

Our fire house is only 2 blocks away.

COP 3

Hey, kid! Get out of there!!

A boy on a bicycle is rushing across the street in the middle of the firefight. Bullets hit the pavement all around him but he makes it safe to hide behind a dumpster. The dumpster is riddled with bullets from the hidden bad guys.

JOHN

Holy crap! Who are these guys?

COP 1

Probably the 8th Street Mafia. They run the crystal meth in the county. Word on the street is some gang out of Dallas is trying to cut in on their action. That's probably who's shooting back.

JOHN

Well, that kid's screwed if we don't get him out of there.

(CONT.)

19 CONTINUED: (2)

19

COP 1

We can't. We're pinned down here.

John thinks for a second then gets up and runs back to the rig. Dani sees him coming and drives closer. John opens one of the side storage compartments and pulls out a scoop litter.

DANI

What are you doing? Is everyone OK?

JOHN

One of the cops got hit in the calf. Through and through. He'll be OK.

DANI

What are you doing with that?

JOHN

I got an idea.

John also pulls out a wooden spine board and fastens it tight to the scoop litter with tape and straps. He throws this onto the gurney and pushes it running back to the stand-off. He gets to the police car and lowers the gurney to the ground.

JOHN

How's he doing?

COP 1

The kid? He's still there. Doesn't look like he's been hit yet. What the hell is all that?

John doesn't answer him. Instead, he props up the litter/spine board combo up against one of the side rails of the gurney and pushes it out in front of him. He lines it up with the dumpster and locks the wheels so they don't pivot. He runs, pushing the litter in front of him and dives onto it, rolling towards the dumpster with the spine board acting a shield. Several bullets hit the improvised shield as he crashes into the dumpster. The kid looks at him in shock as John rolls off the gurney. He grabs the kid by the collar.

JOHN

Get on and stay down!

(CONT.)

19 CONTINUED: (3)

19

The kid scrambles onto the gurney as John moves around to the other end. John starts pushing back towards the barricade as bullets are flying. Police are attempting to shoot back but cannot see where the shots are coming from. John jumps onto the gurney and the kid after he gets up enough speed to coast back to safety. The whole incident is captured by an onlooker's cell phones.

20 INT - FIRE STATION/BREAK ROOM - DAY

20

John, Dani and the others are gathered around the TV in the break room watching the news as they are showing John's heroics captured by the cell phones. Someone turns off the TV and the fire fighters all start applauding and patting John on the back. The Commander is standing at the back of the room with no expression. He motions for John to come into his office.

21 INT - FIRE STATION/CAPTAIN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

21

The Commander comes in and sits on the edge of his desk. John follows him in.

COMMANDER

Shut the door, John.

JOHN

Boss, look...

The Commander holds up his hand to cut him off.

COMMANDER

Shut up! And close the damn door.

John closes the door, turns around and starts to sit.

COMMANDER

I didn't say "sit"?

John freezes in mid-sit then straightens up.

COMMANDER

What the hell were you thinking out there? Do you have any idea how far up my ass I have both the Chief AND the Mayor?

JOHN

Sir, I'm sorry but...

(CONT.)

21 CONTINUED:

21

COMMANDER

Sorry? You're sorry? You're lucky that's all you are. You should be dead. What were you thinking? You know scene safety always comes first.

JOHN

I know. I guess I wasn't thinking. I saw that kid and just reacted.

COMMANDER

Was this some kind of PTSD flashback or something? You're not a goddamn Navy Seal anymore.

JOHN

Green Beret.

COMMANDER

Whatever! I don't care!

There's a knock on the door. No one says anything as the Commander just stares at John. After a moment, the Commander goes around and sits at his desk. There is another knock.

COMMANDER

Just a minute!

The Commander checks some paperwork on his desk then looks up.

COMMANDER

I can't suspend you. I should but I can't. AJ is still laid up at home and Nicholson is out with the flu so I can't afford to lose anyone. But I am gonna dock your pay for the cost of the spine board and scoop litter you destroyed.

Another knock on the door.

COMMANDER

What?!

Dani sticks her head in.

(CONT.)

21 CONTINUED: (2)

21

DANI

Sorry, boss. But someone's out here
looking for John. And you're gonna
wanna see this too.

22 EXT - FIRE STATION - EVENING

22

Some of the other fire fighters have gathered outside to see what's going on. A convoy of two large tricked out four wheel drive trucks and a brand new SUV have pulled up. Several redneck thugs have exited the trucks and are standing around like private security guards. But they are clearly not law enforcement. John, Dani and the Commander make their way through the other fire fighters. A huddle of thugs spreads apart to reveal BILLY Blankenship, the leader of the 8th Street Mafia. He is white, mid-50s, well-dressed, educated, and speaks with a slow but articulate Southern drawl. And although he is physically smaller than the thugs surrounding him, he is obviously the boss. He sees John and breaks into a wide smile with arms outstretched.

BILLY

There he is! The man of the hour!

He starts to move towards John as if to embrace him but a couple of large fire fighters armed with axes step in to block his path. Billy's men step forward, almost drawing their weapons. Billy raises his hands in mock surrender.

BILLY

Whoa! Easy, easy!

He turns to his men, motioning for them to calm down.

BILLY

Calm down, boys. Let us allow
cooler heads to prevail, OK?

He turns back to John and the group.

BILLY

I come in peace, my friends. Just a
regular concerned citizen coming to
praise yesterday's hero, Mr. Paxton
here.

COMMANDER

I know who you are. And you are not
a "regular citizen."

(CONT.)

22 CONTINUED:

22

Billy smiles broadly.

BILLY

I suppose that could be a fair assessment as I am, admittedly, more financially comfortable than the rest of the community. But today I am humbled to meet John Paxton.

JOHN

What do you want, Mr. Blankenship?

BILLY

Mr. Blankenship? No, no, no; please. Call me Billy. Everyone calls me Billy.

JOHN

Fine; what do you want, ...Billy?

BILLY

Only to properly thank you, sir. Oh, and your lovely partner too of course.

DANI

Thank us for what?

Billy turns and signals to his crew. One of them opens a pickup door and the boy John saved jumps out and runs to Billy.

BILLY

This is Robert, my nephew. My older brother died tragically at the hands of ne'er-do-wells shortly after Robert was born and I promised to raise the young man as my own.

Billy nudges ROBERT. He steps forward, stands up straight, extends his hand formally, looks up at John, and recites his well-rehearsed speech.

ROBERT

Mr. Paxton; I would like to thank you for your bravery yesterday. Your...

(CONT.)

22 CONTINUED: (2)

22

BILLY

Heroic.

ROBERT

Your heroic actions undoubtedly
saved my life and I am in your
debt. Thank you, sir.

John squats down to Robert's level and shakes his hand.

JOHN

Well, Robert; that is very kind of
you but it's not necessary. I'm
just glad you are OK. How old are
you?

ROBERT

I'm 9 and a half, sir. Almost 10.

JOHN

I have a daughter just a little
younger than you. Do you know what
you want to be when you grow up?

ROBERT

Yes sir. An architect.

JOHN

What? An architect? Not a fireman?

The group of fire fighters all chuckle causing Robert to
blush a little. A few of them start to go back inside.

JOHN

Well, nothing wrong with being an
architect. Do you like school?

ROBERT

Yes, sir! Very much.

Billy nudges Robert again and Robert looks up at him.

BILLY

And what else?

ROBERT

Oh, yeah!

Robert reaches into his pocket, takes out a car key fob, and
offers it to John. Robert clears his throat and goes back to

(CONT.)

22 CONTINUED: (3)

22

his formal demeanor.

ROBERT

Mr. Paxton; please accept this
token of my thanks.

John does not take the fob but just looks at it. After a moment, Billy takes it from Robert and pushes one of the buttons. The new SUV chirps and the lights flash. Billy then turns and offers it to John again.

BILLY

Brand new. With all of the whistles
and bells. You mentioned a
daughter. This would be a very safe
mode of transportation for your
young family.

JOHN

I can't accept that.

BILLY

Aww, but Robert insisted upon a
gift for you.

John takes the fob from Billy and squats down again.

JOHN

Robert; you don't have to give me
this. Especially when I know you
didn't pay for it. Your uncle paid
for it, right?

Robert nods shyly.

JOHN

So I would really feel guilty
taking a gift from him for no
reason.

John stands and tosses the key fob to LEON, one of Billy's thugs, who catches it in midair. Leon is the same man who was running away from the fire when AJ was injured. John and Leon lock eyes for a moment.

BILLY

You see, Robert? This is a very
noble man. A proper sense of honor
will prevent him from accepting
(MORE)

(CONT.)

22 CONTINUED: (4)

22

BILLY (cont'd)
anything which he perceives to be
unearned. Do you understand?

Robert looks up at Billy and nods.

BILLY
Good. Now run along!

Robert smiles up at John then turns and runs back to the SUV, waves, and climbs in the backseat.

BILLY
You really cannot accept a gift
from young boy thanking you for
saving his life?

JOHN
No. I really don't want to accept a
gift from you. But I was more than
happy to shake Robert's hand. He
seems like a good kid.

BILLY
He is a very bright boy. One whom I
intend to extricate from this way
of life. That is why I insist that
he attend only the best boarding
schools that I can afford. And I
can afford the best.

JOHN
You should take your own advice,
Billy.

Billy laughs.

BILLY
Oh, no! No, sir. It is far too late
for me. I am much too entrenched in
this lifestyle This has become more
than what I merely do; it is who I
am. And these boys are my family
too.

He gestures to the thugs surrounding him. John considers
this a moment then points to the row of Billy's vehicle.

(CONT.)

22 CONTINUED: (5)

22

JOHN

Well, you and your family need to get your vehicles out of the way. And just to be clear, Billy; we're done here. I mean I'm glad Robert is OK but, you and me...we're done.

BILLY

Done for now perhaps. But I imagine we will meet again. It is a small town.

The two men stand staring at each other. The rest of the fire fighters have all gone back inside except for Dani standing just inside and Billy's thugs have all returned to their vehicles except for Leon, still holding the key fob he caught from John earlier. After a long pause, John smiles.

JOHN

Good night, Billy.

John turns and goes back inside and Dani follows. Billy watches them go in then beckons Leon closer and whispers instructions to him.

23 INT - JOHN'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - EVENING

23

Laura and Carla are at the kitchen table. They have just finished dinner and are cleaning up.

LAURA

Ok, sweetie; go get your bag and show me that homework assignment you told me about and then we can start on that next chapter.

CARLA

OK, mommy.

