

ASSASSINS

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August 12, 1994

FADE IN:

PERFECT SQUARE OF BLACK

We know that we are looking at something because its polished surface shimmers with light.

PULLING BACK, other squares are revealed; the black and white tiles of a chess board.

The board rises and spins, slipping beneath us we find ourselves MOVING ACROSS the board, MOVING THROUGH a chess game.

The pieces are everywhere, checking and covering other pieces. It has reached that critical moment when pieces are traded and the board begins to clear as two strategies unravel towards a final outcome.

Standing above the pieces around him, we see the black king.

We MOVE CLOSER TOWARDS his face, CLOSER TO his chiseled ebony features, CLOSER UNTIL we are staring into his cold black eyes...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MARSH - SUNGLASSES - DUSK

The red setting sun is reflected in the black lens.

Two men are tromping through the calf-deep mud of an end-

less marsh. It is fall, the first frost not far away and the foliage is brown and bare. With the red-orange ball of fire melting into the horizon, the two men at first appear as only silhouettes or shadows slogging through the mire.

The man with the sunglasses walks behind the other man. He is very well-dressed in a dark suit. A .22 caliber gun, fitted with a long silencer, dangles from his hand.

His name is ROBERT RATH.

The other man is WILLIE KETCHAM. He is also wearing a very expensive suit though it is being destroyed by the brambles and mud.

As he lifts his foot his Gucci shoe is sucked off by the mud.

KETCHAM

Aw-shit!

He balances on one leg, holding his silk-socked foot in the air. He looks at the shoe, already filling with mud. He looks at Rath.

KETCHAM

How much farther?

RATH

Just a little ways. Up to those trees.

About a half mile further into the thickening marsh there is a small cluster of trees.

KETCHAM

Oh, fuck it.

He pulls his sock off and plunges his foot into the mud. He smiles. It feels good. He hurls the sock. Lifting his other foot he pulls his shoe off and hurls that. He grabs for the other sock, struggling to get it off, laughing at himself as he slips and falls into the mud.

Rath waits, a faint smile.

He manages to get the sock off and then stands digging both feet into the dark, wet earth.

KETCHAM

Hey, this feels kinda good.

They move on, Ketcham almost playing, sinking his feet deep pulling them out to make a SPLURCHING, SUCKING NOISE.

KETCHAM

Hey, do you mind if I talk a little? I feel like, I don't know, talking I guess.

RATH

Sure.

KETCHAM

Funny, I've never been a talker. My wife was always getting on me about that. 'Say what you feel, tell me what's bothering you, you've got to talk to me.' I never would though. Not really.

RATH

Why not?

KETCHAM

I don't know. Part of me wanted to but part of me always said, 'What's she going to be able to do?' I don't know. Maybe I didn't trust her.

He picks up a handful of mud and begins shaping it like a snowball.

KETCHAM

My Margaret... I loved her but you know what? I cheated on her. All the time. I don't even know why. It wasn't the sex, Margaret was great in bed. I think if I wasn't married I wouldn't have even looked at some of those women. I knew she couldn't trust me, so how could I trust her? If she was here right now I'd think that I would tell her that I was sorry... 'course, if she were here right now, maybe I wouldn't feel like talking.

He throws the mud ball at the grove of trees but they are too far.

KETCHAM

I think I've heard of you.

RATH

It's possible.

KETCHAM

You're pretty famous aren't you?

RATH

I hope not.

KETCHAM

I know this may seem like a strange question, but can I ask you how much the contract was for -- not to insult you or anything, I know you're a professional, but just for me, I was just wondering.

RATH

It's a common question.

KETCHAM

Oh yeah? I guess we still need to see that price tag. Like art, right? You hang some painting that looks like baby-puke in your living room only if it costs a bundle.

RATH

A dime.

KETCHAM

One hundred thousand? That's it? Jesus... Is that a lot?

RATH

Average.

KETCHAM

Shit... oh well.

Ketcham laughs.

KETCHAM

I have been thinking about this for a long while. I knew this day was coming. I knew someday someone would make the call on me. I never thought about anyone that I had whacked. What do you call it anyway?

RATH

Taken.

KETCHAM

'Taken.' That's nice. When I had someone taken I would call our General Contractor, transfer the money and as soon as I hung up the phone I forgot about them.

RATH

Everyone who plays the game knows the rules.

KETCHAM

That's exactly what I told myself.

