

LOS DUQUES

Pilot Script

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BEGIN ACT I

A series of intoxicating IMAGES driven by club music, jazz, Reggaeton. Faces, hips, shoulders, DANCERS breathlessly moving to a searing beat.

We're INSIDE a commercial for DUQUE RUM. EXPERIENCING it rather than SEEING it.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL THE DUQUE DISTILLERY

A surgically clean facility with vast steel tanks continuously heating fermented mash. Oak barrels line the walls, filled with the rum distillate.

The company's new ad campaign is being unveiled for the WORKERS on a giant screen. When it concludes, the room erupts in cheers.

Immediately, the company patriarch, PANCHO DUQUE (64), and the Duque brothers, FRANK (41) AND ALEX (42) begin passing out bottles of rum to the men.

The men are laughing; feeling a part of the team. One of the Workers gives Pancho a cigar, *Felicidades, Pancho.* They light up together. The Duques have a common touch. Not so long ago were working these jobs themselves.

Frank, Pancho's eldest *natural* son, is handsome, with dark hair, hazel eyes, and that compelling spontaneity that is the Cuban national SOP. He's dressed with some flash -- the face of the company.

FRANK

-- We're trying to capture a new market segment, Pop, through advertising concepts, web promotion, sponsorships...

DIANA MANN (34), the company's new marketing director (whose campaign they've just watched) is with them. She's disciplined, magnetic. As a kid, she liked doing homework; still carries a legal pad and three sharpened pencils wherever she goes.

DIANA

It's time for the Duque brand to finally catapult itself into the world's Top Five, Mr. Duque.

Pancho has the aura of an old Cuban gentleman. Shrewd blue eyes, charming; wearing a natty, *guayabera*-style shirt and linen pants.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PANCHO

(wry)

Of course our rivals want to move
up the global ladder, too.

DIANA

I believe we can succeed, sir.

The group walks as they talk, followed by ASSISTANTS carrying packages, papers, phones. Workers nod deferentially to them as they pass.

PANCHO

So you used to work for Bacardi?

Diana nods pertly. Beat.

PANCHO (CONT'D)

What do you think, Alex?

ALEX VEGA is on the phone, putting out a company fire. He has dark eyes in an interestingly lined face that is deadly attractive, as much for what it reveals as for what it doesn't. In a crisp white shirt and handmade suit, he radiates a bristling energy that somehow feels out of reach.

[Though he is Pancho's 'son,' he has a different last name. We'll explain this later.]

Diana waits for approval from Alex, but doesn't get it. Throughout, her eyes cut to him, rattled.

DIANA

(to Pancho)

Rum is the only spirits category
that hasn't had a recognized super-
premium end, Mr. Duque.

(smiles)

We're gonna change that.

An Assistant hands Diana a fancy bottle.

DIANA (CONT'D)

It's cut-crystal, with an original
lithograph by Ed Ruscha. And a
bargain at a thousand bucks.

Pancho takes a beat on Diana.

PANCHO

You mean the bottle will cost more
than the rum?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DIANA

(nods)

We'll call it Don Pancho, sir.

His eyes tells her he approves. Finally, Alex gets off the phone.

ALEX

Sorry. Problems with the deal in Mexico. Getting off to a rocky start --

ASSISTANT

(to the Duques)

The caterers were wondering if they could come by the house this evening, Mr. Duque... And Mr. Vega, Senator Barnz called. He said you could reach him on his private line --

PANCHO

Ask Amalia if it'd be all right.

ASSISTANT

-- Your Samuels Sugar meeting is in five minutes. Would you like me to cancel?

Alex makes a face. Frank picks up that Pancho is also reluctant.

FRANK

(to Assistant)

Call and tell them we're running late.

(to Pancho)

Pop, Joe Samuels is dying. He's been in a coma for six friggin' months. His children want to turn over a new leaf. I think we should hear them out.

ALEX

It's a waste of time, Frank.

FRANK

Pop... Please --

PANCHO

(considers; shrugs)

Let's do it.

Pancho is already walking toward the exit.

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CONTINUED: (3)

PANCHO (CONT'D)

Let it never be said that the
Duque family holds a grudge.

As the men leave, Diana watches Alex. Her eyes have been on him throughout. Alex never acknowledges her.

EXT. DUQUE DISTILLERY - DAY

Alex's black Lexus 430 has just been washed. Alex gives the *BALSERO* washing the car a tip. The *Balsero* (a Cuban who came on a raft) is a nut-brown, sinewy man with prison tattoos between his knuckles. Alex holds on the tattoos a moment, then gets in the car. The *Balsero* watches Alex drive off.

EXT. INT. LEXUS - ALEX DRIVING - CENTRAL FLORIDA - DAY

Alex tries to light a cigar, but notices the car's lighter is missing. He feels around behind him for the second lighter; finds a hole. Makes a face. Then dials the phone.

OUTSIDE THE LEXUS

A two lane highway that slices through the sugarcane fields. A caravan of cars migrates toward the Duque sugar mills. Surrounding the sugarcane is the Everglades. A primordial river of grass supporting a variety of wildlife and ecosystems. But in 2007, the Everglades is also sugar, and sugar is big business.

INSIDE LEXUS - CLOSE ON ALEX

On the phone, eyes intently precessing what he's hearing.

ALEX (INTO PHONE)

...I understand completely,
Senator Barnz. Corn ethanol *might*
or *might not* be a thing of the
past... I realize if sugar ethanol
were the preferred biofuel we'd
all be rich... Of course, you know
the Duques are behind you a
hundred and fifty percent... Six-
figures-percent, sir... Can we
count on seeing you and your
family at the party...? We look
forward to it --

Alex hangs up. Eyes cutting back and forth; serious.

EXT. INT. THE DUQUE SUGAR MILLS - CENTRAL FL - DAY

A complex of industrial buildings and smoke stacks. Twenty-four hours a day, the refinery pumps the brown syrup that is turned into white crystals. The Duque cars pull up to the cane fields surrounding the complex.

The Samuels are already there. LAMARR (39), brother JACK (36), and sister ELLIS (34). Lamarr Samuels is polite and coolly detached. Jack is fierce, with wary eyes. Ellis is bigger than life, in a pastel suit, stiletto heels, jawbreaker-sized topaz on her finger.

JASON GREENBERG (35), the Duque's family counsel, a brainy oddball with a ferocious commitment to the Duques, stands discreetly behind the family. The Samuels have brought no representation.

For a moment, there's a complex series of handshakes among the principals. Except Ellis and Frank, who kiss like old friends. Finally, Pancho and Lamaar face each other. Very professional.

LAMARR

We wanted to talk, Mr. Duque.
Family to family. Thank you for
seeing us.

Throughout, Alex contemplates the participants in silence. Frank swats mosquitos and fans himself.

LAMARR (CONT'D)

As you know, our family owns two
hundred thousand acres of
sugarcane fields. We want to buy
your hundred and seventy thousand
acres, for a fair price. In
return, we'll sell you all the
molasses you need to make your rum
at 10% below world-market rate,
for ten years. After that, we'll
meet the lowest world price.

(to Greenberg)

And we'll put that in writing,
counselor.

For a moment everyone present feels the impressive scope of the offer.

PANCHO

And why do we deserve this
generosity, Mr. Samuels?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAMARR

Our business is sugar. Sugar's become an afterthought for you. You're in spirits now.

(a nod to Alex)

When Mr. Vega started up Duque rum, you supplied your own molasses. You sold two million cases last year, posted sales of over a billion dollars. But you spent twenty million buying molasses from Costa Rica, Belize, Egypt --

From the family's reaction, which is extremely subtle, it is clear this was not public information.

LAMARR (CONT'D)

Our offer would conservatively save you thirty-five million over the next several years. Not to mention shipping and tariffs. The cash from the sale, you could put back into your spirits business. You're negotiating to buy a brewery in Mexico, no...?

Alex looks mildly irritated. Again this was not public information. Ellis steps up, an armful of jangling gold bracelets.

ELLIS

And let's face it, *sugah*, sugar's a fucking nuisance. Tree-huggers, *media vultures* treatin' us like we left a turd on the table... Then there are the politicians. It's feeding frenzy, and we're the cash cows.

Ellis is a Southern flirt who swears like a trooper.

GREENBERG

You paint a calamitous picture, Ms. Samuels. Why's your family so interested in sugar?

ELLIS

Like Lamarr said: our business is sugar. Our only business.

LAMARR

If we control Florida sugar, we control the world market.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LAMARR (CONT'D)

(pausing; somber)

I know you farmed these fields with your sweat, and your sons' sweat, Mr. Duque. We respect that. We're all Americans here. I know when you started buying land, my father resented it. I speak for my siblings when I say we're sorry for the bad blood my father may've created. But he's dying. He's had twenty-four hour care for the last six months. We're offering you a good deal.

There's a long silence in which Pancho gauges the Samuels' sincerity, and in which each person present feels the tension. When Pancho doesn't say anything:

LAMARR (CONT'D)

Are we in the ballpark here, Mr. Duque?

A long moment when Pancho is still reflective. Then:

PANCHO

I told Frank I'd see you because he said you were turning over a new leaf. Your offer is reasonable. I'll consider it.

Suddenly Ellis slaps Pancho on the back.

ELLIS

Now we're gettin' somewhere, Pancho.

Everyone takes a breath and shakes hands. Pancho's thoughtful. Frank's thrilled. Jason's quietly surprised. But Alex is stunned.

EXT. INT. NEW HOPE COMMUNITY SCHOOL - BELLE GLADE - DAY

Blisteringly-hot sidewalks, skinny dogs panting in the shade, MEN (mostly JAMAICANS) shuffling home at the end of their cane-cutting day. Ninety miles drive from Palm Beach and we're in the Third World.

The New Hope School is a rural parish broken into four classrooms. An all-volunteer staff of teachers and well-to-do Palm Beachers man it.

ISABEL VEGA (37) is a staggeringly beautiful woman. Even in jeans, T-shirt and ponytail she looks extremely well put together.

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CONTINUED:

ROBERT LAWRENCE (35) is fit, with longish, sun-streaked hair; dressed in a deconstructed American way.

The CHILDREN Isabel and Robert are teaching are a mix of JAMAICANS and MAYAN INDIANS. They're singing Yankee Doodle, preparing for the Fourth of July; dressed as Statues of Liberty, Uncle Sams, etc. Robert is playing a flute and Isabel a snare drum; having exuberant fun.

INT. TEACHER'S ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

A cramped parish office. Isabel's packing up for the day. Robert is with her; as is ISAAK (40), a Jamaican teacher. Isaak has the carriage of a gentleman. Robert is new to the school; his desk still bare.

ISABEL

-- It costs thirty-two-hundred a year to educate each child. So it's always a struggle. On the other hand, we're blessed. We're the only school in the United States devoted entirely to migrant farm-worker children.

