

# TRAP DOOR

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FADE IN:

A strip torn from a plastic bag flutters and twists in the breeze like a live creature, struggling to break free.

It is snagged on the SAVAGE BARBS of serpentine wire that coil atop the 20-foot fence. This fence surrounds the:

EXT. PRISON COMPOUND - DAY

A maximum security facility isolated in a stretch of parched California farmland. The kind of place you drive quickly past, if you're lucky.

INT. PRISON CORRIDOR - DAY

Dim, cold, uncaring. Silent, except for the CLOMP of a PRISON GUARD'S SHOES as he passes by on his rounds. As he passes the window of a laundry room door...

The face of a LATINO INMATE appears behind the glass. Keeping watch.

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM - DAY

A LATINO PRISON GANG is working over a VICTIM. The three GANG MEMBERS have his head submerged in a large sink.

They raise the victim's head out. He GASPS for breath. The victim is also an inmate. White, early 40s, curly black hair. Everything about his smooth face and terrified eyes says "first timer."

The LATINO GANGSTER leader, a hardcore lifer, wields a fist, showing off the ring on his finger. A twisted spur of metal rises out like a corkscrew.

LATINO GANGSTER

You ran your mouth to those Aryan crackerjacks. Now you can run it for me.

VICTIM

I already told you where it is!

The gangster carves a slice across the victim's cheekbone with the ring. As the man HOWLS, the gangster plunges his head back under the water... holds it there for several seconds as the victim's legs kick wildly.

Finally he brings the victim's face back out.

LATINO GANGSTER

You think I'm stupid, *ese*? I want  
the exact location.

(off his silence)

I guess you wanna die today?

The victim knows he's dead either way. He holds back. The gangster reaches for an open gallon of BLEACH. He pours it over the victim's head. As the victim HOWLS...

LATINO GANGSTER

Stings, don't it?

The gangster dunks the victim's face back under. The other inmates study their leader with fear. He's enjoying this too much. Air bubbles rise from the water. The victim's legs stop kicking.

INMATE

Don't kill him! Aurelio said...

The gangster raises the victim's head. His eyes are frozen in death.

LATINO GANGSTER

Shit.

He drops the man's head. They hustle out of there. At the bottom of the sink basin lies a pair of EYEGLASSES, forever separated from their owner.

CUT TO:

A PAIR OF CHIC MENS' SUNGLASSES

Folded on the dash of a futuristic hybrid SUV.

WE ARE:

EXT. HILLTOP HOME DRIVEWAY - DAY

A Spanish style estate with a loop driveway and fountain. Three-car garage and large picture windows. An OPEN HOUSE sign by the front door. Looks like the Hotel California, set atop Mulholland Drive. Two cars are parked at the curb -- the SUV and a Mercedes.

EXT. HILLTOP HOME BACKYARD - DAY

The home is built on the hillside. Artistic stucco and tile, replete with arched doorways, iron railings and red tile roofing.

Two terraced levels of backyard patios overlook a swimming pool with a faux-rock waterfall and the sprawl of Hollywood below.

There is no question who drives the SUV -- MORGAN FISCHER admires the view. Morgan is an LA advertising executive. He defines high-end cosmopolitan trend. His finger is welded to the pulse. Slick suit, dangling wristwatch... maybe too handsome for his own good.

Admiring the view with him is NAOMI FISCHER. Naomi is hip in a more spiritual way. She feels the warm California breeze against her face.

The 60-ish REALTOR stands back and lets the property speak for itself.

REALTOR

The sheriff's auction is tomorrow.  
If you're interested, stop by.

NAOMI

Who was the owner, a drug dealer?

REALTOR

White collar criminal. His luck  
ran out.

MORGAN

Well, he had taste.

Naomi is apprehensive, but Morgan sees shining opportunity.

NAOMI

I don't know, Morgan. It's  
extravagant.

MORGAN

Naomi. This place is so "us."  
(pointing down the hill)  
Look. An omen.

Naomi peers down at the boulevard far below. Traffic, crowded storefronts, billboards... one with an eye-popping graphic and the NIKE "swoosh."

NAOMI

The Nike ad?

MORGAN

That's ours.

Naomi gives Morgan a sidelong glare, pretends to be put off. Secretly, she is amused by him.

They follow the realtor around the pool and waterfall. They enter through the glass doors to the recreation room on the bottom floor.

INT. RECREATION ROOM - DAY

A large open space with white floor tiles and a spiral staircase. Naomi regards the large windows.

NAOMI

You feel quite exposed in here.

REALTOR

The house is designed to let you see out, to maximize the panorama.

The realtor sweeps his arm at the view outside. Morgan studies the back wall, covered in MIRROR TILES. Four tiles are missing in a cluster near the floor. Newspaper has been taped over the gap.

MORGAN

What's with the... ?

REALTOR

Some damage from the property seizure. Police pulled some evidence out of here.

Naomi shoots Morgan a hesitant look.

REALTOR

We're waiting on replacement tiles. Should be fixed within the week.

Morgan nods. Not an issue. He follows the realtor up the spiral stairs. Naomi studies the mirrored wall a bit longer before she climbs after them.

EXT. HILLTOP HOME BACKYARD - DAY

Through the windows of the second floor (street level), we can see Morgan and Naomi eyeballing the layout. They follow the realtor up yet another flight of interior stairs.

The third level of the house is a single room. A turret with a crow's nest view of the property.

INT. TURRET OFFICE - DAY

Naomi and Morgan are now in this upper space with the vaulted ceiling ending in a center point. Morgan admires the deep velvet carpet.

MORGAN

This is the only room with  
carpeting?

REALTOR

It was recently installed.

Naomi stares at the electrical outlets in the wall. Six outlets alongside six phone jacks, two DSL jacks and a cable feed. Morgan notices.

MORGAN

Damn. Got the juice up here.

REALTOR

I need to make a quick call...

NAOMI

We'll be down in a minute.

Now that the realtor is gone, husband and wife can compare notes. Morgan goes into a slick sales pitch:

MORGAN

Think of where we'll be in a year.  
With the Apple and Target accounts,  
I'll be running the place.

NAOMI

If you land the accounts.

MORGAN

You'll have a three-book deal.  
(then)  
We deserve this. We've passed up  
other opportunities.

Naomi averts her eyes at that last comment.

NAOMI

You've never been so confident in  
my abilities before.

MORGAN

You've got a best-seller coming  
out. Look at this room. This is  
the office of a best-selling  
novelist, yeah?

Naomi knows she's being played, but she takes a moment to dream with him. Looking out the window, it is like being on top of the world.

MORGAN

We make our own reality.

NAOMI

You're not worried?

MORGAN

What? We sold the other place. We need to reinvest the equity.

NAOMI

But you're not worried about this house of ill repute?

MORGAN

The guy got pinched moving some money around. It's not like people were killed here.

He runs his hand along her back, a tenacious puppy.

MORGAN

We could snatch this place for a fraction of its worth.

NAOMI

(finally)

We'll go to the auction, but only if you bring Bruce.

MORGAN

Of course. Bruce is the man. He knows the game.

Morgan kisses her quickly. He knows how to close the deal.

EXT. CENTURY CITY - DAY

The modern office towers are shielded by mirrored glass, keeping out the heat.

INT. ADVERTISING AGENCY - DAY

Bold designer colors on the walls. EMPLOYEES in fashionable casual wear hustle about with their chores, humming with the collective energy. This place is "happening."

Morgan darts into one office, then another, collecting his things. He's in a hurry. His assistant ZOE (24) attacks from behind her cubicle wall. She's spunky, with dyed streaks in her hair.

ZOE  
Morgan! Don't forget your four  
o'clock.

MORGAN  
Don't plan to.

She thrusts a few message slips at him. Morgan takes them, but never breaks stride. Now he's hustling down the corridor.

ANTHONY appears. Alpha male, a step higher in the pecking order. This is who Morgan wants to be.

ANTHONY  
Morg? Are you my guy?

Morgan turns his head, sees Anthony leaning out of his office. Several advertising MOCK-UPS are inside.

MORGAN  
You know I am.

Morgan keeps walking. Anthony follows him.

ANTHONY  
If the account is too much for your  
plate...

MORGAN  
I'm on it, Anthony. I'm your guy.

They approach the elevators in the lobby.

ANTHONY  
Can we talk?

MORGAN  
I gotta do this thing with the  
auction.

Morgan steps into the elevator, turns around. Anthony points at him.

ANTHONY  
Apple. You got three weeks to  
bring them in for the landing.

MORGAN  
All over it. Apple's a done deal.

The mirrored elevator doors close and Morgan is gone.



AUCTIONEER (V.O.)  
The bidding starts at two million.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

BIDDERS crowd the seats as an AUCTIONEER reveals PowerPoint slides of the hilltop property. Several paddles go up in the air. Morgan's is first.

AUCTIONEER  
I have two-point-one.

Sitting beside Morgan are Naomi and BRUCE (early 50s), a real estate attorney.

NAOMI  
(sotto)  
You know what you're doing?

MORGAN  
I've been to a couple of these that Dale helped with.

AUCTIONEER (O.S.)  
I have two-point-three.

As Bruce nudges him, Morgan raises his paddle again.

BRUCE  
Dale?

MORGAN  
My mom's... last husband.

The auctioneer focuses on Morgan and a MATRONLY WOMAN, the most aggressive buyers in the room.

AUCTIONEER  
We're now at two-point-four. Who's for a clean two-point-five?

Morgan's paddle goes up again. Naomi notices a YOUNG LATINO MAN studying her across the aisle. He has a crew-cut, like a cop or serviceman, going prematurely salt-n-pepper gray.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

Lunch hour in the civic center. ATTORNEYS and GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES purchase food from a sidewalk HOT DOG VENDOR. Bruce hands a sheaf of papers to Morgan. They shake hands, all smiles.

BRUCE  
Congratulations.

Naomi is pleased, but reserved. Morgan slips on his stylish shades and lights a cigarette.

MORGAN  
Who's wants a drink? I'm buying.

NAOMI  
Four million in the hole and you're buying?

BRUCE  
You've already made a profit on the house. It's worth five and a quarter, easy.

MORGAN  
We'll never have to move again.

Naomi nods to Morgan's cigarette. He shrugs.

MORGAN  
Old time's sake.

Naomi holds out her hand. Morgan reluctantly digs the pack from his coat pocket and forks it over.

BRUCE  
Listen to her. You'll live longer.

Morgan smiles. But he's not looking at Bruce or Naomi. His view drifts past them... past the hot dog vendor...

To the crew-cut Latino gentleman, who is climbing into the passenger seat of a Jaguar sedan with dark windows. He darts a look back at Morgan and Naomi before closing the door.

INT. HILLTOP HOME - NIGHT

The Fischer's SUV is in the circular drive. A light glows in the front window. The real estate sign out front has a "SOLD" placard below it.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Morgan and Naomi are alone in the large space. Planning ahead before the move. The open floor plan connects the rooms with spacious wood floors in the living and dining areas. A tile floor kitchen is at one end; the bedrooms are at the other.

MORGAN

It's almost an illusion, how  
flawless it is.

NAOMI

Like every tile, brick and wood  
grain was selected by artisans.

A double-sided clay brick fireplace and chimney separates the living room from the dining room, but does not obstruct the line of large bay windows that admit the twinkling lights of the city below. A galaxy unto itself.

NAOMI

(pointing)

I see an area rug with the sofa and  
coffee table.

(then)

I don't like the walls. We need a  
warmer orange or gold.

MORGAN

And a new artisan takes it to the  
next level.

Morgan grins as Naomi's passion for the house finally blossoms.

NAOMI

We can always paint after the move,  
worst-case. I want to be in before  
the first.

MORGAN

I could paint some of the rooms.

Naomi gives him a knowing stare.

NAOMI

You're not going near a paint  
brush. I want this place to look  
nice.

Morgan bounces down the spiral staircase.

INT. RECREATION ROOM - NIGHT

Morgan activates the switch and recessed LIGHTS brighten the room. The attractively lit pool patio beckons through the glass doors. Morgan glances at the mirrored wall. The newspaper is gone. The missing tiles have been replaced.

MORGAN

This will be the gym. Access to  
the pool...

Off to the right is a large guest bathroom, also tiled.  
Morgan pokes his head into the guest bath.

INT. GUEST BATHROOM - NIGHT

An oversized shower and jacuzzi tub dominate the room, which  
is also fully tiled. A wall bench runs below a set of towel  
hooks. Morgan and Naomi get acquainted with the room.

NAOMI

You up for a swim?

MORGAN

Tonight? We don't have any...

Naomi points to a set of white bath towels on the bench.  
Morgan is puzzled.

NAOMI

Maybe the agent brought some  
friends over for a dip.

MORGAN

You still don't have a suit.

NAOMI

Who needs a suit?

Naomi starts to undress. Morgan can't argue.

EXT. SWIMMING POOL - NIGHT

Naomi is already doing laps as Morgan turns off the exterior  
floodlights. Not that many neighbors would have a vantage  
point to see them. Morgan runs and dives in, a dim naked  
figure.

LATER...

Morgan and Naomi are in the deep end, backlit by the  
underwater dome light set in dark blue tiling. Morgan clings  
to the lip of the waterfall while Naomi straddles him. They  
kiss like two honeymooners.

Suddenly the pool and deck are AWASH WITH LIGHT. Morgan and  
Naomi are startled. The motion lights have come back on.

MORGAN

What the hell?

NAOMI  
They're on a timer?

MORGAN  
No. Something activated them.

They sink lower in the water, feeling very vulnerable.

LATER...

Morgan and Naomi have covered themselves with the towels. Morgan circles the deck, looking out at the dark patches of steep hillside all around. A bush RUSTLES.

MORGAN  
It was an animal or something.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Just off the foyer corridor connecting the front door with the main living room is a wet bar with a sunken bartender pit. A SECURITY KEYPAD blinks along the wall. Morgan fiddles with the buttons while reading a manual.

He and Naomi are dressed again. Naomi towels her damp hair.

NAOMI  
If you can't figure it out...

MORGAN  
It was armed when we came in. We should get in the habit of arming it when we leave.

PIERCING WHISTLES attack them! High decibel sonic stings. Naomi covers her ears. Morgan jabs at the keypad, trying to silence the alarm.

As abruptly as it started, it stops. Naomi laughs, spooked.

MORGAN  
Jesus.

They share a look of surprise and relief.

A sharp RAP (O.S.) comes from the front door. Naomi cautiously approaches. She opens the door to find JT CROSBY (early 40s) in his security guard uniform. Slight beer gut, beady eyes. He stares hard at Naomi.

JT  
Olympus Security. Can I ask what your business is?

His voice is weighted with a very slight Southern drawl. Naomi stares back. *He sure got there fast.*

NAOMI

I'm Naomi Fischer. My husband and I just bought the house.

JT

Sorry. I wasn't notified.

As Morgan approaches, JT glides past Naomi into the house. JT offers a hand to Morgan first. Man to man.

JT

JT, Olympus Security.

MORGAN

Morgan Fischer. Sorry about the alarm.

JT turns a keen eye back on Naomi.

JT

How's the water?

Naomi shoots Morgan a dark look. JT catches it.

JT

Your hair's wet. I assume you didn't drop by to test the showers.  
(moving deeper inside)  
That pool is tempting. I was here when Nolan put it in.

JT surveys the empty rooms. He has a certain small town sheriff swagger. Both Naomi and Morgan notice that JT carries a SIDEARM in his packed utility belt.

MORGAN

So you knew the former owner.

JT

(turning back to them)  
I know everyone on the hill. That's my job, keeping everyone safe. That's what your association dues cover.

Morgan moves back the keypad.

MORGAN

I was trying to reprogram this thing.

JT strolls over, takes charge.

JT

Let's erase the temporary code.  
Don't want those realtors coming in  
and out as they please.

(beat)

What do you want your code to be?

Morgan and Naomi trade looks again. JT senses their tension.

JT

I'll show you how to change it  
whenever you want.

Morgan watches JT operate the keypad.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

A modern culinary command center with stainless steel appliances and glass-front cabinets. Stark black, white and silver. The Fischers have moved in. A few boxes are still stacked along various walls.

SUPER: THREE WEEKS LATER

Morgan shoulders a cell phone call while preparing a French press coffee maker and service tray.

MORGAN

Where's my mock-up, Zoe?

