

Nomads

“Pilot Script”

Written by

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"Nomads" - Pilot
By Ken Sanzel

TEASER

EXT. JUNGLE - NIGHT

Moonlit and silent... except for the SOUND OF HEAVY BREATHING --

JOHN AND KIRK VIRGIL --

Both in their 20's, clean-shaven, All-American, sprint and stumble through a narrow path in the dense fauna...

FLEETING POV -- BEHIND THEM --

FLASHLIGHTS rip through the trees -- bounce off wet leaves --

-- rapidfire murmurs in Malaysian, then the occasional SHOUT...

EXT. CLEARING - CONTINUOUS

JOHN and KIRK hit a small clearing -- with no apparent path out. The voices getting closer...

John looks to Kirk for guidance briefly; seeing uncertainty but slow process in his eyes... then...

MACHINE GUN FIRE

Bursts through the foliage -- leaves ripping, vines snapping all around them --

KIRK

Let's go!

Kirk SHOVES John forward -- just a few steps ahead of him, but enough to kick John into even higher gear, plunging into...

EXT. DENSE JUNGLE - CONTINUOUS

... MORE GUNFIRE rips around John and Kirk, pushing them to wend their way through vine... out onto

ANOTHER PATH --

TIGHT ON JOHN --

Running for his life as MORE GUNFIRE echoes behind him, MORE VOICES...

... his BREATHING getting louder and louder as he runs, until it fills his ears, blotting out all other sounds...

... then he stumbles... falls to the ground...

... and, picking himself up, catching his breath a little...

... aware of a sudden SILENCE. No guns... no voices...

No Kirk.

John wheels around -- searching the darkness --

JOHN

Kirk!

Silence.

JOHN (CONT'D)

(more panicked)

Kirk!

More silence... John turns around -- doubling back -- to --

EXT. CLEARING - CONTINUOUS

Empty now, silent... and pitch black. John pauses, spinning around -- suddenly lost and alone ---

HARD CUT TO:

INT. HOSTEL, ROOM - NIGHT

And JOHN... six months later, now sporting a traveler's beard... lying in bed, eyes wide open. Staring at the clock, as WORLD MUSIC thumps through paper thin walls.

Slowly, he swings out of bed, flicks a roach off of half a warm beer sitting on the floor, and throws on a T-shirt and pants.

INT. HOSTEL, HALL - NIGHT

A narrow hall is crowded with two dozen college-age kids from all over the world. LOUD MUSIC competes with five or six conversations, kids make out in doorways, etc.

JOHN rolls out of his room, into the party. Wanders down the hall -- a GUY hands him a... well, let's call it a hand-rolled clove cigarette...

GUY

John -- John -- what I was saying
about Dylan and Schopenhauer --

JOHN

-- Faust and "In Rainbows"...

GUY

... whatever... dude... it was deep,
right?

GIRL

Seriously? Seriously, you're
comparing Goethe and Radiohead?

JOHN

Same story...

GUY

Right? Goethe told it first, but Thom
Yorke plays drums, bass, guitar,
piano...

John drags on the cigarette, hands it off to a RASTA HAIR
DUDE, keeps moving...

... and a HOT GERMAN CHICK grabs him from behind, slams him
against the wall, and shoves her tongue down his throat. They
make out for a beat, then she pauses, pulls back --

GERMAN CHICK

Oh, sorry... I thought you were
someone else.

JOHN

Not a problem.

GERMAN CHICK

(checks him out)
He doesn't show up --

JOHN

Yeah... I gotta' go out for a few
hours... but maybe when I get back --

GERMAN CHICK

Oh, I'm not going to wait a few
hours.

John smiles, shrugs, heads down the stairs...

EXT. HOSTEL, DOORWAY - NIGHT

... and steps out onto KHAO SAN ROAD... Our first realization
that we are, in fact, in another country...

... on a short street, dense with bars, gaudy neon signs, pirate DVD stalls, suspect food stands... and more backpacker tourists per square inch than anywhere else in the world.

JOHN pauses in the doorway -- checks a

BULLETIN BOARD --

Among flyers for pretty much everything tourist related, there is a TATTERED MISSING POSTER -- "HAVE YOU SEEN HIM" --

-- with a PHOTO OF KIRK. He looks pretty much how we left him, posed in front of a Buddhist temple.

John ruminates on the poster for a beat -- takes it down... replaces it with an IDENTICAL, CLEANER COPY...

CUT TO:

TIGHT ON A COMPUTER --

SNAKEFARM.COM -- a travel website littered with banner ads for Thailand travel, backpacker tips, etc.

We are...

INT. INTERNET CAFE - NIGHT

A narrow room with a few rows of computers. JOHN sits at one, clicks through a few bulletin boards... arrives at a page that reads:

HAVE YOU SEEN HIM?

Pretty much identical to the flyer we saw earlier -- same PHOTO OF KIRK -- some text beneath it, nothing we pause to read...

... as John clicks on a "7 MESSAGES" icon...

... deletes some junk mail... pauses on a message titled "I KNOW YOUR BROTHER"

ON JOHN --

expression tightening as he opens the email... we read only a few scattered words... *Khunying... beach... drugs... Picasso...*

John makes some notes in a small, weathered spiral notepad...

...then makes a

SKYPE CALL --

His own image appearing on the screen in jagged pixels, then dropping into the corner as

STEVE VIRGIL --

Appears on screen... 50's, weathered, working-class face...

JOHN

Hey, Dad.

STEVE VIRGIL

These videophone calls... feel like I'm living in the future.

JOHN

Yeah, well... cheap.

STEVE VIRGIL

Yeah. So.

John pauses a beat, doesn't want to ask, then dives in...

JOHN

I could use a little more money.

STEVE VIRGIL

You cashed in your plane ticket.

JOHN

I told you I would.

STEVE VIRGIL

You want to come back home, get back in school, I'll buy you another.

JOHN

Dad, no one else is looking for him --

STEVE VIRGIL

Because it's been six months. Sooner or later, you have to accept things.

JOHN

You passed that insight on to Mom?

STEVE VIRGIL

She's on the verge of having two sons disappear into that damned country.

JOHN

I have some new leads...

Steve's hard face fights back tears... gets even tougher.

STEVE VIRGIL

Next ticket I buy you will be non-refundable. Let me know.

Steve hangs up on John. His image fizzing away, leaving John looking at his own pixellated image again.

EXT. KHAOSAN ROAD - NIGHT

As JOHN steps out of the cafe --

ZACK

Party on Sukhumvit Road. Starts at 1.

... turns to see ZACK MORGAN, a shaggy blonde 20's Aussie surfer dude with the good nature (and sex drive) of a Labrador Retriever...

... and NADIA CAVLOVIC, Eastern European; young, beautiful, eyes wearing the dark humor of an old soul without hardening.

NADIA

You will come. Someone has to keep him from getting beaten up, and it's starting to bore me.

ZACK

I'm supposed to just know who's got a boyfriend --

JOHN

I'll see... maybe...

NADIA

A real maybe or a John maybe.

JOHN

Hard to say. On my way over to Patpong 1 --

NADIA

(slyly)
Really.

JOHN

Not what you think...

ZACK

Too bad. Need a lift anyway?

Off John...

EXT. BANGKOK ROAD - TRAVELING -- NIGHT

ZACK --

threads a MOTORCYCLE through crowded streets at stupid speeds, grinning... as...

NADIA --

surges up alongside him on her own bike, riding just as fast and crazy, but with a calm grace... JOHN riding bitch seat, holding on as they pull parallel, yelling to each other over the honking and din of the street --

ZACK

I am dangerously close to bored...

NADIA

We were talking about going south -- maybe into Malaysia.

JOHN

Malaysia? To get killed?

ZACK

To say we didn't get killed --

Zack speeds up ahead of Nadia, who opens the throttle and heads after him...