ROBERT

What drew you to this kind of work, Isabel?

ISABEL

I'm a teacher. I was in a position to help. What about you?

ROBERT

I was in Brazil with the Greenpeace Student Network. Found I had a knack for talking to kids.

Isabel's gaze is always direct. Robert can't take his eyes off her.

ISABEL

So you think you'll stay?

ROBERT

You kidding? This place's got my name on it.

(beat; smiles)

Maybe you can show me around sometime?

In the b.g., Isaak's eyebrows go up. A car-horn blares outside. Isabel looks out the window.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ISABEL

There're my kids. My youngest is trying out for All-Stars today.

Isabel grabs her bag. Stops at the door, thoughtful:

ISABEL (CONT'D)

My family's having a Fourth of July party, Robert... Why don't you come?

ROBERT

...I'm not imposing -- ?

The car-horn blares again.

ISABEL

Isaak, please tell Robert how to get to my father's house?

(smiles to both)

See you at the party.

Isabel runs out. Robert's eyes follow Isabel into a BMW 3 series. A young man with long hair is behind the wheel. Isabel gets in the car and they pull out.

Robert looks crestfallen. After a moment, Isaak chuckles.

ISAAK

She very, very pretty, Robert. Got a body that make you cry. But she a proper lady.

ROBERT

She been married a long time?

ISAAK

Long enough. She have teenagers.

Robert is somehow encouraged by this information.

ROBERT

What's he like, her husband?

Isaak's face is stern.

ISAAK

Mr. Vega, the Duques, are all nice people. They have *history*. You sweet on Isabel, you t'ink about that.

Beat. Robert smiles sheepishly.

EXT. LITTLE LEAGUE FIELD - PALM BEACH - DAY

Isabel sits in the bleachers with her children: JAIME (18), KATIE (16), ARTIE (10, in a Marlins uniform); and Jaime's girlfriend, REBECCA KING (18). Jaime is model-handsome, with long hair, green eyes, a nose ring. Rebecca is blonde, pretty, wearing a baseball cap. Jaime has a level-headed, thoughtful disposition. He and Rebecca hold hands throughout, emitting the floral glow of young love.

Katie is a willowy, lively thing; but unsure of herself at sixteen, she keeps her spark muted. We can tell Jaime has a special affection for his little brother ARTIE, who's indelibly sweet.

JAIME

-- Eyes on point of contact. Like I taught you.

Artie's a little nervous. A lot of the kids on the field look zealous. Their parents, too.

KATIE

(looking out)
Dad's coming?

ARTIE

(disappointed)
-- He's on the phone...

They see Alex walking in their direction, holding a phone to his ear; *roll their eyes* as a family. By the time Alex arrives, however, he's hung up. He kisses everyone. OVER THE P.A. we hear A COACH calling out names:

COACH (OVER SPEAKER)

-- James Rosenthal, Jorge Garza, Arturo Vega, Michael Cooper, please come to the field --

ALEX

You're up, Artie. Remember, no circus catches. Make the hard plays look easy, like Clemente.

Artie nods, smiles, the full range of his new ragged-teeth, like candles stuck in a cake. Alex gives him a confident thumbs-up. Artie takes a breath and races onto the field. As soon as Artie's gone, Alex bows over, sick.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAIME

Dad, stop worrying. Artie's *good*.

But Alex is strung out with nerves. Amused, Isabel kisses his cheek. Then they both look away from the field, their hearts in their throats. Jaime, Rebecca and Katie laugh.

THE FIELD - A SERIES OF SHOTS

A HALF-DOZEN PLAYERS, including Artie being put through their paces: scooping up ground balls, catching flies, batting. Throughout, Jaime and Rebecca are pumping their fists. Artie *is* good, playing with confidence.

Raking his hair nervously, Alex starts pacing. He can face a CEO across a boardroom table and not blink; a mass of nerves when it comes to his children.

Looking around, Alex catches a MAN watching him. Small, very dark, with curly black hair. But when Alex holds his gaze, the Man turns away. He's sitting alone on the third-base-side of the bleachers, trying to be inconspicuous. The man makes Alex's scalp prickle.

On a sudden instinct, Alex starts walking toward the Man. We can almost feel the Man willing himself to stay put. As Alex nears, he feels himself go cold. In two steps Alex is in the Man's face:

ALEX

I know you... Who are you?

The Man is feral, gnarled, like a tree. Acts startled.

MAN

(Spanish)

I don't know you. I don't know what you're talking about --

Suddenly Alex clutches the Man's shoulder.

ALEX

(Spanish; steely)

But I know you.

It's as if the Man had dropped a mask. The look on his face is hard and dangerous. He shakes Alex off. For a moment doubting himself, Alex lets go. Then the man stands up and walks calmly away. Limping.

QUICK FLASH: The muzzle of a gun firing. A scream.

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CONTINUED: (2)

BACK TO ALEX -- like someone cold-cocked him. His chest is tight. Face drained of color.

In the b.g., Jaime, Rebecca and Katie are high-fiving Artie. Isabel is watching Alex curiously. Artie comes running to Alex.

ARTIE

Dad! Did you see my diving catch?! I held on to the ball!

Alex pulls his son into his arms and holds him for dear life. The Man has brought back a memory that chills Alex to the bone. Artie looks up at his father, confused. As the thoughts race in Alex's eyes, we --

END ACT I

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BEGIN ACT II

EXT. PALM BEACH MARINA - LATE AFTERNOON

The island town of Palm Beach is quaint. Spanish-style buildings, red-tile roofs, marina full of bobbing yachts.

EXT. INT. THE VEGA HOME - ALEX'S STUDY - LATE AFTERNOON

Airy, bright tile floors, interior courtyards; doors that open to a tropical garden and pool. Lived-in ambience. Alex is on the phone. Squinting, as if he had a terrible headache. Suddenly the door opens; Isabel. She waits as Alex wraps up his call.

ISABEL

Alex, who was that man at the park?

Alex doesn't answer immediately. Shrugs it off.

ALEX

Nothing. Business.

But she knows him. It didn't look like business.

ISABEL

You looked angry.

ALEX

(smiles)

Business can do that to you.

(changing subject)

I have to go to Miami.

ISABEL

But Pop wants us over for dinner.

ALEX

I'll be there as soon as I can.

Don't hold dinner for me.

Isabel nods; hesitating:

ISABEL

I want to talk to you about something --

But his eyes tell her his 'business' is unavoidable.

ALEX

It's a bad time right now, Isabel.
We'll talk tonight?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She stands there a moment; smiles, nods. As the door closes:

ALEX (CONT'D)

...Sorry.

EXT. INT. DUQUE CRYSTALS OFFICES - LATE AFTERNOON

Surprisingly simple. Decorated with 1950s photos of sugarcane fields in Cuba, and maps indicating the sweep of the Duque properties in the Everglades.

Pancho sits in front of DRS. RODRIGUEZ and GORDON (40s), who're making a house call. Rodriguez is pudgy. Gordon, rail-thin. Both wicked smart. Neither one to mince words -- because that would be insulting to Pancho. From the look on their faces, they've given Pancho bad news; again. There's a tray of *pastelitos* (guava pastries) and Cuban coffee on the table before them.

PANCHO

-- I'm tougher than I look.

DR. GORDON

Obviously --

DR. RODRIGUEZ

Should've died a year ago.

Pancho shrugs; such is life.

PANCHO (CONT'D)

Have you tried the *pastelitos*?

DR. GORDON

You want us to die, too?

PANCHO

I want to put meat on those bones, Dr. Gordon. Do you eat?

DR. GORDON

I've been *known* to eat.

DR. RODRIGUEZ

(beat; quietly)

It's not your diet, Pancho.

PANCHO

How long?

DR. RODRIGUEZ

(exchanging a look
with Gordon)

...Six months, a year? You should tell your family.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Pancho looks at the Doctors, then at the sugarcane fields outside the window; with a farmer's unsentimental eye.

EXT. THE EVERGLADES - LATE AFTERNOON

For Pancho, sugarcane is Cuba. He's on horseback now, *guajiro* hat on his head. As he passes some workers, he tips his hat ruefully; the respect reserved for those who serve the land.

INT. HIGHRISE TOWNHOUSE - PALM BEACH - EVENING

Comparable in size to the mansions built pre-Crash of '29, with floor-to-ceiling windows. *More* is better in Palm Beach. Sometimes with a vengeance.

CLOSE ON FRANK AND ELLIS SAMUELS - tangled in white sheets; as Ellis props herself up on her elbow to look at Frank. Her hair down, face scrubbed clean, she's quite pretty; not the cliché she seemed. She runs a manicured nail down an old heart-surgery scar on Frank chest.

ELLIS

When do we celebrate, *sugah*?

Frank doesn't like anyone looking at his scars. Physically robust, ferociously fit, he's a mass of inadequacies and self-doubts. He rolls on top of Ellis.

FRANK

How 'bout now?

Her game-face on, Ellis resumes lusty lovemaking. But in Ellis' eyes is an intensity not revealed in her manner. If she weren't so good at concealing it, Frank might know she cares.

INT. VEGA HOUSE - JAIME'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Different lovemaking. Jaime and Rebecca lost in each other's eyes. Eighteen-year-old love; more powerful than any narcotic.

LATER - JAIME AND REBECCA

Curled up together. Jaime's bedroom has few of the benchmarks of a teen; a couple of posters, a drum and percussion kit.

REBECCA

When're you gonna tell your parents?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAIME

-- The Fourth.

Rebecca is slightly out of her depth with Jaime, but worthy of the challenge. They hear a car outside.

TIME CUT - LIVING ROOM

Boxes of family photos are spread out on the living room table. Isabel enters carrying packages from Bed & Bath, FUBU. Jaime and Rebecca pass through, holding hands.

REBECCA AND JAIME

-- Hi, Mrs. Vega. Bye, Mom.

Isabel skewers them a look; can still see their glow.

ISABEL

I got you some stuff for the dorm,
Jaime, towels, sheets; a coat --

JAIME

(under his breath)
Can buy my own clothes, Mom.

Isabel hangs on to her sense of humor.

ISABEL

Hijo. I have an intense desire
not to be a Cuban Mother. But
maybe you should read the section
on helping your parents through
their first year of college.

Jaime backtracks; hugs his mother sweetly.

ISABEL (CONT'D)

Got you a Blackberry... So you can
reach us any time...

JAIME

Mom. Relax. *Trust me.*

She does. But he's her first; now maddeningly grown up. Rebecca sluices Jaime a look; both uncomfortable with the subject of college. Rebecca changes it.

REBECCA

(re: photos)
Jaime, this your Dad?