Carla puts her dishes in the kitchen sink as the doorbell rings.

LAURA

Go. I'll get the door. It's probably that rug I ordered for the patio.

Carla goes upstairs to get her homework as Laura opens the front door. It's Leon with a big smile.

(CONT.)

23 CONTINUED:

23

LEON
Mrs. Paxton?

LAURA
Yes? Can I help you?

Leon holds up the key fob and smiles.

LEON
Congratulations!

24 **EXT - JOHN'S STREET - MORNING**

24

It's the next morning and John is driving up his street, returning home after his shift. He pulls to the curb in front of his house and sees the same brand-new SUV in the driveway. He gets out of his truck and goes over to look at it. Laura comes out of the house very excited.

LAURA
Isn't it awesome?

JOHN
Where did this come from?

LAURA
Can you believe it was a gift?

JOHN
A gift? From who?

LAURA
No idea. Apparently someone with a lot of money saw your rescue of that kid on the news and wanted to show his appreciation. His assistant just dropped it off.

JOHN
Assistant?

Laura takes out her cell phone and starts scrolling through the pictures.

LAURA
Yeah. He even included a gas card to pay for gas for a whole year. Here; this is the guy.

(CONT.)

24 CONTINUED:

24

She holds her phone out to show John a selfie of her and Leon with the car. Laura is beaming with excitement and Leon is grinning.

JOHN

You have to send it back.

LAURA

Send it back? Back where? We don't even know who it came from. Besides we've been talking about needing to trade in my car. And this would solve that problem. Plus no more car payments.

JOHN

Honey; look...

LAURA

No, John; you look. This is exactly what we need when we need it. It's brand new, reliable, safe. It's perfect. Plus gas for a year. And you earned this. I know you hate taking rewards but you earned this. It's ours. It's mine and I'm keeping it. Period.

She turns and heads back in the house.

LAURA

Breakfast will be ready soon. Go clean up. You smell like the station.

John watches her go back in the house then looks at the SUV and sighs, resigned to the fact that it's not worth fighting about. He goes into the house.

25 INT - FIRE STATION - DAY

25

John and Dani are at work restocking their rig.

DANI

So you kept it?

JOHN

Laura kept it. What was I supposed to do.

(CONT.)

25 CONTINUED:

25

DANI

Same thing you did when that creep showed up here. You say no and send it back.

JOHN

Well, first of all, I wouldn't even know how to send it back. It's not like I can just call up Billy Blankenship and say, "hey, come get your truck". And second; Laura really likes it. I mean really, REALLY likes it. She was gushing over it when I got home and really put her foot down. Plus, she kind of had a point. We do need another car. Hers was on its last leg.

DANI

Fine. Justify it if you want. But did you stop to think about something.

JOHN

About what?

DANI

That Blankenship knows where you live.

John stops and thinks for a moment as Dani goes in to the break room.

JOHN

Shit.

26 INT - FIRE STATION BREAK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

26

Dani comes in and goes to the fridge to get a cold drink. The news on the TV is showing file footage of the fire where AJ was injured in the building collapse. John follows her into the room and goes over to the TV and turns up the volume.

NEWSCASTER

(on TV)

Fire officials are investigating the possibility of arson. It is widely believed that the house was
(MORE)

(CONT.)

26 CONTINUED:

26

NEWSCASTER (cont'd)
being used as lab to manufacture
illegal narcotics and the fire was
set as part of an ongoing turf war
between rival drug gangs.

John mutes the TV as the report continues.

JOHN
That's where I know that guy from.

DANI
What guy?

JOHN
Billy's guy. That smug bastard that
brought the truck to the house. I
knew I'd seen him before.

John checks his phone and pulls up the picture that Laura
forwarded to him.

DANI
Seen him where?

JOHN
At that fire. The fire when AJ got
hurt. I saw him trying sneak off
and I started to chase him when
that tree fell. No doubt Billy sent
him to set that fire.

DANI
And you're sure it's the same guy?

John is looking at the picture of Leon, grinning at the
camera with his arm around Laura's shoulder.

JOHN
Oh yeah; that's him alright.

27 INT - BILLY'S RANCH - DAY

27

The ranch is sprawling with a large gate and security fence.
Inside is almost over-the-top rustic decor. Longhorns,
leather furniture, Indian blankets, etc. Billy and Leon are
sitting in over-stuffed leather chairs watching the same
news report about the arson.

(CONT.)

27 CONTINUED:

27

NEWSCASTER

(on TV)

Three fatalities were reported inside the home and fire fighter AJ Jones was seriously injured when a part of the house collapsed Jones remains on medical leave.

Billy smacks Leon on the back of the head.

BILLY

Idiot!

LEON

Damn, Billy! What the hell?!

BILLY

That investigation will almost certainly determine that the blaze was intentional. You were untidy in performing your task and very nearly apprehended. I would now wager that our friend Mr. Paxton even remembered your face and that is why he would not accept Robert's gift.

LEON

But he has it now. His wife took it and he ain't tried to give it back. So he changed his mind.

BILLY

Is that a fact? Well, answer me this, Leon: If one were to present a brand new luxury automobile to your wife as a gift, would she allow you to return it.

Leon considers this for a moment.

LEON

No, Boss.

BILLY

No, she would not! He did not accepted the car; his wife did. And, like any man, like you with your Jennifer, he wants to make his wife happy.

(CONT.)

27 CONTINUED: (2)

27

Billy stands, pacing. The gears turning in his head.

LEON

What are you thinking, Boss?

BILLY

So now that his wife has convinced him to keep the car, perhaps we can convince our new friend to assist us with our present conundrum.

LEON

How?

BILLY

Go to the safe in my office and retrieve one of the Rolex watches. I will handle this myself. Man to man.

LEON

Yes, Boss.

Leon heads off down the hallway. Billy calls after him.

BILLY

And get one of the good ones. Gold.

28 **EXT - CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT**

28

John and Dani's rig is parked around the side of the store. John comes out with a coffee and walks towards the rig as he sips and makes a quick check of his phone messages. As he comes around the corner he does not see Billy standing there waiting.

BILLY

Good morning, John.

John is startled and drops his coffee, spilling it all over the pavement.

JOHN

Jesus!

BILLY

Well now, I have been addressed by many names but Jesus is not one that I recall.

(CONT.)

28 CONTINUED:

28

JOHN

What do you want?

BILLY

How are you all getting along with that new vehicle? It drives well, I take it?

JOHN

It's fine. My wife drives it so I wouldn't know.

BILLY

Oh yes, of course. Miss Laura. My associate Leon relayed to me how very enamored she was with it. And little Carla too. Such a precious child. I was quite pleased that you decided to accept it.

John sighs.

JOHN

You didn't answer my question: what do you want?

BILLY

Just to ensure that you are pleased with my gift and to apologize that I was forced to send my associate to make delivery however, I had a pressing business issue that required my immediate attention.

JOHN

First of all, Billy; I know what your so-called "business" is. And second; we are not friends.

Billy gasps in mock horror.

BILLY

John! But of course we are friends. I would only present such an opulent gift to a friend while asking nothing in return. However, while friends do perform favors for each other, I would not dare come to you empty handed to request a further favor of you.

(CONT.)

28 CONTINUED: (2)

28

Billy takes the Rolex watch out of his jacket pocket, a gold Rolex with diamonds, and holds it out for John to take.

JOHN

Excuse me.

BILLY

Yes, it is true. I am a little embarrassed to admit. But I come to you asking a favor. I merely present this little token as a symbol of my humility.

John takes the watch and looks at it.

JOHN

Little token? This is a sixty thousand dollar watch.

BILLY

Forty-seven five if you know the right people.

JOHN

No.

BILLY

I beg your pardon?

JOHN

No. Whatever it is; no.

John stuffs the watch back in Billy's pocket. Billy chuckles.

BILLY

Now John, please. This fruitless investigation being reported by the media. It would be a monumental waste of time, do you not agree? You were there. You are an eye witness. You can explain to the investigators that while this was a terrible tragedy, no arson was involved.

JOHN

Why do you care? It wasn't your house.

(CONT.)

BILLY

Because I understand the
journalistic nature of such an
event in a small town. Rumors, even
false ones, will inevitably ensue.
If the conclusion of the
investigation is in fact arson, I
feel certain that accusatory
fingers would be pointed in my
direction.

John speaks and moves slowly, forcing Billy back against the wall.

JOHN

No. Fingers will be pointed in your
direction because I intend to
testify that I saw your boy, Leon,
fleeing the scene. And I'm pretty
sure he doesn't so much as fart
unless you tell him too. Plus that
fire killed three people and almost
killed my daughter's godfather. So
let me be very clear about
something: you and me are NOT
friends and I'm not going to do
anything for you. Ever. Understand?

Billy starts to reach inside his jacket. John suddenly reaches out with one hand and pins Billy's arm against his chest while his other hand darts up and grabs Billy's larynx. Billy gasps and coughs as John pins Billy against the wall. John leans in and whispers in Billy's ear.

JOHN

You already made me spill my
coffee, asshole. So now give me one
good reason why I shouldn't pull
out that candy-ass chrome plated
.45 you've got your hand on right
now and shove it down your fucking
throat.

Dani slowly comes around the corner of the building, holding two coffees.

DANI

Everything OK here, partner.

(CONT.)

28 CONTINUED: (4)

28

John slowly turns his head to look at her. He sees that she is holding two coffees.

JOHN

Is one of those for me?

DANI

Yeah. You dropped yours.

John turns back to Billy.

JOHN

It's your lucky day.

John releases his hold on Billy's throat and when he feels that Billy is no longer grasping the gun under his jacket, John reaches in and pulls it out. Billy reaches up and rubs his throat while John drops the magazine out of the weapon and works the action, ejecting a round. John holds on to the magazine and shoves the pistol back into Billy's chest. Billy grasps the empty weapon as he tries to catch his breath.

JOHN

I'm gonna walk away right now and forget this ever happened. Why don't you do the same?

John kicks the magazine across the parking lot and takes one of the coffees from Dani and they head towards the rig. John turns back to Billy.

JOHN

Oh, and Billy. Don't ever say my wife or daughter's names again.

They open their doors to get in the rig. John takes a sip of his coffee and turns to Dani with a smile as he closes the door.

JOHN

Hmmmm. Hazelnut!

They pull away leaving Billy to glare at their tail lights as he massages his throat.

29 INT - AMBULANCE - CONTINUOUS

29

Dani is driving as John is looking out the window, sipping his hazelnut coffee.

(CONT.)