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Naomi is at the table with EVAN MAROS (mid-30s), a scholarly Athenian. Her editor. Their body language suggests they are good friends, just finishing a home-cooked meal.

EVAN

The place is gorgeous.

NAOMI

It all happened so fast.

The walls have been painted. The place is starting to take on their vibe. Morgan finishes his call, brings in the coffee service.

MORGAN

Sorry. We've got two big deals  
hanging in the balance.

EVAN

We were talking about the book signing events. They'll correspond with the national release.

Naomi pours the coffee.

NAOMI

First one's on Thursday.

MORGAN

I'm going to be pulling twelve hour days this week, babe.

NAOMI

(incredulous)

You're not coming to my signing?

MORGAN

Probably not this one.

Morgan shrinks from her stare.

MORGAN

I'll be at the next one.

NAOMI

This is my first book. My first public event. You know how hard Evan and I have worked for this.

Evan looks down. Not going to jump in the middle.

MORGAN

You know I support you, one-hundred percent.

Naomi GRUNTS to herself. Morgan watches Evan and Naomi, judging him in silence. He moves to the windows, stares down at the city lights.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

The furniture is in place, but open boxes are still evident, along with a few framed photos and paintings leaning against the walls, waiting to be hung. Save for the city lights in the window, the glow of the alarm clock is the only illumination. "2:25" glows in gamma-green.

Morgan is asleep. Naomi is not. She is wide awake, listening intently to something:



Stealthy SCRAPING SOUNDS (O.S.), like picture frames being slid along a wall.

Naomi waits, not daring to breathe. Now she hears ELECTRONIC BEEPING (O.S.)...

Naomi shakes Morgan hard. He rolls over.

NAOMI  
(sotto)  
Morgan!

Morgan sits up, groggy.

NAOMI  
Someone's in the house. Hear that  
beeping? What is that?

Morgan listens. The BEEPING continues. Fainter now. Morgan rolls out of bed and digs in an open moving box. He pulls out a titanium case.

Morgan sets the case on the bed, opens it to reveal a SEMI-AUTOMATIC PISTOL in form-fitting velvet. The thing is sleek, compact, nickel-plated, and in mint condition. Something a James Bond fanatic might set in a display case.

MORGAN  
Call the security company.

NAOMI  
No. I'm calling the police.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Morgan eases along the wall, bare feet moving soundlessly.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A shadowy domestic landscape. Only the radiance of the city lights below. Morgan's eyes examine the shapes of the furniture. Nothing out of place.

He comes beneath a staircase leading up to the turret office. From there he surveys the wet bar.

Morgan can see the security panel. Just a safe, steady GREEN LIGHT. No blinking warnings.

He spies a glint of RED LIGHT reflected off the staircase railing. The BEEPING SOUND comes from there. Someone is in the rec room downstairs! Morgan advances with the gun held out front.

INT. STAIRCASE/REC ROOM - NIGHT

Morgan crouches on the steel stairs. His eyes search the room below. Exercise equipment is spread out. A treadmill, exercise bike, bench press, dumbbell rack, etc.

A RED LASER LIGHT BEAM reflects off the wall of mirrors. It is being emitted from something in the hands of the...

INTRUDER.

The man has a dark hood over his head and a utility belt of some sort. Morgan can make out the shape of a PISTOL GRIP in the belt. He is kneeling by the wall with the replaced mirror tiles.

Morgan stretches his gun between the railing bars and aims down. The intruder senses him. He spins around and rises from the floor...

BLAM-BLAM!

Morgan double-taps the trigger. Mirror tiles CRACK! The intruder leaps aside and reaches for his gun.

Morgan descends two more steps, gets a better angle over the railing and FIRES AGAIN.

The man in black is blown backwards. He topples over the treadmill and goes still. Face down on the floor.

Morgan hears the SNAP (O.S.) of a pistol slide being released behind him. Another armed intruder is above him!

Morgan freezes. The faint sound of VEHICLE SIRENS (O.S.) waft up from the canyon...

POUNDING FOOTSTEPS (O.S.) from above. Morgan turns around. The second intruder has fled. A moment later, the front door upstairs crashes open with a THUD (O.S.) and that shrieking ALARM (O.S.) pierces the house!

MORGAN

Naomi!?

Morgan runs up the stairs.

EXT. HILLTOP HOME - NIGHT

Three police vehicles and an ambulance crowd the circular driveway. Their LIGHTS spin silently.

INT. RECREATION ROOM - NIGHT

Two UNIFORMED POLICE and a MEDIC keep a perimeter around the first intruder's body. Morgan stands at the back wall with DETECTIVE WARRELL KAYE (late 40s), in a somber suit.

Det. Kaye finishes taking a statement from Morgan. He flips his notebook closed and approaches the body.

Morgan is ashen. He looks up at the top of the staircase, where Naomi, in burgundy slippers and matching robe, waits with DETECTIVE BURGESS (late 30s), Kaye's junior partner.

The uniforms step aside as Kaye kneels down by the intruder. He slips on a pair of latex gloves and examines the intruder's utility belt. Soft velcro pouches contain specialized TOOLS. A professional burglar.

Kaye gently pulls the hood back from the intruder's head. A flattened crew-cut underneath. Salt-n-pepper gray. The man has a dark Hispanic complexion.

Naomi GASPS from the top of the stairs.

NAOMI

He was at the auction.

JT (O.S.)

Guess one of Nolan's friends  
decided to drop by.

Everyone is surprised to find JT standing in the sliding glass doorway to the pool deck.

DET. KAYE

Who the hell are you?

The uniforms are ready to pounce.

JT

JT Crosby, Olympus Security. This  
house is on my patrol.

DET. KAYE

This is a crime scene, Mr. Crosby.

JT

Understood. You guys have cleanup  
duty. I'll wait upstairs.

JT gives Morgan a look, then swaggers back outside. One of the cops follows him.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The strobing POLICE LIGHTS penetrate the home easily through the wide front windows. Det. Kaye examines the security keypad behind the wet bar. The Fischers watch from a respectful distance. JT is itching to jump in, but Det. Burgess keeps him back.

DET. KAYE

System only shows one breach...  
when the second guy ran out the  
front door.

(beat)

There was no breach prior to that.

Naomi stares at Morgan. Their skin is crawling.

MORGAN

That's not possible. How did they  
get in?

NAOMI

Maybe they knew the code.

JT

You just changed your code.  
Besides, any commands would be  
recorded in there.

DET. KAYE

They must have come in before you  
armed the house.

They all ponder the implications. The Fischers are even more disturbed than before.

DET. KAYE

I'll put you on a black and white  
patrol route.

JT

And I'll keep a unit out front for  
the next forty-eight hours. We  
want you guys protected.

This is JT's territory, and he's protective of it. Det. Kaye holds Morgan's pistol in an evidence bag.

DET. KAYE

We'll need this for the routine  
ballistics. Sounds like you have  
nothing to worry about.

MORGAN

Thank you.

DET. KAYE

I may need you to come by the station for some follow-up.

MORGAN

Are you going to find out who the corpse is?

DET. KAYE

I wouldn't be doing my job if I didn't.

JT

Like I said, detective... he looked familiar, but I don't have a name.

Det. Kaye is growing weary of JT. He checks his watch.

DET. KAYE

Why don't we let them get some sleep.

Naomi looks puzzled by this comment. She's wired awake. Morgan puts an arm around her as the professionals leave.

Then he goes to the security keypad to arm the house. The sky is already starting to BRIGHTEN outside.

NAOMI

You did what you had to do.

MORGAN

That's right.

They are both troubled by the episode.

NAOMI

You could have been killed. We could have been killed.

Morgan nods soberly as he examines the security keypad. The mystery is eating at him.

EXT. HILLTOP HOME - DAY

Another sunny, smoggy day in the Hollywood Hills. An Olympus patrol vehicle is parked across the street. The garage door rises, revealing Morgan's SUV and Naomi's less ostentatious sedan. A full car space lies between them.

Morgan comes out from the garage, spots the patrol car. JT strolls over.

JT  
Where'd you learn to shoot?

MORGAN  
My stepfather was a Riverside Sheriff.

JT  
(nodding)  
My pop was a Georgia state trooper.  
Kid brother's LAPD.

Morgan studies him. Explains a lot. JT surveys the exterior of the house.

JT  
Having some cameras would be an excellent deterrent.

MORGAN  
How did those guys get in my house?

JT  
You'd have to ask them. I'm just thinking ahead.

EXT. MORGAN'S STREET - DAY

Mid-afternoon now. A white utility van is parked around a curve, just down the street from Morgan's place. Someone with a sweatshirt hood and binoculars is behind the wheel.

INT. VAN - DAY - BINOCULAR P.O.V.

A POLICE CRUISER creeps past Morgan's property. As the car rolls away, the unseen WATCHER speaks into a cell phone.

WATCHER (O.S.)  
Aurelio. Black and white's on drive-by circuit.

AURELIO (V.O.)  
(through phone)  
Only a matter of time before they link Capilla to us.

The voice of AURELIO is that of a serpent, smooth and unhurried. Almost a whisper. An aristocrat who has almost masked his foreign accent. He could be Mediterranean... Latin American...

WATCHER (O.S.)  
Then there's the fucking security  
guard. He's putting up cameras.

The watcher's binocular P.O.V. moves over to the property.  
JT is on a ladder, installing a security camera near the  
eaves of Morgan's house.

WATCHER (O.S.)  
Why don't you let me wet this  
fucking guy? He knows our faces.  
All of us.

AURELIO (V.O.)  
We've had this conversation. I  
can't touch him.

WATCHER (O.S.)  
I don't care who his brother is!

AURELIO (V.O.)  
(coldly)  
I have what I need. Get back here.

EXT. MORGAN'S STREET - DAY

The van backs up and turns around. Rolls away.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Morgan is behind the bar, looking much more composed. Naomi  
sits on a stool, drinking a glass of wine. She still seems  
rattled.

Morgan is operating what appears to be a tiny computer  
station set on the bar counter. A small black & white  
monitor with a compact keyboard.

MORGAN  
You can toggle between cameras...  
(then)  
Or you can run a thirty second  
playback of all cameras  
simultaneously.

Morgan presses a few keys. Finally he masters it. Various  
EXTERIOR SHOTS of the house appear on the monitor.

NAOMI  
This was all JT's idea?

MORGAN  
He's not a bad guy. I wouldn't  
invite him to dinner...

Naomi laughs.

NAOMI  
You feel better?

MORGAN  
(considering)  
Yeah. You?

Naomi nods. She slides her glass away.

NAOMI  
Cut me off, barkeep. I've got a  
power brunch in the morning.

MORGAN  
Right. The publishers.

Morgan takes a sip from his martini glass.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Naomi lies in bed, watching Morgan hammer in the second of  
two picture hangers. He lifts a large framed painting,  
struggles to catch the back wire on both hooks.

NAOMI  
If the book doesn't break as big as  
we hope, you'll be okay with that?

MORGAN  
We'll manage. I'll pay the bills.

Not the kind of support she's looking for. Morgan adjusts  
the painting, steps back. It is crooked.

NAOMI  
I wish I knew what the critics are  
writing about me.

MORGAN  
Does that look straight? That  
isn't straight. I can't do this.

Morgan takes the picture down, studies his hooks. They are  
sadly misaligned. Naomi is staring at him, waiting for a  
real response. Morgan finally picks up on her need.



MORGAN

People either love your kind of book or they don't. What are you gonna do?

Naomi turns away from him, hurt. Morgan flicks off the lights and slides into his side of the bed. The darkness envelops them.

The clock reads "10:45."

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

The clock advances to "7:30." The SNOOZE RADIO activates:

RADIO NEWSCASTER

... what will be the fate of Tagaro. Protestors of capital punishment have been gathered outside the San Quentin facility since last night...

Morgan is asleep, oblivious to the radio and bright sunlight outside. He is alone in the bed.

RADIO NEWSCASTER

Governor Hollenbeck is considering a last-minute plea for a stay of execution, but sources say such a decision is highly unlikely...

From somewhere deep within the house, NAOMI SCREAMS!

Morgan bolts upright. He shakes off sleep. *Was he dreaming?* He slaps the snooze button, silencing the radio.

MORGAN

Naomi?

Morgan slips out of bed. The master bath door is open. No one in there.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Morgan moves quickly down the hall.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Morgan scans the empty rooms. He runs up the stairs.

MORGAN

Naomi!

INT. TURRET OFFICE - DAY

Naomi's office is coming together. Large writing desk, notebook computer, moody paintings...

Bookshelves crammed with texts. But her ergonomic writing chair is vacant. Morgan goes to the window, looks down on the terrace decks. He leaves.

INT. GARAGE - DAY

The lights FLICKER on as Morgan checks the garage. Both cars are still there.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Morgan does a quick scan, then returns to the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Morgan checks the security display. He runs the 30-second playback on the camera monitor. No activity outside.

MORGAN

Naomi!?

Morgan rushes down the spiral stairs.

INT. RECREATION ROOM - DAY

Morgan winds down the steps to the floor. No sign of Naomi. He seems to dread this room now. He scans the pool patio outside. Not a soul.

INT. GUEST BATHROOM - DAY

Morgan enters and stares in shock at the center of the tiled bathroom floor:

A TRAP DOOR PANEL IS HANGING OPEN!

Built right into the tiling.

Morgan gazes with growing dread at the shaft that descends through the floor. Rungs are set in the wall, leading straight down ten feet.

Morgan peers down. He can make out the dim form of a SLIPPER lying in the horizontal passageway below.

MORGAN

NAOMI!?

NAOMI (O.S.)  
 (faintly)  
 Morgan!

Morgan clammers down the hatch. No time to think.

INT. SEWER - DAY

Morgan drops into the cramped tunnel, which could be nothing other than a sewer tunnel. Only two ways to go from here -- up the twisting pipe beyond the escape hatch, or down.

Naomi's far-echoed SCREAM (O.S.) settles it. Morgan races down the damp tunnel, following the curve down the canyon.

DIM SQUARE BULBS behind safety cages light portions of the tunnel every several yards. Like sporadic streetlights on the most claustrophobic street.

Morgan runs barefoot through the slop, hands skimming the concrete walls for balance. Morgan sees DAYLIGHT ahead.

The end of the tunnel is a rusted metal grate. Morgan can see a soggy culvert outside, surrounded by underbrush and steep hillside.

A WHITE VAN is pulling away.

EXT. DRAINAGE CULVERT - DAY

Morgan pushes against the grate, which rises out on a hinge. He races toward the van as it rolls up the hill to the canyon road above.

MORGAN  
 HEY!!!

A FIGURE rushes up behind Morgan. A GUNMAN in a dark blue sweat suit, hood over his head, dark sunglasses and a bandana pulled over his mouth.

He swings the silencer barrel of his MAC-10 sub-machine gun... SLAMMING Morgan upside the head.

Morgan topples, falls in the tall grass. He is dazed.

MORGAN'S P.O.V.

The world swirls in a drunken spin. The canyon walls surround him. Luxury homes on stilts way up there, teetering...

The WHOOSHING sounds (O.S.) of CARS up on the canyon road...

The wide black sunglasses of the hooded gunman, whipping Morgan around...

The mouth of the tunnel, yawning open to swallow Morgan again...

INT. SEWER - DAY

Morgan collapses in the tunnel. Wet muck soils his shirt. The gunman kicks him, forcing him back up. His compact black sub-machine gun is leveled, slung on a strap. Morgan is slowly coming back to himself.

MORGAN  
(scared shitless)  
What... what do you want?

The gunman snaps the safety off his weapon.

MORGAN  
Where are they taking her!?

GUNMAN  
You find out at the house.

INT. GUEST BATHROOM - DAY

Morgan emerges through the trap door. He climbs out, breathing heavily, ear bloodied. He is still clutching Naomi's slipper in one hand. The world is still surreal.

The gunman rises halfway up, gestures with his gun barrel...

Morgan sees the CELL PHONE sitting on the bench. It isn't his. It BLINKS and VIBRATES with an incoming call. Morgan crawls to it, answers.

MORGAN  
Who is this?

Morgan stares at the gunman while speaking into the phone. He tries to sound tough and in control. The response comes clearly in speakerphone mode:

AURELIO (V.O.)  
Mr. Fischer. My people have your wife.

That serpent hiss again. It freezes Morgan's blood. This caller is in control. NOT Morgan.