Ketcham laughs again. He is getting kind of giggly, like he's high.

KETCHAM

I always wondered what I'd be thinking at this exact moment. I imagined that I would be thinking about the fucker who contracted this, trying to figure out who it was...

Something occurs to him and he looks back at Rath.

RATH

Don't know. That's how it works.

KETCHAM

That's what our General Contractor told us but how can you trust someone like that?

RATH

Right.

KETCHAM

I thought that I would be thinking about Margaret, or work, or that I'd be having these deep, profound and depressing thoughts but I'm not. I'm trying to think really profound thoughts, but I can't. It seems very funny to me.

RATH

What are you thinking about?

KETCHAM

I'm thinking about Moonpies. Ain't that funny? I haven't had a Moonpie since I was ten years old. Right now, I'm thinking how much I'd love one.

RATH

And an R.C.

He's 'laughing' and Rath laughs with him. Ketcham suddenly stops laughing. They are nearly to the cluster of trees.

KETCHAM

Can I ask you something?

RATH

Go ahead.

KETCHAM

What do other guys do?

He looks at the trees, his voice dying in the WIND.

RATH

Everyone handles it differently.
Some are ready, some are not.

KETCHAM

Do they get down on their knees,
begging and crying?

RATH

Some.

KETCHAM

When I thought about this, that
was always there, in the back of
my head, that image of me on my
knees, crying. It wouldn't go
away and it would really upset me.
It was something that I could never
get away from... but now, I feel
it's okay. I feel good.

RATH

Can I ask you a question?

KETCHAM

Anything.

RATH

Why didn't you fade?

KETCHAM

You mean quit?

RATH

Yeah.

KETCHAM

I used to think about it. I had
Margaret. She wanted kids. I
thought about moving somewhere
far away like, Europe. I could
see all of that, the first part,
the getting away but I couldn't
see that next part. 'Then what?'
So I'd stop thinking about it and
go back to work. You understand?

RATH

Yeah.

Ketcham smiles and looks around at the grove of birch trees.

KETCHAM

I always pictured that I would end in some land fill, under someone else's garbage. I kept picturing those plastic diapers filled with some baby's green shit, covering me. But this is nice...

He looks at the sun, bloody red seeping into the black horizon.

KETCHAM

Look at that. I haven't watched the sun set in a million years. Do you mind?

RATH

No.

Ketcham stares at the last of the light.

KETCHAM

Nice... real nice.

With his face hidden from Rath he begins to cry.

Rath watches Ketcham staring at the setting sun. Rath looks down at the gun limply held in his hand.

When the sun is gone, a red glow at the bottom of a darkening sky, we hear the GUN, SILENCED, ONCE, then the BODY FALLING INTO THE MUD. After a beat we hear TWO MORE SHOTS.

Ketcham is lying face down, already sinking into the mud, a red cloud mushrooming around his head like the red haze left by the dying sun.

Rath breathes in deep and lets the air out slowly, standing alone in the middle of nowhere.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

The room is dark and still.

A man is standing at a wall of windows that glow from the amber wash of urban light.

Snow is falling, heavy white flakes glittering in the city's electric night.

The man finishes his bourbon, ICE CLINKING in the empty glass. He is slightly drunk and he sways forward until

his forehead rests against the window.

In the dim light, we recognize the man as Rath.

Outside there is a beautiful stone church decorated for Christmas. He watches the snowflakes drift to the distant street below.

He is wondering what it would feel like to let himself fall, when there is a KNOCK at the door.

Crossing the room, he opens the door. Backlit by the bright hallway light is a WOMAN. She has already removed her coat and though she is only a silhouette we can see that her dress is very short and very tight.

ESCORT (WOMAN)

Hi. Did you call --

RATH

Yes. Please come in.

Her HIGH HEELS TAP against the tile foyer as she enters and he takes her coat.

ESCORT

Goodness, it's so dark...

She reaches for the wall switch but he stops her.

RATH

I prefer it like this.

ESCORT

How can a beautiful man like you be shy?

He smiles.

RATH

I prefer it, that's all.

She moves closer to him, the sexual confidence of her body radiating like heat.

ESCORT

It's okay, honey. We can do it anyway you want.

Rath is obviously uncomfortable.

RATH

Would you like a drink?

ESCORT

I'd love one. Whatever you're having.

They move into the room, from a distance, as featureless as two shadows.

She stands at the windows watching the snow-bubble of a city night.

ESCORT

Beautiful.