... and we follow them on an insane, exhilarating

RACE

through the streets of Bangkok -- weaving around tuk-tuks, grazing taxicabs, near-missing pedestrians... on their way to...

EXT. GO-GO PICASSO BAR - NIGHT

Bangkok's red light district -- even rowdier and raunchier...

... as NADIA lets JOHN off her bike in front of a narrow staircase that leads up to a second floor bar -- BIKINI-CLAD BAR GIRLS visible in the windows...

ZACK

(to Nadia)

Want to go in for one?

NADIA

Zack, even if what you want to happen was going to happen, I'd never let you watch.

With an "oh well" grin, Zack pops a wheelie and speeds off...
Nadia looks at John --

NADIA (CONT'D)

Now I sort of want to go in -- just
to tell him I did --

JOHN

(thanks but no thanks)
This is a Kirk thing.

NADIA

Then you were wrong -- it was exactly
what I thought.

She gives him a quick kiss, then takes off.

INT. GO-GO PICASSO - NIGHT

Some of the hottest women in Thailand -- the world -- bikini-clad and dancing on stage; sleeker women working the bar. The clientele are almost all American and European, older than what we've seen -- 30's to 50's --

We follow KHUNYING... young and slightly girlish beneath a long, silky dress... as she wends her way through the club to the

BAR --

Where JOHN waits for her.

KHUNYING

You look like your brother, you know
that?

JOHN

The email said... you saw him last
month?

KHUNYING

Yeah... Kho Tao. Buy me a drink.

John nods at the BARTENDER -- then takes a PHOTO OF KIRK out of his pocket --

JOHN

You're sure it was him --

KHUNYING

Has a beard now. He was selling
drugs, liked girls...

John is stunned by this -- the Bartender brings over a beer and a glass of champagne...

BARTENDER

2000.

JOHN

2000 -- no... no bar fine, just the drinks.

KHUNYING

Pay the fine -- it's cheaper -- we can go upstairs and talk...

JOHN

Where did he say he was going...

Khunying slides her arm under his...

KHUNYING

1800, okay?
(nods to bartender)
1800.

Impatiently, John takes some money out of his pockets... slaps it on the bar...

JOHN

I've got... 950 baht, okay?

KHUNYING

950? No way...

JOHN

I don't want to -- that's just to tell me where he said he was going --

She starts talking to the bartender in Thai -- turns back to John --

KHUNYING

He says 1500 is okay. Go out, get the rest --

John looks at Khunying -- a moment of clarity --

JOHN

You don't know my brother.

KHUNYING

(feebly)
Sure -- I know your brother --

But John knows he's been lied to. Again. Disgusted, he reaches for his money... but the Bartender puts a BEER GLASS down on top of it.

A BOUNCER --

Materializes out of the din of the bar -- not huge, but formidable looking --

-- John's expression registering a moment of almost bemused, resigned realization...

JOHN

My fault... I walked right into this--

And John punches the Bartender in the face. It's a fast, hard shot, just enough to rock him back...

... grabs the money -- heads for the door -- weaving past the bouncer with the grace of a running back --

-- running straight into a DOORMAN -- bigger than the bouncer -- who grabs his shirt with a beefy paw and SLAMS HIM into a booth --

-- spraying beer and broken glass and cash everywhere. John grapples with the doorman as the bouncer moves in as well --

-- John reaching for a beer bottle -- cocking it back to take his best swing at getting out of there --

-- when a STRONG HAND grabs his wrist --

-- RYKER. 40's, well-dressed, perfectly average to the edge of bland looking... but with hard, authoritative eyes.

RYKER

(calmly)

You don't want to do that.

(IN THAI)

We're okay... everything is okay...

Ryker reaches into his coat -- the bouncers take a step back--

-- but Ryker comes out with a WAD OF CASH.

RYKER (CONT'D)

I'll cover these guys and the broken glass. Throw three hundred to your girlfriend and the guy you moused.

JOHN

Dude, the whole thing was a ripoff --

Ryker peels off some hundred baht notes -- hands them off to the bouncers --

RYKER

That's why you come here; to get ripped off. The trick is to do it at the going rate.

(beat)

Cops're going to be here in five minutes. Jail'll cost you a lot more... me, personally? I'd rather get something to eat.

Off John --

CUT TO:

EXT. FOOD STALL - NIGHT

An open garage-style food stall. JOHN and RYKER eat pad thai standing up...

JOHN

So look...

RYKER

You can't pay me back.

JOHN

Down to fumes -- any other situation, I'm not that guy who punches the bartender --

RYKER

No worries -- what we do, right? Farangs got to help each other figure it out...

JOHN

Seems like you've got it figured out already.

RYKER

(vaguely)

Yeah, well... I travel a lot. Telcom - everyone needs cell phone towers and internet, right?

JOHN

Sure...

RYKER

Thinking about going back in there, huh.

JOHN

Stupid, right? Just one more lie --

RYKER

How long have you been looking?

JOHN

Six months. Pick a story, I've heard it... he's in prison, he's fighting with Myanmar guerillas, he's a tour guide...

(beat)

... but a bar girl using him to scam me for -- what -- fifty bucks? That's a first.

RYKER

She comes from some rice field down south, where she's supporting parents, brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews, maybe a kid or two. She thinks about your problems about as much as you think about hers.

John nods; good point.

RYKER (CONT'D)

Can I tell you something?

JOHN

Something else?

Ryker smiles --

RYKER

Take a look around...

THEIR POV --

of Khao San; a torrent of backpackers, sex tourists, obvious tourists --

RYKER (CONT'D)

Ninety percent of them come for a few weeks, go home with some pictures and souvenirs. Let's say the next eight percent spend a few months, see the "real Thailand" -- go home pretty much the same way.

(beat)

That other two percent? The you and me two percent?

(MORE)

RYKER (CONT'D)

Stay here long enough, you don't get to decide how you leave -- if you leave. Thailand decides for us.

JOHN

No offense? You don't know me well enough to make it an "us" --

RYKER

I don't know you at all, John. But I know this country.

(beat)

It's on the verge of swallowing you whole. Which isn't necessarily a bad thing...

(enigmatic)

... but it's a whole other thing.

Ryker polishes off his noodles and leaves. John watches him disappearing into the neon glare of the Khao San Road.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

EXT. BANGKOK ROOFTOP - NIGHT

A huge rooftop party -- techno music thumping from giant amps, light show, stunning night view of the city. A few hundred PARTYERS, tranced out on dope and sex...

... as ZACK brings plastic cups to JOHN and NADIA.

JOHN
What's in it?

ZACK
Tastes like lime juice, but it's doing something interesting to my neurotransmitters...

Nadia takes one, downs it.

NADIA
Prvo skoci pa reci "hop."
(beat)
Croatian proverb -- first leap, then say "jump."

John takes the other, hesitates...

ZACK
Dude, I've never seen anyone enjoy Bangkok less.
(then)
Hey... over there, blonde ponytail talking to Andres...

POV -- DONNA --

Pretty in an accessible way -- talking to a GRUNGY ARGENTINIAN KID, who is pointing at them... she starts over...

ZACK (CONT'D)
Quick -- tell me if I already --

NADIA
Don't think so... not slutty enough...

DONNA
You're John?

Nadia smiles at a surprised Zack -- John's surprised too --

JOHN

Yeah --

DONNA

The one with the posters? Kirk
Virgil?

JOHN

(veiled)
My brother.

DONNA

I was in Koh Tao --

... the mention of which gets John's attention... Donna takes
the cup out of his hand and drinks it down...

DONNA (CONT'D)

-- met up with these Israelis...
anyway, we went out with the sea
gypsies for a week... there was an
American living on one of the other
ships. He had a big tattoo on his
chest, though... you don't have
anything about a tattoo --

JOHN

What kind?

DONNA

A devil ---

JOHN

ASU Sun Devils... Koh Tao... how long
ago?