MORGAN  
Who are you?

AURELIO (V.O.)  
Aurelio. That will suffice.

(NOTE: The phone conversations between these two are always in speakerphone mode.)

MORGAN  
We don't have any real money. We  
sunk it all in this... house.

His voice cracks. The tough guy facade is breaking down.

AURELIO (V.O.)  
This is not a kidnapping for  
ransom.  
(beat)  
You have work to do, Mr. Fischer.

MORGAN  
What are you talking about?

AURELIO (V.O.)  
Nolan Rego stole millions from my  
employer. We want it back.

MORGAN  
What the hell does that have to do  
with us?

AURELIO (V.O.)  
Nolan built a vault in that house.

MORGAN  
A vault?

AURELIO (V.O.)  
A safe. I sent my best men in to  
find it. We had no intention of  
involving you... but then you  
killed my point man and brought on  
this police scrutiny.

Morgan peers out at the recreation room. The site of his  
fatal mistake.

AURELIO (V.O.)  
I would like to go in and tear  
apart your home to find this cache,  
but I'm afraid that is too much of  
a risk.  
(beat)  
You'll have to do it.

Morgan spins around in shock. The gunman has pulled up his sweatshirt, revealing a tool belt, much like the one the intruder wore the other night. He unstraps the belt, sets it down. Peeking through the flaps and sleeves are hammers, short saws, and a compact power drill.

MORGAN

I just moved in here. I don't know this house! I don't know anything about construction or finding safes or... tools.

AURELIO (V.O.)

I know they are watching. That house has to look normal.

(then)

You own it. You live there. You're the one behind the windows. You have to be the one.

Morgan's mind is racing. Every word from Aurelio is critical. He clutches the phone with white knuckles and looks out the glass windows at his pool deck.

AURELIO (V.O.)

You will locate the safe by five o'clock.

MORGAN

Today?

AURELIO (V.O.)

This is the deadline for my employer.

MORGAN

And... if I can't find it?

AURELIO (V.O.)

You will not see Naomi again.

Morgan bristles. Aurelio does have her. He knows her name.

MORGAN

How can you be sure the safe is still here? The police already tore stuff out.

Morgan is looking back at the mirrored wall.

AURELIO (V.O.)

They didn't find the trap door to the escape tunnel, did they?

Morgan stammers.

AURELIO (V.O.)  
 They didn't find the safe either.  
 (then)  
 Here are the conditions. You will  
 search for the safe. You will keep  
 this phone for communication with  
 me only. I will be checking on  
 you, as will my colleague.

Morgan turns back to the guest bathroom, surprised to find  
 that the gunman has vanished. The trap door has disappeared.  
 Nothing but a perfect, seamless expanse of tile.

AURELIO (V.O.)  
 You will not leave the house. You  
 will not notify the security patrol  
 or the police. You will not  
 discuss this with anyone.  
 (beat)  
 Someone comes to the door, you make  
 them go away. I see one person  
 inside that house that isn't Morgan  
 Fischer, your wife dies.

MORGAN  
 So you can see me?

TELESCOPE P.O.V.

The hillside estate is in center focus. A tiny Morgan stands  
 by the window, looking out at his swimming pool. Dwarfed by  
 his giant house. Aurelio is already watching from afar.

AURELIO (O.S.)  
 Everyone can see you. We will be  
 monitoring your movements. To keep  
 you honest, I require that you go  
 outside on the upper terrace every  
 hour, on the hour, for two minutes.

EXT. POOL PATIO - DAY

Morgan comes outside with the phone, staring out at the city,  
 as if trying to gauge from where Aurelio is watching.

AURELIO (V.O.)  
 Then I can see that you are  
 diligently working.

Morgan grips the railing on his terrace to steady himself.  
 The unreality of it all has undermined his sense of balance.

MORGAN

If you hurt her in any way...

AURELIO (V.O.)

Do you understand these conditions?

MORGAN

(through clenched teeth)

I find your safe... I get her back?

(off the silence)

Right? I get her back?

CLICK. Morgan hears a chilling DIAL TONE (O.S.).

Morgan releases his grip of the railing. In doing so, he leaves the crushed slipper sitting there like a sacrifice on an altar.

He turns, dazed, and looks at his new dream home.

His castle. His prison.

INT. GUEST BATHROOM - DAY

Morgan splashes water on his face, his bloody ear. He is trembling. It takes tremendous effort for him to raise his head and look at himself in the mirror.

MORGAN

(sotto)

You can do this.

Morgan starts by studying the one known eccentricity of the house -- the trap door. Only the expert eye can make out the spider cracks between the grouting and the four central tiles of the door.

Morgan feels around the edges of tile, pressing on the gray grouting until a strip of it rises up on a spring. A thin handle, like a moving part of a giant Swiss Army knife.

Morgan pulls up on the handle and the door rises from the floor... but stops after exposing two inches of darkness.

Morgan kneels down and tries to see in the crack. Strands of rope have been knotted around the inner handle, probably tied around the rungs. The door is anchored down.

Morgan reaches for a small-tooth saw from the tool belt. Then he drops it.



MORGAN

(sotto)

Idiot. That's how they'll know.

If the rope has been cut when the gunman returns, Morgan is busted.

Morgan drops the door. The handle folds back neatly into the floor. Morgan tosses the saw and paws through the other tools. He studies a strange black plastic device, the size of a large walkie-talkie. But it isn't one. Puzzled, Morgan sets it aside.

He picks up a nail hammer. He taps the tile of the trap door, listens to the deep THUNK.

Then he taps other tiles surrounding the hatch. Flat sounds. Solid concrete beneath them.

LATER...

Several of the tiles have been smashed -- some in the walls. Gouged out like hollow eye sockets.

INT. RECREATION ROOM - DAY

Morgan is on his hands and knees, methodically tapping the 12-inch tiles in sequence. There are a few hundred of them in this room alone.

SUPER: 8:40 AM

Then Morgan looks up, fixes his sights on the mirrored wall. He clambers over to the area with the replaced mirror tiles. Where he shot the intruder.

Morgan SMASHES IN the mirrors with the hammer. He uses the hammer claw to hack through the drywall, exposing a pocket within...

But it is merely a hollow alcove between the house and the hillside of dirt and rock. Nothing in there. Morgan stretches his back. He's discouraged.

INT. TURRET OFFICE - DAY

Morgan has closed the blinds to every window. He slips a pair of binoculars through the slats and studies the realm beyond his back patio:

BINOCULAR P.O.V.

Across the canyon to the left are HOMES ON STILTS.

A RICH WOMAN sunbathes on one deck, while talking on her cordless phone...

A GARDENER with headphones trims bushes at another property.

MORGAN (O.S.)  
(sotto)  
Aurelio? That you?

P.O.V. shifts up to a hilltop marked with zigzag hiking trails. Two JOGGERS stand at the summit, staring vaguely his direction. But all they have are water bottles.

P.O.V. shifts down to the right...

The modern office buildings and 1920's era hotels rise from the Hollywood streets. POV shifts from a WINDOW WASHER on a rig to a MAINTENANCE MAN on a hotel roof, wiping the scaffolding of a rooftop billboard.

There are so many buildings, so many windows. So many suspects.

P.O.V. shifts down the hillside, beyond the glimpse of road, to the lower drainage culvert. We can barely make out the BLUE HOOD of the gunman, stationed below the road. Guarding the escape tunnel.

MORGAN

Lowers the binoculars. He's boxed in.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

The sub-zero refrigerator has been rolled away from its nook. Morgan is trying to unscrew the overhead microwave from its mounting frame.

Dishes and glasses are all over the counters. The cupboards are empty and wide open. The hunt is on.

Morgan is stripping the screws. He GRUNTS and jabs at the microwave with the screwdriver.

MORGAN  
Where the fuck are you?

Morgan opens a few lower cabinets, examines the back walls. He yanks an empty drawer out, tosses it...

A pair of SWIMMING GOGGLES flies out. The rubber strap snags a cabinet knob. Morgan stares at the goggles.

He yanks out the next drawer, dumps it. Amidst the junk -- napkins, candles, matchsticks -- he sees a CIGARETTE PACK. Secret stash.

Morgan lunges for it, shakes out a smoke. He grips a blue-tipped match, strikes it on the floor, lights up. He inhales deeply as he runs a hand through his hair.

A MELODY (O.S.) chirps from the next room. Like electronic bagpipes. Morgan jumps in surprise. He runs out to the dining room, grabs his personal cell phone.

INT. DINING ROOM - SAME

Morgan takes a moment to gather his thoughts. Play it cool.

MORGAN

Yeah.

ZOE (V.O.)

You in traffic?

Morgan wilts. He hasn't prepared for this.

MORGAN

No. I'm still at home.

INT. ADVERTISING AGENCY - DAY

Zoe is in her cubicle, manipulating the appointment schedule on her computer screen. She wears a phone headset.

ZOE

You know what time it is?

BACK TO MORGAN

Who is all too aware of time.

WE INTERCUT AS NECESSARY

MORGAN

Yeah... look, I'm going to be late.

Morgan paces to the fireplace. He runs his fingers along the cracks between the clay bricks, always searching.

ZOE

Madeline confirmed for eleven, with the other Apple executives. They are all primed for the pitch.

MORGAN  
Zoe, I can't talk now. There's a  
problem with the house.

ZOE  
Spackling up the bullet holes?

MORGAN  
That's not funny.

BREEP! Morgan jerks his head. The house phone.

MORGAN  
I'll call you back.

Morgan disconnects and runs for the kitchen phone.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Morgan knocks a wine glass over, reaching for the phone. It  
shatters on the counter.

MORGAN  
Hello?

EVAN (V.O.)  
Is Naomi there?

MORGAN  
(guarded)  
Evan?

EVAN (V.O.)  
I wanted to be sure she didn't get  
lost on the way.

MORGAN  
She can't make it.

EVAN (V.O.)  
Is there a problem? I'm here with  
the publisher at the restaurant.

MORGAN  
Naomi's not feeling well. She's  
been in bed all morning.

EVAN (V.O.)  
It's not the flu, is it?

MORGAN  
(swallows hard)  
Sorry to wreck your brunch.

Morgan looks at the phone base. The red MESSAGE LIGHT is blinking. Morgan's anxiety increases.

MORGAN  
I gotta go, okay? I'll have her  
call you.

Morgan hangs up. He pushes the answering machine playback button. All he hears is RUSTLING... QUICK BREATHING...

NAOMI (V.O.)  
Morgan?

Like a voice from beyond. Morgan is riveted.

NAOMI (V.O.)  
I can't see where they're taking  
me.

Her voice wavers. A forced call.

MORGAN  
(eyes welling with tears)  
Oh, God.

NAOMI (V.O.)  
Whatever they want, give it to  
them. I don't care what it costs  
us...  
(calling out)  
Wait!

BEEP. The message is over.

Morgan stares at the phone base, one hand covering his mouth.

A SERIES OF SHOTS:

Increasing in tempo as Morgan's panic RISES:

- Morgan lights another cigarette, finds his resolve.
- Morgan shifts furniture, examining the walls behind...
- He flings pictures and mirrors off the walls, runs his fingers along the naked painted surfaces...
- He invades closets, tossing clothes and luggage aside... searching all obvious places...
- With the power drill, he unscrews air duct vents, yanks them out, reaches inside the ducts...

-- Morgan inspects the walls and floor of the garage, checks behind and under the furnace...

-- Morgan pounds the kitchen floor tiles with a hammer...

THUNK... a hollow space.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Morgan uses the hammer claw to pry up two of the thick Mexican tiles. A plywood sheet lies beneath. Morgan hacks at more of the tiles, until he finds an edge of the plywood.

MOMENTS LATER...

Morgan pries up the plywood sheet, a 1' x 3' strip nailed to the floor studs. A hollow space lies below, several inches deep. Completely empty.

Morgan flings the plywood away in rage.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Morgan is hunched over the wet bar. He stares at his personal cell directory, weighing his options. Finally he selects a name and dials. He closes his eyes and lights a fresh cigarette.

CUT TO:

A GRIMY BEIGE ANSWERING MACHINE PHONE

RINGING the same bleary warble it has rung for twenty years. It hangs on a wall covered by peeling green wallpaper. A gruff MALE VOICE answers on the machine.

DALE (ON MACHINE)

I'm not in. Leave a message with your pertinent details.

MORGAN (V.O.)

(through machine)

Uh... Dale? You there?

WE ARE:

INT. HAWKINS KITCHEN - DAY

A small, tired place that has not seen a woman's touch in a few years. Security bars frame the one small window to the outside -- an outside that doesn't promise to be much more inspiring, judging by the grafitti-tagged bus that groans by.

MORGAN (V.O.)  
 It's Morgan. I know I'm the last  
 person you'd expect to be calling.

DALE HAWKINS sits at the table, staring at the phone on the wall. Despite his advanced age and wrinkles, Dale carries himself with a straight back. His gray hair is receding, but close-cropped and presentable. He wears pressed khakis and a crisp button-down short-sleeve.

This guy has not been a civilian in a long while. And he's in no hurry to talk to Morgan.

BACK TO MORGAN

Leaving his awkward, stilted message... perhaps in vain.

MORGAN  
 I got a bit of trouble here. We  
 bought a new house...  
 (doesn't know where to  
 begin)  
 I need some advice.

BACK TO DALE

The ice is melting a bit. He's listening.

WE INTERCUT AS NECESSARY

MORGAN  
 (pained)  
 When my mom passed on... I wasn't  
 myself. I was wrong to blame  
 you... if that's how it seems.  
 (beat)  
 Anyhow... if you get this...

BREEP! Morgan is distracted. The house phone is ringing again. Morgan rushes for the kitchen.

At the same moment, Dale rises from his chair, reaches for his phone.

DALE  
 Morgan?

But Morgan is gone. Dale hangs up. He's curious, concerned.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Morgan has dropped the call on his cell. Now he scrambles to pick up the house phone.

MORGAN

Hello?

DET. KAYE (V.O.)

Mr. Fischer? Warrell Kaye, LAPD.

Morgan stiffens. Just the kind of call he should NOT be taking.

DET. KAYE (V.O.)

Catch you at a bad time?

MORGAN

No. Sort of.

Morgan keeps his body out of view of the back windows.

DET. KAYE (V.O.)

I was hoping you could come by today for some follow-up questions.

MORGAN

Does this have to be today?

DET. KAYE (V.O.)

Is today not good?

MORGAN

I'm late for a meeting.

DET. KAYE (V.O.)

I'd like to get a few things sorted out rather soon. They may impact other investigations we have going.

MORGAN

So... you found a connection to another case?

DET. KAYE (V.O.)

I'd rather we talk in person. Any chance you could meet me at the station in the afternoon?

Morgan can't risk it...

MORGAN

I'll check my schedule.

DET. KAYE (V.O.)

Oh, Morgan?

(measured beat)

Any chance Naomi could join us?



MORGAN  
 (wincing)  
 Uh... I'll have to see.

DET. KAYE (V.O.)  
 There are a few questions I forgot  
 to ask her.

MORGAN  
 Will do.

DET. KAYE (V.O.)  
 She's okay, isn't she?

Morgan freezes. *Does this guy know?*

MORGAN  
 What do you mean?

DET. KAYE (V.O.)  
 She seemed disturbed. Natural, of  
 course. If either of you feel the  
 need to talk to someone, there are  
 counselors available.

A veiled invitation? Morgan still isn't sure how to  
 interpret him. He's at a loss.

DET. KAYE (V.O.)  
 I'll talk to you this afternoon.

MORGAN  
 Yes. Bye.

Morgan hangs up. He almost blew it. He takes a deep drag  
 from his smoke. He looks at the wreck he's made of his  
 kitchen... the wreck his life has become.

INT. TURRET OFFICE - DAY

Morgan is at Naomi's desk, fumbling with her delicate  
 notebook computer. He's frantically trying to use the tiny  
 finger pad to scroll through a WEBSITE that features various  
 types of SAFES...

Morgan scrolls down through photos and large headings:

**WALL SAFES -- FLOOR SAFES -- GUN SAFES -- DROP SAFES --**

As many styles, shapes and sizes as one could imagine. This  
 isn't helping.

MORGAN  
 (sotto)  
 I need you, Bruce.

Morgan switches to an e-mail program and starts typing a rapid-fire message. Then he looks up at the wall clock facing him: "10:00."