The photo Rebecca's holding cracks Jaime up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JAIME

-- When he came from Cuba with Pedro Pan. Can you believe they sent kids to Miami in wool coats?

CLOSE ON PHOTOS - black-and-white. A line of Cuban Refugee CHILDREN, coming down a plane staircase, wearing wool coats, carrying little boxy suitcases. They're greeted at the airport by Immigration Services and Catholic Nuns and Priests.

The photos have the effect of taking Isabel's mind off Jaime. She looks through them.

REBECCA

Who's Pedro Pan?

ISABEL

It was an airlift. After the revolution, a lot of Cuban parents sent their kids to Miami because Castro was shipping them to camps in the country. They lived in orphanages and foster homes. Eventually, most were reunited. Alex wasn't.

JAIME

That's when my grandmother brought him home to live with them.

REBECCA

(to Isabel)

So you guys grew up like, brother and sister?

(then; to Jaime)

He's your father and your uncle?

Absently, Jaime laughs; holding on a photo of his father in the Armed Services. He puts down the photo and gestures for Rebecca to go. As they head for the door, Isabel grins *pointedly*; not looking up:

ISABEL

Jaime, no seas cochino. Cuídala.

Basically, *Don't be a pig, son; wear a condom* -- which makes Jaime blush bright crimson and slam the door.

JAIME

See you at grandpa's!

INT. MIAMI POLICE DEPARTMENT - MIAMI - EARLY EVENING

Alex is looking at photographs. DETECTIVE VINCENT GRASSO stands over him; a big guy, close-cropped hair, Sicilian.

CLOSE ON PHOTOGRAPHS - the man Alex saw at the Little League Field; only younger, dressed in Bee Gees Disco; malevolence in his eyes. There are piles of old mug books all over Grasso's office.

GRASSO (O.S.)

-- Name's Luis Quiñones. He's Cuban. Came over in '61. But he's been out of the U.S. for thirty-some years. Few weeks ago he applied to come back, from the Dominican. H-2 Visa. Sugar worker.

ALEX

(beat)

What'd you pick him up for?

GRASSO

In '73, assault. Victim wouldn't testify.

(reading jacket)

-- Also picked up in '69 and '71. Quiñones was a Field Pusher out in Belle Glade. Got into a machete fight with a Jamaican cane-cutter. Mutilated him pretty good. Again, the victim wouldn't testify.

ALEX

Who'd he work for back in '73?

GRASSO

(reading)

-- Samuels Sugar.

ALEX

(knows the answer)

Who sponsored the H-2 Visa this time, Vince?

GRASSO

...Samuels Sugar.

Alex puts down the pictures. Stares. At a sinister apparition. A moment.

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CONTINUED:

ALEX

Can I get copies of these?

Grasso's tagged along for the ride with Alex so far, but now he wants to know why.

GRASSO

Alex. Quiñones is a bad guy. I'm telling you both as a cop and as an old friend. He's a *very bad* guy. Let's go out for a drink. Talk to me.

ALEX

Not on this one, Vince. Can I just get the pictures, please?

Beat. Grasso hits Print on the computer screen. The photos of Quiñones begin printing. Then Alex takes a bottle of the best Duque *añejo* rum out of a bag and hands it to Grasso.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Thanks. See you on the Fourth.

As the photos spit out into a tray --

EXT. INT. DUQUE COMPOUND - EVENING

Set back among the bougainvillea, palms, and flaming royal poincianas, is the comfortable but not ostentatious home of Pancho Duque. Preparations for a Fourth of July party are underway. Tents raised; a band-stand being built; CATERERS milling about.

LIVING ROOM - CLOSE ON A PHOTOGRAPH - A GIRL OF THREE

Dressed immaculately in white. Could be the young Isabel. The photograph says it's LUCIA. A votive candle burns in front of the photo.

A Marlins game is on in the family room, muted. Ruben Gonzalez playing on the stereo.

THE KITCHEN - AMALIA DUQUE (63)

Pancho's wife, is the size of a good cook. She's stirring pots, chopping ingredients, making a huge Cuban dinner for her family. Isabel's helping.

HENRY DUQUE (32), Pancho's youngest son, enters through the front door with his fiancé, STEPHANIE (28), a statuesque woman, with a big ring on her finger.

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AMALIA
(eyeing Stephanie;
fatalistic)

She's going to have to get
pregnant.

ISABEL

Por Dios, Mami.

AMALIA

How else is she going to get Henry
down the aisle?

Entering the kitchen, Henry overhears. He's wrinkled-
charming; a little grunge; a little rock-n-roll. Kisses
his mother and sister.

HENRY

It's your fault, Mom. Still
looking for somebody like you.

AMALIA

You're looking in the wrong place,
Henry.

Amalia nurtures and accepts all her children, but doesn't
stomach bullshit. Henry's a dreamer, boyish, innocent;
accommodating of everyone.

Frank enters through the kitchen door; kisses everybody.
Excitement in the air over the possibility of a sale.

FRANK

I need to talk to Pop.

AMALIA

Where's your son, Frank? I
thought he was coming.

FRANK

Carlos is with his mother. He'll
be here for the Fourth. *Coño*,
Henry, how's the club business
treatin' you?

HENRY

Great. I'm trying to make a deal
with a label --

FRANK

-- 'Cause we could use you on the
rum side; you know how Pop feels
about that nightclub shit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HENRY

Pop doesn't know everything,
Frankie. Duque is a brand. We're
not exploiting the brand.

Frank throws his arm around his baby brother; walks with him past the family room, where Stephanie has bee-lined for the bar.

FRANK

(meaningfully)
Hello, Stephanie.

STEPHANIE

Hey, Frankie.

As they continue, Frank gives Stephanie a once-over; like it hurts, she's so voluptuous. He raps his knuckles on Henry's head *to wake him up!*

Jaime enters through the back door with Rebecca; smells the good food. Immediately gives his grandmother a giant squeeze.

JAIME

Nobody cooks like you, Abuela.

All Cuban males know how to work the females, so they can continue to be spoiled-rotten for the rest of their lives. Amalia eats it up anyway.

HALLWAY - FRANK AND HENRY

HENRY

-- So you think Pop'll sell?

FRANK

It's a *good* deal, Henry.

HENRY

What I could do with that money...
Duque Night Clubs in Vegas,
Dubai... The Duque Brand on
everything --

Frank nods, fired up over the possibilities. As they pass Pancho's study they see Artie and Katie teaching Pancho how to download music to an iPod. Pancho looks a little bewildered.

FRANK

Pop, can we talk?

Seeing Henry, Katie brightens and jumps to her feet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

PANCHO

Is Alex here yet? Hello, Henry.
You bring Stephanie?

FRANK

No.

HENRY

(entering; kissing
Pancho's head)
Hi, Dad. Steph's here --

PANCHO (CONT'D)

Good. She's a nice girl. We'll
wait for Alex to talk.

Irritated, Frank and Henry return to the living room.
Katie accosts them in the hallway.

KATIE

I'm sixteen now, Uncle Henry. Can
I go to your club?

HENRY

Don't see your parents being down
with that, Katie-girl.

KATIE

What if you promised to watch me?

Henry looks dubious.

KATIE (CONT'D)

Please, Pleeeaaase, Uncle Henry...
I'll do anything --

Katie's blinking those big brown eyes persuasively. Sees
Henry capitulating, and lights up like a firecracker;
already racing down the hall:

KATIE (CONT'D)

MOM!

THE KITCHEN - AMALIA AND ISABEL

Making family-talk.

AMALIA

-- So where's Alex?

ISABEL

Had to go to Miami.

Isabel sees Amalia's brow wrinkle slightly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ISABEL (CONT'D)

Please, Mom. Alex likes tucking his children into bed. He's worse than you were. He's *working*.

AMALIA

(smiles)

He was always an industrious little thing --

KATIE (O.S.)

-- MOM! Uncle Henry says I can go to the club --

DINING ROOM - LATER

A free-for-all dinner. Stephanie, slightly drunk -- and overwhelmed -- gravitates toward Rebecca (the only other Anglo) like a magnet. Everyone's drinking wine, shouting in *Spanglish*. Someone from another culture walking in would think the Duques are having a fight. They are not.

KATIE (CONT'D)

But I'm *sixteen*. Uncle Henry said he'll look after me --

FRANK

We want to talk about the deal, Pop.

ISABEL

We'll ask your father.

PANCHO

We'll wait for Alex.

KATIE

What if he says *no*?

FRANK

Sugar hasn't been our core business for ten years. We're stepping up rum production, broadening distribution, expanding to beer --

ISABEL

You won't go. Henry's busy --

PANCHO

(dry)
Where'd the Samuels hear that, Frank?

KATIE

That's not fair --

FRANK

Don't look at me.

JAIME

(after a moment)
Beck and I'll take her, Mom. We were gonna go--

PANCHO

We'll wait for Alex.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

Isabel looks relieved about Jaime chaperoning Katie. Jaime's giving Katie a you-better-mind-your-p's-and-q's-big-brother stare. Katie sweetly kisses Jaime and Rebecca, then her mother, for good measure.

Then Frank's glaring at Isabel, *Where the fuck is Alex?* Suddenly Isabel gets up from the table. Frank whips out his phone. We notice Isabel's plate is untouched. Henry, the appeaser, pours everyone more wine.

EXT. MIAMI BEACH STREETS - NIGHT

The allure of the sandy playground, majestic palms, Art Deco hotels, topless sunbathers. A city transformed from mangroves and mosquito-ridden island to 'paradise.'

INSIDE LEXUS - PARKED IN AN ALLEY OFF 5TH STREET

Alex only sees the black hole of Calcutta. His cell's ringing; going to voice-mail. Alex is holding photographs of Quiñones in his hands. The gravity of the situation smothering him like a wool blanket.

QUICK FLASH: *The young Quiñones running into a cane field in the night. Dipping the wick of his fire-pot. The fire catching the cane and riding up. The noise building into rolling claps, like a volley of gunfire. Followed by the sound of real gunshots.*

BACK TO ALEX - he looks older. In the b.g. his cell rings again.

INT. DUQUE COMPOUND - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Isabel leans over the toilet, taking deep breaths; the nausea passing.

FAMILY ROOM - LATER

Everyone watching TV. Except Frank, who paces. Finally, they hear the back door open. Alex enters carrying a package. His eyes catch Isabel's across the room; an unspoken apology. She holds his look, concerned.

STUDY - LATER

Pancho, Alex, Frank and Henry holed up behind closed doors. Sleeves rolled up; tempers flaring. Alex looks tired. Frank is loaded for bear. Henry watches the impassioned back-and-forth; a contentious struggle for Pancho's respect, where family history plays as subtext.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

(to Pancho)

-- You were a *rummaker* in Cuba. Smuggled *yeast* so you could make rum *here*. That's what we all grew up hearing from you, Pop. The Duque name meant rum, not sugar.