He hands her the drink. Her smile is bright and perfect.

ESCORT

Good will towards men.

Their glasses clink as he drains half his drink. If she drinks at all, we can not tell.

RATH

Why are you working today?

ESCORT

Holidays are our busiest days. No one likes to be alone on holidays. I know I don't.

She touches his face, the caress and her expression of tenderness seemingly genuine.

RATH

You're very good at this aren't you?

ESCORT

I think you're supposed to answer that question.

Her hand slides down his chest, but before it goes any farther Rath turns away, returning to the bar.

RATH

I know what you expect, but I don't want...

He pours himself another drink.

ESCORT

That's okay, hon, I always expect the unexpected.

RATH

I called because I just want... I need to talk.

She sits on the couch, her body language changing, as she becomes a listener.

RATH

I've been thinking about my life,
about things I have done... What I
do for a living is in some ways
similiar to what you do.

He sits on the other end of the couch, his words thickened
by the alcohol.

RATH

I know that everything has a
price. I want you to understand
that I'm willing to pay.

He takes out an envelope and puts it between them. She
picks it up, glancing inside at a stack of hundred
dollar bills.

ESCORT

For what?

RATH

Honesty.

She puts the envelope down.

RATH

I just want to ask you some
questions.

Uncomfortable, she waits as he searches his drink for
the right words.

RATH

Do you ever regret things you've
done?

ESCORT

Everyone regrets something.

RATH

But when you finish a job,
afterwards do you think about
them?

ESCORT

Sometimes.

RATH

Do you think about their wives or
their families?

ESCORT

No. They call me, I don't call
them. If they didn't call I
wouldn't exist.

Rath nods. His next question is barely audible.

RATH

Do you ever think about starting over?

ESCORT

All the time.

RATH

Can you tell me about it?

For the first time we really see her take a drink. She closes her eyes.

ESCORT

Sometimes I dream that I meet a man, this good, honest man and we fall in love. I imagine us living on a boat, reading books, sailing to places where no one knows who we were or cares what we did.

She opens her eyes and looks at him.

RATH

And what if you never meet that man?

She smiles.

ESCORT

Then, I'll sail alone.

RATH

Do you believe that?

ESCORT

Are you asking me if I believe in another life?

Rath nods.

ESCORT

I have to.

She finishes her drink.

ESCORT

Is that all you want?

RATH

Yes.

She picks up the money and stands.

RATH

Thank you.

ESCORT

Anytime.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

It is the same room but now it is very cluttered, room service trays and empty liquor bottles tossed about.

He has been here for a while.

He is sitting at the table, staring intensely at a chess game; we see the board and all of the pieces set in the same positions as in the opening sequence.

He rubs at the whiskers that have darkened his face and then finishes off another bottle of bourbon.

He flings the empty bottle across the room as he reaches over the board and moves one of white knights, taking a black rook.

A sequence begins, obvious, and he works through it moving both the black and white pieces. Suddenly he stops. He gets up and shifts to the other side of the board, studying the game from white's perspective.

Another sequence emerges and he trades the pieces through it as he moves around the table, returning to his place behind the black king.

The games reaches its end as black is check-mated.

He slumps down onto the table and looks across at the white king.

RATH

Fuck you, Nick.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - DAWN

Rath is at a desk where he has set up his computer office; a cellular phone is plugged into a modem with cables winding through a scrambler and then into a fax machine and the latest high-powered lap-top computer.

On the table near the desk, we see the .22, dismantled and cleaned, spread out on a white towel.

He types in a complicated access code sequence, then waits, staring at the blank screen.

CONTRACTOR/SCREEN

Where have you been, Robert?

RATH/SCREEN

Sick. The flu.

CONTRACTOR/SCREEN

I don't believe you.

RATH

I don't give a fuck --

RATH/SCREEN

It's true.

CONTRACTOR/SCREEN

I have been sitting on a contract
from Cleveland for six days
because of you.

RATH

Fuck you, fuck Cleveland, and fuck
your contracts --

RATH/SCREEN

I need a rest.

CONTRACTOR/ SCREEN

That's impossible, Robert. You're
at the top of your field. These
are the best contracts. To stop
now would be self-destructive.

He looks away from the screen and sees the chess game on
the table.

RATH/SCREEN

Send the file. I'll have the
estimate tonight.

CONTRACTOR/SCREEN

I'm worried about you, Robert.