MORGAN  
 Shit.

He clicks "SEND" and the e-mail is gone. He closes the laptop screen and races out of the room.

EXT. UPPER TERRACE - DAY

Morgan paces along the deck with his cigarette, making his presence known to Aurelio. He checks his watch. He looks at Aurelio's cell phone in his hand as it glows and VIBRATES. He answers.

AURELIO (V.O.)  
 Are we making progress?

MORGAN  
 How big is this thing supposed to be? How much money is in it?

AURELIO (V.O.)  
 Ten million.

Morgan grapples with a visualization. A LOT of cash.

INT. WINDOW ROOM - DAY

Hard to tell where we are. *Office? Hotel room? Apartment?* In the dim lighting we see AURELIO by the window. He is peering through the blinds with his telescope. We only see a glimpse of his back. Dark slacks, dress shirt, black hair.

AURELIO  
 Bearer bonds can fit in a folder.  
 The safe could be any size.

BACK TO MORGAN

Crumpling. Not what he wanted to hear.

MORGAN  
 Can I talk to Naomi?

AURELIO (V.O.)  
 No. You see my message?

MORGAN

(testily)

No. I'm on the terrace, like you asked.

AURELIO (V.O.)

That phone has photo and video capability. I sent you something.

Morgan stiffens. His tormentor has hung up again. Morgan looks at the display screen. He moves inside to get out of the glare.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Morgan accepts the "video transfer" on the cell. He waits as the file downloads. The video file OPENS...

INSERT - PHONE DISPLAY

Dim lighting shows a CAGE -- something a kennel would keep a large dog in. Something is moving in there.

A SPOTLIGHT shows us NAOMI, still in her bathrobe. A blindfold covers her eyes. Her arms are tied behind her back. She writhes in discomfort.

MORGAN

Stares in horror. He curls over, dry heaves.

INT. TURRET OFFICE - DAY

Morgan digs through a file drawer. He pulls out a clipped bundle of REAL ESTATE PAPERWORK. He tears through the pages until he finds what he needs -- a rough FLOOR PLAN of house from the home inspector.

Not a blueprint -- a general diagram. Three sections appear on the page, one for each level of the house. Morgan studies the diagram. He grabs a marker from the desk.

INSERT - FLOOR PLAN

As Morgan draws large "X" marks over the guest bathroom, recreation room and kitchen. Conquered territory.

MORGAN

Folds the diagram, stuffs it in his pocket. He looks at the plush new carpet under his feet. He swivels the desk chair out of the room, pushes it right down the stairs!

Next he leans a low shoulder to the desk and nudges it toward the center of the room. He's cleared the perimeter edges of the carpet.

MORGAN  
(sotto)  
New carpet, eh?

Morgan sinks to his knees at the corner by the door and tugs at the carpet with his bare fingers. He claws the corner up and wraps his fingers around the lip.

RIP! Morgan yanks the corner flap of rug up from the floor, but drops it just as quickly. He clamps a hand over his injured finger.

MORGAN  
Shit!

Morgan releases his hand to see that his middle FINGERNAIL has come off. Blood trickles down.

INT. GARAGE - DAY

Morgan has the tool belt strapped on. He rummages through the moving boxes, finds some larger tools of his own...

A rusty shovel, rake and AXE. Morgan reaches for the axe.

INT. TURRET OFFICE - DAY

Morgan now has a pair of pliers. He rips up half the carpeting and flops it over the desk. The original wood flooring lies below. Morgan kneels down and feels the boards with his fingertips.

MORGAN  
Forget this.

He steps toward the stairway and fetches the axe. Morgan raises it over his head and glares at the floor with fury. He swings it down with a THUNK!

Morgan kicks at the axe head, breaking up the floor. He swings it down again. Splinters fly.

LATER...

The perimeter flooring has been gouged out. Chunks of wood are strewn everywhere. No sign of the prize, however.

Morgan leans in the doorway, sweaty and exhausted. His hands are blistered and bloody. He unfolds the diagram, draws an "X" through the turret office.

Morgan looks into one of the open FILE BOXES he has tossed around during his search. Framed and loose PHOTOGRAPHS, hastily packed from their move. He pulls one out.

INT. STAIRCASE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Morgan sags down the stairs, staring at the dusty frame.

INSERT - PHOTO

Morgan and Dale, many years earlier, pose beside a green pick-up truck. Morgan shows off a SHOOTER'S TARGET, pierced by a dozen shots in the orange center ring. Dale grins like a proud mentor.

MORGAN

Pulls out his personal cell phone. He scrolls through the directory and presses the number once more.

INT. HAWKINS KITCHEN - DAY

Dale answers this time. He's got a couple of note pads on his table. Been working at something.

DALE

Y-hello?

BACK TO MORGAN

Almost surprised to get through.

MORGAN

Dale. You get... my message?

WE INTERCUT AS NECESSARY

DALE

Yeah.

MORGAN

I'm...

DALE

Glad you called.

They are both stumbling through this.

MORGAN

I'm not too good at this apology thing, I know.

DALE

It's okay. You didn't get to say goodbye to her like I did. I should have told you she was sick again.

MORGAN

She didn't want you to.

DALE

I should have anyway. You're her only son.

So there it is. Out in the open. Morgan grapples for more common ground between them. He stares at the photo.

MORGAN

Remember we used to go shooting in the canyon? Whatever happened to that old green truck?

DALE

Still have it.

Morgan smiles. Of course.

DALE

I heard about the shooting over there. Guy had it coming.

MORGAN

(surprised)  
Yeah...

DALE

Police auctioned the house?

Morgan grunts. Dale refers to his notes.

DALE

You know anything about the prior owner?

MORGAN

His name is Nolan Rego.

DALE

Was.

MORGAN  
What do you mean?

DALE  
Nolan's friends... or his  
enemies... got to him in prison.  
(beat)  
He was killed a few weeks ago.

Morgan is reeling, at a loss for words.

DALE  
Is everything okay? You guys safe?

Morgan weighs his options. He looks around, paranoid. *Does he dare?*

DALE  
Morgan?

The DOORBELL (O.S.) rings. Morgan jumps. He's in the living room. He moves away from the windows, which is a task. There are so many of them.

MORGAN  
Yeah, you know... there's some  
legal stuff.

DALE  
What is it you need?

Morgan is suddenly feeling exposed, like a goldfish in a bowl. *This was a bad idea...*

DALE  
You can talk to me.

MORGAN  
You going to be around today?

DALE  
Where am I going to go?

MORGAN  
I'll call you later. Thanks, Dale.

Morgan hangs up. He cautiously approaches the door, peers out the window. He can't see anyone.

Morgan jerks as a BUZZING SOUND comes from his pocket. He pulls out Aurelio's phone, answers.

AURELIO (V.O.)  
 You've been using the phone. I  
 hope you remember the rules.

Morgan reacts, thinks quickly.

MORGAN  
 My work keeps calling, wondering  
 where I am. I have to stall.  
 (then)  
 That's what you want me to do,  
 right? Prevent suspicion? I don't  
 come in or touch base, they're  
 going to wonder.  
 (then)  
 How is Naomi? Can I...

CLICK. Aurelio has disconnected.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Morgan is sweating like a madman, chopping at the hardwood floors like he did upstairs.

He's torn up three random pockets. Hollow spaces lie below, stuffed with pink insulation that has been torn up. This floor is directly over the ceiling of the rec room.

The workout is taking its toll. Morgan fights to pull the axe blade free from an especially deep dig.

A hard KNOCKING SOUND (O.S.) alerts him again. Morgan turns to see JT knocking on the narrow window framing the door.

*He cannot allow him inside!* But Morgan has no choice. He approaches, opens the door.

JT  
 Morning. Wanted to check in.

EXT. HILLTOP HOME - SAME

JT squints to see past Morgan. He notes the axe, embedded in the floor.

JT  
 Jesus Christ.

MORGAN  
 We're re-doing the floors.

JT looks at him like he's gone mad.



MORGAN

I thought I could save money by  
doing the tear-out myself.

Morgan jabbers quickly, like a con-man on the run.

JT

Does the misses know about this?

The alarm is clear in JT's eyes, but he's not letting it show in his voice. Morgan tries a disarming smile. He closes the door behind him and lights another cigarette. Hoping the smoke will push this guy back.

MORGAN

It's her idea. We got in a little  
argument about it.

JT

And you got passive aggressive on  
the furnishings.

Morgan nods, blows smoke. JT pretends to buy the story.

JT

Where'd she go? Run off?

MORGAN

(quickly)

Yeah. It'll work itself out.

JT

We've had a unit outside. Didn't  
see her leave.

Morgan walked into that one. He notes the SECURITY GUARD behind the wheel of a second patrol car across the street, one house over. Close enough to see Morgan's house, yet not close enough to see INSIDE the house.

MORGAN

She didn't take her car. A friend  
picked her up down the street.

JT

My guy must have missed that.

JT smiles at Morgan, who is quivering.

They watch as a sporty BMW slows on the street. It pulls into the circular drive and stops by the front door. Morgan stiffens.

The window rolls down. Evan, the editor, is behind the wheel. Morgan moves quickly to contain the situation.

EVAN  
How is she?

MORGAN  
Sleeping.

Evan keeps the motor running. Morgan is getting antsy, shifting on his feet.

EVAN  
Can you give her a message?

Morgan jerks. He slips Aurelio's cell from his pocket. It vibrated just once.

EVAN  
Tell her the publisher will send a rep to the signing tomorrow.

Morgan nods, but he's not listening. He's looking at the display on the phone. A text message:

**get rid of them**

Morgan folds the phone away. Evan is looking at JT.

EVAN  
Everything okay?

MORGAN  
They're upgrading our security system.

EVAN  
I heard about the break-in. Take care of her, Morgan.

Evan drives off. JT saunters closer, an accusing look on his face. He overheard, caught Morgan in a lie.

MORGAN  
Naomi's editor. I didn't want to get into it with him...

JT  
Morgan, there's something I want you to understand. Whether your wife's in bed with the hives or out having a fling, I don't care.

(beat)

(MORE)

JT (CONT'D)  
 I'm not the law. My job is to  
 protect my residents on the hill.  
 From all enemies. High profile  
 people deserve a safe haven.  
 (slippery smile)  
 Think of me as a buffer between you  
 and the world... I'm here for you.  
 Just let me know how I can help.

Morgan gets his meanings. He watches JT leave. Morgan looks  
 beaten and disgusted.

EXT. UPPER TERRACE - DAY

Morgan paces on the terrace, waiting out the two minutes.

SUPER: 11:00 AM

He holds the special cell phone, but it doesn't ring or  
 vibrate. No further communiques.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

With renewed fervor, Morgan tries to pry the axe blade from  
 the floor. He swivels his body, prying the submerged axe  
 like an oar.

He slips on wood splinters, falling right on the axe handle!

Morgan's eyes register sharp pain and surprise.

He breathes in shallow spurts. Carefully he rises off the  
 floor, realizing that the back of the axe head was buried  
 under his arm, part-way into his ribs.

Blood flows freely. Morgan can hardly breathe or move. He  
 rolls over and begins the painful one-armed crawl.

From somewhere comes the RING TONE (O.S.) of Morgan's  
 personal cell phone. Morgan stares at the phone on the table  
 as he crawls across the floor.

MORGAN  
 (growing delirious)  
 Kinda busy here...

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - DAY

Morgan is in the shower, arm raised to allow the water to  
 cleanse his side. He can see the laceration is serious  
 enough for stitches... but not life-threatening.

By his shallow breathing, we can assume he has at least  
 bruised a few ribs.

LATER...

Morgan stands in front of the medicine cabinet mirror. An Ace bandage is wrapped around his torso. Temporary field dressing. He keeps his arm tight to his wounded side.

Morgan opens the cabinet, wrestles with the safety cap on a Tylenol bottle. He shakes several capsules straight into his mouth and dry swallows.

Morgan closes the mirror door and stares at his wet face. He's losing this battle.

He lifts the hammer with his good hand and SMASHES the mirror in. Then he smashes the cabinet until it falls off its screws. It leaves a discolored square in the wall behind.

The original paint hue -- not the kind of square Morgan is looking for.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Morgan now wears jeans and a loose shirt. He finally pries the axe out of the floor. He moves his weak arm too much, feels the stab from his sore ribs. He rests the axe against the fireplace.

He's too weak for this. And that frightens him.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Morgan sits on the bed with his cell phone. The doors are closed. The curtains are drawn. He has a pad of paper and pen at the ready. Like a warm-call salesman, he goes through a SERIES of quick conversations:

MORGAN

(into phone)

Of course, the investment would be half yours. I just need the capital up-front.

(listens)

Yeah, the down payment tapped us out, but we can't ignore this kind of opportunity...

ANOTHER CALL --

MORGAN

I know it sounds like a lot, but that's how confident I am in this fund. We have to move now while my broker is game...

Morgan is tallying figures on his pad.

ANOTHER CALL --

MORGAN

James! It's Morgan. How's your portfolio?

ANOTHER CALL --

MORGAN

Tell him I have a hot tip.

ANOTHER CALL --

MORGAN

I'll give you my account and routing number.

(listens)

No, you're the only one I've told about this. We're going to make a killing.

LATER...

Morgan's phone is idle at last. He tallies figures from his pad. Morgan closes his eyes, ashamed by his own lies. But desperate enough to try.

EXT. UPPER TERRACE - DAY

SUPER: 12:00 PM

Morgan doesn't wait for further orders. He pulls Aurelio's phone out, hits the callback button.

AURELIO (V.O.)

What?

MORGAN

Good news. I'll have half of your money in the bank by the end of business day.

AURELIO (V.O.)

That's not what I asked for.

MORGAN

I took out some loans. It'll work. If you give me until tomorrow...

AURELIO (V.O.)  
I don't need your money. I need  
everything in that safe.

MORGAN  
(smoldering)  
So this isn't about money at all.

AURELIO (V.O.)  
Follow your instructions.

MORGAN  
I am destroying my house for you!  
Nothing is turning up! How am I  
supposed to...

CLICK. Aurelio is gone.

MORGAN  
Don't you fucking hang up on me!

Morgan turns, ready to hurl the phone...

But he can't do that. Instead he kicks an empty clay pot  
across the terrace. It SHATTERS against the railing.

EXT. MULHOLLAND BLUFF - DAY

Another hilltop view elsewhere in the neighborhood. JT  
surveys the backyards of the estates with a pair of  
binoculars. Keeping everyone safe. *Right...*

He lowers the specs and climbs into his patrol car.

INT. JT'S CAR - DAY

JT pulls away from the bluff. He folds his visor down to  
block the sun. Clipped to his inside of his visor is a  
strange -- yet familiar -- item.

THE FLOOR PLAN OF MORGAN'S HOUSE.

JT's version has various rooms HIGHLIGHTED in different  
colors.

MATCH CUT TO:

MORGAN'S FLOOR PLAN

Lying on the dining table. It is gradually filling up with  
"X" marks. The living room has been crossed out.

WE ARE:

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

Morgan is on the floor, inspecting the bricks of the hearth under the mouth of the fireplace. He uses the drill to erode the mortar between bricks.

Morgan dislodges a loose brick, pries it out. A hollow space lies beyond.

His personal CELL TONE rings out. Morgan checks the caller ID, lets it ring. He puffs on his cigarette.

MORGAN  
Give it a rest, Zoe.

LATER...

Morgan has pulled out the front layer of bricks under the fireplace. A small crawlspace is revealed. Empty.

An electronic BEEPING SOUND (O.S.) comes from upstairs. Naomi's office. Morgan scurries over to the stairs.

INT. TURRET OFFICE - DAY

Morgan pulls the carpet flaps away from the desk and office equipment in the center of the room. The fax machine is printing out several pages. Morgan grabs the cover sheet.

INSERT - FAX COVER PAGE

Law firm letterhead. A quick note:

**Info you requested on prior owner & property.**  
**-- Regards, Bruce**

MORGAN

Drops the page, lets the fax print. He looks at the great mess he has created in Naomi's writing sanctuary. The box of photos beckons again. A treasure trove of memories.

Morgan shuffles through more photos. Several of himself with Naomi and other friends at various events.

Seeing her face again evokes a desperate reaction. Morgan chokes back panic.

MORGAN  
(sotto)  
Oh, God.