ALEX

The Samuels are snakes, Pop. Why're you considering this?

FRANK

What the fuck'd they do that was so bad, Alex?

A black look crosses Alex's face. He bites his tongue.

FRANK (CONT'D)

All Americans tried to run us out of business when we got here. Joe Samuels saw an upstart Cuban moving in on his business, and tried to put a stop to it. Now that old bastard's dying.

(beat)

Fact is, the Samuels can't acquire more landmass because of environmental restrictions. So they want to buy our sugar. They're in the *sugar* business.

ALEX

Let me tell you why they want our sugar, Frank. I talked to Senator Barnz today. The government's ready to support the production of ethanol from sugar instead of corn. It's ten times more efficient.

(beat)

Sugar's the new oil. Yesterday we drank it in our soda pop. *Tomorrow*, we're going to drive our cars with it. We're talking billions of dollars. *That's* why the Samuels want our sugar.

Alex's dropped a bomb. Frank's taken aback. A moment.

FRANK

No way. The corn farmers would riot.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ALEX

Henry Ford predicted ethanol would be the fuel of the future. With oil at sixty-plus dollars a barrel, the President's embraced that view, too.

Alex spreads some SATELLITE PHOTOGRAPHS out on the desk, from the package he brought with him.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Those are ruined sugarcane fields in Cuba.

(beat)

It may not be next month; it may not be next year, but Cuba's going to open its door to American business again. Cuban sugar's going to become the world's fuel. When it does, we want to still be in the game.

For an intense beat Frank seethes. Venom quietly spilling out:

FRANK

You think you can become the Saudi prince of ethanol. You're really a piece of work, you know that, Alex? The way you play the people in this family. You're not even a Duque.

PANCHO

Ya no mas, Francisco.

Alex keeps his temper reigned; and his tongue. Pancho's look cautions Frank.

ALEX

Rum is sexy. Rum put 'the Duque' family on the map. But rum is only good for one thing. I say we stay in the sugar business.

Alex's a steel curtain. Frank goes for broke:

FRANK

Whose side you on, Pop? His? Or your family's?

PANCHO

You're both my family.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Frank starts to speak, then stops. Looks at Henry, who's caught in between. Suddenly, knowing he's trumped, Frank storms out. After a moment, Henry follows, feeling the pull of blood. Alex's left standing in the middle of the room, rubbing his temples.

ALEX

Pop -- if you really want to sell, in your gut -- for whatever reason. We'll sell. But not the Samuels. Never to the Samuels.

Pancho stares at Alex, genuinely perplexed.

PANCHO

This isn't like you. This is more than an old grudge.

Alex looks ashen. He looks in the direction of the kitchen, which he can see through the window, and where Amalia is moving around. He pours himself a drink.

PANCHO (CONT'D)

What's happened? You need a drink to tell me, Alejandro?

Alex swallows; nods. Pancho's face is stern. He looks into Alex's eyes. A moment.

PANCHO (CONT'D)

Now you've had your drink.

ALEX

They killed Lucia.

Pancho blinks. Alex's hands are shaking. He puts the photo of Quiñones on the desk. Pancho takes in his breath.

ALEX (CONT'D)

His name's Luis Quiñones. Remember him? He's back. He was at Artie's All-Star try-outs.

Just for a second we feel Pancho lose his physical strength. He clasps his hands in front of him on the top of the desk and looks into Alex's eyes.

ALEX (CONT'D)

The Samuels sponsored his visa. He worked for them. He works for them now.

(pause)

They killed Lucia, Pop.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Pancho's eyes slowly move to the photos of the three-year-old Lucia we now see throughout the study.

QUICK FLASHES - THE DUQUE HOUSE - CENTRAL FLORIDA (1973):

White-knuckled panic. Amalia, hysterical. Isabel (10) rocking Henry (5). Frank (13), on the sofa, sickly, breathing through a machine. And Alex (14), frightened, but fit; with quick, eager eyes.

BACK TO PANCHO - his devastation is unmitigated. He's looking at Alex. Something strong passing between them. Then Pancho rises unsteadily. Puts his hand on Alex's shoulder, comforting *him*. It's like the hand of God for Alex. An outwardly unemotional man, Alex suddenly feels himself collapsing.

INT. DUQUE COMPOUND - PANCHO'S STUDY - NIGHT

Pancho watches an OLD SUPER 8 OF LUCIA'S THIRD BIRTHDAY: The family's celebrating in the backyard of a small, white house in Central Florida; the stacks of a sugar mill interrupting the flat horizon in the distance.

The Duques (including 14-year-old Alex) are singing *Happy Birthday*. Lucia, a confident child, talks to the camera in Spanish. The family wearing their humble but Sunday best; a long way from how they live and dress today.

AMALIA (O.S.)

¿Viejo, que haces?

Amalia stands in the shadows quietly; her face slick with tears. Pancho holds out his hand, and she takes it. Sits with him. Grief-stricken, they watch their most desolate memory on film.

END OF ACT II

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEGIN ACT III

INT. VEGA HOUSE - ALEX'S OFFICE - PRE-DAWN

Alex sits at his desk. He hasn't slept. Photos of his family throughout the office. He holds on one of Artie on his third birthday.

QUICK FLASH: *Lucia on her third birthday (same as the Super 8 film), running into the 14-year-old Alex's arms.*

THEN JUMP CUT - *Lucia, still wearing her birthday clothes; lying face down on a dirty mattress.*

BACK TO ALEX - heart pounding in his ears. His computer chimes; an e-mail coming in. He turns to it. Slowly, the anguish leaves his eyes. A hint of a smile. He hits print.

ARTIE'S BEDROOM - PRE-DAWN

The walls painted with scenes from books: Puss in Boots, 1001 Arabian Nights. Sports trophies on every available surface. Alex tiptoes in holding the e-mail. He looks around for a place to hang it so it'll be noticed. Leans it against the bed lamp.

Gently, Alex places his on hand Artie's head. In sleep, the boy's reduced to a more essential self, small and full of transport Alex can feel through his body. Alex holds his hand over his son's head another moment.

ALEX

Congratulations, Artie.

INT. VEGA HOUSE - DAWN

Isabel's sleeping. Artie runs into the room waving the e-mail.

ARTIE

Mom! I made the All-Star Team!

Isabel wakes to an empty bed. She looks at the cold pillow beside her. Used to it. Then she smiles; kisses Artie, who starts stomping around the room in his excitement. Isabel begins her day.

EXT. INT. DUQUE RUM HEADQUARTERS - ALEX'S OFFICE - DAWN

Alex sits by the window in his office, early morning blue across his face. Diana walks past. Surprised to see him so early:

DIANA
Morning, Mr. Vega --

Alex looks up. As if he didn't see her, he returns to what he was doing. She continues on to her office.

DIANA'S OFFICE - LATER

Morning light filters through. Alex enters.

ALEX
Show me our new website --

CLOSE ON A COMPUTER SCREEN - DUQUE RUM'S NEW WEBSITE. A plethora of mind-blowing experiences -- the family history, assorted music videos; upcoming promotions.

Alex watches. Diana watches him, feeling his pull.

JAIME (O.S.)
Dad -- ?

ALEX
(looks up)
Jaime? Excuse me.

Alex borders on the rude with Diana. He walks out of her office without another word, leaving her perplexed and frustrated.

HALLWAY - JAIME AND ALEX

Jaime carries a Starbucks cup.

JAIME
You look like crap, Dad.

ALEX
(kissing him)
Thank you. To what do I owe the honor of a visit at this hour?

They walk for a beat:

JAIME
I don't know how to say it, so I'm just gonna say it.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAIME (CONT'D)

I don't want to go to MIT in the fall... You didn't go to college.

Alex blinks; hollow-eyed. Takes the Starbucks cup from his son.

ALEX

Let's go get *un café Cubano*.
(as they walk)

I didn't go to college, Jaime, because I went into the Army. When I came back, Pancho needed me in the business.

They reach the Duque Corporate Café, where a heavy-set CUBAN WOMAN in her forties makes 100 thimble-sized cups of sugar-laden-Cuban-coffee an hour; keeping the Duque Rum offices *wired*.

In the b.g., Alex notices the Balsero who washes cars sweeping floors; pushing a janitor's cart. Again, he holds on the man's tattoos.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Dame dos coladas, Miriam, por favor.

JAIME

Did grandpa want you to enlist?

ALEX

I did it on my own, Jaime. *A man should pay with his body for his beliefs*, so Teddy Roosevelt once said.

The Woman hands Alex and Jaime a *colada* each (about six espressos, with six sugars). Alex sips, feeling himself waking up. He watches the Balsero slipping a couple of cans of Bustelo coffee into the janitor's cart.

JAIME

(treading lightly)
Sometimes I hear things... Like, how you'd do anything to get on grandpa's good side -- like *enlist... Marry Mom* --

They both know they're talking about Frank.

ALEX

-- 'Somebody' thinks I married your mother to get on Pancho's good side? 'Somebody''s blind.
(pausing)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ALEX (CONT'D)

I had a crush on your mother since she was twelve. I did everything in my power, including moving out, taking different jobs, and almost marrying a deranged woman, so *no one* would think I wanted to marry into the business. Your mother showed up and stopped the wedding.

Jaime is wide-eyed.

ALEX (CONT'D)

(grins)

Your mother was something. Still is.

Alex's eyes tender up; emotional eddies that go to the bone, buried deep. Then, realizing:

ALEX (CONT'D)

You trying to tell me something about Rebecca, Jaime?

JAIME

(straight)

I love her, Dad.

ALEX

Then you'll still love her when you get back. Don't think I didn't hear the part about you not going to MIT. You'll go to MIT. When you graduate, you'll work your way up like everybody else. Then you can marry Rebecca.

ON JAIME - both awed and impelled by his father.

ALEX (CONT'D)

And watch out for your sister at that club tonight.

EXT. MIAMI LAW OFFICES - DAY

Wolf, Milian & Greenberg. Jason Greenberg's office is piled with inventions, from the bizarre to the ingenious. Pancho sits across from a life-size robot that is identical to Jason, with silica-gel skin that looks real.

JASON

My wife's idea. Maybe I can bill twice as many hours...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jason smiles; waits. Pancho looks old; bent, but not broken. Finally:

PANCHO

You know why I'm here, Jason. I
want to draw up new papers --

OFF JASON, as the implication of Pancho's words crosses his features --

INT. VEGA HOUSE - EVENING

Alex enters. Artie sits at the piano with a MUSIC TEACHER, brightly playing *Cantina Band*, from Star Wars. Alex waves, walks past, not wanting to disturb them.