DONNA

(into a talking jag)
I don't know... maybe a month, a
little more... Only talking to him
for maybe fifteen minutes, but he
looked kind of like the picture --
sounded kind of midwest, of course he
didn't talk a lot... skinnier, than
the picture, I mean... seemed really
in tune, you know? I mean, these are
beautiful people, but day three
smelling those fish --

Then Donna runs out of steam, stops short --

DONNA (CONT'D)
John, did you dose me?

CUT TO:

EXT. BANGKOK TRAIN STATION - MORNING

JOHN buys a ticket -- he's loaded up with his backpack now, ready to travel...

... turns to see RYKER behind him. Wearing a sport coat and slacks.

RYKER
Taking my advice or the bar girl's?

JOHN
Neither.

Pretty presumptuously, Ryker takes the ticket out of John's hand, checks it out...

RYKER
Never been to Koh Tao -- hear it's beautiful.
(beat)
I'm headed the other way -- Rangoon.

JOHN
Well... cool.

A WHISTLE draws their attention to --

ZACK AND NADIA --

Who are getting on the train --

ZACK
Let's go!

JOHN
Right there --

RYKER
Your friends?

JOHN
Met them two days ago.

RYKER
Two days out here... like two months back in the real world.
(MORE)

RYKER (CONT'D)

Hell, I know more about you from
twenty minutes than guys I shared an
office with for two years.

Ryker takes a card out of his pocket --

RYKER (CONT'D)

My email, and a sat phone -- perks of
working in telcom --

JOHN

Um...

Ryker smiles -- weird and disarming knowing at the same time.

RYKER

Yeah, probably not. But you never
know.

JOHN

But probably not. Thanks for saving
my ass, though.

RYKER

Some day you'll save someone else's
ass -- maybe they'll save mine some
other time. Travel karma.

JOHN

Well... okay.

INT. TRAIN, 2ND CLASS - DAY

JOHN walks through the train...

... finding ZACK and NADIA in their berth -- already spread
out and making themselves at home. Zack is listening to an
IPOD.

ZACK

The good news is, Koh Tao has a sick
Full Moon party. If you're still
there when we double back up...

POV -- OUT THE WINDOW --

Of RYKER, standing on the platform, finishing his cigarette.

NADIA

Who's your friend?

JOHN

Guy from the club last night... kind
of a weird dude...

ZACK

Personally? I'd've opted for the inadvertantly stoned chick. It might make you feel slightly less foolish about travelling half the length of the country on her very questionable story....

JOHN

Is it going to be that kind of a train ride?

NADIA

Oh, I imagine it'll probably get worse.

John looks out the window again -- Ryker is gone. And the train slowly rolls out...

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN - DAY

As the train rolls at a lesiurely tempo out of the crowded urban chaos of Bangkok... the scenery giving way to trees and small villages that roll by in a brief strobe of shacks and stores...

BOOM UP -- TO THE ROOF OF THE TRAIN --

Where ZACK and NADIA sunbathe on the roof, Zack listening to his Ipod, while JOHN looks out over the country, his legs dangling over the side.

NADIA

I miss Zagreb in the winter. Oppressive cold, snow, heavy clothes... this world has no weight.

ZACK

Kind of the point.

JOHN

No, I get it... you end up feeling guilty about enjoying yourself this much.

NADIA

I gave up on guilt some time ago. It's more of a sense of... incompleteness.

JOHN

You could go home... even for a few months...

NADIA

That would have its own complications. Besides, I have numerous things still to check off the list.

ZACK

Me, for instance.

Without looking over, Nadia punches Zack in the balls. Zack doubles over in laughing pain.

ZACK (CONT'D)

Gently next time.

NADIA

(to John)

What about? What's at home?

JOHN

Grad school, eventually, I guess. I was supposed to go back to MIT...

(thinks about it)

Eight days ago.

ZACK

Yeah? What are you going to be when you grow up?

JOHN

Computer engineer. Next generation communications.

ZACK

Wow... that's pretty...

(beat)

... boring.

John waves at a

POV -- PASSING VILLAGE --

JOHN

People in that shack right there? Hundred years ago, all they'd know about Australia is you, wandering in out of the jungle.

NADIA

A tragedy of misinformation.

JOHN

Books, radio, TV -- they start to get a bigger picture. Still incomplete. The internet -- now the world becomes larger, more detailed -- and a smaller, less scary place.

(beat)

There's a next step right around the corner... I'd like to be a part of that. That's how Kirk got me down here in the first place -- said I should meet some of the people I want to pull together.

NADIA

Wow.

ZACK

Yeah... that's even more boring than I thought.

John laughs politely, but Nadia makes eye contact with him -- reads his feelings --

NADIA

Does it ever occur to you that he could have been making the opposite point?

JOHN

Which is?

NADIA

Some people should never be brought together... some people should be kept apart always and forever.

JOHN

When I find him, I'll ask.

John lies back on the train -- his head next to Nadia's and Zack's. The three of them looking up, into the sky...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CHUMPHON TRAIN STATION - NIGHT

The TRAIN pulling into a medium-sized train station in a sleepy gateway town --

-- JOHN, NADIA, and ZACK pile out with their backpacks, among a crowd of Thais and the odd other backpackers...

... Zack takes the Ipod buds out of his ears, stuffs the Ipod into Nadia's backpack --

NADIA

Why am I carrying your things?

ZACK

Four ounces. You're not going to make me take off my pack and unzip it, are you?

NADIA

Four ounces, plus your book, plus your second pair of sunglasses... I'm going to buy you a purse.

JOHN

You sure you guys aren't together?

NADIA

One of us couldn't handle the other one...

ZACK

We can't agree on which is which.

JOHN

Well, look, I've got to make the ferry...

ZACK

Yeah -- we figured we'd catch a bus over with you, spend a night on Thung Wua Laen Beach --

NADIA SCREAMS -- the other two wheel around --

-- to see a THIEF knocking her to the ground -- grabbing her bag --

-- and taking off into the crowd.

NADIA

Son of a bitch!

John and Zack start to help her...

... but she's already on her feet -- sprinting into the crowd after the thief. Zack looks at John --

ZACK

It's going to be really embarrassing if we don't help out, right?

John half-smiling -- then he turns and sprints after her -- Zack a step behind him as they run, hampered by their backpacks...

EXT. NIGHT MARKET - CONTINUOUS

A quaint, scaled-down version of Khao San -- just a short run of food stalls and bookstands --

NADIA searches for the thief among a crowd of people -- not having much luck -- as JOHN and ZACK catch up --

JOHN
Anything in there you care about?

ZACK
My sunglasses...

NADIA
Clothes and books -- it's the principle of the damned thing --

ZACK
My Ipod...

Nadia throws him a look...

JOHN'S POV -- THE END OF THE STREET

And the THIEF, still hauling the backpack, disappearing between two buildings --

JOHN
There!

They take off after him...

EXT. ESTUARY - CONTINUOUS

A riverside mooring -- gaudy-colorful fishing boats moored for the night. Moonlit and eerie...

... JOHN, ZACK, and NADIA coming up, slowly now...

POV -- THE THIEF --

a silhouette, weaving in and out of the maze of masts and bobbing skiffs...

JOHN AND ZACK --

Unshoulder their packs...

ZACK
(whispering)
Who watches the packs?

NADIA
Don't even think about looking at me--

John looks around -- doesn't see anyone else -- and tosses his pack on the deck of a boat. Zack shrugs, tosses his over as well...

... and they creep through the docks.

JOHN
There!

They see the THIEF climbing from one boat to another -- the pack keeping him slow and awkward --

-- enough so that they corner him at the end of a dock...

... and the thief drops Nadia's pack at his feet. Pulls a butterfly knife.

ZACK
Okay... this just took a turn...

JOHN
(to the thief)
English?

The thief responds by moving toward them -- a lethal look in his eyes --

ZACK (CONT'D)
I move around, you can grab him...