29 CONTINUED:

29

DANI

So; lie to the fire marshall, huh?

JOHN

Yep.

There is a long pause.

DANI

You did say no, right?

John turns and looks at her as though she has just lost her mind.

JOHN

Seriously?

DANI

Hey, I had to ask.

JOHN

Yeah, I know.

The partners drive for a moment in silence.

JOHN

It's that damn car.

DANI

The what?

JOHN

The car. The SUV that Billy gave us. Laura is friggin' in love with that thing. I should have never let her keep it. No way she's giving it up now.

DANI

Did you tell her where it came from?

JOHN

No. I didn't want to freak her out.

DANI

John? Seriously? I've only met her twice and I already know she's smarter than that. Hell, she was a soldier too.

(CONT.)

29 CONTINUED: (2)

29

John just stares out of the window at the passing traffic and sipping his coffee.

DANI

I know what you're doing.

JOHN

Really? What am I doing?

DANI

Trying to justify keeping it. Same thing you've been doing since Laura showed it to you.

JOHN

What?

DANI

You are. You know how much she loves it and you don't wanna take it away from her. No matter how dangerous it might be.

JOHN

Dangerous? That thing's got like eight airbags?

DANI

Not the car, you dork. The situation with Blankenship. Pretty sure you pissed him off back there.

JOHN

Whatever. He's a little turd.

DANI

You can think what you want but I get the feeling he's not the type of guy who likes hearing people say "no".

30 INT - BILLY'S HOUSE - DAY

30

Billy is livid. He's pacing around the spacious living room like a caged animal and waving his pistol around. Leon and some of his other thugs are in the room but doing their best to stay out of his way.

BILLY

NO! He's mine! Son of a bitch!

(CONT.)

30 CONTINUED:

30

LEON

Boss; I'm just saying...

Billy points his gun at Leon.

BILLY

Saying? Saying what? Please enlighten me. What precisely are you saying?

Leon raises his hands in surrender.

LEON

Just...you know...we're your boys, Boss. Let us handle this guy.

BILLY

Why? Do you now believe that I am not capable of handling a goddamn fireman?

Billy's pistol never waivers.

LEON

No, Boss. We know you are a bad ass. It would be no problem for you. But we can go and tune this guy up while you stay home and chill. Right, guys?

The other thugs around the room nod in agreement.

LEON

See? We got you. You stay here, put your feet up. And we got this.

Billy starts to calm down and slowly lowers the gun. Then he pulls Leon in for a fatherly hug.

BILLY

Yes, yes. You are right, my friend. My ire is misguided. Sometimes I lose control of my passion. I do apologize.

Billy begins to pace again; slower, more deliberate, as he begins to calm down and think.

(CONT.)

30 CONTINUED: (2)

30

LEON

It's alright, Boss. I know how you are. So just tell us now: how bad do you want this guy fucked up?

BILLY

No. Do not touch him. I still need him. But I do know what you can do.

Billy turns and grins at Leon.

31 **EXT - JOHN'S HOUSE - DAY**

31

One of the big 4x4 trucks is parked at the curb as Laura and Carla in the SUV pull into the driveway. Leon gets out of the passenger side and another thug emerges from the driver's side. They are trying to look like Billy, dressed in suits and ties, but they do not pull it off well. Leon carries a clipboard. They walk towards Laura as she helps Carla out of the back seat along with some groceries. Carla looks at Leon suspiciously.

LEON

Hello, sweetie. How are you?

CARLA

Fine.

Laura turns, sees Leon, and smiles.

LAURA

Oh, hello again. I'm so sorry I forgot your name. Mr....?

LEON

Morris. Leon Morris.

LAURA

Oh yes, Mr. Morris. Is everything OK?

LEON

Oh yes, Mrs. Paxton. Everything is fine with the car. There is just some tax paperwork that we overlooked before. If you don't mind.

Laura turns and heads towards the front door. The other thug takes the groceries from her.

(CONT.)

31 CONTINUED:

31

LAURA

Of course. Come on in. Can I get you something? Coffee? Soda?

LEON

Nothing for me, thank you.

Laura turns to the thug with the groceries.

LAURA

What about you, Mr....?

He just looks at her with no expression.

LAURA

Taxes, huh? I guess the government has to get their little piece of everything, don't they?

LEON

Sad but very true.

As they all go into the house, we see Leon is holding a pistol hidden under the clipboard.

32 INT - JOHN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

32

Carla comes into the house and runs upstairs.

LEON

You have a lovely home, Mrs. Paxton.

The thug and Leon follow Laura to the kitchen. The thug puts the groceries on the kitchen counter.

LAURA

Thank you so much. That's very helpful. You gentlemen please have a seat. I just want to put some of this stuff away first.

Laura begins putting some of the groceries away in the refrigerator and pantry. Then she opens a kitchen drawer where a small pistol is hidden. She quickly spins and expertly levels the gun at Leon.

(CONT.)

32 CONTINUED:

32

LAURA

Alright; who the hell are you? And don't even think about reaching under that clipboard.

Leon raises his hands in surrender and smiles.

LEON

Mrs. Paxton. Please.

LAURA

Please, my ass. John told me there was something wrong with keeping that car. Now I don't know what you have in mind but you and your friend need to get the hell out of my house. Right now!

Leon just looks at her with a smirk.

LAURA

GET OUT! NOW!

LEON

Sorry, that ain't happenin'.

LAURA

You better damn well make it happen! I shot expert in the Army and go to the gun range every weekend. I promise you; I won't miss from here.

LEON

Neither will he.

CARLA

Mommy?

Laura turns to look behind her and sees the other thug has come into the room holding Carla at gunpoint.

LAURA

It's OK, baby; Mommy's here.

Carla starts to cry a little. Laura lowers her gun and turns back to Leon.

LAURA

Fine. What do you--

(CONT.)

32 CONTINUED: (2)

32

When Laura turns back to face Leon, she is met with his fist to her jaw, knocking her to the floor.

CARLA

MOMMY!!

LEON

You point a gun at me, bitch, you
better pull the trigger!

Carla continues to struggle and cry in the grasp of the big thug. Leon looks at Laura on the floor for a moment, then speaks to his partner.

LEON

Shut her up!

The thug puts his hand over Carla's mouth to muffle her. Leon rolls his eyes in frustration.

LEON

Not with your hand, dumbass! Here.

Leon grabs a dishrag from the sink and tosses it to his partner who gags Carla with it.

LEON

Take her to the truck. I need to
leave a message for the fireman.

The thug picks up the crying and gagged Carla under his arm and takes her outside. Leon pulls Laura to her feet and shoves her into a chair. He starts moving about the kitchen looking for something to leave a note on.

LAURA

I don't know who you are or what
you want but you picked the wrong
family.

LEON

Shut up.

LAURA

Do you know who my husband is? What
he is?

LEON

I said shut up!

(CONT.)

32 CONTINUED: (3)

32

LAURA

Where are you taking Carla?

Leon ignores her. He finds a box cutter in one of the drawers and puts it in his pocket.

LAURA

Where's my daughter, you son of a bitch?! If you hurt her...

LEON

Shut up! She's fine.

Leon is rooting through Laura's purse and pulls out her driver's license. He slips it in his pocket. Laura wipes away some of the blood from her busted lip, looks at it, and spits on the floor.

LAURA

You are so screwed.

Leon, furious, spins around and levels the box cutter in Laura's face. She stares right back at him, undeterred.

LEON

One more word out of your mouth and I'll feed Carla's fingers to you one by one while she screams.

The two stare at each other for a moment. Laura spits blood on the floor again. Leon finally puts the box cutter in his pocket and grabs Laura by the arm, pulling her to her feet and pushing her to the door.

LEON

Get up, bitch. Move.

They exit the house, leaving Laura's pistol on the kitchen floor where she dropped it.

33 EXT - FOOD TRUCK - DAY

33

Dani is getting their taco orders from the truck and carries them over to an outdoor table where John is sitting and checking his phone. Dani sits next to him and starts sorting out the food.

DANI

Yes, taco Tuesday!

(CONT.)

33 CONTINUED:

33

John ignores her, staring at his phone.

DANI

Hello?

JOHN

Laura's not answering my texts.

DANI

What did you do?

JOHN

Nothing. I left this morning and everything was fine. She texted me saying she was going shopping and did I need anything and I said no. I've sent her 4 texts since then. Nothing.

DANI

Did you try calling her? You know; the old fashioned way?

JOHN

Yes, I tried calling her, smart ass. Straight to voicemail. Left two messages there too.

DANI

Well, don't freak out on me, partner. Maybe her phone died. Or she dropped it and it broke. Could be anything. Don't suppose your house has a landline we could call?

JOHN

Does anyone have a landline anymore?

A young boy rides up on his bicycle, drops an envelope on John's lap, and speeds off. It falls to the ground and John bends to pick it up.

DANI

Well, do you wanna go by the house later and check on her?

John has picked up the envelope and opened it. He pulls out Laura's driver's license and a slip of paper that says "Go home". John shows the note to Dani as he stands up and puts

(CONT.)

33 CONTINUED: (2)

33

the license in his pocket.

JOHN

No, not later; now!

DANI

Oh, shit!

They both leave the food on the table and run to their rig, jump in and take off with lights and siren.

34 INT - AMBULANCE - CONTINUOUS

34

Dani is driving, speeding through traffic with the siren blaring. John has dialed a number on his phone and holds it to his ear as he plugs his other ear with his finger.

JOHN

Hey, Philly! You on the job today?
(beat) Good. Get over to my house
ASAP. (beat) I'll explain later.
And we're coming in hot.

35 EXT - JOHN'S HOUSE - DAY

35

The ambulance and the police car, both running lights and siren, pull up in front of the house almost simultaneously. Neighbors are coming out to see what all the commotion is about. Phillips jumps out with pistol drawn and yells to the neighbors.

PHILLIPS

Please, folks. For your own safety;
stay inside your homes.

They return to their homes to peek out of the windows instead. Meanwhile, John has jumped out of the ambulance and is running into the house with Dani close behind. Phillips turns to see them disappear through the front door.

PHILLIPS

Dammit, Doc!

Phillips chases after them into the house.

36 INT - JOHN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

36

Phillips cautiously enters the front door into the living room. Dani is standing alone in the middle of the room.

(CONT.)

36 CONTINUED:

36

PHILLIPS

Where'd he go?

DANI

He told me to stay here and he went
that way.

As she points to another room, John comes out with a tactical shotgun and a pistol and walks up to Dani.

JOHN

You don't need to be here. You
should wait outside.