RATH

You fucking should be --

RATH/SCREEN

Don't be.

On the screen the word "Transmitting" appears. Rath
slowly gets out of his chair.

The FAX MACHINE CLICKS and HUXS to life as a photograph
of a smiling, old Italian man curls onto the desk.

Rath begins destroying the hotel room, smashing anything
he can get his hands on.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - DAY

Rath is in the middle of the room which he has demolished. Having showered and shaved, he is now standing naked, in the midst of the rubble, practicing the slow and graceful art of Tai Chi.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

Rath is working at the desk. He is tallying numbers, materials, totaling his estimate.

Spread out over the table are several faxed photos of the old Italian, Leevio Valli, usually surrounded by bodyguards.

The file details Valli's life and his daily routine. It includes: phone bills, credit card and bank account statements, driver license and vehicle registration, the real estate listing of his house and even a copy of his income tax return.

Satisfied with his figures, Rath plugs the phone into the modem and makes a call.

The network comes on-line as the General Contractor types:

CONTRACTOR/SCREEN

You're too late, Robert.

Rath types.

RATH/SCREEN

What?

CONTRACTOR/SCREEN

The contract was stolen.

Rath stares at the screen.

RATH/SCREEN

Who?

CONTRACTOR/SCREEN

A new player. He's using the name Nicholai.

The name hits Rath and he sits, unable to breathe.

CONTRACTOR/SCREEN

You know what must be done.

The screen goes black as the network shuts down.

Rath looks down at the pile of assembled facts. He lifts

a credit card bill on which the name of a restaurant appears every Friday. The name of the restaurant has been circled in red pen by Rath: "Trattoria Roma."

EXT. TRATTORIA ROMA - NIGHT

A red awning spans the entrance of a popular Italian restaurant.

INT. TRATTORIA ROMA

It is a large establishment with many tables and booths. The dinner crowd is a mix of yuppies and older Italian families who have been eating here for years.

Rath is sitting alone at a booth. With very subtle changes to his appearance, he looks like an older Italian.

In front of him is a glass and a carafe of dark red wine. He touches neither of them. His eyes shift as he studies the room.

LEEVIIO VALLI pushes into the restaurant surrounded by five gorillas in Italian suits. The owner hurries to greet them, hugging, kissing, speaking only Italian.

The entourage moves through the restaurant to the oversized booth in the back.

Rath does not look twice at them. Immediately he is watching everyone else, looking for the other assassin.

Leevio slides into the booth as his goons stand and sit around the table, obscuring him from all parts of the room.

A wine steward immediately brings a bottle of red wine and fills their glasses. A pretty waitress sets a steaming loaf of garlic bread out and a giant bowl of minestrone in front of Leevio. He tells her something and she giggles. They joke in Italian, watching her ass as she wiggles back to the kitchen.

At Leevio's table the wine steward returns to fill their glasses.

It is the goon standing against the wall that is the first to realize that it is not the same wine steward. He is the second assassin, much younger than Rath. His name is BAIN. He smiles.

The goon reaches for his gun as --

Bain SHATTERS the BOTTLE of wine into his face. He screams.

Leevio coughs a spray of minestrone, as a GUN flashes free from the white linen towel hung over the steward's arm.

It happens instantly. FOUR SHOTS and the goons are dead.

Leevio screams.

LEEVIO

Don't!

A FIFTH, SIXTH and SEVENTH SHOT.

Leevio's body falls forward and softly thuds on the table.

Bain whips around drawing a small SEMI-AUTOMATIC WEAPON from his belt expecting an attack.

Facing the screaming crowd, he begins to SHOOT anyone who moves or stands, men or women.

There is chaos in the restaurant. People scream, falling to the ground, scrambling under tables.

Bain is sweating, his eyes shifting wildly from one end of the room to the other.

The restaurant falls quiet except for several people who are sobbing.

He moves through the room, watching, searching.

BAIN

Don't anybody move. You move,
you're dead.

He passes the table Rath was sitting at, but it is empty.

BAIN

Come on, you chicken shit
motherfucker. I know you're here.
Let's go.

EXT. CONCRETE PARKING GARAGE

Across the street from Trattoria Roma, Rath jacks together a German assault rifle with night scope.

INT. TRATTORIA ROMA

Bain looks out the window at the dark street.

He turns and searches through the people huddled on the floor. He aims his gun.

BAIN

You! Get up!

A quivering wine steward stands.

He points to another.