KATIE'S BEDROOM

Canopied bed, stuffed dolls, state-of-the-art technology. Shakira blasting on a CD. YouTube is up. Solipsism, on steroids. The middle child, Katie is caught between Cuban-American princess and the lure of the mass culture.

She's dressing to go to Henry's nightclub. Putting on makeup, vamping for a webcam. She hears footsteps outside; quickly shuts down. A knock at the door, simultaneous with Alex and Isabel entering.

KATIE

(good-natured)

Here it comes --

Alex points his finger in Katie's nose; sweetly:

ALEX

We're letting you go because we
trust you. Don't break that
trust, Katie. Hard thing to get
back.

KATIE

I know, Daddy.

ISABEL

Let me see --

Katie pirouettes for her mother. Her clothes may be tight; but at least they cover all the key regions.

JAIME (O.S.)

Let's go, Katie!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KATIE

Bye, Mom, Dad!

Katie's already out the door. Alex and Isabel look at each other, then at the heavens, as all parents do *that* first time. ABAYA'S DALE DON DALE RISES --

EXT. INT. DUQUE NIGHT CLUB - MIAMI - EVENING

[The Duque club taps into the untapped mother lode: second and third generation bilingual Latinos (18-34) who love urban music, but yearn for their own sound: a savvy mulch of Reggaeton, Spanish hip-hop and goosed-up mainstream R&B. Plus all things Cuban.]

A *Hurban* Music Mix over the sound system. Jaime and Rebecca dance a sexy bump-and-grind. No need for intoxicants; making their own pheromones. Trying hard to be inclusive of Katie, but she is *so* the third wheel.

Katie spots someone at the bar. Gestures to Jaime that she's going to take a break. Jaime's eyes follow Katie to where Henry picks up the chaperoning baton.

TIME CUT - THE BAR - HENRY

pouring Katie a soft-drink. Katie raises her glass to Jaime, who's busy dancing. Beat. Then Katie sluices a look at the guy she spotted at the bar -- WINSTON FERRARA (20) -- *sallow, unwashed, edgy*, with a *Maker's Mark* and a cigarette. Winston stubs out the cigarette and heads toward the back of the club. Katie mouths to Henry that she's going to the bathroom. Disappears.

TIME CUT - THE CLUB

The joint is jumping. A sonic sound with a hard digital pounding. Jaime and Rebecca are dancing. Jaime's looking around; realizing Katie's nowhere in sight. He heads for the bar. To question Henry, who shrugs and points toward the bathroom. Annoyed, Jaime starts searching for Katie.

ALLEY - BEHIND THE CLUB

Winston's holding two round white tablets in a baggie. Katie has some money out, a little intimidated by him.

WINSTON

-- Pharmaceutical grade, Katie.
Wouldn't let anything hurt you --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KATIE

You sure?

Winston nods an oily smile.

WINSTON

Uncle's a pharmacist --

He puts the baggie in Katie's hand. Suddenly:

JAIME (O.S.)

What're you doing out here?

Katie drops the baggie. Winston leans back, like nothing's happened; lights up; ogles Katie. Jaime doesn't see the baggie; checking Winston out.

JAIME (CONT'D)

Who's this guy?

KATIE

(*freaking out*)

Jaime, this is Winston Ferrara.
Winston's Carlos' friend.

JAIME

(*big fucking deal*)

Had I but known. Let's go --

KATIE

-- Winston's coming to the Fourth.

JAIME

I'll warn Dad.

Jaime grabs Katie's hand. Katie's mortified.

KATIE

You're not my *father*.

Jaime starts to retort. Catches himself. Squints.

JAIME

You're right. Dad would never let you out of the house again. He'd know this guy's looking for an angle. Can't take advantage of you 'less you let him, Katie. We're going home.

KATIE

Thanks for nothing, Jaime.

As they leave, Winston picks up the baggie, nonchalant.

EXT. EL MATADERO - OKEECHOBEE RD. - HIALEAH - DAY

Pancho, Alex, Frank, Jaime and Artie have travelled to a slaughterhouse to choose a live pig for the Fourth of July party. It's a basic and primitive ritual, aided by a tumbler of rum on one hand and a *robusto* on the other. There's tension between Alex and Frank; but it's muted. This is a family tradition.

FRANK

-- You want to get your pig the day you season it...

ARTIE

These are big suckers, Uncle Frank.

FRANK

A lot of people coming.

JAIME

Kind of a disgusting family tradition, if you ask me.

FRANK

Big Macs don't come wrapped in cellophane either, Jaime.

Pancho selects a large pig and THE BUTCHER takes it inside the slaughterhouse. Then the men pour shots of rum all around. Light their *robustos*, to wait for the pig to be killed and cleaned. Artie runs off to explore the grounds. After a moment Pancho approaches Frank:

PANCHO

Let's go for a walk.

In the b.g. other cars pull up; working-class families choosing *lechón* (whole-pig roast) for their Fourth of July celebration. Cuban music blares from their radios, as everyone sits together on lawn-chairs, to share the Duque rum and stories about the old country.

ON FRANK AND PANCHO

They've arrived at a clearing. Pancho faces Frank; quietly:

PANCHO (CONT'D)

I'm not going to sell the sugarcane to the Samuels, Frank.

Frank blanches.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PANCHO (CONT'D)

Bad things might come of that decision. I don't want you to handle them alone.

(pausing)

I'm going to make Alex the president and CEO of the company.

Frank feels a chill go down his back.

FRANK

Pop... you can't --

PANCHO

I love you. But for reasons which you don't know... You're not the right man for the job.

FRANK

What're you talking about? I'm up to the job. Don't do this...

PANCHO

When you were a boy you almost died. But you challenged yourself and became a powerful man. Now you've become distracted by the boats, the women, the money.

Frank is wounded to the bone.

FRANK

I'm not that sickly kid anymore, Pop.

PANCHO

It's what's best for the family --

FRANK

-- Don't do this. This is not okay with me.

PANCHO

I'm not asking your permission.

FRANK

I have plans for the company.

PANCHO

I'm sorry, Frank. I'm giving control of the company to Alex.

A long moment. Then Frank steps back, spits on the ground, turns, and walks away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANGLE ON ALEX

His eyes on the scene that just played out with
puzzlement and concern. In the b.g., the squeal of the
slaughtered pig fills the air.

END ACT III

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BEGIN ACT IVEXT. DUQUE ESTATE - A MONTAGE - DAY

The pig, now lying on a tray, is transferred by the Duques to an outdoor table. They puff smoke from their cigars over it, for luck. Pancho starts stabbing the pig with a knife and stuffing it with the garlic. Then the marinade comes out (garlic, sour oranges, oregano), and the pig is bathed in it. It's then transferred into a *Caja China*, a zinc-lined box with a metal pan over it for charcoal. As this plays out, the PARTY RENTALS and CATERERS set up. Frank is not present.

EXT. INT. MIAMI INK - SOUTH BEACH - EVENING

The energized pulse along Ocean Drive has started to palpitate. Tourists and locals trolling the grid-locked thoroughfare. Urban wildlife at their fingertips.

INSIDE TATTOO PARLOR

An altogether different scene. Emotional and fierce. Jaime and Rebecca are getting a tattoo of *an angel*. Jaime's is on his chest; Rebecca's, over her breast. Something passing between them that's charged and poignant.

JAIME

(softly)

I'm inked, Becky. Have you over my heart forever... My good-luck charm.

Suddenly Rebecca's eyes well-up. A tear falls. Jaime wipes it.

REBECCA

I don't want you go to...

JAIME

I'll be back. I promise.

He crosses the angel over his heart. Rebecca's looking at the angel. A reminder of a higher purpose. Things go from light to heavy fast. Jaime lets them for a moment, then reigns them in:

JAIME (CONT'D)

One more thing, Beck...?

(deadpan)

Can I take your underwear with me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She laughs; hits him. He holds her.

INT. EXT. DUQUE DISTILLERY - LOADING DOCK - NIGHT

It's dark. Employees leaving, turning off lights. Alex sits in his car watching them, holding an unlit cigar; his car lighters still missing. The *Balsero* who works odd jobs in the distillery, is last to leave. He carries a paper bag to his rust-bucket of a car and opens the trunk; starts loading it.

Alex gets out of the car and approaches the *Balsero*. The man is very dark, wiry, with *santería* beads around his neck.

ALEX

¿Tienes mi encendedora por ahí?

The *Balsero* jumps. Alex is casually looking inside the trunk, which is filled with stolen goods: coffee, sugar, office supplies. The man launches into heavily-gesticulated *It wasn't me* protests in Spanish. But Alex is stony-faced. He appraises the *Balsero*. In Spanish:

ALEX (CONT'D)

What's your name?

SANTO

Santo.

ALEX

Santo what?

SANTO

Just Santo.

ALEX

You come on a raft?

(Santo nods)

How long?

SANTO

Eight months.

ALEX

Family still in Cuba?

SANTO

In Matanzas. But I'm going to bring them soon.

ALEX

What were you in prison for?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Beat. The man smiles.

SANTO

Jay-walking.

ALEX

(re: tattoos)

Didn't earn those by jay-walking.
You ran with *las madres* in Cuba.
Those are scary guys.

SANTO

You do what you have to for your
family.

Balls-out. Nothing Alex can do to him that hasn't
already been done. In Alex's eyes there's kinship.

ALEX

(not unkindly)

You don't have to pilfer here,
Santo. Different country.

Alex waits for a reaction. Santo's posture becomes
slightly less defensive.

ALEX (CONT'D)

I'll make you a deal. Stop
stealing from me; I'll give you a
job. Make five times what you
make now.

Alex sees the white of Santo's eyes. Then, suspicious:

SANTO

What's the job?

ALEX

(a long beat)

I'll let you know when it's time.

(another beat)

You have friends? *Otros balseros*
who've done what they had to for
their families? Who want a job?

Santo squints at Alex. Slowly, he nods.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Come to my house tomorrow. Bring
your friends. We're having a
party. To celebrate America.

Then Alex starts walking back to his car.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SANTO

Señor Vega -- ?

Beat. As Alex turn, Santo tosses him his car lighters.

EXT. INT. DUQUE ESTATE - DAY

A confusion of cars arriving and parking; and a line of GUESTS filing in -- from businessmen to aging farm managers; uncles, cousins without two nickels to rub together; ultra-chic Palm Beach social x-rays -- and *balseros*, including the ill-at-ease Santo, who drives up in his rust-bucket with a threatening-looking friend (MIGUEL), and gets stared down by the Valets.

INSIDE ESTATE - A BEDROOM - ISABEL

is examining her sideways profile in the mirror. Alex enters mid-sentence; feeling his pockets for his phone.

ALEX

Babe, can you look after Senator
Barnz wife's. I hear --

ISABEL

-- Alex, I'm pregnant...