DANI

We're partners.

JOHN

Walk out now. No hard feelings.

Dani points to the pistol.

DANI

Give me that.

Dani reaches and takes the pistol out of John's hand.

JOHN

So you're in?

Dani expertly pulls out the magazine and checks it. Then she reloads it and works the slide to chamber a round.

DANI

I'm in.

John looks at Phillips who shrugs.

PHILLIPS

She's in.

They each go in separate directions, clearing rooms on the ground floor. In the kitchen, John finds the groceries still on the counter with the ice cream melting. Then he sees the tipped over chair and Laura's pistol on the floor. He picks it up and slips it into his empty holster. He pauses, concerned, when he sees Laura's blood on the floor where she spit. They eventually meet back at the base of the stairs.

(CONT.)

36 CONTINUED: (2)

36

JOHN

It's all clear but something happened. Looks like she got snatched out of the kitchen. They probably got Carla too.

PHILLIPS

Wanna clue me in, Doc? Before I get suspended. Who is "they"?

JOHN

Billy Blakenship.

PHILLIPS

Blankenship? What did you do to piss him off?

DANI

More like what he didn't do?

JOHN

Actually, it's what I won't do?

PHILLIPS

What?

Dani goes upstairs.

JOHN

He wants me to lie on the fire inspectors report from when AJ got hurt. But we all know it was arson and we all know it was Billy.

PHILLIPS

I know but, we can't charge anyone until we get the official report on Friday that says "arson."

JOHN

I know that and he knows that. That's why he wants me to pull it.

PHILLIPS

You know this for a fact?

JOHN

He already told me, in person, face to face.

(CONT.)

36 CONTINUED: (3)

36

PHILLIPS

What did you tell him?

JOHN

I told him to get bent.

PHILLIPS

Way to win over hearts and minds
there, Doc.

JOHN

One of his minions dropped this in
my lap today. Literally

He hands the note and driver's license to Phillips.

PHILLIPS

Well; the good news is if Billy
Blankenship wanted them dead, we'd
already be looking at their bodies.Phillips walks out of the house as Dani calls down from
upstairs.

DANI

Hey, guys. Come see this.

John bounds up the stairs, two at a time.

JOHN

Where are you?

DANI

Carla's room.

John goes into Carla's room that overlooks the front yard. Dani is standing by the window with the curtains pulled back. She points out of the window and John looks down to where she's pointing. Phillips is backing people up who have gathered outside the house. The new SUV is still parked in the driveway. A phone number has been scratched into the hood of the car.

37 INT - BILLY'S HOUSE - DAY

37

Leon and some of the other thugs are sitting in the main room watching a tractor pull on the big screen. Leon's cell phone rings and he starts out of the room and down the hall to avoid the noise. He answers the phone.

(CONT.)

37 CONTINUED:

37

LEON

Well hello, fireman. It's about time.

JOHN

(phone)

Where's my family, you son of a bitch?

LEON

Calm down, asshole. They're fine. I'm taking the phone to Billy. He wants to talk to you.

Leon gets to the end of the hall and knocks on a door. He enters without waiting for an answer. Billy is in his home office, a drink in one hand and a large cigar in the other. Leon goes to him and holds out the phone.

LEON

It's him.

Billy takes a drag from the cigar, sets it down in a large ashtray, then blows out the smoke as Leon puts the phone on speaker and sets it on the desk in front of Billy. The conversation cuts back and forth between Billy and John.

BILLY

Good afternoon, John.

JOHN

Let them go right now and I won't kill you.

Billy laughs.

BILLY

Oh, no, no, no, John. I attempted to reach an amicable agreement with you, my friend, and was assaulted for my troubles.

JOHN

We were never friends.

BILLY

Well, of course now that is abundantly clear. I misinterpreted your heroic actions as kindness and
(MORE)

(CONT.)

37 CONTINUED: (2)

37

BILLY (cont'd)
even familiarity. I see now that I
may have been blinded with
gratitude after you saved Robert.
You could have had anything my
money could buy.

JOHN
I wasn't doing you or Robert a
favor. And I don't want anything
bought with your dirty money.

BILLY
And yet you accepted the gift of
that beautiful, and very expensive,
automobile. But then refused my
further generosity in exchange for
a simple favor. And insulted me in
the process.

JOHN
That simple favor is a felony.

BILLY
That fact would be irrelevant
between actual friends.

JOHN
I told you; we are not friends. We
never have been.

BILLY
Therefore, since you have refused
to assist me in regards to my
current dilemma in a friendly
manner, you have forced me to
involve your lovely family.

JOHN
Let them go. This is between you
and me.

BILLY
Oh, rest assured I fully intend to
release them in conjunction with
the release of the fire inspector's
report.

JOHN
That fire killed three people.

(CONT.)

37 CONTINUED: (3)

37

BILLY

Yes, a tragedy. Now, the report is due to be released to the public on Friday. At that time, your family will be released as well. Of course, their condition upon their release is contingent upon the content of the report.

JOHN

Billy, I swear to God --

Billy abruptly ends the call and tosses the phone to Leon.

BILLY

Leon, please make sure my guests have a proper lunch then move them to the guest suite after Jason has finished installing the new locks. And no one; and I mean NO ONE; is to so much as touch a single hair on either of their pretty heads. They are my personal guests and they will be afforded every possible courtesy. At least until Friday.

LEON

Yes, Boss.

38 INT - JOHN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

38

John is hanging up the phone as the CSI team is entering the house. They move about collecting evidence. Phillips is standing with him and was listening in on the call with Billy.

PHILLIPS

Told you. He's keeping them alive.

JOHN

But for how long?

PHILLIPS

As long as he thinks they're useful.

John considers this for a moment, then brushes by Phillips.

(CONT.)

JOHN

I'm going to get them.

As he enters another room, we see that this is from where he retrieved the shotgun earlier. There is a variety of weapons on the wall as well as gunsmith and reloading equipment on workbenches. John goes to a rack and takes down a tactical vest and puts it on. He's preparing for battle.

PHILLIPS

Doc; what're you doing?

JOHN

I told you. I'm going to get them.

PHILLIPS

Alone? To Blankenship's ranch? With no plan? That's suicide.

JOHN

Maybe; maybe not. I can surprise him. And if I do it right, I can get in and out before they even know I'm there.

PHILLIPS

That's not gonna happen either. I've seen his place. Remember that HVT we went after in Kosovo? The one who hanged himself when we got there?

JOHN

Yeah, I remember.

PHILLIPS

Worse than that. No way you get in there alone.

JOHN

I gotta do something.

PHILLIPS

Look; let's you and me go recon this place. See it for yourself.

JOHN

Fine.

(CONT.)

38 CONTINUED: (2)

38

PHILLIPS

OK. Now take off all of that cool
guy stuff and give me thirty
minutes to go home and change. Then
I'll meet you at the fire house.

JOHN

Roger that.

Phillips goes out as John is taking off the vest and putting
weapons back in their proper places. He exits the room and
locks the door. When he walks out of the house, Phillips is
pulling out of the driveway and headed down the street with
a wave. John stops one of the CSI agents.

JOHN

Hey; who's in charge?

39 INT - PHILLIP'S SQUAD CAR - CONTINUOUS

39

Phillips is driving and pushes a button on his cell phone.
We hear the hands free device dialing over the car's
speakers and a man's voice answers.

PHONE

(speaker)

Hello, Phil. Have you reconsidered
my offer.

PHILLIPS

No sir. My answer is still no but
thank you again for the offer. But
I do have something I need to run
past you. Doc Paxton and I could
really use your help, sir.

PHONE

(speaker)

Name it. Anything I have is yours.

Phillips smiles to himself.

PHILLIPS

I was hoping you would say that,
sir.

40 EXT - JOHN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

40

John walks back to the ambulance where Dani is sitting.

(CONT.)

40 CONTINUED:

40

DANI

OK. I called the captain and told him what's up. We're officially off the clock as long as necessary. But we do need to get this rig back to the station ASAP.

JOHN

What do you mean "we" are off the clock.

DANI

I'm with you, partner. I told you; I'm all in.

John just looks at her for a moment.

JOHN

You're a dumb ass.

DANI

You're welcome. Now what's the plan?

41 **EXT - JOHN'S TRUCK - NIGHT**

41

John, Phillips, and Dani are driving down a two lane country road.

PHILLIPS

Make this next right.

John turns right down a dark gravel road and travels a couple of hundred yards.

PHILLIPS

OK. Kill the lights.

John pulls to the side of the road across from Billy's front gate.

PHILLIPS

There's the front door.

JOHN

What do we know about it?

(CONT.)

41 CONTINUED:

41

PHILLIPS

Reinforced steel. Electronic controls with hydraulic swing arms. All authorized vehicles have an electronic tag that signals the gate to open. Or you can call up to the house and ask Billy to let you in.

JOHN

OK, we'll call that Plan B. What about the rest of the perimeter?

PHILLIPS

The rest of the fence is 10-foot tall and electrified. Four or five roving guards around the house, all with MP5s.

John gives Phillips a sideways look.

JOHN

How do you know all this?

Dani has her tablet out and has pulled up the house on Google Earth. She leans forward from the back seat and shows it to them.

DANI

Looks like it's about 75 yards from the fence to the house all the way around. Then there's this pool house in back.

Phillips looks at John and grins.

PHILLIPS

Wow. Look at the squid getting all aerial recon on us.

DANI

Bite me. What's this back here.

PHILLIPS

Looks like a horse barn.

JOHN

OK; this is all good info to have. But unless we know exactly where
(MORE)

(CONT.)

41 CONTINUED: (2)

41

JOHN (cont'd)
they are keeping Laura and Carla,
we'd be going in blind. We really
need a proper support package.

PHILLIPS
You mean like what we had at Group?

JOHN
Exactly.

PHILLIPS
I was thinking the same thing. So I
made a call.

JOHN
To who?

PHILLIPS
Pack a bag. We're going to Dallas.

42 INT - CLAYTON TACTICAL SOLUTIONS (CTS) - DAY

42

This is the company founded by John's former commander,
Colonel Leo Clayton, after he retired. CTS now holds a
number of DOD contracts for high-level security and tactical
operations. The reception area is very well appointed and
ultra modern. It looks more like the home of a chic fashion
magazine than that of a military contractor. Clayton has
obviously done very well for himself. The phone rings at the
receptionist desk just as John and Phillips walk in.

RECEPTIONIST
Good morning. Thank you for calling
Clayton Tactical. How may I direct
your call? (beat) One moment,
please.