BAIN

You, too! Up!

EXT. PARKING GARAGE

THROUGH the NIGHT SCOPE we see the front door to the restaurant open and a group of wine stewards clumped together slowly back out.

INT. TRATTORIA ROMA

Bain is second from the end, both guns aimed at the stewards.

One of them begins to cry.

BAIN

Not yet. Don't move or you're
fucking dead.

INT. PARKING GARAGE

Rath moves the scope back and forth, unable to pick out the assassin.

RATH

Shit. Just do them all. All of
them. Shit.

He can't pull the trigger.

EXT. TRATTORIA STOREFRONT

The group moves toward the street.

BAIN

Now run!

Like dogs out of the gate, they bolt.

INT. PARKING GARAGE

Rath watches as they scatter, finding Bain in his scope.

EXT. STREET

A chunk of BRICK EXPLODES from the wall just behind Bain's head as he drops behind the row of parked cars along the curb. He laughs. We get the idea that Bain is enjoying this.

INT. PARKING GARAGE

Rath looks over his scope, talking to himself. He is sweating.

RATH

Shit. What are you doing, old man?
You're too fucking slow.

He looks back into the scope and begins scanning the line of cars.

RATH

Okay. Which one? Which one is
yours?

EXT. CITY STREET

Bain is crawling alongside the tightly parked cars, staying low and out of sight.

He works his way up to a black Mercedes that is parked illegally next to a fire hydrant and takes out his keys. He hits the remote unlocking the doors.

INT. PARKING GARAGE

Rath finds the fire hydrant in his scope, almost obscured by the parked Mercedes.

RATH

Amateur.

He takes aim.

EXT. CITY STREET

Just as Bain starts to open the door, the front TIRE EXPLODES. Another second, the back TIRE EXPLODES.

BAIN

Fuck!

INT. PARKING GARAGE

Rath waits, steely calm, his finger on the trigger.

RATH

Your move.

EXT. CITY STREET

Bain hears the growing wail of POLICE SIRENS. Thinking for a moment, he opens the car door and pulls a long handled switchblade and a roll of electrician's tape from the glove compartment.

INT. PARKING GARAGE

Rath sees the car light go on, but can't make out what Bain is doing. The SIRENS are GETTING LOUDER. There's a lot of them.

EXT. CITY STREET

Bain finishes taping the knife to his forearm and rolls his shirt sleeve down. From his pocket he takes out a Gameboy and begins playing "Tetris."

INT. PARKING GARAGE

Rath watches as the police cars come racing down the street.

EXT. CITY STREET

The CARS SCREECH to a halt in front of the restaurant. The COPS jump out, drawing their weapons.

Bain throws his guns down, raising his hands in the air.

BAIN

Don't shoot! Don't shoot! I give up!

More CARS come SCREECHING up as the two officers hold their beads on Bain.

COP

Hit the ground! Face down! Spread your legs!

Bain follows the orders as the second cop edges up to him, frisking him. In this position the Cop is unable to find the knife strapped to Bain's forearm, but finds the Gameboy.

BAIN

Hey, don't touch that!

COP

Shut up!

The Cop twists Bain's arms behind his back, handcuffing him tightly.

They drag him to his feet, a swarm of police and paramedics in the street.

INT. PARKING GARAGE

Rath holds them in his cross hairs as they move to the police car, but is unable to get a clean shot. Bain is using the cops for cover, keeping his head low.

RATH

Son of a bitch.

The Cops shove Bain into the back seat.

Rath very quickly walks to his car, tossing his gun into the trunk. He gets in and STARTS the ENGINE.

INT. PATROL CAR

The two Officers are outside the car talking with the sergeant.

Bain, laying low beneath the windows, peeks up at the shadowy parking garage. He smiles.

The two Policemen get in the car, the second picking up the radio. The driver GUNS the ENGINE and the black and white RUMBLES down the street.

COP #2

This is 181, returning with suspect involved in multiple shooting at Trattoria Roma. Repeat, en route with suspect.

He hangs up the radio and looks back at Bain through the metal caging.

COP #2

Jesus Christ, do you know who you shot in there?

Bain almost laughs.

COP #2

What are you? Some kind of a

hitman?

Bain looks out the window.

COP #2

You know what we call guys like you?

Bain looks at him.

COP #2

Sizzle lean. They're gonna fry your
ass.

He laughs at his own joke, looking at his partner, who
chuckles.