NADIA
Not worth it --

John takes out his WALLET -- takes some CASH OUT --

JOHN
No hassles, my man... we just want her bag back, ok?

But the thief now has a cold thug's eyes -- and moves farther forward... forcing the three travelers to retreat...

ZACK
At some point we either fight or run -
-

GUNSHOTS --

Rip through the night... and through the thief's chest. He spasms and drops, face first, onto the walkway.

THE KILLER --

A hard faced and scarred Malaysian -- as many light years away in badness from the thief as the thief was from John, Zack, and Nadia. He steps off of a boat, a SMOKING PISTOL held casually by his side.

JOHN, ZACK, AND NADIA --

Stand there -- frozen -- as

THE KILLER --

Kicks the thief's corpse into the water, then walks over and picks up NADIA'S BACKPACK...

... and tosses it to her. Nadia catches it with astonished fear...

... as the Killer puts his finger to his lips in a "be quiet" gesture...

... and steps backward into the shadows. Disappearing into the night.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. BEACHFRONT BUNGALOW - NIGHT

A no-frills bungalow on Thung Wua Laen Beach. JOHN, NADIA, and ZACK sit outside, passing around a large bottle of beer and a joint.

JOHN

... and we're not calling the cops because...

ZACK

We don't know what happened.

JOHN

I'm pretty sure we do.

NADIA

He saved our lives.

JOHN

He killed someone.

ZACK

Who was trying to kill us. Who let us go and gave Nadia back her bag.

JOHN

Then the cops --

NADIA

Maybe in America the police only punish the guilty and serve only the truth...

ZACK

We don't know the rules, we don't know the values. Get tangled up in someone else's feud -- can't even know whose side we're taking.

JOHN

And the acceptable alternative is what? Close our eyes, walk away.

NADIA

It's just a traveler story... we keep it close and be happy we survived it.

Zack hands off the beer, takes the joint and stands up.

ZACK

All right... off to celebrate the
absence of punctures in my vital
organs.

With a weird explosion of energy, Zack sprints into the
night. John looks at Nadia.

JOHN

A man dies in front of you... you're
supposed to do something.

NADIA

You're right... we go inside.

A frank sexual look on her face... John startled by this...

NADIA (CONT'D)

We've looked at death tonight --
we're alive. There's really only the
one thing to do.

JOHN

Zack --

NADIA

I told you we aren't together that
way.

JOHN

I didn't believe you.

NADIA

I know you didn't.

She takes him inside.

CROSS CUT --

EXT. CLIFF - NIGHT

ZACK, standing alone, framed by the moonlight, draws on the
joint and takes off his clothes...

INT. BEACHFRONT BUNGALOW - NIGHT

JOHN and NADIA, on a futon, take off each other's clothes...

EXT. CLIFF - CONTINUOUS

Zack, naked, sprints toward the edge of the cliff... HOWLING
AT THE MOON... exuberant... as he LEAPS...

INT. BEACHFRONT BUNGALOW - CONTINUOUS

John and Nadia make love...

EXT. CLIFF - CONTINUOUS

Zack freefalls through the air... and SPLASHES INTO THE WATER.

TRANSITION TO:

EXT. CHUMPHON TRAIN STATION, PLATFORM - MORNING

A TRAIN loading passengers... JOHN sees off ZACK and NADIA...

JOHN

So...

ZACK

Been fun, Johnny.

Nadia hugs John -- not a whiff of the sexual dynamic there --

NADIA (IN CROATIAN)

(whispers in his ear)

Travel safely.

She turns to get on the train -- Zack grabs her backpack --

NADIA (CONT'D)

What. Now.

ZACK

The tunes...

(unzips her bag)

There's a dive shop in Jansom Bay --
guy who owns it... this South African
dude, Bobcat...

JOHN

If I get there, I'll say hello...

ZACK

(takes out the Ipod)

I owed him some money for some
stick... he told me he'd take music
in trade... loaded this bad boy up...

He stuffs the Ipod in John's shirt pocket --

JOHN

Don't know if I'm going to get down
there --

ZACK

This way, you know you will.

(beat)

Enjoy the party.

John smiles -- gets it --

JOHN

Looking out for my best interests...

ZACK

Someone has to.

Nadia and John look at each other --

NADIA

(double meaning)

What happened last night...

JOHN

... a traveler's story. I'll keep it close.

With that, Zack and Nadia get on the train. John turns and walks out of the station...

... bumping through TWO THAI MEN, 20's, casual wear and not all that hard looking, lingering by the door.

EXT. CHUMPHON, DAY MARKET - DAY

JOHN walks through the market...

... notices the TWO MEN in the crowd behind him... then they stop to haggle with a VENDOR...

His radar fires up a little... he stops and checks his WALLET, his PASSPORT... still there...

... takes Zack's IPOD out of his pocket...

POV -- THE TWO MEN --

Who try not to pay attention to this -- but clearly tense up at the sight of the IPOD --

-- time slowing down as John makes the connection -- his eyes to their eyes, still on the Ipod for a beat before they meet his; then the men quickly turn away --

BACK ON JOHN --

rolling the thumbwheel thoughtfully...

ON THE IPOD SCREEN --

He rolls through the menu -- to "MUSIC" --

-- finding an empty screen.

And then John has a --

PERSPECTIVE SHIFT --

Our signature storytelling device -- a flashback plus; as we revisit vital information -- often out of sequence, but always constructing a story -- the perspective shifts, illuminating detail(e.g., the backpack, the Ipod) with highlights of supersaturated color; speedramps underline critical moments, sometimes viewing them from a new angle --

AT THE CHUMPHON STATION... as Zack gives the Ipod to John--

ZACK

... he told me he'd take music in trade... loaded this bad boy up...

AT THE ESTUARY... as the KILLER tosses Nadia her backpack --

AT THE CHUMPHON TRAIN STATION... as the THIEF steals the pack

--

AT THE CHUMPHON STATION, MOMENTS BEFORE... as ZACK puts the IPOD in the pack --

NADIA

Why am I carrying your things?

AT THE NIGHT MARKET...

ZACK

My Ipod.

and Nadia's look to him -- what seemed at the moment like irritation... but now looks like something else --

BACK TO SCENE --

John looking at the empty Ipod -- and the TWO MEN, watching him carefully. He stuffs the Ipod in his backpack, zips it up...

HARD CUT TO:

INT. INTERNET CAFE - DAY

Smaller than the one in Bangkok -- John sits at a computer, plugging in the IPOD -- tensely looking back at...

POV THROUGH THE WINDOW -- THE TWO MEN

Still across the street -- making no effort to move --

ON THE COMPUTER --

A warning sign comes up -- "RISKWARE ALERT -- HIDDEN FILES IDENTIFIED"

John's fingers fly across the keyboard --

-- and a SERIES OF FILES OPEN UP... times and a series of numbers, meaningless to the casual observer...

ON JOHN --

Wondering what the hell he's stepped into. He types another command into the computer...

EXT. INTERNET CAFE - MOMENTS LATER

As JOHN walks out... sees the TWO MEN across the street. As he starts to walk -- they start to follow --

-- he stops by a waiting TAXI -- leans in to the DRIVER --

JOHN
Police station?

DRIVER
Sala Daeng -- you need police?

JOHN
Yes --

DRIVER
Right there --

The driver points back --

-- at the two men following him. John stunned for a moment -- looks around, thinks about running -- but where the hell to...

... dives into the back of the taxi...

THE TWO COPS --

See him see them -- break into a sprint toward the car -- guns coming out --

JOHN
Go! Go!

DRIVER

Police right there --

And they are... right outside the cab... the smaller one
SHATTERING THE REAR WINDOW with the butt of his gun --

COP 1 (IN THAI)

Police! Get out!