She transfers the call and looks up at John and Phillips
with a smile.

RECEPTIONIST
Good morning. Welcome to Clayton
Tactical Solutions. How may I help
you?

PHILLIPS
We're here to see Colonel...I mean
Mr. Clayton.

(CONT.)

42 CONTINUED:

42

RECEPTIONIST

Mr. Paxton and Mr. Phillips? Of course. However, you will need to leave your cell phones and any other electronic devices in one of the locking cubbies behind you.

She presses a call button on her desk while the guys lock up their cell phones. A young intern appears.

RECEPTIONIST

Chris here will show you to the conference room. They're expecting you.

JOHN

They?

43 INT - CTS CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

43

The intern opens the door and ushers John and Phillips into the room. They enter to see COL Clayton, immaculately dressed in a custom-tailored suit, seated at the head of a long conference table and flanked on either side by two men, Patrick HALL and Graham MCGEE, who each look as if they could be playing in the NFL. The each are wearing khaki pants, matching CTS polo shirts, and sidearms. Clayton stands and looks at his watch.

CLAYTON

Well, it appears that the two of you have easily adapted to civilian life; you're almost three minutes late.

PHILLIPS

Well, maybe if we had some crusty old colonel kicking us in the ass every day, we could fix that.

CLAYTON

I've been telling you for years to come work for me.

Phillips moves across the room and embraces Clayton.

PHILLIPS

I'm fine right where I am, sir. No more scenic trips overseas and just
(MORE)

(CONT.)

43 CONTINUED:

43

PHILLIPS (cont'd)
another 22 months until I can
retire and add that pension to my
VA. Then I'm done done.

Clayton looks at John who has not moved since entering the
room. He is looking around, dumbfounded.

CLAYTON
Doc? You OK?

JOHN
Sir? What the hell is all this?

CLAYTON
Clayton Tactical, my security
company. I told you about it three
years ago. At the reunion? Fort
Bragg? Remember?

JOHN
You said it was a security company.
I thought you meant like
rent-a-cops for parking garages and
stuff. Not...all this!

CLAYTON
Clayton Tactical only hires former
special ops operators -- SF, SEALS,
Delta -- and we handle some of
DOD's most high-profile security
jobs. And it pays about four times
what you're making as a fireman.

JOHN
Paramedic.

Clayton takes his seat again at the head of the table.

CLAYTON
Paramedic, of course. But I
understand Philly here didn't bring
you here to discuss employment
opportunities.

JOHN
Actually, sir; I'm not sure what he
told you.

(CONT.)

43 CONTINUED: (2)

43

They all sit now. The two linebackers next to Clayton are taking notes.

CLAYTON

Well, he gave me a pretty good briefing on the situation with your family. Laura and...?

Hall quickly checks his notes and speaks up.

HALL

Carla, sir.

CLAYTON

Yes. Carla.

John looks at Hall.

JOHN

How do you know that?

CLAYTON

Like I said, Philly gave us a very good briefing on your situation.

Hall looks at John and nods.

JOHN

OK, so...why am I here?

CLAYTON

To coordinate the support package for your operation.

JOHN

My operation?

CLAYTON

Of course. This is a textbook extraction op from what I understand. And CTS will provide all of the necessary logistics. Weapons; aerial coverage; night vision; even personnel.

Clayton indicates the two men seated next to him.

(CONT.)

43 CONTINUED: (3)

43

CLAYTON

This is Patrick Hall, former OD
Delta team leader, and Wayne McGee,
former Seal operator.

The two men nod to John in recognition.

PHILLIPS

Doc; we did hundreds of ops just
like this back in the day. Woods
and Fitch are already on their way.
Lawrence is still on active duty at
Bragg but said he'd get back to me
today.

JOHN

Woody and Fitch are on their way?

CLAYTON

Company jet.

JOHN

Wow. So; I guess we're getting the
band back together. Larry too?

PHILLIPS

Yep. And the colonel here can
provide a support setup just like
what we had at group.

CLAYTON

Actually, much more advanced than
what you were used to at group.
Better night vision, thermal
imaging, drone overwatch. I even
have image analysts recruited from
Langley to provide real-time intel.
And these two gentlemen have also
volunteered to provide additional
boots on the ground.

JOHN

I can't ask you guys to do that.

HALL

You don't have to ask. We
volunteered.

(CONT.)

43 CONTINUED: (4)

43

MCGEE

I lost my little brother to heroin last year. As soon as I heard your back story, I knew I wanted a piece of this Billy bastard.

Hall and McGee look at each other and nod in agreement.

PHILLIPS

Cool. So with you guys and if Lawrence can get away that makes us eight.

JOHN

What about the captain? He was pretty high speed for a ring knocker.

Phillips solemnly looks at Clayton. Clayton gives him a slight nod.

PHILLIPS

Yeah, except it's major. And he..um...he went over to Delta and bought it in Kabul about four months ago.

JOHN

Damn.

There is a quiet pause before Clayton stands up.

CLAYTON

Yes. Well. Moving on. Doc; I understand this op has a narrow window.

John is stunned for a moment but then his mind kicks into operator mode.

JOHN

Sir? Oh, yes...a narrow window. We will need to execute within the next 48 hours. That's when the fire inspector's report will be forwarded to the DA's office for prosecution. And when that happens, Blankenship will know that I didn't alter it or pull it like he wanted me to and he will...

(CONT.)

43 CONTINUED: (5)

43

CLAYTON

I understand.

Clayton presses a remote control, dimming the lights and dropping a projection screen at the far end of the room. An aerial view of Billy's ranch appears on the screen.

CLAYTON

Pat?

Hall stands up and goes in front of the screen, highlighting with a laser pointer as he speaks.

HALL

Thank you, sir. This is the latest satellite imagery we have been able to get from Langley.

JOHN

Wait...Langley? I thought the CIA wasn't allowed to operate within the United States.

Hall chuckles.

HALL

Yeah. OK. Anyway. After looking over the images we are pretty confident that the compound uses four roaming guards at any one time. They change out about every six hours but they're not exact. It varies. Sometime two will swap out after four hours and the others after six. Sometime after five. It's all pretty casual.

PHILLIPS

So, it's not likely they're former military?

HALL

We don't think so. They're pretty undisciplined. The ones at night usually end up finding a cozy corner to take a nap and the day shift seems pretty lazy. Wandering around, smoking and joking.

(CONT.)

PHILLIPS

Amateurs.

HALL

True. But that can also be a bad thing. It means the situation is unpredictable. It's impossible to say where any of these guys will be at any given time. I would suggest we have some overwatch from the wooded area over here.

JOHN

What about Laura and Carla? Do we know where they are being held? How about that pool house?

HALL

We doubt it. There has been very little traffic in and out of there.

JOHN

The horse barn?

HALL

We're pretty confident they're in the main house.

JOHN

Define "pretty confident?"

HALL

Ninety-five percent. The guards appear to be paying extra special attention to this wing on the east end. Also, our thermal imaging has picked up two people inside who have not left since we started our recon and someone is delivering meals to them three times a day. Everyone else appears to be taking their meals here, in the main dining room. Oh, and one of the two in this east wing appears to be about 4 feet tall.

John moves closer to examine the two thermal images of what looks like his family being held captive.

(CONT.)

43 CONTINUED: (7)

43

PHILLIPS

Gotta admit, Doc; that's some pretty solid intel.

JOHN

OK. So what's next?

HALL

Graham?

Hall returns to his seat as McGee goes to the front of the room. The slide on the screen changes to a blueprint of the house.

MCGEE

Thanks, Pat. We have been able to obtain a floor plan of the AO courtesy of the Navarro County zoning office. Our logistics people are reconfiguring our shoot house to match those dimensions as we speak. When the rest of your team gets here, we can sand table some scenarios.

JOHN

How do we get inside?

MCGEE

Basic Trojan horse. Which could work a couple of different ways.

John is closely studying the floor plan on the screen.

JOHN

So, we work the problem?

CLAYTON

Exactly. We work the problem.

MCGEE

Obviously, the biggest problem is the unpredictability of the roving guards outside. But, like Pat said, a good overwatch position or two in that woodline should take care of that. Plus, we will have real time eye in the sky watching everything from the command center.

(CONT.)

43 CONTINUED: (8)

43

CLAYTON
I'll be in your ear the whole way.

PHILLIPS
Just like old times.

John turns around and looks everyone in the room in the eye,
Clayton last.

JOHN
Thank you.

CLAYTON
Let's go get your family, Doc.

44 **EXT - PRIVATE AIRFIELD - DAY**

44

Woods and Fitch are deplaning a small private jet. Woods
walks with a slight limp and Fitch has an eye patch. John
and Dani approach.

JOHN
Hello, gentlemen.

FITCH
Alleged gentlemen.

John embraces them both and then steps back to reveal Dani.

JOHN
This is Dani, my partner.

WOODS
Well, hello Dani.

JOHN
Cool your jets, Woody, or her wife
will kick your ass.

WOODS
Just being friendly. No offence.

DANI
None taken.

They collect their bags and start moving towards a large
black SUV parked nearby.

(CONT.)

44 CONTINUED:

44

FITCH

So what the hell is going on? We got a very cryptic phone call from COL Clayton this morning saying you and Phil were knee deep in some shit and then this private jet is picking us up.

JOHN

Laura and Carla were kidnapped.

FITCH

What? Why?

JOHN

A very bad man wants me to lie and make a certain arson report go away.

WOODS

OK; so your basic exfil op. Got it. What are we up against?

DANI

Heavily fortified secluded ranch house with four to five roving guards outside.

WOODS

How many inside?

Dani shrugs.

FITCH

And just us four?

JOHN

No, eight. You forgot Philly. And Larry is on his way from Bragg plus two of Clayton's best guys. And Clayton's company has some serious hardware and operation support. Better than anything we ever had at Group.

WOODS

I'll believe that when I see it.

45 **INT - CTS TRAINING FACILITY - DAY**

45

The building resembles a large airplane hangar. In the center of the hangar is a shoot house in the dimensions of Billy's house with walls and floor but no ceiling. There is a catwalk all around the shoot house where the training can be observed from above. At one end of the facility is an elevated control booth. The whole team except for Lawrence has gathered in the booth. There is also a technician seated at the controls. Several closed circuit monitors offer views of virtually every angle inside the shoot house and a switch board can open and close doors and move targets around inside the shoot house. On one of the monitors is a real-time drone aerial view of Billy's house.

WOODS

OK. I believe it.

CLAYTON

Now obviously, we won't have these interior views of the actual house while you're inside. We will only have thermal imaging. But these are very useful in our training environment.