EXT. CITY STREET

Rath's car races down the street trying to catch up with
the patrol car.

INT. PATROL CAR

Bain stares out the window, silent.

Behind his back, he takes hold of his left thumb with his
right hand.

The Cop is playing with the Gameboy.

With a quick jerk, he yanks the thumb out of its socket.
His expression remains perfectly blank.

The thumb hangs unnaturally from the hand. The skin
stretches strangely as he pulls the metal cuff from his
wrist.

The Cop turns as the SWITCHBLADE CLICKS and Bain sticks
the knife through the wire mesh, into the cop's eye. A
font of blood arcs onto the windshield.

Grabbing hold of the driver's shirt collar, Bain jabs the
blade into the back of his neck.

The driver screams trying to pull free of Bain's grip.

He slams on the brakes, groping for his gun and the CAR
SKIDS out of control.

Bain stabs the Cop again, his GUN FIRING WILDLY as --

The patrol car starts to flip and roll.

INT. RATH'S CAR

Rath turns as he hears an EXPLOSION, several blocks away. The TIRES SQUEAL as he makes a hard right.

EXT. STREET

Orange flames lick up from the belly of the overturned patrol car. Oil black clouds billow into the night sky.

Rath's car cruises past.

Rath sees the back seat window shattered, kicked out.

Bain is gone.

RATH

I'm not done yet.

EXT. CITY STREET INTERSECTION

A brand new cab is sitting at a red light.

The cabby looks into the rearview mirror, as a pair of headlights roll up behind him. The car gets closer, the lights brighter; they don't stop.

He shrieks as the CAR SMASHES INTO HIS, TEARING OFF HIS **BUMPER.**

The cabby jumps out, rattling off a string of obscenities.

Rath gets out of the white car, starting to apologize, as the cabby moves toward him.

When he's close enough, Rath decks him, knocking him unconscious.

He picks him up and puts him in the white car.

Rath then gets in the cab and when the light changes to green, he drives off.

INT. CAB

Rath circles the area, turning up the cab's CB.

A couple of CALLS CRACKLE through the speaker, before he hears what he's waiting for; an airport fare in this area. At the intersection of Adams and Nine.

He picks up the mike.

RATH

This is 1242. I got it.

EXT. ADAMS AND NINE

It is a deserted intersection. The buildings are dark and some of the street lights are out.

The cab sits by itself, ENGINE RUNNING, its taillights glowing through the exhaust.

INT. CAB

Rath holds his gun cocked beneath his coat. His other hand grips the door handle.

As he waits, watching the intersection, he notices the cabby's ID pinned to the dashboard.

Leaving the gun in his jacket, he reaches for the ID card.

He rips it from the dash and as he drops it under the seat, the door behind him opens. Someone gets in and closes the door. Rath peers into the rearview mirror.

It is Bain.

For the first time we realize that the front and back of the cab is separated by an inch of bullet proof glass.

There is an awkward silence as Rath sits, unsure.

Bain looks at him.

BAIN

Is there a problem?

RATH

No. No problem. The airport, right?

BAIN

Right.

The cab pulls out of the intersection.

INT. CAB

Rath studies Bain. There is a thin line of blood down his temple. Bain is oblivious to it and pulls out his Gameboy, resuming his game of Tetris.

RATH

How'd you cut yourself?

Their voices are distorted through the small electric

amplifier set in the bullet proof glass near the metal money exchanger.

Bain touches the blood on his forehead, looking at it a bit surprised.

BAIN

Oh? Working. A little accident.

He wipes it off as best he can.

RATH

You a waiter? You look like a waiter.

Bain is uninterested.

BAIN

Yeah. Yeah, I'm a waiter.

RATH

Where?

BAIN

What?

RATH

What restaurant?

BAIN

Uh, Fontella's

RATH

So you're from around here?

BAIN

No. No I'm not.

Bain is getting agitated.

RATH

Where you from?

BAIN

What is this?

RATH

Not too good at small talk, eh?

BAIN

Look, I'm real tired and I'm not interested in fucking chit-chat.

RATH

I know just what you mean. I'm pretty beat myself.

Silence.

RATH

Since you looked like a waiter, I had to ask what restaurant because of what happened at the Trattoria Roma.

Bain looks up.

BAIN

Why? What happened?

RATH

Didn't you here all them sirens? It's been all over the radio. Some guy shot Leevio Valli, and a bunch of bystanders, in the Trattoria Roma.