-- the bigger one reaching through the broken glass and
dragging John out, through the window --

-- he tries to fight, but they wrestle him to the ground --

-- the Driver jumps out -- yelling at the cops --

DRIVER (IN THAI)

What the hell?

-- the smaller cop backing him off with his gun --

COP 1 (IN THAI)

Police matter! Give me his bag!

-- the bigger cop handcuffs John as the Driver hesitates...
then takes John's backpack out of the back seat and hands it
to the cop.

INT. POLICE STATION, INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

A simple room, barred windows and cold cement. JOHN, still in
handcuffs, sits in a chair, watching the TWO COPS unzip his
backpack... go through his things...

... while a third man -- THE COLONEL -- stands in the far
corner, watching silently. Older, poker-faced, wearing a
vaguely military shirt. He thumbs the wheel of the IPOD, back
and forth, its click the only sound in the room...

OUT OF THE BACKPACK --

they pull a BAGGIE FULL OF BRIGHT ORANGE TABLETS. Look at
each other knowingly.

COP 1

Ya ba.

JOHN

That's not mine.

COLONEL

Very serious. There are farangs in
jail the rest of their lives for
this.

JOHN
(re: cops)
They planted it--

The Colonel nods at Cop 2, who SLAPS John.

COLONEL
Accusing a police officer of
misconduct. Also serious... and a
breach of good manners.

JOHN
If you want money, you've got the
wrong guy... my family doesn't --

The Colonel nods again -- Cop 2 punches John in the face.
Hard. Taking John and the chair over...

... then stands on John's head -- keeping him on the floor,
the chair forcing his feet up in the air.

COLONEL
Accusing me of corruption -- perhaps
the most serious breach of all.
(beat)
You've been here for six months, and
still ignorant. Travel with other
farangs, sleep in farang hotels...
we're just scenery to you.

JOHN
I'm sorry... I've never had to deal
with the police before...

COLONEL
You've never been caught before.

JOHN
Those pills are not...
(pauses)
I don't know how those pills got in
my pack.

COLONEL
A man was killed last night... his
body washed up at the mouth of the
river.
(beat)
One of my soldiers.

John stumbles over this for a moment, then --

JOHN

I'm a tourist, a traveler. I don't know anything about --

He clicks the wheel on the

IPOD --

Whose screen now reads: "NO FILES FOUND."

COLONEL

A tourist who carries an empty music player. Why is it empty?

John realizes that this is what it's all about. He hesitates, then, starting to crack --

JOHN

I don't know this game. I don't know how to play it -- what to say, what not to say --

The Colonel nods, and Cop 1 PULLS HIS SANDALS OFF.

COLONEL

You could die in this room. Alone, unanswered for.

Another nod... Cop 1 produces a small TASER...

COLONEL (CONT'D)

You should say whatever it is you believe will make that not happen.

... and ZAPS THE SOLE OF JOHN'S FOOT. John SCREAMS in pain --

JOHN

Zack Morgan!

A pause -- the Colonel waiting -- and John spews, on the edge of tears --

JOHN (CONT'D)

Zack Morgan did this to me. He gave me the Ipod... he must've put the pills in my bag... I don't know why he's doing this to me...

The Colonel moves forward now --

COLONEL

No, we put the ya ba in your bag...

-- sets the IPOD on the table --

COLONEL (CONT'D)

... and I don't believe that he gave you this -- because this is nothing.

-- takes the taser from Cop 1 --

JOHN

I don't know what you want to hear...
I don't know how to keep myself
alive...

COLONEL

Maybe you don't. Maybe I've been
misinformed... or maybe you're an
exceptional liar.

-- and sets it on the table as well.

COLONEL (CONT'D)

I need to think about that. So do
you.

He speaks to the cops in Thai for a beat, then leaves.

INT. JAIL CELL - DAY

JOHN sits in a cell at the end of a narrow hallway --
thinking, getting more scared as he does --

-- and then COP 1 comes down the hallway -- someone behind
him -- and unlocks the cell door --

-- allowing DONNA -- from Act One -- to enter. John is
stunned for a beat --

-- as Donna rushes to him -- hugs and kisses him before he
can say anything --

DONNA

(in his ear)

I'm your girlfriend, Donna, and I
just bailed you out -- and by bailed,
I mean paid a very serious bribe.

(beat)

I also told them I've alerted the
consulate that you're here -- which I
haven't -- so we need to walk out
right now, and discuss this later.

EXT. CHUMPHON JAIL - DAY

JOHN and DONNA walk out of the station -- John carrying his
backpack...

... as COP 1 and 2, standing outside, watch silently. Donna leads John into a waiting

JEEP --

Driven by NADIA... ZACK riding shotgun.

As Donna and John get in the back seat, Zack looks down, refuses to make eye contact; Nadia gives John a dim, apologetic smile, then throws the jeep into gear and SPEEDS AWAY from the police station.

INT. JEEP (TRAVELING) - DAY

The four of them ride silently for a long beat, as the town gives way to orchards and smaller villages...

... John waiting for someone to say something... drawing a slow boil...

... and then he LUNGES across the back seat at Zack. Catching him across the side of the head with a decent punch, grappling for him --

DONNA

Hey!

-- Donna grabs John -- surprisingly strong, and John still weak from his beating --

DONNA (CONT'D)

John! Hey!

They make eye contact -- John just as fierce and accusing --

DONNA (CONT'D)

It's all going to make sense. I promise you that.

JOHN

You promise me? Because after lying to me about Kirk, getting me arrested for muling your -- whatever the hell was on that Ipod -- I'm supposed to --

He turns to Nadia --

JOHN (CONT'D)

"Some people should be kept apart always and forever." Were you warning me, or playing with me?

NADIA

I was talking to you. The one thing
has nothing to do with the other --

JOHN

(pressing; bitterly)
Sure -- we made a real connection.
How long have you been setting me up?
Had to be before the party -- had to
be since we met...

Nadia shakes her head, exasperated...

NADIA

Fine, John... it's a dangerous,
treacherous world, filled with liars
and disappointment. If you get
comfortable with that, you may stand
a chance of enjoying yourself.

John tries to figure out how to respond to that as --

EXT. MANGROVE FOREST - DAY

-- the JEEP parks beside

A SECOND JEEP --

Driven by the KILLER who saved their lives...

... RYKER climbing out of the passenger seat.

RYKER

So... right about now, you're really
wondering what the hell is going on.

Off John -- wondering exactly that --

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. MANGROVE FOREST - DAY

JOHN and RYKER walk and talk...

RYKER

Brace yourself for this -- I'm not a telcom engineer.

(beat)

It's like this... in Bangkok, Shanghai, Singapore... no one looks at me twice. But I turn up in Chumphon, Koh Samui, some fishing village in Malaysia... give it ten minutes, and everyone knows the CIA is there. Hell, they think the real businessmen are spies.

(beat)

So every now and again, I need someone to do something for me. Take a picture, deliver a message --

JOHN

-- or an Ipod --

RYKER

Dumb, fearless backpackers joyriding through sketchy neighborhoods -- you're the next most indigenous thing to locals, and a lot easier to get to.

JOHN

Zack, Nadia, Donna -- spies?

RYKER

More like subcontractors. I throw them a low risk job every now and again, put cash in their pockets, they keep on surfing, screwing... living your endless summer.

(beat)

There were data files hidden on the Ipod --

JOHN

Some kind of timetables.

(off Ryker, surprised)

Two guys followed me from the train station, I put two and two together.

RYKER

And broke CIA-encryption?

JOHN

I'm good with computers.

RYKER

They're schedules for southern border patrols. Extremely valuable if you're a heroin smuggler working out of Myanmar.

JOHN

That's who was trying to steal them?

RYKER

No -- that's who we're trading them to. Dog -- guy who saved your life?

PERSPECTIVE SHIFT --

AT THE BANGKOK TRAIN STATION... as John leaves Ryker, gets on -- SHIFTING PERSPECTIVE to see RYKER nod to DOG... who gets on the train after John...