Then another one catches his eye:

INSERT - PHOTO

Naomi with her shirt pulled up, revealing a SWELLING BELLY. Just beginning to show, first trimester.

MORGAN

Lowers the picture. A life that was not meant to be.

The pain washes over him again. Morgan looks at the book shelf, stacked with printed manuscripts. A title page reads:

**ALEDA'S SONG**  
**By Naomi Fischer**

Morgan lifts several of the rubber-banded drafts. Admiring the effort Naomi has put in.

SOMETHING OUTSIDE

Catches his eye. Out front, through the turret windows. Morgan spots the Olympus security guard running from his car!

The guard runs toward the front of the house. Morgan can't see his front entry from up here.

MORGAN  
What the hell...?

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Morgan moves as quickly as he can, given his injury. Someone is POUNDING on the front door. As Morgan moves for the foyer, he hears GLASS BREAKING (O.S.).

Morgan approaches the door as a HAND reaches through the narrow window pane and unlocks the door.

Morgan freezes. The door flies open...

A TATTOOED SKINHEAD fills the frame, white t-shirt flecked with blood. He has a large combat knife in one hand, the kind with brass knuckles built into the grip.

Morgan is stunned as the muscle-bound young thug storms toward him. Behind him in the courtyard lies the body of the security guard. Blood spills from his neck.

SKINHEAD  
Where is it?!



MORGAN  
(backing away)  
What?

SKINHEAD  
You think I'm playing? I know it's  
here.

The knife/fist comes flying, smacking Morgan between the eyes, sending him sprawling.

Morgan winces as he hits the floor. His ribs are on fire. The skinhead grabs his hair from behind, lifts his head.

The blade is held at the back of his neck, pressing into Morgan's spine.

SKINHEAD  
The safe, asshole. Now!

MORGAN  
You don't understand. I'm already  
working with Aurelio...

The skinhead lifts Morgan by the arms, squeezes his shoulderblades together. Morgan SCREAMS in agony.

SKINHEAD  
You think I give a shit about  
Aurelio and his vatos?

He pushes Morgan at the fireplace. Morgan slams it hard. He clings to the bricks for balance.

SKINHEAD  
In case you haven't figured it out,  
I don't play for their team.

The skinhead admires the play of light on his blade. He holds it closer to Morgan.

SKINHEAD  
I just spent some hard time with  
the guy that lived here.  
(then)  
He promised me fifty grand to watch  
his back.

MORGAN  
You did a good job of that.

The skinhead is surprised by his audacity.

SKINHEAD

What did you say?

The knife tip is now just inches from Morgan's eye.

MORGAN

You want the safe?

Morgan's head dips to the spiral stairs. The skinhead points his knife. Morgan grips the railing and hobbles down.

INT. RECREATION ROOM - DAY

Morgan gestures to the hole he has smashed low in the mirrored wall.

The skinhead kneels by the wall. He dusts broken shards of mirrored glass away so that he can place both hands on the floor to peer inside the hollow.

Morgan snatches a 10-pound DUMBBELL from the rack and lunges at the floor. He SLAMS the weight on the skinhead's knife hand, crushing it!

The skinhead GASPS!

Morgan swings the flat side of the dumbbell up into the man's face. His nose explodes as he falls backwards. Morgan's got his own brass knuckles.

Morgan stands above the writhing man, whose one functional hand is pressed to the fountain of blood in his face.

Morgan SCREAMS with primal fury and raises the dumbbell over his head.

The skinhead holds his arm up in surrender. Morgan trembles with rage, ready to crush this guy's skull.

MORGAN

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THEM?!

SKINHEAD

What?

MORGAN

Aurelio's guys! Where are they based?

SKINHEAD

(scared)

They got guys on the inside, guys on the outside...

Morgan KICKS him hard.

MORGAN  
Where is Aurelio?!

SKINHEAD  
From what I heard, he owns a...

But he falters... HE'S LOOKING AT SOMETHING BEHIND MORGAN.

WHITTT!

A funny sound. A HOLE bleeds out from the skinhead's face, above his eye. He twitches, dead.

Morgan spins around to behold...

THE GUNMAN

Standing right behind him with his silenced MAC-10. The trap door is open in the bathroom beyond.

Morgan reacts on instinct -- almost clobbers the GUNMAN with the weight instead...

But that dark barrel is aimed at his chest. Silent and nasty. Morgan drops the dumbbell to the broken tiles.

GUNMAN  
Have a seat.

Morgan sinks to the floor, trembling with adrenaline.

EXT. GUEST BATHROOM - DAY

The gunman drags the skinhead's limp body across the tile. He stuffs it down the escape hatch.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Morgan nurses his side. The shirt is stained with blood from his opened cut. His face is scratched and swelling from his encounter.

The gunman is behind the wet bar, yanking out the camera monitor and computer. The gunman takes notice of the random damage Morgan has inflicted on the house.

GUNMAN  
You using the stud-finder?

MORGAN  
The what?

GUNMAN

With the tool kit! It finds metal  
and wood behind the walls.

Morgan is dumbfounded. *That's what the odd device was.*

MORGAN

If you took off the costume, you  
could stay a while, give me a hand.

GUNMAN

(re: disguise)  
It's for your protection.

He watches numbly as the gunman drags the dead security guard into the foyer and lays him on Naomi's throw rug. The guard's throat has been cut open.

The gunman calmly removes the keys from the guard's belt. He rolls the bundle up like a sleeping bag.

GUNMAN

Bring it in the garage.

He tosses the guard's keys to Morgan. The gunman swings his MAC-10 around on the strap and takes position by the window.

MORGAN

I'm not helping you.

GUNMAN

Get the fucking car. That's all  
you have to do.  
(re: entryway)  
And spray down this patio.

EXT. HILLTOP HOME - DAY

Morgan crosses the street, mindful of any activity in the neighbors' yards. Everyone is at work. He approaches the Olympus Security car.

INT. SECURITY CAR - DAY

Morgan starts the car. He looks at the cb radio in the dash, but remembers that the gunman is watching from the door. He can see the gun barrel through the front window.

Then Morgan looks up, shocked to see a black and white PATROL CAR gliding toward him!

Morgan freezes, stares straight ahead.

The cop drives right past, hardly glancing at Morgan or the house. *Some patrol presence...*

Morgan takes a deep breath as the car disappears. He pulls the security car into the drive and backs it between his own two vehicles. The garage door closes.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Morgan enters from the garage as the gunman approaches.

GUNMAN  
Stay in the house.

The gunman goes into the garage, closes the door. Morgan has an idea. He moves for the front door.

EXT. HILLTOP HOME DRIVEWAY - DAY

Morgan is at the closed rolltop garage door. Small diamond shaped WINDOWS are set in the door, just above eye level. Morgan stretches on his toes to get a glimpse inside.

MORGAN'S P.O.V. - GARAGE

The gunman heaves the carpet bundle into the trunk, then tosses in the security monitor and computer. He slams the lid shut.

The gunman moves to the driver's door, ducks out of the MAC-10 strap. Then he pulls down the bandana and hood, removes his sunglasses. Unmasking himself for the drive outside. He has an olive complexion, like a Latino or East Asian. Scar under the lip.

MORGAN

Drops down, but HOLDS AURELIO'S PHONE UP TO THE WINDOW. He presses a button.

MORGAN  
(sotto)  
Smile, motherfucker.

As Morgan backs away, the garage door begins to rise. Morgan runs back to his front door. Moments later, the unmasked gunman ROARS OUT in the security car.

EXT. UPPER TERRACE - DAY

Morgan does his time on the terrace.

SUPER: 1:00 PM

He cups his hand around the phone display to view his acquisition:

INSERT - PHONE DISPLAY

A shot of the UNMASKED GUNMAN as taken from the garage window. Good frontal view of his distinctive face.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Morgan has the camera phone at the ready while engaged in another call on his personal cell.

MORGAN

I may be able to transmit to your e-mail address.

INT. HAWKINS KITCHEN - DAY

Dale is on his phone, writing notes.

WE INTERCUT AS NECESSARY

DALE

So you're sending me a digital picture of this guy and you want me to match it to LAPD suspect photos?

MORGAN

Can that be done?

DALE

Sure, if I was LAPD and not a retired sheriff.

(then)

But I'll try calling in some favors. You really think the security company has a known felon driving around in their vehicles?

MORGAN

I need a name. And if there is a link to the burglar, any common addresses or affiliations. They may be gang members.

DALE

Can't let these kind of guys get the upper hand.

Dale is fishing for more info. Morgan grimaces.

DALE

Have they made another move? The man you shot was there for a reason.

MORGAN

I can't say anything else at this point. I just need to protect my family. I need your help.

DALE

You want me to come over?

MORGAN

You can do more from where you are.

Dale chews on that. He's dying to know what is really going on with Morgan.

DALE

Okay, champ. Send me that image.

MORGAN

I'm sending a cell phone number too. Maybe you can trace it.

(beat)

And Dale...

DALE

What?

MORGAN

Thank you. I mean it.

Morgan hangs up. He navigates through the features of Aurelio's phone, writes down the callback number on a piece of junk mail.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Morgan digs ice from the freezer beneath the wet bar. He wraps the chips in a paper towel, holds it to the swelling knot on his forehead.

JT (V.O.)

Morgan?

Morgan cautiously peers around the corner. JT is looking through the broken window pane. Morgan pulls back, but as JT knocks on the door, he realizes there is no escape.

EXT. HILLTOP HOME - SAME

Morgan opens the door, keeps the ice pack to his head.

JT  
What happened over here?

MORGAN  
I was carrying some stuff out.  
Missed the door.

JT examines the window, Morgan's face. Morgan realizes JT is standing right on the wet front entry where the guard was killed. The water used to hose off the bloodstain is still tinged red. Morgan is sweating.

JT  
You know where my guard is?

Morgan looks past him, as if noticing the absence of the other car.

MORGAN  
No.

Morgan's jaw is tight, his hands balled into fists.

JT  
Well, he's in a world of shit now.  
You mind if I run a copy of the  
camera backup files? If the eyes  
caught him leaving, I can grab the  
time code.

JT moves for the door. Morgan blocks him.

MORGAN  
(feigning anger)  
Okay, I sent him away. I had him  
yank out all that camera shit. I'm  
through with this.

A dangerous bluff, but Morgan is convincing.

JT  
Easy, partner. We're just here to  
help you.

Morgan trembles.

JT  
Have you heard from your wife?



Morgan shakes his head. That's no lie.

JT  
I'm sorry.

Morgan feels terrible playing this card. Maybe he misjudged JT...

JT  
You'll get through it. We do what we gotta do.

Morgan looks at JT in yet another light. *A darker one.*

MORGAN  
Who do you work for?

JT  
(confused)  
I work for you.

MORGAN  
You worked for Nolan too.

JT  
I don't know what you're trying to insinuate.

MORGAN  
If there's something I need to know about Nolan or this house, maybe you could help me out.  
(then)  
Maybe we could help each other.

JT ponders. His response is equally loaded:

JT  
If anything comes to mind, I'll let you know.  
(then)  
Meantime, you see my guard, give me a holler. I don't know why he didn't radio in.

Morgan nods. Neither are ready to show their cards.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Morgan watches through the window, making sure JT has left. He's nervous, trembling.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Morgan goes through the tool belt again. He lifts out the plastic device. The stud-finder.

His personal cell RINGS again. Morgan digs it from his back pocket. He glances at the caller ID screen and disconnects the call.

Morgan examines the switches on the stud-finder when the HOUSE PHONE begins to ring. Morgan catches it by the bed. It's gotta be the same pestering caller.

MORGAN

Zoe, I need you to stop calling here!

ANTHONY (V.O.)

Morgan? What the hell happened?

MORGAN

(stunned)

Anthony.

INT. ADVERTISING AGENCY - DAY

Anthony is hunched over Zoe's desk, using her handset. Zoe sits meekly in her cubicle corner.

ANTHONY

You left your biggest potential account in the lurch. I had to step in and salvage the disaster.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - DAY

Morgan enters from the bedroom, sweaty and battered. He holds the ice pack to his face again.

MORGAN

It's been kind of an off day for me.

WE INTERCUT AS NECESSARY

ANTHONY

You realize Madeline and her people flew out here for you?

MORGAN

I understand that.

ANTHONY

Do you, bro?

Morgan winces at his tone, his attitude. It reminds him of himself. His former self.

ANTHONY

Listen, I know you're wrapped up in the new place.

(then)

I convinced Madeline to join us for dinner at six-thirty. We'll pick you up over there, you can close the deal.

MORGAN

No. I'm taking some time off, starting today.

Anthony makes a sound like a scoff or a laugh.

ANTHONY

What's the story, Morgan?

MORGAN

Naomi's book comes out tomorrow. I'm going to support her at her appearances.

ANTHONY

So... I can't count on you --

MORGAN

No.

Morgan hangs up. *So long, job.*

He tosses the ice bag in the sink.

EXT. AUTO SALVAGE YARD - DAY

A warehouse and trailer office are set behind stacks of crushed cars and junk. The lot is secured by a chain link fence and a padlocked gate.

A weathered green pick-up is parked at the curb. Prominent in the back window is a RIVERSIDE SHERIFF decal.

Dale's gray head can be seen through the rear window.

INT. PICK-UP TRUCK (PARKED) - DAY

Dale studies the salvage lot through the fence. On the seat beside him is a note pad jotted with information, along with a 5X7 PHOTO of the gunman in Morgan's garage. The camera phone shot.

Clipped alongside this is an ARREST PHOTO of the same guy. Olive skin, scar under the lip.

Dale takes out his cell phone.

EXT. UPPER TERRACE - DAY

Morgan finishes a cigarette, grinds it out. He looks out across the valley as the afternoon wanes.

SUPER: 2:00 PM

Morgan stares at his diagram. If it were a game of tic-tac-toe, the "X" marks would be winning. Three rooms remain, along with two hallways.

Morgan pulls at his hair, knowing the sands are running low. He's out of strategies. The HOUSE PHONE starts RINGING (O.S.) inside. Morgan is dying to catch it, but he can't leave the terrace yet.

He checks his watch. The ringing eventually stops.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Morgan enters, heads right for his answering machine. The light is BLINKING. He hits the playback button.

DALE (V.O.)

Okay, Morg. The cell number is registered to Vargas Industries. Corporate records list a PO box, no first name for the for the owner.

Morgan jots down notes.

DALE (V.O.)

Vargas Industries owns a couple of other businesses. One is an auto parts refurbisher and former employer of both Benjamin Capilla and Julian Gonez.

(then)

According to LAPD, Capilla is the man you shot in your exercise room. Gonez is the driver in your photo.

(MORE)

DALE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 You don't want this guy in your  
 neighborhood. Both men have  
 serious priors on record.

(beat)

I'm at 4711 Washington Boulevard in  
 Culver City. The salvage yard.

Morgan scribbles down the address. He is anxious.

DALE (V.O.)  
 The gates are locked, but I see  
 someone on the grounds. Looks like  
 a jogger...

That startles Morgan. An ominous indicator.

DALE (V.O.)  
 Hey... this is going to sound  
 strange... there's a woman in  
 there. I swear she looks like...  
 (suddenly rushed)  
 Hang tight. I'll call you back.

BEEP. End of message. Morgan's eyes are bulging.

MORGAN  
 Naomi!?

Morgan pulls out his cell phone, speed dials.

Waits...

MORGAN  
 (sotto)  
 Come on, Dale!  
 (realizing)  
 Oh, Jesus...

He disconnects. Morgan looks around the house. *Can he afford to wait?* He pulls out his wallet, digs out a business card. He dials the number on his personal cell.

RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)  
 Homicide.

MORGAN  
 I need Detective Warrell Kaye.

RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)  
 I'll patch you through.

Morgan takes a deep breath. Can't believe it's come to this...

DET. KAYE (V.O.)  
This is Warrell Kaye...

MORGAN  
Detective, it's Morgan --

DET. KAYE (V.O.)  
... I'm not in right now, but your  
call is very important to me...

Morgan pulls the phone away. *Voicemail?*

Morgan hangs up. He looks at his scribbled notes, sets his mind to something... action.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Morgan pulls out his titanium gun case, opens it. It is empty. Morgan silently curses. The detectives still have his gun.

He grabs a small duffel bag from the closet, crams in some of the tools from the tool belt.