BAIN

No shit.

RATH

Yeah, it's terrible. I mean Valli, and I don't care what office he's running for, the guy's a crook. He probably had it coming, but all the other people. Real sad.

BAIN

Yeah.

RATH

But they caught the guy. I heard it all. Sounded like he just went berserk, fucking loco. Shooting anybody. Drugs, probably.

BAIN

Probably.

RATH

I'd love to sit in that jury. Send that S.O.B. right to the chair.

Bain allows himself a bemused smile.

BAIN

Sizzle lean.

The cab passes the intersection for the airport.

Bain sits up.

BAIN

What are you doing?

RATH

What?

BAIN

That was Peterson back there. That goes to the expressway for the airport.

RATH

You're right. Talking too much again.

BAIN

Yeah well, you just blew your tip, pal.

RATH

What? You think I'm running you up?

BAIN

Just do your job.

Rath pulls over and slaps the cab in park.

BAIN

What are you doing?

RATH

Get out. You think I'm running you up? Get out.

BAIN

You can't --

RATH

The hell I can't. It's my cab. I don't like you. So, get the hell out!

Bain can't figure out what is wrong, when he sees the dashboard and the missing ID.

Their eyes meet in the rearview mirror.

BAIN

Holy fucking shit!

The cab rocks as both men move. Instantly guns fill their hands. Bain ripping out a .357 lifted from one of the dead cops. Rath rolls to the side whipping the gun free from his jacket.

Bain throws open the door, about to run, but stops. He looks at Rath. He wants him to run. Anyone who moves away from the bullet proof glass is dead.

Both men are silent, each holding the other in their gun sights.

Bain blinks, sweat forming on his lip.

BAIN

I get out, you got me.

Bain reaches over and closes the door. He smiles knowing it is the right move.

BAIN

Now what?

Rath calmly uncocks his gun.

RATH

We're both going to the airport.

Bain nods.

RATH

Sit back. Put your seatbelt on.

BAIN

No fucking way.

RATH

Okay, don't.

Bain thinks.

RATH

If either of us fucks around, the other can blow the fuel line.

He points his gun at the floor where the fuel line runs.

Bain sits back, aiming his gun, watching Rath.

Rath eases back into the driver's seat, also holding his gun on the fuel line.

He puts the car into drive and slides back into traffic, turning back towards Peterson.

They sit in silence, studying each other, when they hit the expressway. Bain can't contain himself, giddy on adrenaline.

BAIN

Jesus -- I'm being driven to the airport by Robert Rath.

He laughs.

BAIN

I can't believe this. You rolled
some cabby for the radio, then
waited for an airport fare.

He laughs again.

BAIN

Boy, that's fucking genius. You're
a fucking genius. Then you're just
sitting there, bullshitting with me.
Man, no way I coulda done that!

RATH

What's your name? We both know it's
not Nicholai.

BAIN

Holy shit! Robert Rath wants to
know my name.

He leans back. This is a big moment for him.

BAIN

Bain. Michael Bain.

RATH

How long have you been freelance?

BAIN

Two years. Two long fucking years.

Something occurs to him and he leans close to the window.

BAIN

Hey. What I don't get was why
didn't you take the shot inside the
restaurant? I mean you had me, a
free shot. That's what I would have
done.

RATH

It's just a shoot-out then. Sixty-
forty, at best. Not my odds.

BAIN

Sounds like chickenshit --

He laughs hard.

BAIN

Listen to me calling you
chickenshit!

He stops laughing and looks closely at the back of Rath's
head.

BAIN

Is that a wig? Shit, I hate wigs!
Wigs are the worst part of this job.
I'd rather dye my hair than wear a
wig.

Rath studies him.

RATH

You're wearing a wig now.

Bain chokes on his laugh.

BAIN

God damn are you good. Everyone
says you're so fucking good. I just
can't believe I'm still alive. If I
believed in God, I'd be down on my
knees. Right now -- Hey, how come
you just didn't plug us all when we
came through the door?

Rath does not answer. Bain smiles. He knows something
about Rath now; he doesn't like killing innocent people.

BAIN

Shit if I was you, back there --

He holds his gun up to the bulletproof glass behind Rath's
head.

BAIN

Game over.

He laughs.

BAIN

Do you mind if I ask you a couple of
business questions? You know I was
wondering how much you bid this job
at?

Rath says nothing.