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

He's with the smugglers. Followed you from Bangkok to make sure you didn't get hurt...

AT THE ESTUARY... as Dog shoots the thief...

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

... and the guy he shot? He worked for Colonel Somsak Than...

AT THE JAIL... and the Colonel...

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

... who's gone rogue... thrown in with Muslim insurgents. He's been stealing rockets and guns from his own armory and sending them south.

BACK TO SCENE --

RYKER (CONT'D)

His problem is that the border patrols don't trust the Army with their schedules --

JOHN

(let me guess)
-- because of guys like Colonel Than.

RYKER

After Dog shot his man and got hot,
he had to scoot out of Chumphon --
which is how you slipped through the
cracks --

JOHN

-- and into jail.

RYKER

If the insurgency drives out the
Buddhists, we're looking at a
breakaway Muslim state... and The
Colonel becomes The General... Hero
of the Revolution.

(beat)

Dog's people don't want
fundamentalists controlling the Malay
border any more than we do.

JOHN

So you do business with the heroin
dealers --

RYKER

-- to fight terrorists. That is the
world I live in.

JOHN

But why the hell didn't you just give
the timetables to Dog in the first
place?

RYKER

I might trust him with your life --
but not with a deal.

(beat)

Bobcat -- guy you're supposed to meet
in Koh Tao? A serious and seriously
respected go-between.

(beat)

I give Bobcat the timetables... he
decrypts and verifies them, tells
Dog's people they're for real... they
terminate the Colonel for us.

JOHN

(realizes)

Koh Tao -- you were in the bar to set
me up --

PERSPECTIVE SHIFT --

AT THE GO-GO PICASSO BAR... Khunying walks through the bar...

RYKER (V.O.)

Yeah... pretty impressive the way you
read her...

... takes money from Ryker -- already there as John walks
in...

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

... of course, it meant I had to push
again to get you moving in the right
direction...

AT THE ROOFTOP PARTY... DONNA walks past RYKER, who fades
into the crowd as she approaches John...

BACK TO SCENE --

JOHN

Had Donna tell me that story about my
brother...

RYKER

If that was the worst thing I ever
did, I wouldn't drink or go to
church.

(beat)

Most people don't get into this way
of life through the front door, John.
Best way to recruit is have you do
the first job without knowing it.
Then, once you see how easy it is --

JOHN

(dry)

Real easy -- except the Colonel knew
what I was carrying --

RYKER

The timetables passed through three
sets of hands to get to me -- or
maybe someone in Dog's organization
leaked intel -- there's no hard
science here.

(beat)

And if you hacked the files, Colonel
Than has them now --

JOHN

No.

(off Ryker)

I put four and two together --
figured I didn't want to get caught
with whatever it was I was looking
at.

PERSPECTIVE SHIFT --

AT THE CHUMPHON INTERNET CAFE... John has the Ipod jacked into the computer --

JOHN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
So I uploaded the files to a secure web site and wiped the Ipod's drive.

ON THE IPOD --

The code DISAPPEARS...

ON THE COMPUTER SCREEN --

The same code reappears... then vanishes behind a window that reads: DATA SECURED.

BACK TO SCENE --

Ryker stops and smiles...

RYKER
Nadia clocked you as a natural from the jump.

JOHN
She picked me out? Or did you send her after me?

RYKER
That's a longer conversation -- one we can have after you finish the job.

JOHN
There is no job. I don't want anything to do with heroin smugglers, or crooked cops... or you.

RYKER
How about two thousand dollars?

John stops cold at that --

JOHN
For what?

Ryker takes a NEW, RED IPOD out of his pocket and tosses it to John.

RYKER
Start with downloading my timetables again.
(beat)
(MORE)

RYKER (CONT'D)
I don't like the internet. You can't
look into anyone's eyes on the
internet.

HARD CUT TO:

INT/EXT. JEEP AND MANGROVE FOREST, TRAVELING - LATER

NADIA driving, JOHN riding shotgun; ZACK and very subdued
DONNA in back...

NADIA
We don't do it for free...

ZACK
Well, you did --

John turns and PUNCHES Zack, bouncing his head off the back
seat.

ZACK (CONT'D)
That's two... are we done yet?

JOHN
(beat)
I don't know.

ZACK
Two g's to take a ferry ride to Koh
Tao, hand a thing to a guy...

JOHN
He pays you like that every time?

NADIA
Usually five hundred, sometimes a
thousand.

JOHN
So how much risk is two thousand
worth?

ZACK
Part of the juice, Johnny.

John looks at Donna --

JOHN
You too?

DONNA
(tersely)
I don't do it for the money.

NADIA

And yet, you take it.

(to John)

Of course there's risk -- there's risk being here. Think about how long that money will keep you traveling -- let you look for your brother --

ZACK

Some serious truth there -- what you've already been through, you really want to leave empty handed?

Off John...

EXT. CHUMPHON PIER - DAY

JOHN and DONNA stand in line to get on a FERRY BOAT. THREE SOLDIERS, manning a checkpoint, wave on PASSENGERS -- backpackers, locals, tourists...

JOHN

Nothing in the Lonely Planet about checkpoints...

DONNA

Because it wasn't here yesterday.

She nods back at --

THE TWO BAD COPS --

Standing at the end of the pier. Watching... signalling to the lead soldier...

LEAD SOLDIER

You two.

The soldier pulls John and Donna aside...

A LONG, EXCRUCIATING MINUTE...

... as the soldiers pore through their backpacks meticulously. Check the pockets of their clothes, open their guidebooks and examine the spines, etc.

Nothing there but clothes and books. The lead soldier shoots an inquisitive look back at

THE BAD COPS --

The smaller of whom shrugs and turns... and they walk off.

The lead soldier waves John and Donna onto the ferry.

EXT. KOH TAO FERRY - LATER

As the ferry pulls away from the Chumphon pier...

JOHN AND DONNA --

Lean at the rail, silently staring out to sea...

DONNA

Going to be a long trip with us not talking to each other.

JOHN

You lied to me. About my brother.

DONNA

You dosed me.

Which breaks the tension a little...

JOHN

I was a gentleman.

DONNA

Which was slightly insulting.

(beat)

Look, we're fighting for the security of our country... I don't expect Zack and Nadia to get that --

JOHN

I don't get helping drug dealers --

DONNA

-- in order to stop Muslim terrorists? Really?

JOHN

The whole "lesser evil" thing -- seems to historically bite us in the ass.

DONNA

So does the whole "tying one hand behind our backs" thing.

From behind the ferry --

A JETSKI --

Whips out from the Chumphon Pier -- more thrillseeking tourists pulling stunts --

-- buzzes past the ferry, then circles around -- typically obnoxious tourists until we realize that it's

ZACK AND NADIA --

Zack driving, Nadia holding on tight... and, as they buzz the ferry a second time...

Nadia HURLS a daypack... which sails over the rails...

... and lands at Donna's feet. She picks up the daypack and unzips it...

... revealing the SAME RED IPOD Ryker gave to John to reload the files.

JOHN

Any idea what he has against the internet... or why he needs me, when he's got you...

THEIR POV -- THE JETSKI --

Speeding off ahead of the ferry... farther into the Gulf of Thailand. The vistas are quickly becoming prettier.

DONNA

Senior year I applied for the Clandestine Service... and the CIA offered me an analyst slot. Sit at a desk in DC... read about what someone else is doing.

JOHN

You want to see the world.

DONNA

(no)

My dad's a Sergeant Major -- 86th Airborne. I grew up in Korea, Okinawa, Germany... there's no such thing as travel in my family, just a change of scenery.

JOHN

You want to save the world.

DONNA

Meanwhile, my dad's sure I'm some kind of burnout, down here hiding from duty and responsibility...

(MORE)

DONNA (CONT'D)

and I can't tell him any different,
because I'm hoping that sooner or
later Ryker's going to realize that
I'm not just one more backpacker
looking for beer money.