JOHN

Then let's get busy.

46 **TRAINING MONTAGE**

46

Shots of Clayton delivering cases of top of the line weapons and gear.

Shots of the team on the firing range with their new weapons. Rifle and pistol. They are all good. Dani is surprisingly very good with the sniper rifle.

The team going through drills over and over. Various targets popping up and changing with each drill. They are all tired but they keep going.

Clayton is on the catwalk, stopwatch in hand, giving instructions, making corrections.

CLAYTON

We don't do it until we get it right, gentlemen; we do it until we can't do it wrong. Again!

Shots of the team moving in and out of the rooms of the shoot house, clearing them, over and over again.

(CONT.)

46 CONTINUED:

46

Lawrence arrives in uniform and is warmly greeted by everyone.

Shots of Lawrence and Dani at the range with the sniper rifle. He is impressed.

47 **EXT - CTS TRAINING FACILITY - EVENING**

47

The sun is setting and the team is walking out of the facility, sweaty and tired. These warriors have been training hard all day. They are moving toward a bus that will carry them back to the main building when Lawrence calls out as he and Dani approach from the rifle range.

LAWRENCE

Hey, Doc! I thought you said this new partner of yours was a squid. She sure doesn't shoot like one.

DANI

And you might wanna remember that the next time you talk smack about the Navy.

The guys chuckle at the exchange as they get on the bus.

48 **INT - BUS - CONTINUOUS**

48

The team is clamoring onto the bus. Clayton is already seated in the front seat. He motions John to join him as he gets on.

CLAYTON

You guys are looking pretty damn good for a bunch of old grunts.

JOHN

We need to be pretty damn good period.

CLAYTON

You know what I meant. Are you scared? Nervous?

JOHN

Not scared for me. You know that. But this Billy. He's a psycho. Unpredictable. I'm scared for the girls. Laura's tough as nails and
(MORE)

(CONT.)

48 CONTINUED:

48

JOHN (cont'd)
that will help Carla. But if
they've been separated...

CLAYTON
All of our intel shows them
together and that they haven't
moved from that wing.

JOHN
I also know how wrong intel can be
sometimes.

CLAYTON
We've got thermal imaging on the
ground and in the air manned around
the clock. We will know the second
anything changes.

JOHN
I know, sir. It's just...this is
the one op that literally has zero
room for error.

The conversation pauses as they each look out the window
while the bus drives down the road. It's getting darker.
John has a sudden thought.

JOHN
She doesn't know we're coming.

CLAYTON
What?

JOHN
Laura. She doesn't know we're
coming. Hell, she may not even know
why she's being held or by who.

CLAYTON
Proof of life.

JOHN
What?

CLAYTON
Proof of life. Call Billy and
demand proof of life. Tell him you
need to talk to her and know she's
OK before you do anything.

(CONT.)

48 CONTINUED: (2)

48

JOHN
OK, but how does that help?

CLAYTON
Well for one; it will make you both
feel a little better. And two; you
can let her know to be ready for
the exfil.

John thinks about this and a plan starts to form in his
head.

JOHN
Yes. Yes, that's good. That could
work.

49 INT - CTS COMMAND CENTER - NIGHT

49

John and Clayton go to one of the work stations. John sits
and puts on a headset then looks at Clayton and nods.
Clayton signals one of the techs who presses a button on his
control panel and we hear a phone being dialed followed by a
ring tone. After a moment we hear Billy's cheerful voice.

BILLY
Well hello, Mr. Paxton! Do you have
news for me already?

JOHN
Not yet. I need to know my girls
are OK.

BILLY
No need to concern yourself with
their well-being. I assure you they
are in perfect health.

A pause as John grits his teeth before taking a deep calming
breath.

JOHN
Let me speak to them.

BILLY
Mr. Paxton; I do not believe you
are in any position to make demands
of me.

(CONT.)

49 CONTINUED:

49

JOHN

Well, I have one demand or the deal is off: let me talk to Laura.

BILLY

I have given you my word.

JOHN

Forgive me if I don't take your word for it. I want to hear it from her. Now.

A long pause. No reply from Billy. The control room is eerily silent for what seems like an eternity. Then we hear Laura's voice over the speakers.

LAURA

John?

JOHN

Laura? Yes, it's me. Are you OK?
How's Carla?

LAURA

We're fine, I guess. They haven't hurt us.

We hear Billy in background and know that his phone is on speaker.

BILLY

I told you so.

JOHN

I saw blood on the floor.

LAURA

One of them got in a cheap shot at the house. Carla's hit me harder than that playing patty cake.

JOHN

How is she?

LAURA

She's fine but scared. She doesn't understand what's going on and, actually, neither do I. How did you get mixed up with these people?

(CONT.)

49 CONTINUED: (2)

49

BILLY

"These people"?

JOHN

It's a long story, baby, but listen; we just wanted to make sure you're OK. Uncle Clayton is here along with my brothers and we were all worried about you.

LAURA

Your brothers? You mean Woody and Fitch?

JOHN

And Larry too. But I feel a lot better hearing your voice. We all do.

LAURA

Tell them we're OK.

JOHN

Will do.

BILLY

OK, that's enough.

JOHN

I love you.

LAURA

I love you more.

With a click, the call is disconnected. John slowly takes off the headset.

JOHN

I love you most.

50 INT - BILLY'S HOUSE - LAURA'S ROOM

50

Laura is brought back into the suite where she and Carla are being held. The door closes behind her and we hear it being locked from the outside. Carla is laying on the floor, coloring. Laura stands and watches for a moment before Carla looks up from her coloring book and sits up.

CARLA

Mommy? Are you OK?

(CONT.)

50 CONTINUED:

50

Laura goes and sits next to her. She hugs her close and speaks softly.

LAURA

I'm fine, baby. Now listen; remember when Daddy said there may be times, in an emergency, when you don't ask questions, you just do what you're told right away?

CARLA

Yes. He called them red alerts.

LAURA

Right. Red alerts. So if I say "red alert", that means it's an emergency and I don't have time to explain. You just do it. That's really, really important, OK?

CARLA

OK, Mommy. I'll be ready.

LAURA

Now; get your things together, brush your teeth, and go to bed. But sleep in your clothes and keep your shoes on.

CARLA

My shoes?

LAURA

Yes, baby. Because Daddy's coming.

51 **EXT - DIRT ROAD - EARLY MORNING**

51

A large black SUV pulls off to the side. Dani and Lawrence get out and pull a cammo net over the truck to hide it. Then they grab their sniper gear and head deeper into the woods.

52 **INT - CTS MOBILE CONTROL VAN**

52

The controls and video monitors are manned by two techs at their work stations. Clayton is standing behind them with a headset and watching Dani and Lawrence from the drone's camera as they disappear into the trees.

CLAYTON

OK, people; it's showtime.

53 **EXT - BILLY'S RANCH - EARLY MORNING**

53

It's a quiet country morning. Birds singing. The house is very quiet. The only movement is a roving guard, armed with a small machine gun, looking bored as he walks around the swimming pool. Another guard is laying on his back, snoozing in a lounge chair. The first guard goes over and kicks his foot to wake him up and bum a cigarette. He sits up and offers it to him with a light. The first guard takes a drag and leans back to stretch, looking up at the sky as he blows out the smoke. As he does, the sleeping guard flops back onto the chaise. The other guard looks down, curious. He bends down to take a closer look as his colleague. He suddenly bolts upright just as a bullet silently hits him in the forehead. He stands for a moment before falling backward into the swimming pool.

54 **EXT - WOODED AREA - CONTINUOUS**

54

High in a tree, Lawrence has set up his position with a suppressed sniper rifle. He is barely visible through his camouflaged guillie suit. Just a small puff of smoke coming from his barrel gives him away. He keys his mic.

LAWRENCE

Splash two bad guys. Literally.

55 **INT - CTS MOBILE CONTROL VAN - CONTINUOUS**

55

Clayton is watching the operation unfold on the various monitors. A view from the drone shows the blood beginning to swirl around the body floating in the pool.

CLAYTON

McGee. Go!

56 **EXT - BILLY'S RANCH/FRONT GATE - CONTINUOUS**

56

McGee is driving a large delivery van with Hall in the passenger seat. He pulls up to Billy's front gate and presses the intercom button.

57 **INT - BILLY'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS**

57

Billy is sitting in an elaborate robe, having breakfast. A buzzer keeps going off and he is annoyed.

BILLY

Leon!

Leon comes in, already dressed.

(CONT.)

57 CONTINUED:

57

LEON

Boss?

The buzzer goes off again. Billy looks at Leon angrily and motions for him to do something about the buzzer.

LEON

Oh, right. I'll take care of it.

BILLY

Don't we have guards for this? Why
am I paying them?

Leon goes to a control panel on the wall and presses an
intercom button?

LEON

Who is this?

MCGEE

(intercom)

Delivery for William Blankenship.

Leon presses the button again.

LEON

Just leave it at the gate.

MCGEE

(intercom)

Sorry. Someone has to sign for it.
If you'll open the gate I can drive
it up there.

Billy points his butter knife menacingly at Leon.

BILLY

No. Send someone down. Send Myron.
Anyone. I don't care. And find
those useless fucking guards.

Leon presses the talk button again.

LEON

Wait there. Someone will be down to
get it.

CUT TO:

58 **EXT - BILLY'S FRONT GATE - CONTINUOUS**

58

McGee is talking to the intercom as Hall watches from the passenger seat of the van.

 MCGEE

 OK, but I'm kind of in a hurry.
 I've got a lot of deliveries today.

He winks at Hall who chuckles in return. Hall keys his mic.

 HALL

 OK, everyone; they're sending
 someone down. Looks like it's plan
 B.

59 **INT - BILLY'S HOUSE/GUARD'S KITCHEN - MORNING**

59

Several of Billy's men are in a small dining room, milling about, getting coffee, having breakfast and chatting. Leon enters.

 LEON

 Myron!

One of the men, MYRON (white, overweight), is just sitting down with a breakfast burrito and a cup of coffee. He looks up without saying anything.

 LEON

 There's a delivery at the front
 gate. Billy wants you to go sign
 for it.

 MYRON

 OK.

Myron takes bite of his breakfast burrito. Leon slams his hand down on the table, startling everyone.

 LEON

 Now!

Myron is frozen looking up at Leon. His mouth is still full of that first bite as he replies.

 MYRON

 Yes, sir.