INT. GUEST BATHROOM - DAY

Morgan presses the secret spot between the tiles. The thin grouting handle rises. Morgan pulls up the trap door with ease. The rope is gone, as the gunman left through the garage.

He stretches his good arm through the straps of his duffel. As he lowers himself painfully into the hatch, he pauses as if in prayer.

MORGAN  
I'm coming, babe.

He climbs down the hole and pulls the trap door closed over his head. It melts into the floor.

INT. SEWER - DAY

Morgan drops down the rungs, swinging over the dim shape of a body. The dead skinhead.

INT. SEWER - MOMENTS LATER

Morgan slishes toward the grate. He scans the culvert outside. No one out there.

MORGAN

Yeah, your tunnel sentry's on a little errand.

Morgan presses against the grate, but finds it is secured by a lock and chain. Morgan threads the chain through the grate, until he can grasp the thin padlock.

Morgan pulls off the bag, unzips it. He removes a hammer and chisel, sets to work on the lock. In moments he has smashed it open.

EXT. DRAINAGE CULVERT - DAY

Outside at last. Morgan threads the chain back through, hides the padlock. At first glance, the sewer opening will appear to be chained shut.

Morgan checks his watch: "2:14."

He carries the duffel bag, runs up to the road.

EXT. CANYON ROAD - DAY

Afternoon traffic curls by at a steady clip along the two-lane road. Morgan trots along the shoulder, carefully watching the cars coming up behind him. He moves around a bend in the road, sees three cars climbing up the hill.

The third is a taxi. Morgan waves. The cab shows no signs of slowing. No fare. Morgan times the closing distance between the downhill and uphill cars...

As the cab draws closer, Morgan leaps out across the first lane. A downhill sportscar SCREECHES to a halt.

Morgan keeps going, planting himself in the taxi's path. It swerves to the shoulder. The CABBIE (50s) glares through his open window.

MORGAN

It's an emergency! I'll pay you triple the fare.

INT. TAXI (MOVING) - DAY

Morgan sits with his bag and notes from Dale. The cabbie is weaving through cross-town traffic, zooming through the long blocks, hitting the lights just as they yellow.

Morgan pulls out his personal cell. Dials again. Waits... No answer.

EXT. AUTO SALVAGE YARD - DAY

Morgan studies the stacks of junked cars and debris, the small office, the open warehouse beyond...

No movement. No sign of anyone.

Morgan checks his watch again: "2:35."

He sets down the bag, pulls out the hammer and chisel combo again. Goes to work on this padlock.

INT. TAXI (PARKED) - DAY

The disturbed cabbie is parked several yards away. He watches Morgan breaking the lock.

EXT. AUTO SALVAGE YARD - DAY

Morgan finally busts the lock. BREEP! A car horn startles him. He turns around. The taxi is there.

CABBIE

You pay me now!

Morgan glances up and down the street. No foot traffic. Passing cars take no notice of them. Morgan rushes over, throws several bills through the window.

MORGAN

Just wait...

The taxi takes off. Morgan curses and rushes back to the fence. He grabs his bag, opens the gate.

He slips through, closes it behind him.

MOMENTS LATER...

Morgan hides in the stacks of crushed cars. He shoulders the bag, keeps the hammer out as a weapon.

He moves around a corner, getting closer to the warehouse. Amidst a crowded area of rusting vehicles is DALE'S PICK-UP. Morgan sees the Sheriff decal on the window.

He darts over, looks through the window. The keys are on the seat. Morgan frowns. He pulls out his phone, speed-dials Dale again.

BEEP-BEEP...

BEEP-BEEP...



A RING TONE (O.S.) from inside the warehouse. Morgan slinks toward the open warehouse door.

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

BEEP-BEEP... BEEP-BEEP... growing louder. Morgan slips inside, gets his bearings. Tools, lifts and heavy equipment along one wall.

An old Mercedes carcass, being cannibalized part by part.

A panel truck in the center, hood open, no engine.

BEEP-BEEP...

The cell ring tone is coming from behind the truck.

Morgan creeps around the side...

BEEP... the ringing stops. Morgan disconnects his phone. He peeks around the truck to find...

DALE... lying amidst a red tool chest and assorted vehicle parts. His windbreaker is folded closed over his chest in an odd way. His head lolls to the side, dead.

Morgan drops to his knees beside him.

MORGAN  
(choking)  
Dale...

Morgan reaches for his hand. The windbreaker slips open, revealing a wide, bloody EXIT WOUND in his chest.

Morgan is gripped by anguish. He stares at the body... the cell phone clipped to the belt...

The empty GUN HOLSTER at his side.

MORGAN  
(sotto)  
Oh my God...

Horror, guilt, fear... they swarm around Morgan like invisible demons.

MORGAN  
I'm sorry.

His eyes dart around the remainder of the warehouse.

A giant tarp hangs over a wire, like a curtain, sectioning off the back corner of the warehouse. Morgan shakily gets to his feet.

He moves to the tarp... pulls it away...

AND THERE SITS THE CAGE. Empty.

A camera tripod stands nearby. *He's too late!*

MORGAN

No! NO!!

Morgan spins around. They are gone. Naomi is gone. His chest heaves with grief.

He is drawn toward the open cage, set right on the oily concrete. Nothing else has been left behind...

Except for a RUSTY SCREW lying on the floor. Morgan can see LETTERS desperately etched into the concrete, one scrawled through each square of the cage's floor:

**T A G A R O**

Morgan stares at the word. It seems familiar.

MORGAN

(sotto)

What's Tagaro, Naomi? Come on, girl.

EXT. AUTO SALVAGE YARD - DAY

Morgan climbs into Dale's truck, fits the key into the ignition with shaking hands.

INT. PICK-UP TRUCK - DAY

Morgan must reverse out of the tight spot. He whips the wheel while craning his neck around. He's reversing way too fast through these canyons of metal rubble, emotion running high...

As he skids into a sloppy three-point turn, the back gate CRASHES into one of the stacks.

EXT. AUTO SALVAGE YARD - DAY

Morgan guns the truck forward, but the pile of crushed cars teeters forward... and COLLAPSES!

The heavy debris smashes on the truck bed, pinning it down.

INT. PICK-UP TRUCK - DAY

Morgan looks back through the window to see the wreckage that nearly killed him.

MORGAN

Jesus.

Morgan FLOORS the gas pedal. Gradually the old truck grinds forward, slipping free of the weight.

EXT. AUTO SALVAGE YARD - DAY

The truck groans away as the auto carcasses crash to ground like giant crushed soda cans. The bed of the pickup is wrecked. The tailgate dangles, scraping the ground.

Morgan speeds right for the unlocked gates, CRASHES THROUGH.

Sparks fly as the tailgate bounces off the street. It finally falls free like a severed appendage.

INT. PICK-UP TRUCK - DAY

Morgan skids to a smoking stop behind a line of cars waiting at a red light. He looks over to see a trendy bookstore. In the window, a CLERK is setting up a display of hardback novels. A black and purple cover, with the white lettering:

**ALEDA'S SONG**  
**Naomi Fischer**

In the corner of the display window is a handwritten sign:

**Book Signing Tomorrow by Author**

Morgan stares at the window with a sense of awe. Her dream has become a reality. A bitter irony. Morgan breaks down in sobs, covers his face.

EXT. MULHOLLAND DRIVE - DAY

Morgan flies around the curves in the pick-up at unsafe speeds. The haze of Los Angeles yawns below.

INT. PICK-UP TRUCK - DAY

Morgan parks around the bend from his house. Before jumping out, he remembers something...

Morgan pops open the glove box. Inside is Dale's backup piece. A .38 SPECIAL. Morgan stuffs it into his duffel bag.

EXT. MORGAN'S STREET - DAY

Morgan slinks along the road toward his house. He keeps close to the ivy-covered front wall of his neighbor and spies around the corner...

Bad news. Two cars are idling in the street by Morgan's house, facing opposite directions. JT's patrol car and the police cruiser. The men chat through their open windows.

Morgan pulls back. He checks his watch: "3:02." *He's too late to signal!*

MORGAN

Fuck.

Morgan looks again. At least they are still in their vehicles. Morgan retreats. He examines his neighbor's wall. It is too high and he is too tired.

The PHONE vibrates in his pocket. Morgan slips it out.

Dread.

Morgan leans against the ivy covered wall. He answers with barely controlled rage and fear.

MORGAN

What?

AURELIO (V.O.)

Look at how much you have wasted.

(beat)

An hour has gone by, your stepfather is dead... and I still have your wife.

(beat)

What have you accomplished?

A detached disappointment in the dry voice.

AURELIO (V.O.)

You know what I could do. Anytime I want.

MORGAN

He was retired! He didn't know anything!

(off the silence)

Tell me she's okay.

More silence. Morgan moves closer to the street, watching the authorities.

MORGAN  
 (desperate)  
 Is she?

AURELIO (V.O.)  
 For the next hour and fifty-eight  
 minutes.  
 (then)  
 You get one last chance. If that  
 safe is not located tonight, my  
 employer will lose someone very  
 close to him.  
 (beat)  
 And so will you.

Morgan listens with a hollow stare. Aurelio has  
 disconnected.

EXT. HILLTOP HOME DRIVEWAY - DAY

The police cruiser drives away. JT finally drives the other  
 direction. Moments later, Morgan emerges from hiding. He  
 runs up to the house with his bag. He spots the NEWSPAPER  
 lying in the front flower bed.

INSERT - NEWSPAPER

One of the smaller headlines reads:

**TAGARO FACING EXECUTION**

MORGAN

Snatches the paper. His mind is turning.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Morgan has the newspaper spread on the counter. He scans the  
 article about the death row inmate.

MORGAN  
 Who's your daddy, Vince?  
 (beat)  
 And how is he going to spare you  
 from the needle?

Morgan looks at his watch. There's no more time for research  
 or role-playing.

He grabs the duffel bag, spills it out on the floor.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Morgan has finally made friends with the stud-finder and laser level. He passes it close to the wall and two red LASER BEAMS are projected horizontally on the wall surface.

MORGAN  
 (impressed)  
 Never hang a crooked picture again.  
 (adjusting the device)  
 Let's see what's behind.

The lines disappear. Now as Morgan passes the device along the wall, a vertical laser line suddenly shoots out, marking the stud location. An ELECTRONIC BEEP follows.

This must be what the first intruder was doing that night in the rec room.

Morgan keeps moving. A second line shoots out. BEEP. A second wall stud. As Morgan keeps going toward what should be a third stud...

A HORIZONTAL LASER LINE splays out, which expands into a SQUARE. BEEP-BEEP-BEEP... something solid behind here. A 12x12 box is hidden behind the wall!

Morgan sets the drill in the center. He drills an inch deep, until he can hear the GRINDING of metal on metal.

Morgan sets the tools aside and lifts a hatchet. He hacks at the drywall surrounding the drill hole.

Gradually he exposes what looks like an electrical box.

Morgan GASPS with anticipation. *This could be it!*

But there's no lock on this box. Morgan chips away the last bits of drywall framing the box, then he pries open the door.

Two rows of TELEPHONE CIRCUITS line the inside. Morgan can tell by the VERIZON logo on the door. All the multi-colored lines have been CUT, except for two.

MORGAN  
 (sotto)  
 Twenty-two lines?

His eyes follow the lines out of the back of the box, directly up through the wall to the turret office above. Morgan moves for the stairway, still gripping the hatchet.

INT. TURRET OFFICE - DAY

Morgan admires the electrical outlets once more. The six phone jacks. He pulls the papers from his fax machine. The research from Bruce. Morgan flips through the pages...

Deed paperwork on the house, a mini-dossier on Nolan Rego.

INSERT - XEROXED PHOTO

NOLAN REGO. Deep tan, curly black hair and thick eyeglasses. We recognize him, of course, as THE PRISON VICTIM FROM THE OPENING SCENE.

MORGAN

Takes out his cell, dials.

BRUCE (V.O.)  
Bruce Hailey.

MORGAN  
(somber)  
It's Morgan. I got your fax.

EXT. MELROSE SIDEWALK CAFE - DAY

Real estate attorney Bruce is having a late lunch. Caesar salad, iced tea. Tough life. He's on his cell phone.

BRUCE  
Sorry I couldn't get the blueprints today. The Building and Safety office is like H&R Block on April fourteenth.

WE INTERCUT AS NECESSARY

Morgan's rumpled FLOOR PLAN sits on the desk. Only three areas left unchecked.

MORGAN  
This is good stuff on Nolan Rego. Social Security number, all that. But what was the story? Why was he put away?  
(then)  
Why did they seize the house?

Bruce signs the check that his WAITER leaves.

BRUCE  
I wasn't sure you really wanted to know.

MORGAN  
Yes!!

BRUCE  
You okay?

MORGAN  
(trying to remain cool)  
I need to know, Bruce. For my peace of mind.

BRUCE  
Well... turns out the Sheriff's Department wasn't entirely forthcoming.  
(beat)  
Nolan engineered some cutting edge telecommunications software. He sold out early to Pac Bell, bought the house, squandered his small fortune.  
(beat)  
Then he put his technology and skills to work for the highest bidders. Corporations, crime organizations.

MORGAN  
What skills?

Morgan stares at the picture of Nolan, trying to absorb every detail.

BRUCE  
Nolan could tap a phone in New York from his home computer. He could record telephonic conversations simultaneously in ten cities. He was a piece of work.

MORGAN  
So he stole information.

BRUCE  
And sold it. Some of his clients used it for blackmail purposes.  
(MORE)



BRUCE (CONT'D)  
The feds busted him, built a case that he maintained his residence as a base of operations. Seized the house, all of his computers...

MORGAN  
All of them?

BRUCE  
I don't know. My sources only fetch what I ask them to fetch.

MORGAN  
Any idea how Nolan got busted?

BRUCE  
I believe it was a sting operation that started with a tip from the local security patrol.

MORGAN  
JT Crosby?

BRUCE  
I forget the name...  
(beat)  
You okay with the deal? I still say you got a bargain.

Morgan grits his teeth.

MORGAN  
I sure did. Thanks, Bruce.

Morgan hangs up.

MORGAN  
(sotto)  
That fucker's been after the safe all along.

He lifts the hatchet, regards it like a gladiator inspecting his weaponry. Ready to give it one more go...

A SERIES OF SHOTS:

GUEST ROOM -- The walls are dotted with drill holes.

MASTER BEDROOM -- Turned upside-down. The mattress and box spring are standing against the windows. The floor is hacked to pieces.

MASTER BATHROOM -- Covered in dust. Chunks of tile are missing from the shower.

LIVING ROOM -- Holes punched through every wall. Bloody handprints. Like a bomb went off.

NAOMI'S OFFICE -- Surprisingly CLEAN. Morgan has put everything back in place. The shrine is intact.

THE FLOOR PLAN -- Lying forgotten on the floor. Every room is an "X" -- and a giant "X" has been scrawled across the entire page. Game Over.

INT. RECREATION ROOM - DAY

Morgan looks through the doorway to the bathroom. He's lifeless as a corpse. His shirt is stained with dried blood and covered with dust. HE GRIPS DALE'S GUN IN ONE HAND.

He gave it his all and he failed.

He drifts forward...

INT. GUEST BATHROOM - DAY

Morgan lifts the trap door. He stares down the hole.

*An escape?*

He slams the hatch closed. *No way.*

Morgan checks his watch. He contemplates the cold .38, opens the cylinder to see six rounds in the chambers. He's in a crisis of conscience.

MORGAN  
(dazed)  
God help me...

He opens the hatch again, stares down.

The darkness is tempting.

*But Hell isn't.*

Morgan slams the door closed again.

INT. RECREATION ROOM - DAY

Morgan is strangely still and resolute. He slips Aurelio's phone from his pocket, dials the callback...

AURELIO (V.O.)  
Yes.

MORGAN

Let Naomi go. She has a life ahead of her. A career. She has nothing to do with any of this.

Morgan climbs the steps as he lays it out:

MORGAN

It was my idea to buy the house at auction. It was my ego.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Morgan passes through toward the kitchen, but his eyes never leave the large windows... seeking out Aurelio.

MORGAN

So you can take me instead. You can take this house. You can do whatever you want.

(beat)

Just promise me you'll let her go.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Morgan ends his walk. He closes his eyes. There is a long silence. His words have hit some kind of mark.

AURELIO (V.O.)

I thought we went over this already. I release her when you find the safe.