(beat)

So no... I don't get why he needs you
when he's got me.

She smiles dimly. John looks at her; realizing now where's
she's coming from, sympathetic for the first time...

JOHN

They... my parents... think I should
go home. I'm the second person in my
family to graduate college. Ever.

(beat)

Kirk was the first. They think he's
already dead.

DONNA

What do you think?

JOHN

That if I'd been the slower runner,
he'd still be out here looking for
me.

(beat)

But now... there's the reason I'm
still here, and there's why I'm still
here... and I'm not sure they're the
same thing. Know what I mean?

DONNA

Yeah...

Donna wants to ask more, but it's clear that John doesn't
want to say more. They look out at

POV -- KOH TAO --

Coming into view... a stunningly beautiful island...

EXT. JANSOM BAY, BEACH - EVENING

Pure tropical paradise. A scattering of thatched stilt
bungalows, pristine beach, and beautiful young travelers
coming out of the water, starting fires in the sand, firing up.

JOHN AND DONNA...

Hike along the sand...

JOHN

And this guy, Bobcat...

DONNA

Brokers deals for half the dirty stuff in South Thailand.

JOHN

Spy stuff...

DONNA

Drug stuff, gun stuff... it's all one thing made up of a lot of other smaller things.

(beat)

Ryker sends us south, it's usually to Bobcat. Bobcat deals with the scary people.

... arriving at

EXT. BOBCAT'S DIVE SHOP - CONTINUOUS

More of a shack, really... gear and a few kayaks haphazardly stacked outside, alongside a few t-shirts, a cooler full of beer and soda...

... and BOBCAT, lying in a hammock, listening to MOLLY HATCHET. He is in his 40's, deeply tan and sun leathered, eyes hidden behind old-school Ray-Bans.

JOHN and DONNA approach...

BOBCAT

(without moving)

Hey.

JOHN

Bobcat?

BOBCAT

Yep. Anything you can't find...

(beat)

... well, we probably don't have it. Chicago?

JOHN

You got that from one word?

BOBCAT

The one word I hear more than any other word. "

(MORE)

BOBCAT (CONT'D)

Hey Bobcat, you know where I can rent
a boat," "Bobcat, hook me up,"
"Bobcat, I'm light, can you front
me."

DONNA

"Bobcat, remember me?"

Bobcat turns slowly at that... looks at Donna... seems to
tense up...

BOBCAT

Yeah...

John reaches into his bag --

JOHN

I ran into this guy Zack, in Bangkok--

BOBCAT

(quickly)
Donna, right?

Donna and John exchange a look -- something's clearly not
right --

DONNA

Yeah...

BOBCAT

Before you guys take anything out of
that bag, I've got something in back
you ought to check out.

DONNA

You know what we're --

But Bobcat is up, leading them around the side of the shack --

BOBCAT

Yeah, yeah -- in back...

INT. BOBCAT'S DIVE SHOP, STORAGE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

BOBCAT opens the door, leads JOHN and DONNA into a small,
cramped storage room -- COMPUTER EQUIPMENT stacked to one
side --

-- and ZACK, lying on a cot -- semiconscious, dirty, face
bloody...

BOBCAT

He belongs to you, right?

ZACK

(weakly)

Sonsabitches were waiting -- jumped
us when we got to the beach...

(beat)

They took Nadia.

Off John and Donna --

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. BOBCAT'S DIVE SHOP, BACK ROOM - NIGHT

ZACK cleans blood off his face in a small sink... with JOHN and DONNA...

ZACK
That Colonel is waiting for you on
Nangyuan Island.

JOHN
Me.

ZACK
Said you specifically. He's sure you
have the timetables, even if he can't
figure out where.

Silence for a long beat...

DONNA
The way it works is, I contact Ryker
for guidance.

JOHN
And he tells us to give Bobcat the
timetables, and Nadia gets killed.

DONNA
You don't know that --

JOHN
I know he left me in jail for twelve
hours --

ZACK
(softly)
Doesn't matter what Ryker would do...
he's not here to do it.

Which stops the argument. John gets up, walks out of the room... Donna follows...

EXT. DIVE SHOP - NIGHT

BOBCAT lies in the hammock, talking to JOHN and DONNA. The SUN is peering over the horizon now.

BOBCAT
Well, on the one hand, killing a
tourist is not done lightly --
(beat)
(MORE)

BOBCAT (CONT'D)

On the other hand, I'd like your friend's chances better if she were American. English, even.

DONNA

We could use some help --

BOBCAT

Bad timing -- I burned through my quota of "getting involved" mistakes just ten, fifteen years ago.

DONNA

You work for Ryker --

BOBCAT

I work for myself. I'm a go-between; you give me timetables, I activate an encryption key, I close a deal between two parties who need each other, but don't trust each other.

(beat)

Staying neutral is how I stay in business.

JOHN

What if we don't give you the timetables?

BOBCAT

(shrugs)

Then that's what I tell Ryker -- you didn't give them to me.

DONNA

You're really going turn your back on us?

Bobcat looks at Donna coolly, but age and regret crease his eyes --

BOBCAT

Ryker didn't throw you in the deep end... you waded over here, with your eyes wide open. Your friend, too.

(I'm not getting involved)

You want help? I'll rent you a boat for 500 baht. That's half the going rate.

John looks at Donna --

JOHN

We're not leaving her behind.

Donna considers a moment --

DONNA
No... we're not.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAUNCH - DAWN

As JOHN, DONNA, and ZACK drag a MOTORIZED SKIFF into the water, past FISHERMEN getting ready to go out, a TOUR BOAT loading up...

ZACK
Trying to handle this ourselves...
could be, all we're doing is adding
three more bodies to the pile.

JOHN
Could be.

ZACK
On the other hand... one bitching
traveler story.

They look at Donna, who smiles dimly. They climb into the boat, start it up, and set off...

CUT TO:

EXT. NANGYUAN ISLAND - MORNING

As the SKIFF comes into view...

... piloted by ZACK. JOHN and DONNA, wearing snorkeling gear, drop off the sides of the boat...

AN UNDERWATER SHOT --

Takes them swimming along a stunning underwater vista -- reef and sea life...

EXT. RUINED JAIL - MORNING

The vestiges of an old penal colony -- crumbling walls being reclaimed by the jungle.

JOHN and DONNA come out of the water... walk across a long sloping beach... toward...

THE COLONEL --

who sits on a crumbled stone wall... smoking a cigarette.
Behind him --

NADIA --

Sits on the ground, hands cuffed behind her back, framed by the TWO SOLDIERS from the ferry.

COLONEL

So... have you learned how to play
the game yet?

EXT. SKIFF - CONTINUOUS

ZACK holding the boat in open water -- watching the small figures on the shore --

-- and suddenly BOBCAT, wearing a scuba tank, pulls himself out of the water, over the side of the boat. He is wearing scuba gear --

ZACK

What the hell are you doing here --

BOBCAT

Getting involved...

He ditches the aqualung. Zack relaxes a little, figuring that Bobcat has decided to help them out...

... as Bobcat opens a SMUGGLER'S COMPARTMENT in the roof of the skiff --

BOBCAT (CONT'D)

... so just relax and let the grownups settle this.

-- and TAKES OUT A PISTOL...

EXT. RUINS - CONTINUOUS

Back on John and Donna and the Colonel...

JOHN

We didn't bring it with us.

COLONEL

It's on the boat, with your friend.

JOHN

Shoot us, it goes in the water.

The Colonel considers this for a beat...

COLONEL

And you're proposing to control the negotiation how?

JOHN

We take our friend and go, leave the timetables wherever you want them.

COLONEL

Because I should trust you.

JOHN

Because I don't care about the timetables -- or your guns, or your insurgency -- or someone else's drugs.