60 **EXT - BILLY'S FRONT GATE - MORNING**

60

McGee and Hall are sitting in the van when they hear Clayton's voice on their comms. Myron is just coming into view down the driveway, still eating his burrito and his weapon casually slung over his shoulder.

CLAYTON

(radio)

Be advised. I show one tango coming down the driveway on foot.

HALL

Roger. We see him.

McGee exits the van with a package in both hands and waits for Myron to enter the code that opens the gate. As the gate opens, the van doors open and the rest of the team pours out, weapons at the ready. Myron sees them as he is taking a bite of the burrito. He leaves it clenched between his teeth and attempts to level his weapon. A hole bursts through the package in McGee's hand as he fires his suppressed weapon through the box, hitting Myron right in the burrito. Myron drops to the pavement. Hall is watching and keys the mic radio in the van.

HALL

Splash one fat tango.

CLAYTON

(radio)

Roger. Splash one.

Hall dismounts the van and joins the rest of the team as they stealthily move up through the gate and up either side of the driveway. John keys his mic.

JOHN

This is Six. Crossing Fender now.

61 **INT - CTS MOBILE CONTROL VAN - CONTINUOUS**

61

A white board is set up with a list of check points named for guitars; Fender, Gibson, Martin, Taylor, and Ovation. Clayton turns and draws a line through Fender and keys his mic.

CLAYTON

Copy, Six. Crossing Fender.

62 **EXT - BILLY'S SWIMMING POOL - MORNING**

62

Another roving guard comes around the corner and sees the "sleeping" guard in the chaise. He shakes his head and marches over to wake him, kicking a leg of the chair. It's then that he sees the man is actually dead. He turns in shock and sees the other dead guard floating in the pool. He keys his walkie, yelling and running towards the house just as a bullet zings past his head.

 GUARD
 Emergency! Emergency!

63 **EXT - WOODLINE - CONTINUOUS**

63

We see Dani in a tree wearing cammo similar to Lawrence. She has just fired a shot and quickly works the bolt of her rifle.

 DANI
 Shit!

64 **INT - GUARD'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS**

64

The rest of Billy's thugs are having their morning coffee and their walkie-talkies have come to life.

 GUARD
 (radio)
 Emergency! We've got two dead in
 the pool and--UGH.

His transmission ends suddenly with a grunt, then nothing. The others grab their weapons and bolt out of the room.

65 **EXT - WOODED AREA - CONTINUOUS**

65

Dani is working the rifle's action again and keys her mic.

 DANI
 Splash one near the pool. But I
 think he was able to kick the
 hornets nest before I got him. It
 may be a little hot when you get in
 there, John. Sorry.

 JOHN
 (radio)
 Roger that. No worries.

66 **EXT - DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS**

66

The team is slowly moving closer to the house. John speaks in a loud whisper.

JOHN

You guys hear that? The AO's
already hot now. Let's roll.

They all pick up the pace and move quickly to the front door.

67 **INT - BILLY'S HOUSE - HALLWAY**

67

The guards are frantically moving around the house with their weapons. One of them, JIMMY, bumps into Leon who grabs him.

LEON

Jimmy! What the hell are y'all
doing?

JIMMY

There's two dead guards in the
pool. Maybe three. We're under
attack, man!

LEON

What are you talking about?

JIMMY

The outside guard called it in on
the radio. We all heard it.

LEON

You dipshit. Don't you think if we
were under attack we would have
heard something?

At that moment a breaching charge explodes and blows the front door off of its hinges, knocking Leon and Jimmy to the floor. Fitch is first through the door and double taps Jimmy before he can even level his weapon. Leon is stunned but already up and moving. He pulls his pistol and fires a wild shot towards the door that misses. Woods is right behind Fitch. He shoots at but misses Leon who disappears into the house. The rest of the team comes through the door, their laser sites piercing the smoke. John comes in and moves to the front of the group. He looks around the entry way and at the body on the floor then keys his mic.

(CONT.)

67 CONTINUED:

67

JOHN
Control; this is Six. Splash
another one and crossing Gibson
now.

CLAYTON
(radio)
Roger; crossing Gibson.

John turns to Fitch.

JOHN
Status?

FITCH
I dropped this one. Another one ran
down the hall that way. I'm pretty
sure it was your boy, Leon.

JOHN
OK, that's east towards Laura so me
and Philly will go that way. You
guys clear the house from here
going west, just like we drilled.

WOODS AND FITCH
(in unison)
Roger that.

JOHN
Go.

With fist bumps all around, the team splits up and moves
out.

68 INT - BILLY'S KITCHEN

68

Billy is still in his robe, his half eaten breakfast still
on the table. He is shooing the cook and maid out the back
door, waving his pistol and carefully pulling back the
curtains to see what's going on outside. He can see the
three dead guards around and in the pool. Leon enters and
Billy spins around, startled and furious.

LEON
Easy, Boss. It's just me.

(CONT.)

68 CONTINUED:

68

BILLY

Leon! What the hell is going on? Is it those Hondurans again? They have the audacity to attack my home?

LEON

I don't think so, Boss. They look like military. Maybe feds. DEA?

BILLY

No. Feds would not just blast their way in unannounced.

LEON

Well, these guys are serious, Boss. You need to get out of here. Now.

BILLY

Shit. OK; go retrieve our guests and bring them to me in the cellar. They are still needed. We'll take the tunnel to the barn.

LEON

Got it.

Leon takes off towards Laura's room while Billy strips off the robe, drops it on the floor, and heads for the cellar.

69 INT - BILLY'S HOUSE - VARIOUS ROOMS AND HALLWAYS

69

We see various action shots of the four-man team, moving in a stack down the hall to different doors, and clearing rooms. Bad guys pop out here and there or are hiding in some of the rooms. The highly-trained and well-drilled team easily work their way through the house, clearing each room.

John and Phillips are also stealthily moving down another hall and checking each room. While in the study, they don't see one thug is outside looking in the window. He raises up to shoot when he is suddenly shot and crashes through the window. Startled, John and Phillips spin around as Dani's voice comes into their headsets.

DANI

(radio)

You're welcome.

John chuckles a little then consults the small floor plan on his wrist band. He turns to Phillips.

(CONT.)

69 CONTINUED:

69

JOHN
Kitchen's just ahead.

They make their way to kitchen entrance and bust in, one going left and the other to the right as they clear the room. They slowly realize the room is empty.

PHILLIPS
Clear.

JOHN
Yeah, clear. But we just missed him. Look.

He points to the table and Phillips goes over to take a look. He picks up a piece of bacon and takes a bite.

PHILLIPS
Well; someone was in a hurry. Who leaves bacon behind? Coffee's still warm too.

JOHN
It was Billy.

PHILLIPS
You sure?

John holds up Billy's fancy robe.

JOHN
Who else?

Phillips consults his own wrist band.

PHILLIPS
OK. But that's going towards the pantry and laundry room. Laura's room is this way. Which way do we go? Billy or Laura?

John answers immediately.

JOHN
Laura.

70 INT - BILLY'S HOUSE/HALLWAY

70

Leon is rushing down the hall but not running. Two guards are at the last door. They practically come to attention

(CONT.)

70 CONTINUED:

70

when they see him coming. He ignores them as he pulls a key from his pocket and unlocks the door. He turns to one before opening the door.

LEON

You don't move from this spot or
I'll shoot you myself. Got it.

The guard replies by nodding and racking the bolt of his weapon. Leon opens the door and enters the room.

71 INT - BILLY'S HOUSE/LAURA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

71

Laura and Carla have heard the noise and are huddled in a back corner of the room. Laura has laid a large chair on its side to provide cover if needed. Leon enters the darkened room and flips the light switch. Nothing. He stops, looks up at the ceiling light and tries it again. Still nothing. He gives up and slams the door shut. He pauses for a moment as he allows his eyes to adjust to the low light. He smiles.

LEON

Ah. There you are. Playing a little
hide and seek, huh?

LAURA

(whispers)

Carla; red alert starting now, OK?

Carla looks up at her mother and nods her understanding.

LEON

Now, now. Come out from there. The
little game is over. I found you.
It's time to go.

LAURA

Go where?

Leon is furious now.

LEON

Go wherever I tell you to go! Now
get out from there.

Leon grabs the chair and throws it to the side. Then he grabs Carla and pulls her to her feet. Carla screams. Laura lashes out with the light bulb she removed from the ceiling light and smashes it into Leon's face. He staggers back, screaming and clutching his bleeding face. Carla runs back

(CONT.)

71 CONTINUED:

71

to hide behind Laura. Leon pulls his hand away and looks at the blood. When he looks up, there are still bits of the light bulb embedded in his cheek.

LEON

You bitch!

There are the sounds of two quick pairs of suppressed gunshots followed by the sound of two bodies dropping to the floor in the hallway outside. The door is kicked open and John comes in, his laser sight sweeping to room with Phillips close behind. Leon moves quickly and grabs Laura, pistol to her head as he uses her as a human shield. Carla has ducked back behind the fallen chair again. Phillips moves to the other side of the room to provide flank cover. John stops with his rifle leveled at Leon and keys his mic.

JOHN

This is Six. Crossing Martin now.

CLAYTON

(radio)

Copy. Crossing Martin.

CARLA

Daddy, daddy! It's a red alert!

JOHN

Carla; go to Uncle Phil now! Run!
Phil; get her out of here.

Carla immediately runs to Phillips who scoops her up in his arms and leaves the room. John looks down the barrel of his rifle at Leon.

JOHN

Let her go, Leon.

LEON

No! We are all leaving together.

JOHN

We? We who? Where's Billy?

Leon laughs.

LEON

Ha! He's already gone, asshole. You can't catch him. And now your time is up.

(CONT.)

71 CONTINUED: (2)

71

JOHN
Laura; on three.

Laura nods.

LEON
Oh, and what happens on three?

JOHN
Three!

Laura suddenly lifts her feet and drops to her knees, out of Leon's grasp. In the same instant, John shoots Leon twice in the center of his chest. He stands stunned for a moment and starts to raise his pistol. John fires another round into Leon's forehead and Leon drops to the floor, dead. Laura quickly jumps to her feet and runs into John's arms. He keys his mic again.

JOHN
Control; this is Six. Crossing
Taylor, time now.

72 INT - CTS MOBILE CONTROL VAN - CONTINUOUS

72

JOHN
(radio)
I say again; crossing Taylor.

Clayton pumps his fist and exchanges high fives with the two techs in the van then keys his mic.

CLAYTON
Good copy, Six. Crossing Taylor.
Now move to exfil.