Alex stops. His eyes catch Isabel's in the mirror. In that moment, we know Alex loves his wife, and the emotions he keeps so tightly-reined surface for her as for no other.

Slowly, Alex locks the door. He walks up behind Isabel and places his hands on her bare shoulders. His lips brush her neck. Goosebumps. She closes her eyes. His arms come around her. Suddenly the atmosphere is charged. A dancing heat between them that electrifies the air.

OUTSIDE - THE ESTATE

The party to end all parties. Fourth of July *estilo Cubano*. A crack Cuban orchestra plays on a bandstand. Speedboats roaring through the water, pulling waterskiers in the b.g. Tables covered with food and drink. TWO HUNDRED GUESTS filling the lawns on the intracoastal for an exhilarating celebration of the birth of the nation; and a marketing opportunity, to boot. Placards for the family's new *añejo rum*, Don Pancho, everywhere in sight.

Pancho's dancing a *son* with Amalia. He mops his sweating forehead with a handkerchief. Artie hustles to get a glass of an icy rum drink, and brings it to him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AMALIA

¿Dónde está tu hermano?

ARTIE

Jaime said he was gonna be late,
grandma.

AMALIA

Entonces, baila con migo, mi amor.

Amalia insists. Artie does the eye roll, but dances with his grandmother.

[All Cubans dance. Their station in life is of no consequence. When the music starts, the millionaires mix it up with the working class.]

Stephanie and Henry are also dancing. She's pressing her body, through her immaterial dress, against him; her hand in his shirt, provocatively rubbing his chest. Discreetly Henry moves Stephanie's hand out of his shirt.

INSIDE ESTATE - BEDROOM

Dishabille, having just made love, Isabel smiles at Alex. Alex's sitting on the edge of the bed, holding her hand.

ALEX

I'm sorry it's been so crazy...
You feeling alright?

ISABEL

(nods)
Just a little nauseated --

Alex's phone rings. He lets it; finally answers the call. Isabel watches him slowly become preoccupied. Feeling a little stood-up, she suddenly takes the phone from him.

OUTSIDE ESTATE - PANCHO AND AMALIA

meander through the crowd, kissing and embracing guests; pinching children's cheeks, making everyone welcome.

Vince Grasso, the cop, arrives; stag. He spots a frail old priest in a Roman cassock talking to Amalia. Shouts out in a husky voice:

GRASSO

Sonuvabitch! Father Joe!

FATHER JOE shakes his head at the sight of his unruly ex-pupil. Amalia smiles.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

INSIDE ESTATE - BATHROOM

Alex's standing over the toilet where Isabel has just dropped his cell phone. Looking at it in the bottom of the bowl.

ALEX

What the hell? I've worked as a plumber --

He starts to roll up his sleeves. But Isabel grabs him by the ear. Turns him to her. He's trying to look concerned, but his eyes smile.

OUTSIDE ESTATE - ISABEL AND ALEX

Dancing, his hand on the small of her back. Lost in each other. The sense of yearning. The sense of a fiery and complex history. Suddenly he kisses, hard.

ANGLE - ROBERT LAWRENCE

Taking in the sights with Isaak, the Jamaican teacher from Isabel's school. Watching the electrifying kiss.

TIME CUT - OUTSIDE

The music is incandescent. Frank has a streak of show-off in him, dancing with SEVERAL FEMALE GUESTS, who give him delicious smiles. He returns them.

Alex, moving through the crowd, occasionally stopped and greeted by friends. He settles by a table. Sees:

DIANA on the edge of the party. Exhilarated by the music, the vitality, looking like kid in a gift shop.

A slender, aristocratic WOMAN in her late forties is waving to Isabel. Alex catches Isabel's eye: This is MRS. SENATOR BARNZ. Isabel approaches her.

ISABEL

Mrs. Barnz? I'm so happy you could make it. I'm Isabel Vega... We met at the Cure Autism Now Benefit --

ANGLE - CARLOS DUQUE (18)

Strutting into the party with Winston Ferrara, Katie's friend from the club. Carlos is Frank's son; intense, sharp, dangerous. He's high-fiving everyone, including his father, who slips him a wad of cash.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

KATIE (O.S.)

(squeal)

Carlos!

Carlos and Winston are greeted by Katie and her YOUNG FEMALE FRIENDS, who squeal and embrace them. Then someone throws someone in the pool, and life is good.

Only Artie, walking around by himself, with his ball and glove, looks a little lonely.

TIME CUT - DIANA

Working the GUESTS from the Duque Rum table, where every Duque product is featured. Her eyes cut repeatedly to Alex as he works the party. If Alex is aware that Diana is watching him, it doesn't show. Charming:

DIANA

(to FIRST GUEST)

-- Have you tried our new coconut rum on crushed ice...? There's no looking back --

(to SECOND GUEST)

Taste that sherry finish...?

(to THIRD GUEST)

If you're going to mix it with juice, use the 'see-through.' There's no place for fruit in an *añejo*. Where's the respect?

A sexy smile. The Guest laughs; leaves. Like a magnet, Diana's eyes go to Alex. Frank suddenly startles her.

FRANK (O.S.)

Take the night off, Diana. I give you permission.

He offers his hand and a drink. She briefly hesitates, then takes both.

FRANK AND DIANA

dancing close. He's had a lot to drink, but is minding his manners. Frank likes Diana and doesn't bother to conceal it. But he's looking at the long view with her. Her eyes are sly; onto him.

ANGLE - THE ENTRANCE

Waving an arm jangling with gold jewelry, Ellis Samuels arrives, followed by a bronzed, dimpled DATE. Lamarr and Jack follow, accompanied by THEIR WIVES, both of the Palm Beach Society of yore.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Ellis sees Frank dancing with Diana. Instantly reads his interest in her. Takes a beat on that; grabs a drink.

Father Joe's found Alex and Grasso and brought them together; chiding them like the naughty school boys they once were. They look desperate to make a getaway.

Isabel sees Robert Lawrence in the distance and catches his eye briefly; smiles.

Then the dance ends, and Diana excuses herself from Frank. Frank takes the opportunity to approach Ellis, throwing his arms around her in the Cuban style. Ellis is nothing if not game. She returns the embrace.

ELLIS

We celebratin' yet, honey?

As the music rises, Frank avoids answering; drags Ellis to the dance floor.

TIME CUT - THE BANDSTAND - ON SENATOR TALBOTT BARNZ

As Alex raises his hand for silence:

ALEX

-- Ladies and gentlemen, may I
present our most distinguished
guest, Senator Talbott Barnz --

A big hand as the smiling senator -- in his fifties, southern drawl, from an old Florida family dating back to when the state was covered in muck and overrun by gators -
- takes the microphone from Alex, and a check:

BARNZ

-- My thanks, and the thanks of
the people of the great State of
Florida for this impressive
contribution --

(reading check)

-- Made out to the Everglades
Forever Foundation. Thank you
Señor and Señora Duque, and the
entire Duque family.

Applause. The Senator's presence seems to be a statement of social status and political clout.

ANGLE - SENATOR BARNZ AND THE DUQUE-VEGAS

Shaking hands, as a Photographer snaps their picture, showing the check; everyone together -- except Frank. Alex signals a waiter to bring the Senator a drink.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

ALEX

Senator, could I have a moment of your time next week?

BARNZ

Absolutely. And bring another check.

Barnz winks; moves on. Pancho's looking around, distracted. A moment.

PANCHO

Would you get the family together, Alex, please? I have something to tell them --

ANGLE - THE ESTATE

Alex gathers up the Duque Clan, except Frank who's talking to Ellis, and gestures *he'll be along*. The rest of the Duques eye Alex curiously. Alex shrugs.

Frank leans close to Ellis and whispers something in her ear. Ellis lets loose a ribald laugh. Maybe fooled by Frank's nonchalance; maybe not.

In the b.g., Artie's still walking around with his ball and glove.

And Diana seems at loose ends; drink in hand.

Santo and Miguel, the *balseros*, eat everything in sight.

In a secluded corner of the estate, Winston holds a round white tablet in his palm. Katie takes it.

INSIDE ESTATE - PANCHO'S STUDY

The shades are closed. Alex stands impatiently by the window waiting for Frank. Everyone's looking at Pancho curiously.

HENRY

This about the Samuels' offer...?

Finally, Frank enters. He closes the door, but remains standing, leaning a little; face blank.

PANCHO

I'm going to make this quick.
Frank already knows. I've talked to Jason. He's drawing up papers.
(pausing)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

PANCHO (CONT'D)

As of tomorrow, our family business will be divided three ways. Thirty percent will go to each of my three natural children: Frank, Isabel and Henry. The remaining 10% will go to Alex.

(pausing; with weight)

But Alex will run the company. He'll have 40% of the shares, along with Isabel -- and control of Duque Enterprises.

As if the oxygen had been sucked out of the room. Everyone's looking at Frank. His eyes are opaque, but his humiliation is extreme. Henry looks confused. As does Isabel. Alex is stunned. Didn't see this coming.

PANCHO (CONT'D)

There won't be any sale of our land to the Samuels. Not now. Not ever.

(beat)

I love all of you. I'm sorry if this hurts you, Frank. I believe my decision is what is best for our family and our company.

Suddenly Frank storms out, his face flushed. Alex looks around the faces in the room. Runs after Frank.

OUTSIDE - ALEX AND FRANK

ALEX

Frank!

Frank stops, turns; menacingly thrusts his reddened face at Alex.

FRANK

Don't. Don't even try. You've been waiting for this moment your whole miserable fucking life.

Frank can barely speak. Pancho appears in the b.g.

PANCHO

(plaintive)

Hijo -- tenemos que hablar...

FRANK

We're done here, Pop.

Frank disappears into the crowd. He finds his son, Carlos, throws his arm around him; mutters something.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

For a beat, Carlos looks over his shoulder at Alex.
Frank steers him along.

ALEX
(confused; emotional)
Pop -- why? Frank... He'll never
see past this --

PANCHO
(beat; reflective)
We're a family. Frank'll put that
first.

Alex is not so sure. Pancho is looking at Alex; knowing
how hard this will be:

PANCHO (CONT'D)
Let's go find the Samuels.

Suddenly Alex is rooted to the spot.

ALEX
Pop... if I get in a room with
those people... I don't know what
I'll do to them.

PANCHO
(with subtext)
This is not the time, Alejandro.
Do you trust my judgement?

ALEX
You know I do. I love you.

PANCHO
Then let's go, son.

Alex pauses, thinks; finally nods in acquiescence.

ANGLE - THE FOOD - LA CAJA CHINA

Someone's tapping the skin of the *lechón* with a fork.
It's as tight as a drum. They cut the first piece.
Applause. Then the food is served. Everyone sampling
the meat. Biting into pieces of superbly crunchy pork.