The Colonel is quiet for a long beat. Draws on his cigarette, then looks at Donna:

COLONEL

And you? You don't care either?

DONNA

I care... I care more about my friend.

JOHN

What's your choice here? Kill us, you don't get what you want.

COLONEL

No... I think I can have everything.

He nods out at

POV -- THE SKIFF

Which runs onto the beach. ZACK gets out...

... followed by BOBCAT. Who has the gun at Zack's back...

... and the IPOD in his other hand. His body language, his nod to the Colonel...

... it tells us everything we need to know. Zack figured wrong; Bobcat is clearly on the Colonel's side.

The Colonel nods to the

SOLDIERS --

Who pull a trembling Nadia to her feet -- corralling her over to John and Donna...

JOHN

What happened to neutrality --

BOBCAT

I am buyer agnostic... the Colonel
bought me.

Bobcat prods Zack toward the others -- keeping his gun
trained on them as he moves nearer to the Colonel --

JOHN

You told him how the timetables were
coming in...

BOBCAT

(to the Colonel)
... and he screwed up on stealing
them -- twice. Forces me to get hands-
on, in spite of my better judgement --

DONNA

But we were going to give them to you
--

RYKER (O.S.)

-- which is the one thing he's been
trying to avoid all along.

RYKER AND DOG AND THREE MORE HEROIN SMUGGLERS --

materialize out of the jungle. Machine guns aimed at the
Colonel... at the Colonel's soldiers... at Bobcat.

RYKER (CONT'D)

Let me guess -- he made this "rescue"
seem like your idea, arranged the
boat, and had you take off from the
most public launch site on Koh Tao.

PERSPECTIVE SHIFT --

***AT THE LAUNCH SITE... John, Zack, and Donna dragging the boat
into the water... past fishermen... past a tour dive boat
loading up.***

BACK TO SCENE --

RYKER (CONT'D)

Couple dozen people see the four of
you disappear off the face of the
earth....

JOHN

(realizes)
... Bobcat can tell you we never
delivered the timetables.

RYKER

He couldn't leave you alive -- and he wasn't about to kill you in his own backyard. Which brings us here.

(to Bobcat)

Something like that?

Bobcat shrugs, acknowledging his double dealing, yet oddly calm...

BOBCAT

Something like that.

RYKER

Of course, you weren't giving me a whole lot of credit in the brains department. Or John, for that matter.

JOHN

Just because a man hates the internet doesn't mean he won't check his email.

RYKER

(to Bobcat)

Dog didn't want to use you; he'd heard rumors you'd been doing business with the Muslims, figured we'd get outbid.

(beat)

But I figured, if we played it right, you'd draw the Colonel out for us.

DONNA

(softly)

You used us as bait.

RYKER

I let Bobcat and the Colonel pick the killing ground.

Bobcat and Ryker look at each other coolly... then Bobcat smiles thinly...

... making a split-second decision to change sides one more time...

... as he raises his pistol -- and shoots the Colonel.

Then Bobcat quickly drops the gun, throwing his hands in the air --

-- as the Colonel's soldiers swing their rifles up --

-- John and Donna hitting the ground --

-- Zack grabbing Nadia, pushing her to the ground as well --

-- as a RIPPLE OF GUNFIRE from DOG AND THE HEROIN SMUGGLERS takes down the soldiers.

Dog swings his rifle toward Bobcat --

RYKER (IN THAI) (CONT'D)
No, no... he's all right.

Dog looks at Ryker dubiously -- then barks orders to his men. He pries THE IPOD from the Colonel's dead hands as his men drag the bodies into the jungle.

Then he looks at Bobcat -- who hasn't moved --

RYKER (CONT'D)
Man. When it comes to switching sides, you've got your timing down.

Bobcat smiles and shrugs --

BOBCAT
So...

-- as John, Donna, Zack, Nadia -- all scared speechless -- slowly pull themselves to their feet --

RYKER
(nods at Dog)
So, the only thing that keeps him from killing you from now on is me.
(beat)
Leave the gun.

Grateful for the reprieve, Bobcat nods, turns and heads back to his boat -- as Ryker walks over and picks up Bobcat's gun.

RYKER (CONT'D)
(to John, et al)
Walk the beach north half a click, you'll find a fishing boat in a cove. Have a beer, enjoy being alive... we'll leave in half an hour or so.

John starts to say something -- Nadia grabs him by the arm --

NADIA
(quickly)
As always, a pleasure doing business with you.

That, and Nadia's even look, defusing John. They move off,
with Zack --

-- Donna lingering behind -- watches as

POV -- BOBCAT --

Already piloting the skiff away from the island...

DONNA
Just like that?

RYKER
The man's too useful to burn. And now
I have something on him.

DONNA
He sold out to terrorists. You can't
trust him.

RYKER
I never did.

Ryker walks off, leaving her to contemplate this uneasily...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HOTEL VERANDA - EVENING

JOHN finds RYKER, in a sport jacket and slacks, drinking a
coke and watching the sun set.

RYKER
Who else gets paid to sit on the
beach and watch the sun set? I think
I do this job for evenings like this.

JOHN
After mornings like this, where you
have three men killed.

RYKER
Yeah... it's been a pretty full day.

Ryker slides an envelope across the table to John.

John opens the

ENVELOPE --

Stuffed with cash... and a FILE MARKED: **STATE DEPARTMENT --
CLASSIFIED.**

John opens the file -- it's a MISSING PERSONS REPORT on KIRK, his PASSPORT PHOTO stapled to the upper right corner.

He flips through it...

RYKER (CONT'D)

Not much there you don't already know; rumors, false alarms, a few uninvestigated reports.

(beat)

I believe I owe you a "why me" conversation.

JOHN

(re: file)

Got my answer right here, don't I. You picked me because of Kirk.

(beat)

What was he into?

RYKER

I don't know you well enough to answer that question yet.

JOHN

Or you don't have an answer, and you're stringing me along.

RYKER

On the one hand, you've got a good eye, think on your feet, and don't scare too easy. Plus, clean motivation is pretty rare in my line of work.

(beat)

On the other hand, I can already tell you're going to be a pain in the ass. So why would I bust my ass drawing you in -- unless I have an angle?

As John chews on that, Ryker stands up...

RYKER (CONT'D)

Stay in touch.

Ryker walks away.

EXT. BEACH - EVENING

ZACK stokes a fire as NADIA and DONNA sit and stare into it. A COOLER sits in the sand nearby.

JOHN AND DONNA --

join them at the fire, dumping their packs down...

Nadia looks at Zack, who pauses a beat, then digs into his pocket, takes out some cash, and hands it over to her.

JOHN
Someone lose a bet?

NADIA
Someone won.

ZACK
(to John)
I was sure you'd swing on me again.

The four of them exchange slow smiles.

NADIA
We're thinking about Ko Panyi next.
See the stilt village, watch the sun
set on the other side.

DONNA
Cool if I travel with you?

Zack and Nadia look a little surprised --

DONNA (CONT'D)
Got money in my pocket and time on my
hands...

ZACK
Good feeling, isn't it...

Zack opens the cooler --

-- revealing BEER and LOBSTERS. He cracks the beers, tosses
them around...

DONNA
(to John)
What do you say?

John hesitates, as they settle around the fire...

NADIA
Zivili...
(off the others)
Croatian toast.

DONNA

Feels like we need something...
bigger...

NADIA

Okay... how about a toast to the
bullets that didn't hit us...

ZACK

... which will grow larger in size
and number in the retelling...

DONNA

How about... to the night in front of
us. And the morning after that.

They exchange looks, smiles...

NADIA

I'll go with that one.

ZACK

Sure.

John looks down at his

BACKPACK --

The ENVELOPE fallen halfway out of the front pocket...

... and, with his foot, he pushes the envelope back inside...
out of sight...

JOHN

Ko Panyi. Why the hell not.

As we leave the four of them -- drinking and talking --

END OF SHOW