MORGAN

What I'm asking...

CLICK. Aurelio hangs up. Morgan drops the phone. He raises the gun and randomly SHOTS a gutted kitchen cabinet!

The vibration knocks a loose shard of glass free. The dangling SWIMMING GOGGLES fall from the cabinet knob...

Morgan tilts his head, wondering why he didn't question these before. He lunges into the debris to retrieve the goggles. He examines them.

They are clear, durable, of the highest quality.

MORGAN

(sotto)

Where did you come from?

HE HAS NEVER SEEN THEM BEFORE TODAY.

Morgan places them over his eyes. He studies the gun.

GOGGLE P.O.V.

The gun is ENLARGED, but slightly blurry.

MORGAN

Tears the goggles away from his face. He rushes to the side table, finds the newspaper, the fax pages. He paws through them...

There again is the PHOTO of Nolan Rego: Dark curly hair... thick eyeglasses...

Morgan feels the goggle lenses.

MORGAN

(a whisper)

These are your eyes. Why do you need them?

Morgan knows this is the key, if only he can interpret it. He trembles with adrenaline and rushes out to the terrace.

EXT. POOL PATIO - DAY

Morgan paces around the pool, staring at the water. The waterfall is spilling just a trickle of water into the deep end. Morgan rushes to the faux-rock waterfall base, three feet tall and several feet in diameter.

He finds an ACCESS DOOR cut into the back of the faux-rock. A cheap key latch locks it shut. Morgan tries to pry the panel out.

Finally he KICKS it in, tears the fiberglass off its hinges.

Inside the hollow base are tanks, filters, pumps and pipes. The pool and waterfall equipment. Morgan strains to see past this. Nothing else in there.

Morgan shuts off each dial he can find. He reverses one called "BACKFLOW."

EXT. SWIMMING POOL (UNDERWATER) - DAY

BUBBLES rise from the drain.

INT. SEWER - DAY

Pool water begins streaming down the sewer tunnel.

We RISE back up the sewer pipe, up the escape hatch, through the tile floor, across the bathroom, out to the pool deck...

EXT. POOL PATIO - DAY

The waterfall has stopped spilling. Morgan watches the pool level gradually drop.

MORGAN

Come on...

Morgan lies down on the deck, sets the revolver and goggles aside. He's like a junkie, jonesing for a fix. He studies the pool itself. White plaster walls with a blue tiled rim.

Under the waterfall lip, halfway to the pool bottom, is the POOL LIGHT, framed by a mosaic of dark blue and gray tiles. A pattern that stands out from the rest of the plain pool walls. *Just decorative tiles? Or...*

Morgan empties his pockets and jumps into the pool. He sinks below the surface.

EXT. SWIMMING POOL (UNDERWATER) - DAY

Morgan feels the tiling. He grips the dome light cover, feels around the metal edge. He gets a grip and finds that it can turn like the lid of a jar. Or a submarine hatch.

Morgan twists like mad until the light cover disengages. It glides forward, then swings open on a hinge.

Morgan's underwater eyes go wide as he sees into the abyss behind the light fixture...

A metal-plated cylinder that ends at a round SAFE DOOR!

A NUMERIC KEYPAD is set in the center. Much like his security keypad upstairs. The digits GLOW. Morgan can read them even without goggles. He can also see the logo for "AmSec" on the safe.

EXT. SWIMMING POOL - DAY

Morgan bursts through the surface, elated. He BELLOWS:

MORGAN

Got you, motherfucker! I GOT YOU!!

EXT. POOL PATIO - DAY

Morgan stands dripping wet on the patio. He holds Aurelio's phone between his fingers.

SUPER: 4:57 PM

The sky has turned a brazen pink and orange hue as the sun burns through the lowest level of smog. Night is falling. The city lights below are starting to twinkle.

Morgan snarls into the phone with newfound leverage:

MORGAN

I've got it. I found your safe.

AURELIO (V.O.)

Wait in your vehicle in the garage.  
Around six I will call.

MORGAN

I'm not going anywhere. The safe  
is here. Bring me Naomi.

EXT. HILLSIDE - SAME

JT is peering up over the patio deck, clinging to the railing. Eavesdropping. In realization, he silently mouths the name "Naomi?"

BACK TO MORGAN

Listening to the cell phone.

AURELIO (V.O.)

I am bringing your wife. Follow  
these instructions.

The line goes dead again. Morgan wonders if he's being set up for another trap.

Morgan looks back at the pool. His elation turns to worry. He gets one shot at this...

He checks his watch, takes a breath. *Steady.* He's got time.

EXT. HILLSIDE - SAME

JT drops down, his mind spinning.

JT

(sotto)

Son of a bitch found the money.

INT. TURRET OFFICE - DAY

Morgan sits in Naomi's chair, dripping water everywhere. He's using the computer, checking the website of AMSEC - AMERICAN SECURITY. Several pictures and descriptions of home and office safes.

Morgan spreads the fax from Bruce across the desk. The sum total of what he knows about Nolan Rego. He composes his thoughts. *It is time to fight back with his mind...*

He finds a phone number on the screen and dials on his personal cell.

AMSEC OPERATOR (V.O.)  
(older female)  
American Security.

A brief hesitation... then he steps off the ledge:

MORGAN  
This is Nolan Rego. I have one of your safes in my house. I'm having trouble with my combination.

The old Morgan is back. Casual and smooth.

MORGAN  
I don't remember my code.  
(beat)  
You probably get that all the time.

AMSEC OPERATOR (V.O.)  
Mr. Rego, do you have your account number and original paperwork?

MORGAN  
Absolutely. They're both in the safe, though.

Morgan laughs. The easy laugh of a wealthy gentleman of leisure. Morgan's putting his gift of gab to the test.

AMSEC OPERATOR (V.O.)  
I'll set up an appointment with a technician to restore your factory code. Can you verify your Social Security number?

MORGAN  
(reading from the fax)  
Sure. Five-five-six, eight-one-three-three-six-zero.

AMSEC OPERATOR (V.O.)  
I've accessed your account. I cannot give you your personal combination over the phone.  
(then)  
I can have a technician out to your location next Monday.

MORGAN  
That's kind of a problem. I have to get a certificate out of the safe tonight.

AMSEC OPERATOR (V.O.)  
I'm sorry, Mr. Rego, but I cannot give you the combination.

Morgan looks at the death certificate copy for Nolan.

MORGAN  
What about my personal security question? I can give you my mother's maiden name.

AMSEC OPERATOR (V.O.)  
This is not an e-mail account, Mr. Rego, this is a world class security safe. I really wish I could help you.

MORGAN  
Don't get me wrong, I appreciate your discretion. Wouldn't want anyone calling in, pretending to be me. You're just doing your job.

AMSEC OPERATOR (V.O.)  
(conspiratorial tone)  
I'm looking at your combination now, okay hon? This is for your home safe?

MORGAN  
(deadpan)  
Actually, it's in my pool. But yes, at my home.

AMSEC OPERATOR (V.O.)  
(chuckling)  
You do recall that a star key must be entered in place of a hyphen?



MORGAN  
The star key?

AMSEC OPERATOR (V.O.)  
You've got three hyphens that must  
be converted to stars.  
(beat)  
Unless you've changed your code  
recently.

Morgan realizes she is giving him a HUGE hint.

MORGAN  
Oh! That's it. I thought I'd just  
messed up the numbers.

AMSEC OPERATOR (V.O.)  
Do you want me to schedule the  
technician?

MORGAN  
No. I'm all set. What was your  
name?

AMSEC OPERATOR (V.O.)  
Leona.

MORGAN  
Thank you so much for your help,  
Leona. You have a nice evening.

Morgan hangs up and loses the cool facade instantly.

MORGAN  
Three hyphens?!

Morgan grabs a highlighter pen. He scans through Nolan's  
papers, streaking every word or number sequence that appears  
with hyphens...

INSERT - PAPERS

As Morgan highlights:

*A few compound words* - one hyphen each.

*Nolan's Social* - two hyphens.

*The DATE SEAL by a notary* - two hyphens.

MORGAN

Tosses the pen aside. He looks up at the clock: "5:20." He speaks to it.

MORGAN

Why'd you ask if this was for my  
home safe?

(sotto)

Home safe. Home...

Morgan grabs the Grant Deed among the fax papers. A lot of dense real estate legal wording and assessor codes.

He turns back to the front page. Halfway down on the left is the PARCEL NUMBER for the house:

**APN 5586-022-015-00**

Morgan counts them - three hyphens!

MORGAN

Holy shit.

EXT. SWIMMING POOL - DUSK

The patio floodlights are on, providing light for Morgan. The water level is much lower, just below the open pool light. Morgan can stand in the deep end now. He reaches his hand into the opening.

Morgan's finger inputs the code. His hand draws back as the safe door SWINGS OPEN. A narrow cylindrical vault lies beyond.

Morgan pulls out a BLACK RUBBER POUCH. He stays under the lip of the pool, mindful that the rest of his yard is visible by Aurelio.

He unzips the sealed pouch. He can see three bundles of cash, wrapped in plastic. There is also a fourth item wrapped in plastic, a small cartridge case of some sort.

Morgan unwraps one of the cash bundles. Benjamin Franklins. He fans through them, counting an approximate total. Morgan calculates in his head.

MORGAN

Thirty thousand. Not enough to buy  
a pardon.

He wraps the cash in the plastic, stuffs it in the pouch.

Morgan finally unwraps the cartridge case. His last hope. He unseals the case to find a silver COMPUTER HARD DRIVE.

Morgan carefully lifts out the thin square drive. Behind it is a file directory list. A table of contents.

Morgan unfolds the print. The files are labelled by NAME and DATE, cross-referenced by PHONE NUMBER.

NOLAN'S RECORDED PHONE CALLS.

Morgan scans down the list until one entry jumps out at him:

**HOLLENBECK JAMES 06-16-01.wav**

Morgan folds the print.

MORGAN

They got the dirt on you, Governor.

This is what Aurelio is after. Blackmail for a Governor's clemency. Morgan puts everything back in the pouch. He tucks the pouch back into the safe.

He is about to close the safe door...

When he suddenly considers something.

He looks around at the pool walls rising above him. His eyes lock on the rectangular LEAF TRAP cutaway under the lip of the deck.

INT. MORGAN'S SUV - NIGHT

Morgan sits in the front seat, the cell phone and crushed cigarette pack on the dash. The lights are on the garage. Morgan pushes the cigarette lighter in, waits for it to charge. He's wearing a different set of clothes. Dry ones.

He shakes out the final cigarette from the pack. He stares at it solemnly.

MORGAN

Last one. No matter what.

The lighter pops out and Morgan ignites his smoke. He needs it to settle his nerves. He looks at his watch: "6:00."

EXT. HILLTOP HOME DRIVEWAY - NIGHT - INTRUDER P.O.V.

Someone is moving quickly across the driveway, toward the garage door. Up close to the diamond windows now, shining with light from inside.

P.O.V. moves close to a window, revealing the garage inside. Morgan is a still figure inside his SUV.

P.O.V. moves away from the window, toward the front door. It closes in on the broken window pane. Access to the door lock...

INT. SEWER - NIGHT

FLASHLIGHT beams flicker on the contoured walls as heavy footsteps SLOSH through the water.

INT. GUEST BATHROOM - NIGHT

The trap door rises and flops over. A duffel bag is hoisted up. Rising after it is the gunman (aka JULIAN GONEZ). He's in his usual sweat suit with his strapped MAC-10, but the hood and glasses are off.

Climbing up behind him is Aurelio Vargas. Our first good look. He has coal-dark eyes and a weathered face. He's dressed entirely in black, with a computer bag slung over his shoulder.

Aurelio produces a pair of heavy sunglasses. He slips them on. Now he's ready to do business.

Julian follows suit, slips on his shades, pulls up his hood.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - INTRUDER P.O.V.

The first intruder's P.O.V. continues, slyly peering around corners, making sure the rooms are clear. As it stalks toward the spiral staircase...

FOOTSTEPS (O.S.) are rising from below.

P.O.V. rapidly retreats down the hall, into a bedroom.

INT. MORGAN'S SUV - NIGHT

Morgan looks up as the door to the house opens. Julian levels his gun at the windshield. Aurelio stands behind him.

Morgan steadies his nerves. He grinds his cigarette in the ashtray and slowly opens the door.

Morgan steps out. He and Aurelio stare each other down.

MORGAN  
Where is she?

Aurelio gestures for him to approach. He pats down Morgan's body for weapons. Finds none. Morgan is revolted by his presence, his proximity. But he restrains his emotions.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Aurelio and Julian escort Morgan from the garage through the house. Like a galley prisoner about to walk the plank, Morgan keeps a strong jaw.

CU - HOLE IN THE WALL

Back by the bedroom hallway. One of the holes Morgan gouged out continues through the next room. TWO EYES stare out!

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

The intruder is watching through the damaged wall.

IT IS JT!

JT has traded his uniform for a black tactical outfit. A watch cap is snug on his head, leather gloves on his hands. He's sure not here on official business.

JT'S P.O.V.

Through the jagged hole -- Aurelio brandishes some kind of simple black semi-automatic handgun. He forces Morgan out to the terrace deck.

BACK TO JT

As he rolls his watch cap down over his face. It is actually a ski mask. He draws his gun from his belt.

JT

(sotto)

You're not going to fuck this up,  
Aurelio. I put in two years.

EXT. UPPER TERRACE - NIGHT

Aurelio leads the way down the exterior stairs. Morgan follows. Julian takes up the rear, toting his duffel. They are unaware of JT.

EXT. POOL PATIO - NIGHT

The floodlights and patio lights are lit. Aurelio motions to the railing at the edge of the patio. Julian pulls something from his duffel... binoculars. He tosses them to Morgan.

AURELIO

Down there, at the mouth of the  
culvert.

Morgan adjusts the binoculars.

BINOCULAR P.O.V.

Off to the right of the curving canyon road is the culvert  
ditch Morgan is quite familiar with. A white van is parked  
on the incline.

Standing in the headlights is Naomi, free of her blindfold,  
wearing a set of athletic warm-ups like the two OTHER GUNMEN  
that flank her.

MORGAN

Lowers the binoculars.

AURELIO

What do you have for me?

Morgan points at the pit of his swimming pool. The water is  
only two feet deep now, still draining.

MORGAN

In there, behind the light.

While Aurelio covers Morgan with his pistol, Julian climbs  
down the side ladder and drops into the deep end. The water  
is up to his knees. He slishes over to the light fixture,  
swings it open.

After peering inside the small passage, Julian nods to  
Aurelio. Aurelio dials his own phone.

AURELIO

Send Ruben with the woman.

Morgan looks through the binoculars again.

BINOCULAR P.O.V.

RUBEN moves toward the sewer opening. He appears to be  
pulling Naomi by the hand. They vanish into the hillside,  
which obscures the entrance from Morgan's view.

Gunman #2, stays with the van. His sub-machine gun is held  
low at his side. He holds his own binoculars.

MORGAN

Lowers the specs. Julian climbs up the pool ladder and begins pulling specialized tools from his duffel. Drill bits, power saws.

MORGAN

I know you're in a hurry. I can save you some time and trouble.

Julian scowls at Morgan.

MORGAN

I have the code.

Aurelio scoffs.

AURELIO

You know the code to Nolan's safe? An hour ago you didn't even know the location.

Morgan tosses the binoculars. Aurelio catches them, glares at Morgan.

AURELIO

And you opened it?

MORGAN

I had to be sure you were getting what you came for.

AURELIO

(furious)

If you took anything...

MORGAN

When my wife comes out of that hole, I'll give you the code.

Aurelio tries to read Morgan's eyes. Bluff or not, he nods. So they wait...

EXT. UPPER TERRACE - NIGHT

The masked JT is crouched near the railing, just out of their sight. He carefully affixes something to his pistol. A small SIGHTING SCOPE.

INT. GUEST BATHROOM - NIGHT

One of Naomi's hands emerges from the hatch. She pulls herself out.

EXT. POOL PATIO - NIGHT

Morgan sees Naomi coming through the rec room, followed closely by Ruben.

Naomi tries to run out through the doorway, but is jerked back by the HANDCUFF on one wrist. The other cuff is secured to Ruben's wrist. He eases her outside, plugs a handgun to her throat. Morgan grimaces.

NAOMI  
(strained)  
Morgan!