As Pancho and Alex walk past, Carlos, Winston, Katie and
their friends roar out of the private harbor to get up on
the water skis. Artie watches.

OUTSIDE - NEAR BOATHOUSE

Lamaar, Jack and Ellis face Pancho and Alex in a secluded
corner of the estate. Everyone already feels this isn't
going to go well.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (8)

PANCHO (CONT'D)

-- There will be no deal, Lamaar.
Our family's decided not to sell.

Lamaar's eyes cut to Jack.

PANCHO (CONT'D)

I've decided to retire. After
forty-two years of working seven
days a week, I'm going take time
for fishing, traveling with my
wife. Alex'll be the new head of
the company.

A long silence, in which each person present feels the
shock of this news. Then:

LAMAAR

Is there anything we can do to
change your mind, Mr. Duque?

Pancho and Alex present a stony front. Suddenly,
combative:

JACK

Where's Frank?

Frank's absence has sent a signal to the Samuels.

PANCHO

He was detained.

Lamaar keeps his voice low, smiles:

LAMAAR

Congratulations, Mr. Vega. I know
you'll represent the interests of
the Duque family, as if they were
your own.

Alex lets the insult slide. Then the Samuels leave.
After their footsteps have receded, Pancho takes out a
handkerchief and mops his brow. Alex touches his arm;
heart beating the cadence of revenge.

TIME CUT - OUTSIDE ESTATE - A PARTY TENT

The light has faltered. Candles and torches are lit
throughout the estate. The orchestra is playing quiet,
unobstrusive dinner music. The Guests eating from the
impressive buffet under an air-conditioned party tent.

Pancho sits at the table of honor with the whole family --
except Frank.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (9)

The conversation becomes almost *exclusively Spanish*, with Stephanie and Diana looking side to side like in a tennis match.

Diana watches the familiar intimacy between Alex and Isabel dejectedly. Isabel is everything Diana feels she isn't: sensual, sultry, confident. Alex seems anxious. Isabel puts her hand gently on his thigh. Whispers:

ISABEL

I'm proud of you.

ALEX

I gotta talk to Frank, Isabel.

ISABEL

-- Give Frank time, Alex. He won't believe you now.

As the sad truth of that statement lands on Alex, Henry raises his glass.

HENRY

Amor, salud y dinero, y el tiempo para disfrutarlos. Felicidades, Alejandro. Un fuerte abrazo y mucha suerte.

If there's bitterness in the toast, it doesn't come through. Alex raises his own glass appreciatively.

ALEX

Te lo agradezco, Enrique.

HENRY

Everyone -- I got a surprise...

TIME CUT - THE BANDSTAND - SHAKIRA

A forceful singer and pop sensation, and the biggest cross-over artist since Gloria Estefan broke down the doors. With a quirky poetic sense and hip-shaking, belly-dancing moves, Shakira explodes on the stage.

Henry, like all the Duque children, has a little bit of show-off in him and needs his father to notice, and appreciate, how good he is at what he does.

HENRY (CONT'D)

She's here as a favor to me, Dad.

Pancho is impressed. The audience basks in Shakira's show-stopping performance. Except some of the old Cuban folk, who're scratching their heads.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (10)

THE PRIVATE HARBOR - KATIE, CARLOS AND THEIR FRIENDS

Pulling into the dock; anxious to hear Shakira.

Frank watches them from a distance with a drink and a cigar. Ellis approaches. She doesn't say anything at first. Clinks glasses with him. Then:

ELLIS

Call me, *sugah*. Let's merge our companies the old-fashioned way... Save a shit-load of trouble down the pike --

It's a proposal, business and otherwise. Frank blinks. But before he can respond, Ellis is gone.

ANGLE - ISABEL AND ROBERT

Sensual and elegant, Isabel draws Robert like a bee to the hive. They're having a spirited conversation; Shakira performing in the b.g.

ROBERT

-- The workers make six dollars an hour and are expected to cut a ton of cane per hour. If they can't, they suffer a deduction in their wages.

ISABEL

And as a Cuban, I know nothing about hardship.

ROBERT

I'm just saying being Cuban opened a hell of a lot of doors for you.

ISABEL

Don't be fooled, Robert. You can take the girl out of the refugee camp, but you can't take the camp out of the girl.

An insight into Isabel. Robert takes a beat on it.

ISABEL (CONT'D)

Want to pick a fight with me?

ROBERT

... No --

ISABEL

Good.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (11)

Her gaze makes his knees weak. He looks away.

ALEX

gives orders to WORKMEN, who begin setting up fireworks.
Diana approaches, slightly tipsy. Filters off:

DIANA

Mr. Vega... Alex... You have a
moment for me? Because...If I may
say so --

(plunges)

-- I've been busting my butt for
Duque Rum for five months...
Twenty-four-seven... Not once have
you told me I was doing a good
job. It's common courtesy to
compliment someone when their work
exceeds... or even *meets*...
expectations. You hired me. If
you don't think my performance's
up to snuff, you should --

ALEX

(overlapping)

-- Fire you?

Diana blinks. Not sure if she's stepped in it. But Alex
is looking at her for the first time; *really* looking,
into her eyes; and looking hard. Diana feels her cheeks
catch fire.

ALEX (CONT'D)

(quietly)

If I didn't think your work was up
to snuff, you'd've heard from me.

A WAITER comes by and offers Diana another drink. Diana
puts her half drunk glass on the tray, feeling she's
already made a big enough fool of herself. She starts
walking away, mumbling:

DIANA

... Sorry --

Alex watches her. Then, calling out:

ALEX

Diana --

(as she stops)

It's outstanding.

She continues without turning. The compliment a dart to
the heart.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (12)

ANGLE - KATIE AND HER FRIENDS - THE DANCE FLOOR

An euphoric, out of body experience; Katie and her friends 'freaking' with each other to Shakira. Katie's heart racing with the thrill of it.

EXT. INT. SAMUELS ESTATE - EVENING

A large and very beautiful house overlooking the Atlantic. The great room is dominated by an enormous bar, behind which stands Jack.

A man sits on a large sofa with his back to us. Standing to one side is a somewhat uneasy Lamaar.

LAMAAR

-- Vega put a six-figure check in Senator Barnz pocket... For the 'Everglades Forever Fund.'

JOE SAMUELS is seventy; scruffy, this morning's shave not perfect -- but the rumors of his imminent demise have been greatly exaggerated. His eyes telling a story of loathing and ruthlessness. Ellis cracks open the door and enters.

JOE SAMUELS

We've let our neighbors dictate our sugar fortunes long enough, Lamaar. Time is right, *again*, for payback.

JACK

Dad, you're not gonna let the Cubans put Banrz in their pocket and cut into our ethanol take?

JOE SAMUELS

One thing you should know by now, Jack: if you think like those around you think, anything's possible. There're ways to eliminate the Duques. And reap our ethanol rewards.

ON ELLIS - as she quietly sighs.

EXT. DUQUE ESTATE - THE PARTY - EVENING

The lawns of the estate are lit by moonlight. It's the TEENAGERS turn to dance. Katie, Carlos and their friends lead the rowdy Reggaeton pack.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Katie's high, spreading her wings. Stephanie, *intoxicated*, is hitting on Grasso. He's very uncomfortable with it. Henry watches disinterestedly. Then the orchestra strikes a big, show-biz chord and the Leader raises his hands for silence.

ORCHESTRA LEADER

Ladies and gentlemen, are you ready for fireworks...?

A cheer goes up through the crowd. Everyone starts looking for chairs, rounding up the kids.

ALEX

Where's Artie?

No one's seen Artie for a while.

ALEX (CONT'D)

(calling out)

Artie -- !

No response. Isabel's looking at Alex; a little worried. Others start looking for Artie; Pancho, Henry, Grasso. Nothing. Suddenly Alex has a sick feeling.

ALEX (CONT'D)

ARTIE!

He can't find his son.

Alex feels a chill. Where the hell's Artie? He won't let himself think it. He's looking around frantically, racing the grounds. The family joins in. They can't find Artie. Panic. Thoughts of the unspeakable.

CLOSE ON ALEX - as he stares at the intracoastal, but thinks even worse; dread in his gut --

END ACT IV

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BEGIN ACT V

EXT. INT. DUQUE ESTATE - THE BOATHOUSE - EVENING

Alex finds Luis Quiñones, standing in the shadows, grotesque and quiet. Artie is with him. Quiñones' holding a bat. With all his strength and passion, Alex literally picks up Quiñones and drives him into the wall.

ALEX

The fuck're you doing in my house?

ARTIE

Daddy, No! No, Dad! Stop! Mr. Quiñones' giving me a bat --

A long moment for the words to sink into Alex's brain.

ARTIE (CONT'D)

Look, it's signed by El Duque. Get it? Duque. Isn't that great, Dad? And Mr. Q. says he knows everybody on the Marlins... I can go with him any time I like --

Alex's eyes meet Quiñones. Like an executioner, he signals for the SECURITY GUARDS, who've appeared behind him, to remove Quiñones from the premises and hold him.

But Quiñones' not easily intimidated. As the Guards grab hold of him to whisk him out, he passes Alex; whispers:

QUIÑONES

Remember, you have children, too.

Grasso recognizes Quiñones as he's escorted out. His eyes cut to Alex. To the hurricane tearing a swath behind Alex's eyes.

GRASSO

He's trespassing. I can arrest him --

ALEX

(already leaving)
Please stay out of this, Vince.

OUTSIDE - THE PARTY

Artie's showing everyone the El Duque-signed bat. Alex finds Santo and Miguel, the *Balseros*, waiting for the fireworks among the guests. Grabs them. Points to where the Security Guards are firmly escorting Quiñones off the premises.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Alex says something to the *Balseros* we don't hear. Gives them his card. Then Alex slips quietly out of the compound. After a moment, the *Balseros* follow Quiñones.

EXT. INT. ALEX'S LEXUS - EVENING

Travelling absurdly fast on the ribbon of highway that cuts through the cane fields. Only the hum of the air-conditioning inside the car. Alex, a lifetime of history crossing his face.

FINALLY WE PLAY THE NON-LINEAR FLASHBACK IMAGES WE'VE BEEN SEEING AS A CONTINUOUS WHOLE:

EXT. SUGAR MILL - CENTRAL FLORIDA - DAY - [1973]

Pancho (30s), Alex (14) hand-feeding stalks of cane into large grinders. There are no walls around the mill; a crude, cinder-block structure with a tin roof. It could be in an eighteenth-century sugar plantation instead of 1973 Florida. The air so hot it has weight.

Suddenly, Isabel (10) runs into the mill screaming:

ISABEL

PAPI se llevarón a Lucia -- !

INT. THE DUQUE FARMHOUSE - CENTRAL FLORIDA - [1973]

Left-over decorations from a child's birthday party still festoon the house.