Clayton goes to the white board. There are lines drawn through "Fender - Gate breach", "Gibson - House entry", and "Martin - Room breach". Clayton smiles as he draws a line through "Taylor - Hostages secured." Below this we see a final line that says "Ovation - HVT secured". Clayton keys his mic again.

CLAYTON
John? What about Ovation, over?

JOHN
(radio)
Negative, Control. Negative
contact. Over.

73 **INT - BILLY'S HOUSE/SECURITY ROOM - DAY**

73

This is where all of the recordings from the security cameras are kept. There are several monitors on the wall showing all aspects of the compound. On the monitors we can also see several of Billy's thugs lying dead and one still floating in the pool. Hall is pulling out all of the hard drives. With each one he pulls, a monitor goes blank. After all of the screens are blank, he shoves all of the hard drives into a bag, throws it over his shoulder and leaves the room.

74 **INT - BILLY'S HOUSE/FRONT ENTRY - CONTINUOUS**

74

Woods, Fitch, and McGee are already waiting near the door when John, carrying Carla, Laura, and Phillips arrive. Hall arrives at about the same time. Faint police sirens can be heard in the distance.

JOHN

Got 'em?

Hall holds up the bag.

HALL

Right here.

PHILLIPS

Good, then we need to un-ass this
AO quick. You hear that?

75 **EXT - BILLY'S FRONT GATE - MORNING**

75

The team comes jogging down the driveway towards the delivery van just as Lawrence and Dani pull up in their SUV.

JOHN

And no sign of Billy? You're sure?

FITCH

I'm telling you, brother; we
cleared every square foot of that
house.

WOODS

He's not in there, Doc.

JOHN

Dammit!

John, Laura, and Carla pile into the back of the SUV. The rest of the team get into the van. The vehicles turn around

(CONT.)

75 CONTINUED:

75

and quickly take off in a cloud of dust as the sirens get louder.

76 **EXT - JOHN'S BACK YARD - DAY**

76

TWO DAYS LATER

It's a beautiful Sunday afternoon and everyone has gathered at John's house. Burgers on the grill. Beers in several coolers. A heated game of cornhole. AJ is there in a wheelchair with two broken legs. Clayton, Phillips, Hall, and McGee have brought their significant others and a few kids too, running around and playing. Everyone laughing and having a good time. Dani walks in the back gate with her wife, NATALIE.

DANI

Hey! Sorry we're late. Everyone;
this is Natalie. Natalie, this
is...everyone.

NATALIE

Hi!

Everyone comes over to meet and greet Natalie. Fitch hands Dani a beer and offers another to Natalie.

FITCH

Beer, Natalie?

NATALIE

God, yes! Thank you!

Dani turns to Laura.

DANI

Sorry we're late. Nat's flight was
delayed in Houston.

LAURA

No worries at all. John just put
the burgers on the grill.

Carla comes running up.

CARLA

Dani!

Dani drops to one knee to give Carla a hug.

(CONT.)

76 CONTINUED:

76

DANI

Hi, sweetie! Oh, I like your dress!

CARLA

Thank you! Will you play cornhole with me?

DANI

OK, but I'm pretty good.

CARLA

I'll still beat you!

Carla runs off to play with the other kids.

NATALIE

She's adorable.

LAURA

Thank you.

Dani leans in closer to Laura.

DANI

How's she doing?

Laura glances at Natalie.

DANI

It's OK. Natalie heard the whole story on the drive over.

LAURA

She's pretty good. Had one bad dream. But we had a long talk. I know it's only been two days but I think she's gonna be OK. She's a tough kid.

NATALIE

How are YOU doing?

LAURA

Me? I'm a tough kid too.

They laugh and Dani gives Laura a one-arm hug as John walks over in a BBQ apron and tapping his watch.

JOHN

What the hell, partner?

(CONT.)

76 CONTINUED: (2)

76

DANI

Sorry. Natalie's flight was delayed.

NATALIE

Yes, it's my fault. Sorry.

JOHN

I'm kidding. We're just glad you're here.

DANI

So; did we miss anything.

John looks past Dani towards the gate as he answers.

JOHN

Uh, no. Actually, it looks like you're just in time.

Standing just inside the gate are two police detectives, WEBBER and GRAHAM. They look out of place at a sunny backyard party in jackets and ties. But their stern faces make it clear they are not here for the fun. John walks over towards them and calls out.

JOHN

Hi. Can I help you?

The other guys turn to see who John is talking to. Only Phillips comes over.

WEBBER

Are you John Paxton?

JOHN

Yes. And you are...?

They both show their badges.

WEBBER

I'm Detective Webber. This is Detective Graham.

JOHN

Oh, I'm sorry, were we being too loud?

WEBBER

No, we're not here about the party.

(CONT.)

76 CONTINUED: (3)

76

GRAHAM
Mr. Paxton; do you know Billy
Blankenship.

JOHN
We've met.

GRAHAM
He's missing.

JOHN
Well, he's not here but, feel free
to look around if you want.

Phillips approaches the group with a couple of beers and
hands one to John.

PHILLIPS
Everything OK, buddy.

JOHN
Yeah, fine. These are detectives
Webber and...

GRAHAM
Graham.

JOHN
Graham.

Graham eyes Phillips.

GRAHAM
I've seen you before.

Phillips shows Graham his badge.

PHILLIPS
Could be. I'm on the job too. Tim
Phillips.

GRAHAM
Oh yeah. Didn't recognize you out
of uniform.

PHILLIPS
So what's up?

(CONT.)

76 CONTINUED: (4)

76

WEBBER

Somebody busted into Billy
Blankenship's place and took out
his whole crew.

PHILLIPS

What? When?

GRAHAM

Couple of days ago. Early morning.

Phillips turns to John.

PHILLIPS

Wow. So, Doc; this guy Billy
Blankenship is like one of the
biggest meth dealers...

WEBBER

THE biggest.

PHILLIPS

THE biggest meth dealer in town.

John nods like this is news. Phillips turns back to the
detectives.

PHILLIPS

And now Blankenship's missing, huh?

WEBBER

I never told you he was missing.

PHILLIPS

I heard Doc tell you guys "he's not
here." Who else would you be
looking for? Besides I saw the BOLO
yesterday.

Graham turns to Webber.

GRAHAM

He is a cop.

WEBBER

Anyway, it looks like he escaped
the attack through a tunnel in his
basement. So we issued a BOLO--

(CONT.)

76 CONTINUED: (5)

76

PHILLIPS

That means "be on the look out"

WEBBER

--for Blankenship yesterday. He won't get too far. But we understand you had a little run in with him lately. You should be careful until we find him. He's dangerous.

JOHN

Well, thank you very much for that. I certainly will.

Graham looks across the yard and sees Clayton laughing and playing cornhole with a giggling Carla.

GRAHAM

Hey! Is that Leo Clayton, the billionaire?

John and Phillips look over at Clayton and then at each other.

JOHN

That guy? No. That's my Uncle Martin.

GRAHAM

I would swear that's Leo Clayton.

PHILLIPS

Oh, sure. Because billionaires drop by here all the time to play cornhole and drink beer. Right, Doc.

JOHN

That's right. Yeah. You just missed Bill Gates. He went to get ice.

Webber chuckles and rolls his eyes and grabs Graham's arm.

WEBBER

C'mon, let's go. Y'all enjoy your picnic.

PHILLIPS

Bye now. Drive safe!

(CONT.)

76 CONTINUED: (6)

76

John smacks Phillips.

PHILLIPS

Ow! What the hell, Doc?

JOHN

"Drive safe"? Really?

PHILLIPS

What?

They walk back to join the rest of the party.

77 INT - JOHN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

77

The party has ended and everyone has left. John and Laura are cleaning up, bringing stuff in from the backyard. John is filling up a large trash bag as Laura brings in the empty Crock pot.

LAURA

My god, those guys can put away some queso. They practically licked this thing clean.

She takes it to the kitchen. John calls to her from the back door as he ties the trash bag.

JOHN

Hey, how about McGee's guacamole he brought. Whoever thought some Irish guy could make guac that good?

LAURA

He's from Kentucky.

JOHN

And that's better?

He picks up the bag to take it out. Laura calls from the other room.

LAURA

Honey; leave that and come in here.

John drops the bag and follows Laura's voice. She's in the living room looking at the sofa, smiling.

JOHN

What's wrong?

(CONT.)

77 CONTINUED:

77

He walks around and sees Carla crashed out on the sofa, cuddling two cornhole bags. John laughs.

JOHN

Oh my God. This girl.

LAURA

I'll get the trash. You take her to bed.

JOHN

Deal.

LAURA

But you're still doing the dishes in the morning.

JOHN

Yes, ma'am.

John bends and scoops Carla up in his arms without waking her. She still clings to the bags.

JOHN

C'mon, Squirt.

John carries her upstairs to her room. Just a nightlight is on but it's enough. He lays her on the bed, taking off her shoes. He decides to just leave her in her dress. He pulls back the covers and tucks her in, leaning down to give her a little good night kiss. He turns to leave and stops dead in his tracks. Billy is standing in the doorway, disheveled, with a pistol pointed right at John. John slowly raises his hands.

BILLY

Hello, again, fireman.

JOHN

What are you doing?

BILLY

I do believe that you were properly informed about the consequences should you not comply with my request. Those consequences have not changed simply because your family is no longer under my roof.

(CONT.)

77 CONTINUED: (2)

77

JOHN

Billy; listen; My truck is in the driveway. Keys are in my pocket. Take it and run. Doing this now is pointless. You've got nothing left.

BILLY

I beg to differ. I still have pride like any other man. And my reputation.

JOHN

Billy; just turn yourself in. The cops where just here today looking for you. Or take my truck and run.

BILLY

Run? Why should I run? I am the victim. I was attacked in my own home. I had to hide for my own safety.

JOHN

OK; so if that's true, go to the police. Tell them what happened. Be the victim. But if you touch me or my family now, every cop in Texas will be hunting you down to watch you fry.

BILLY

You speak in hyperbole, Mr. Paxton, and "fry" is much too metaphorical.

Billy levels the gun at John's face just as we hear a loud clang and Billy drops to the floor. Laura has just clobbered Billy in the back of the head with a cast iron skillet.

LAURA

Not if you start with a good quality skillet.

Laura drops the skillet on the floor and looks up at John. She is close to tears. John smiles in relief, knowing she just saved all of their lives. Their eyes meet.

JOHN

I love you.

(CONT.)

77 CONTINUED: (3)

77

LAURA

I love you more.

JOHN

I love you most.

Laura steps over a prone Billy and hugs John.

END