MORGAN  
It's going to be okay.

Morgan wheels on Aurelio.

MORGAN  
Get those off her!

AURELIO  
When we open the safe, we unlock  
the cuffs.

Morgan smolders. He looks back at Naomi. Her nerves have taken a beating today.

She stands straight, but shivers with fear.

MORGAN  
It's almost over, hon.  
(to Julian)  
The code is numeric.

Morgan pulls out the folded deed with the highlighted parcel number. Julian takes it, scrambles down the ladder.

EXT. UPPER TERRACE - NIGHT

JT realizes there is another gunman out of his sight. Ruben, right below him. JT slowly crawls laterally, moving along the curve of the upper deck.

EXT. POOL PATIO - NIGHT

Julian approaches the safe. Aurelio has his gun on Morgan.

Julian reaches an arm into the passage and enters the code. Nothing happens. He turns back.



MORGAN

You have to substitute stars for  
the hyphens.

AURELIO

Wait!

Aurelio motions for Julian move.

AURELIO

Get out of the water.

Julian climbs back out.

AURELIO

(to Morgan)

You think I'm a fool? You do it.

Aurelio points his gun at Morgan, who reluctantly climbs down  
the ladder.

NAOMI

Morgan?

Morgan looks afraid now. Aurelio and his men sneer, thinking  
they have avoided some kind of clever ploy.

Julian takes position beside Aurelio, near the dry waterfall.

Morgan reaches in and enters the code. They can all hear the  
CLICK as the lock releases.

Morgan reaches his arm into the safe. He draws out the  
zipper pouch. Aurelio reaches down for it. Morgan carefully  
passes it up.

Aurelio tucks his gun into a concealed holster. Morgan waits  
as he unzips the pouch, paws through the contents.

MORGAN

Are you going to let us go?

Aurelio tucks the cash bundles back in the pouch, which he  
slides into his jacket. He unwraps the plastic case.

AURELIO

We'll see.

Morgan, swallows hard. Aurelio opens the case, finds the  
computer drive. He gives a look to Ruben and Julian.

AURELIO  
I need to be sure this is  
legitimate.

Aurelio kneels on the patio and opens his computer bag. A notebook computer sits inside, partially disassembled. Aurelio expertly fits the drive in place.

EXT. UPPER TERRACE - NIGHT

JT now has a better vantage point. He peers through his magnified sights:

INSERT - GUN SIGHTS

The crosshairs are on Aurelio... they shift to Julian...

Then to Ruben... and even to Morgan down in the pool.

EXT. POOL PATIO - SAME

Aurelio boots up the computer. He checks the drive directory. Something is wrong.

MORGAN

Looks smug. Just waiting...

INSERT - COMPUTER SCREEN

The list of files in the drive is NOT the list of names and dates from Nolan's print-out. It is a list of BOOK TITLES and DRAFT NUMBERS:

**ALEDA'S SONG 12.doc**  
**ALEDA'S SONG 11.doc**  
**ALEDA'S SONG 10.doc**

And so forth...

AURELIO

Jumps to his feet and draws his pistol.

AURELIO  
What is this shit?

Morgan shakes with both fear and a strange sense of righteousness.

MORGAN  
Aleda's Song has just been  
published.

(MORE)

MORGAN (CONT'D)  
 Those are the earlier drafts by the author. Should be worth a lot of money to collectors.

Naomi watches with wide eyes, realizing...

INT. TURRET OFFICE - SAME

Naomi's notebook computer lies upside down, the back open. A hollow space amidst the components...

EXT. POOL PATIO - NIGHT

Morgan sneers up at Aurelio.

MORGAN  
 We're going to trust you with those files if you'll trust us with Nolan's drive. You let us go, I'll tell you where I've hidden it.

AURELIO  
 I don't think so.

MORGAN  
 You think you can find the drive before midnight without my help?  
 (beat)  
 Are you willing to risk losing Vincent Tagaro?

Naomi's eyes light up again. Morgan got her message.

Aurelio glares at Morgan. *He knows.* But Aurelio will not be manipulated. He gestures to Ruben.

AURELIO  
 Shoot her.

Ruben moves the gun to Naomi's shoulder. Naomi tries to pull away, but she's shackled to Ruben.

Morgan freezes. His plan has backfired.

MORGAN  
 Wait!

BLAM! Ruben shoots Naomi point-blank in the same arm that is cuffed to his. Naomi SHRIEKS and crumples to the ground.

Morgan reaches a hand up into the leaf trap cutaway in the pool's lip. Like he's trying to pull himself up.

MORGAN  
NAOMI!? NAOMI!!

JT

Pulls away from his sights. He's not sure how to play this now. He shifts on the terrace deck, not noticing...

THE SHARDS OF BROKEN POTTERY by his knee, thanks to Morgan's temper. A piece slides over the edge, CLINKS on the patio below.

Now the ACTION MOVES VERY FAST...

Aurelio turns, points to the terrace above. Julian follows his cue, SPITS WHISPER BULLETS with the MAC-10!

The dim form of JT retreats as GLASS SHATTERS!

Julian charges for the stairs.

Morgan pulls his hand out of the leaf trap. Clenched in his grip is DALE'S .38 SPECIAL!

Morgan turns with the grace of a Samurai. His mind locked in a precision move...

INSERT - QUICK MEMORY FLASH

A CANYON - DAY - This same .38 in YOUNG MORGAN'S HANDS as DALE guides him... shows him how to EXHALE and squeeze the trigger...

BACK TO SCENE

Morgan lets Dale guide him once again... he aims... exhales... and SHOOTS AURELIO!

A sudden BLAST a hundred times louder than the suppressed MAC-10 gunfire.

The shot tags Aurelio in the side, sends him spinning. He vanishes behind the rock waterfall.

Ruben drags Naomi across the patio, trying to aim at Morgan hiding under the pool lip.

But Morgan runs for the shallow end. He rises up, FIRES two shots. One tears through Ruben's neck...

The other SHATTERS the rec room window!

EXT. DRAINAGE CULVERT - NIGHT

Gunman #2 is watching the house above, the FLICKER and POPPING of gunfire. He runs toward the sewer grate.

EXT. UPPER TERRACE - NIGHT

Julian comes up the stairs, finds the masked JT limping through the living room. With the glass windows obliterated, Julian has an easy shot.

He CUTS JT DOWN in a hail of whisper bullets...

But from the floor, JT FIRES his own gun twice. Julian is shocked to see two precise HOLES in his own chest. He crumples.

EXT. POOL PATIO - NIGHT

Morgan climbs out of the pool, rushes to Naomi. She is SOBBING, dragging the dead body of Ruben by the handcuff. Morgan helps her pull the body into the rec room.

INT. RECREATION ROOM - NIGHT

Morgan takes Naomi's face in his hands.

MORGAN  
Oh, God. Are you okay!?

NAOMI  
Morgan...

She leans into him. She's in shock, with hundreds of thoughts she wants to convey... but there's no time.

NAOMI  
Get us out of here!

MORGAN  
I'm trying.

Morgan searches Ruben's body. He keeps looking back at the patio for Aurelio.

EXT. POOL PATIO - NIGHT

Aurelio stands on the waterfall, pulling himself up on the terrace deck. Wounded, but plenty of fight left in him.

INT. RECREATION ROOM - NIGHT

Morgan finds Ruben's keys, unlocks the cuffs. He gently helps Naomi to her feet, guides her toward the spiral stairs. Then he halts.

MORGAN

One of them's up there.

They change course for the guest bathroom.

EXT. UPPER TERRACE - NIGHT

Aurelio finds Julian, dead. He picks up his sub-machine gun.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The place looks like an urban warfare zone. The damage Morgan has inflicted on the floors and walls, along with broken glass, bullet holes in the fireplace, and JT's body by the wet bar.

Aurelio trains the gun at the stairs. Waiting for Morgan to ascend. He checks his bleeding side.

INT. RECREATION ROOM - NIGHT

As Morgan and Naomi limp toward the bathroom and the open trap door, Gunman #2 pops up through the hatch with his own MAC-10!

Morgan pulls Naomi down as they slide on the tile. They roll away from the doorway as BULLETS chew into the walls, savaging the door frame...

Naomi SCREAMS...

Gunman #2 pulls his large frame out of the hatch. Morgan pushes Naomi up the spiral stairs... but he stays below, presses flat against the wall.

The ruse works. As Gunman #2 emerges, aiming high, hearing Naomi's steps on the stairs, Morgan BLASTS him in the ear with the .38.

The man goes down. Morgan can't be stopped now.

Morgan and Naomi rush through the bathroom door. FOOTSTEPS hammer above as Aurelio comes charging down.

INT. GUEST BATHROOM - NIGHT

Naomi drops to her knees, clutching her shoulder. She hesitates, looking at the rungs going down the hatch.

MORGAN  
You have to jump!

Morgan helps her to the edge. She swings her legs into the hole, then drops.

As Morgan drops down after her, Aurelio flies into the doorway. He SPRAYS SILENT BULLETS, which obliterate the open trap door in a shower of ceramic shards.

But the Fischers have vanished. Aurelio is alone.

He ventures a look into the hole, pulls back...

BLAM! Plaster dust falls from the ceiling. Morgan nearly blew his head off.

INT. SEWER - NIGHT

The ground is slick with running pool water. Morgan and Naomi slip and slide as they run full-tilt down the tube. Morgan drops the .38.

Bizarre POPPING NOISES follow them as Aurelio's silent bullets ricochet down the cement tunnel.

MORGAN  
Down!

They jump feet-first into a slide, letting the water and gravity carry them the rest of the way.

EXT. DRAINAGE CULVERT - NIGHT

The grate flies up as Morgan and Naomi power through. The headlights of the van are still on, the engine idling. Morgan helps Naomi to her feet.

Her face is twisted with pain. She runs for the passenger door while he runs for the driver's side.

INT. VAN - NIGHT

Naomi climbs in the passenger seat. Morgan puts the van into reverse. They are battered, bloody, soaking wet, but alive with electricity.

Morgan hits the gas gently, as they are off-road and facing the wrong way on the incline.

NAOMI

Look out!

Morgan looks ahead, where Aurelio is rising from the grate. He points the gun barrel at them...

Morgan throws the van into drive and PUNCHES THE GAS.

They are hurtling toward Aurelio and the cement wall...

Aurelio DROPS down and the gate swings down, just before the van CRASHES into the wall.

Morgan has banged his face on the steering wheel.

NAOMI

Are you okay?

MORGAN

(realizing)

We blocked him in.

NAOMI

Then we leave the van.

EXT. DRAINAGE CULVERT - NIGHT

Morgan and Naomi climb out of the van. They circle around to see that, yes, the grate is pinned shut by the van's crumpled front end.

MORGAN

He'll go back up. We have to get help.

STEALTH P.O.V.

From UNDER the van. Low in the culvert. Morgan and Naomi's legs run away. *They were wrong about Aurelio's fate...*

EXT. DRAINAGE CULVERT - NIGHT

Morgan helps Naomi hike up the brush hillside. They can hear CARS (O.S.) zipping through the canyon. And distant SIRENS (O.S.). The outside world is almost within reach...

Morgan turns as Naomi suddenly falls. The shock of the bullet wound is hitting her. She still grips her shoulder. CRIMSON BLOOD streams out between her fingers.



Morgan turns, sees Aurelio kneeling by the van, steadying his aim. But he doesn't fire.

Something is wrong. Aurelio ejects the clip, furious. He yanks open the slide door of his van, reaches in...

Morgan has no weapons. He ROARS with animal rage and pushes off the hill, runs full-speed at the van...

Aurelio comes back with a fresh clip. Morgan dives right at him...

Their bodies slam into the van. They collapse in a heap, but Aurelio recovers faster. He reaches for the fallen gun.

NAOMI (O.S.)

Morgan!!

Morgan lies there, hand bracing his injured ribs. Aurelio has the gun now... but he's lost the clip. He KICKS at Morgan instead...

Suddenly he's pulled off balance as Naomi tackles him!

But he twists and flings her aside like a child.

Morgan is back up, diving low for Aurelio. He charges him squarely and they crash into the soggy concrete culvert. Morgan lands a blow to Aurelio's side, near the bullet wound.

AURELIO

(wincing)

You don't know who I am.

As the pool water continues to gurgle through the channel, Morgan grips Aurelio by the neck.

MORGAN

(wheezing)

I don't fucking care.

Naomi climbs into the van, rummaging.

Morgan forces Aurelio's head into the water. The TAILLIGHTS of the van bathe everything in crimson.

AURELIO

(strained)

You'll never get away. My people are everywhere.

Morgan presses that head under the water with all his power. His emotions spill out in waves across his face. Aurelio's eyes leer at him from under the surface.

Echoes of Nolan Rego's uncharitable demise.

But Aurelio's face rises back out by sheer force of will.

SLAM!

Suddenly the face is broken, bleeding. Naomi towers over both men, a CROWBAR in her good hand.

NAOMI  
Die, you asshole!

She spins the crowbar around and drives the sharp end RIGHT THROUGH AURELIO'S SKULL.

Finally, Morgan releases his grip. He rolls away. Aurelio is not getting up.

Morgan looks up at Naomi with wonder. He rises and takes her in his arms.

Looking up the hill, Morgan can see his terrace. LIGHTS are on up there. Flashing RED and BLUE ones.

EXT. HILLTOP HOME - NIGHT

Police and fire vehicles are everywhere. Ambulances join the scene. Det. Kaye marches across the driveway.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

UNIFORMS steps aside as Kaye surveys the damage. The night breeze sails through the shattered windows.

DET. KAYE  
What the hell happened here?

UNIFORMED COP  
They're waiting for you downstairs,  
in the bathroom.  
(beat)  
You'll love this one.

EXT. DRAINAGE CULVERT - NIGHT

An ambulance is at the roadside, rear doors open. MEDICS treat Naomi and Morgan, who sit on the back bumper.

More POLICE shine lights on the van and Aurelio's body. An unmarked car pulls up behind the ambulance. Det. Kaye emerges. He studies the Fischers.

DET. KAYE

Morgan?

MORGAN

I wish I could have told you from the beginning.

Morgan pulls something out. The rubber pouch he must have taken from Aurelio's body. Naomi looks at it with interest. Morgan holds it out to Det. Kaye.

MORGAN

Something I found at my house. Doesn't belong to me.

Det. Kaye takes the pouch, unzips it.

MORGAN

I know it will go back into a property room somewhere. It would be nice if some of the bills found their way to the Riverside Sheriffs Department.

Det. Kaye realizes the nature of the request. He nods sadly.

DET. KAYE

We found Dale Hawkins an hour ago. I'm sorry. He may have been retired... but he died in the line of duty.

Naomi looks at Morgan with tearful eyes.

MORGAN

If you go back to the house, down in the wet bar... there's a fridge.  
(beat)  
Help yourself to a ginger ale.

Det. Kaye stares at him, puzzled.

MORGAN

Behind it is a computer drive. Some insurance Nolan put away.  
(beat)  
You'll be surprised.

DET. KAYE

Mr. Fischer... your case just got a bit more complicated.

(then)

I trust you'll be available tomorrow?

MORGAN

That depends.

The detective is astounded by this response.

MORGAN

(deadpan)

My wife is supposed to have a book signing.

Naomi looks at Morgan. She can't help but grin as fresh tears spill down her face.

Now Morgan is grinning too. All the stress they have each carried finally bursts through in a culmination of relief, exhaustion and love.

Det. Kaye backs away, lets them have their moment.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HILLTOP HOME DRIVEWAY - DAY

SUPER: THREE WEEKS LATER

A familiar Mercedes is at the curb, engine running. Through the open window, we can hear the NEWS RADIO (V.O.):

RADIO NEWSCASTER

You may recall some pressure Governor Hollenbeck was under to stay the execution of Vincent Tagaro three weeks ago, a move the Governor decided against.

(then)

In a bizarre development, the Governor is now accused of accepting bribes from a crime organization with ties to Tagaro's father.

(then)

The alleged dealings took place in two-thousand one, when Hollenbeck was a San Diego city council member...

From the front, the house looks as stunning as ever.  
Paradise with a view. A familiar realtor sticks a sign in  
the flower bed.

We HOLD on the sign:

**FOR SALE**

**"AS-IS" PER OWNER**

Caveat Emptor... Buyer Beware.

FADE OUT.

THE END