INSIDE THE HOUSE

White-knuckled panic. Amalia is hysterical. Henry (5), crying himself hoarse. Frank (13), lying on the sofa, breathing through an asthma machine. Fear in his eyes.

Pancho's reading a crudely scrawled note that was left in Lucia's crib. He reacts; sick at heart. In Spanish, with subtitles:

PANCHO

But why us...? We don't have money. We can't pay a ransom --

Amalia is looking at Pancho. There's one way to get the money. Pancho knows it. Amalia, softly:

AMALIA

The sugarcane. You must sell it.

Pancho knows this is true; but the land is his life. Finally, he nods.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PANCHO

We'll go to Joe Samuels. He wants our land.

ANGLE - PANCHO

as he digs under the floorboards and finds a gun. He checks to see if it's loaded; tucks it in his belt. Puts on a jacket. Then he turns to his children. Frank is struggling to get up off the sofa.

FRANK

I can go, Papi... Take me...

All Pancho can see is a sickly young boy with a bad heart. Gently he helps Frank back onto the sofa.

PANCHO

No, Francisco. You must take care of yourself --

He turns to Alex. Quickly finds him two sweatshirts to put on. Then a jacket. Alex looks like he's got some heft on him now. His eyes are wide, frightened, as Pancho pulls him out of the house by the hand.

PANCHO (CONT'D)

(comforting)

No tengas miedo, Alejandro.

Frank watches them go, a desolate look in his eyes.

EXT. SAMUELS MILL - DAY - [1973]

JOE SAMUELS (40) wears his trousers with suspenders, white shirt sloppily tucked in over his belly. He sits in his mill, hat protecting him from the white-hot sun. The Samuels Mill is leagues ahead of the Duques', but still part of the early Florida, bare-knuckles culture.

Pancho stands before Samuels, literally with his hat in his hands. There's a document on a rickety table before them. Alex watches the two men, melting in the heat.

JOE SAMUELS

-- Just sign on the dotted line, Pancho. It's a good deal for ya.

Pancho hesitates only a moment. Then he signs away his land, his crops and all the fruits of his hard work. Samuels gives him a bag of money. Concerned:

JOE SAMUELS (CONT'D)

You call the police?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PANCHO

(no)

They said they'd hurt her if we did.

Samuels is sympathetic.

JOE SAMUELS

Somebody took Bayard's kid last year. These backwoods boys don't mean no harm; just want a little fast cash. You'll get your girl back.

Absently, Pancho takes the money. Throughout, Alex watches Samuels.

JOE SAMUELS (CONT'D)

Real sorry we had to do business this way --

EXT. RURAL HIGHWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Pancho's parked his 60s Chrysler on a rural road. It's pitch black. A buzzing silence. Strained to the limit. He and Alex've been waiting a long time.

ALEX

You sure this is where we're supposed to wait?

(Pancho nods; another moment)

What if they don't come, Papi?

Sternly, Pancho indicates that nothing more must be said. Suddenly, they see a light in the fields. Flickering. Pancho turns over the ignition and takes off toward it.

THE CHRYSLER - PANCHO AND ALEX

Arriving at a ramshackle structure deep in the cane field. Hearing them, TWO MEN scramble out. One of them carries a lit fire-pot. Immediately Pancho knows something bad's happened. One of the men is very young; the one with the fire-pot is Quiñones.

QUIÑONES

(to Pancho; keyed-up)

I said the road. Where's our money?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PANCHO

We waited a long time on the road.
Where's my daughter?

A look passes between the two men. Pancho, trying to stay calm, calls out:

PANCHO (CONT'D)

Lucia!

QUIÑONES

Give us the money! We'll bring her.

PANCHO

LUCIA!

Only the dry rustling of cane.

PANCHO (CONT'D)

Alex, go inside; look for your sister.

Alex goes inside the shack. Quiñones and the other man exchange a look, Let's take him. But before the men can react, Alex screams. Pancho takes the gun out of his belt and walks inside the shack.

INSIDE SHACK

Still wearing her birthday dress, three-year-old LUCIA lies lifelessly on a mattress with a pillow over her face. Suffocated, and thrown away.

ON PANCHO - as he drops to his knees and lets out a soul-rending moan. He removes the pillow from Lucia's stoically calm little face. Just looks at her. His hand still holding the gun.

Alex's heart throbs in his ears. Anguish. Incandescent rage. Icy hatred.

He hears the two kidnappers take off at a run. Reflex -- already willing to pay with his body for his beliefs -- Alex grabs the gun from Pancho. He aims out the shack door and fires. Hits the younger man, who falls in the field. Alex sees Quiñones running with the fire-pot. Starts to move out. Hand still gripping the gun. He looks at the dead man in the field. Then gives full-out chase.

Quiñones dips the wick of his pot. The fire catches the cane and rides up. Alex is wildly at a peak. He shoots at Quiñones. Hits Quiñones in the leg.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Quiñones drops the fire-pot, limps through the row to the unburned side of the cane. But the fire has caught there as well. It surges toward him on a sudden wind.

Alex looks about, terrified; sees the water-wagon sitting at the far end of the field. He races the fire there. Reaches it, climbs into the water and closes the hatch. Then the cane catches, becomes a firestorm --

CANE FIELD - TIME CUT - BEFORE SUNRISE - PANCHO AND ALEX

Wisps of smoke still rise from the scorched stalks of cane, as Pancho and Alex bury the dead kidnapper. Lucia lies on the ground behind them, covered with Pancho's jacket.

INT. THE DUQUE FARMHOUSE - MORNING

A cock crows. The sky, a wash of watercolors tinged by smoke, as Pancho carries the slain body of his three-year-old-daughter into the house. Seeing them, Amalia wails and cries out in anguished Spanish. She takes her baby in her strong arms; holds her.

Isabel and Henry huddle together, scared and crying. Alex's face is frozen in its expression. Then Pancho's hand gently settles on the boy's shoulder; solace, gratitude. Bonded together by fate for life.

Frank watches the tableau of death and shattered lives from the sofa; bewildered. Damaged.

END FLASHBACK - TIGHT ON ALEX'S EYES

EXT. INT. SAMUELS ESTATE - EVENING

In a robe, old man Samuels shuffles to the glass doors of his Florida-Room to close them. The room is dark. He's silhouetted against the moonlight over the Atlantic.

ALEX (O.S.)

I know it was you.

Samuels turns. Alex sits in the same spot on the sofa where Samuels sat before.

ALEX (CONT'D)

You had that animal Quiñones take the baby from her crib -- on the day she turned three -- because you thought you'd make Pancho sell you the sugar. It worked. Pancho didn't see it coming.

(pausing)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ALEX (CONT'D)

But you didn't count on two things
I know about my father: how
decent, and how hard-working he
is; and how those two things would
open doors for him to start over.

(beat; calm)

So here we are again.

Samuels is no fool; he realizes Alex knows everything.
He regards Alex silently for a moment.

JOE SAMUELS

You know what I want.

ALEX

I want world peace, pigs that fly,
and Lucia back home with her
parents.

(then; steely)

Quiñones will never threaten my
family again. You send anyone
else, I'll come for you. It
wasn't Pancho who shot Quiñones.
It was me. I'm the one you'll
deal with now.

Samuels is looking patiently at Alex, as though he hadn't
learned the lesson he'd been taught. Then the old man
turns and moves in his slippers toward his bedroom.

EXT. ALLEY - CENTRAL FLORIDA - NIGHT

A bar for drunks and derelicts. Santo and Miguel walk
back and forth outside, smoking, waiting. Finally,
Quiñones exits, a sinister figure moving down the alley
into the night. Santo and Miguel follow.

Suddenly sensing them, Quiñones turns, rushes them. He
manages to lift Miguel and throw him down on the
concrete. He produces a switchblade; feral. But Santo
is quicker on the draw. Machete in hand, he hacks into
Quiñones shoulder. Quiñones lets out a groan, like some
great hurt animal. Santo and Miguel hustle him to their
car. Then Santo dials Alex's number.

EXT. INT. ALEX'S LEXUS - THAT MOMENT - NIGHT

As Alex answers his phone; eyes cold, impassive. We
don't hear what he says. But he's been waiting for this
moment the whole of his life. In the b.g., fireworks
from the Duque estate light the sky.

EXT. DUQUE ESTATE - NIGHT

Pyrotechnics magic. Guests gesticulating wildly at the crackling, booming, dazzling lights over the water. Neil Diamond's Coming to America playing loudly over the sound system.

Jaime and Rebecca have finally arrived at the party. Jaime's long hair and nose-ring are gone. He has a crew-cut and wears an army uniform.

Isabel sees her son and realizes what he's done. Her hands go to her face. She begins to cry. Slowly, one by one, the family turns to Jaime. Stare, stunned. Shocked. Artie bolts from his chair and runs into his brother's arms. Jaime picks him up.

Alex, just back from the Samuels', is speechless. A tough man to throw off balance, he's suddenly at a loss. Then with brilliant strobes burning the air and the explosions strident, Neil Diamond's voice fades into Lee Greenwood's, Proud to be an American.

Jaime's smiling gently at his mother. Then he looks at Alex, who's scared; and very moved. They come into each other's arms. Nothing left to say.

THE SONG CONTINUES OVER:

- A view of the empty but still illuminated lawn. The debris of the party spread over the grounds; a silent CREW OF WORKMEN busy cleaning up.
- The Vega household. Alex and Isabel kissing Katie good-night. She's come down; Daddy's little girl again.
- Then tucking Artie in; holding him tightly a beat longer than usual; to count their blessings.
- The family gathered in the kitchen. Alex returning with his own dogtags. Placing them in Jaime's hands.
- Isabel crying quietly. Alex holding her, kissing her hair. In the trenches, it's each other they trust, and turn to.
- Finally, Frank, who's not been a part of the family through this, slipping into Pancho's bedroom to watch his father sleep. Sitting down, defeated; isolated.
- Then Alex alone in the darkened boathouse. He is silent.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He rises, and moves to the window overlooking the intracoastal. His cell phone rings. He picks it up, but doesn't say anything.

- In the sugarcane fields, under the Fourth of July moon, Quiñones stands with his back to the *Balseros*, hands bound behind him. Miguel holds an open cell phone and a shovel. Grim, Santo holds a .38. Then Santo raises his arm and there's gunfire.

CLOSE ON ALEX

Hearing the gunshot over the cell. A passion welling up inside him, the same surging rage he felt upon seeing Lucia on the mattress. Finally, he hangs up his phone.

- In the fields, Quiñones lies lifeless, surrounded by sugarcane, as Miguel digs a grave.

BACK TO ALEX

Looking across the water. Wondering what he's done. The song *Proud to be an American* fades out --

END OF SHOW