BAIN

You don't have to tell me that.
It's just, I know my bid was low,
but was it too low? I mean, did I
seem like an amateur, like I didn't
know what I was doing?

RATH

We both know what you were doing.

Bain moves close to the glass again, checking out Rath's
gun.

BAIN

Smith and Wesson .22 with an eight inch silencer. Classic. When I first heard you used that, I thought, shit, that's a lady's gun. Now, it's all I use. Clean, real clean.

He looks at the gun, still trained at the floor.

BAIN

Would you really blow us?

Rath does not have to answer.

BAIN

Oh! I got a question. Jesus, this has been driving me crazy for years -- shit, listen to me. I sound like some fucking fanboy. I'm sorry, but I just got to ask you. Everybody talks about how you left the Agency and got into the business and then how you went after the Russian, Nicholai Talinkov --

RATH

Tachlinkov.

BAIN

Yeah, that's it. And he's like a fucking genius. They said he shaded you over and over. And in the end, he aced you again. Shaded and faded. They say he's living on some Greek island, but I say that's fucking bullshit. I say you're the best and that you planted his ass. Am I right?

Rath says nothing.

BAIN

I bet I'm right.

The car passes under a sign indicating the ramp for the Cleveland airport.

BAIN

Robert Bain, driving me! Jesus fucking Christ!

RATH

After those cops, you'll never be able to come back to Cleveland.

BAIN

Who the fuck cares about Cleveland.

Cleveland blows. What kind of marks
have they got here? Greasy mobster,
teamster or some hand job
politician. I want the money marks.
I want the marks that you get.

A long beat of silence.

The CAB RUMBLES up onto the "departures" ramp which
circles past all of the terminals.

BAIN

So what happens now?

RATH

We go around once.

BAIN

Bullshit.

He throws off his seatbelt.

BAIN

You tell me that we're gonna go
around once, then, while I'm
checking out the lay of the land,
you bail out and send me flying over
the bridge. Right? Am I right?

Rath doesn't answer, studying the terminals, noting the
police and airport security.

Rath studies the terrain. Bain studies Rath.

Soon they have passed the entire airport. Rath nods.
Steering the car through traffic in onto a circle
interchange that will bring them to the beginning.

Bain wipes the sweat from his face.

RATH

Okay.

BAIN

What? What's okay?

Rath begins to accelerate, rounding the interchange.

BAIN

What are you doing?

RATH

There's a sand barricade up ahead;
I'm going to ram this cab into it.
The cab has an airbag, odds are good
I'll survive. But with this steel
casing and bullet proof glass, odds

for you are not so good.

Bain laughs.

BAIN

Oh man, that's sweet. That's
fucking sweet.

The speedometer continues to climb.

BAIN

You're bluffing.

Rath says nothing. Ahead, at the ramp to the terminals,
is the sand barricade.

BAIN

You're fucking with me. You want me
to jump. I jump, you hit the brakes
and bang -- Game over.

The cab is flying at its target.

BAIN

No, no. Wait. You don't want me to
jump. You're going to jump. I'm
stuck back here until it's too late.
Wham -- over!

RATH

I know you're going to jump.

Bain looks at him and then at the barricade.

RATH

You're still young. Young enough to
still think you're indestructible.
Invincible. You believe with utter
certainty you can bail out at the
last second and survive.

The barricade hurtles toward them, rising up, filling the
windshield.

RATH

If you do survive, we'll see each
other again.

Bain screams, throwing open the door and hurling himself
out.

Rath jams on the brakes, TIRES SCREAMING, steering into
the steel side rail, banking the car into the drums of
sand as --

Bain hits the pavement, bouncing like a stone skipped
across water.

A driver hits his brakes, swerving, just missing him.

SAND EXPLODES from the impact and the cab bounces up over the median into the bus-only lanes as the driver's airbag balloons out of the steering wheel.

Bain rolls and rolls, finally stopping sprawled out like a piece of roadkill.

The cab careens up onto a curb, slamming into a pole, the radiator spitting out a cloud of WHISTLING STEAM.

Several cars lock up and collide to avoid Bain; one car stopping inches from him. A woman jumps out, rushing to the front of the car, but Bain is gone.

Police CARS ROAR up into the midst of the accident. One of them pulling alongside the demolished cab. The door is open, the airbag popped. Rath is gone.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

A large six flat leans out from a hill in San Francisco.

INT. ELECTRA'S APARTMENT - DAY

The apartment is always dark; heavy drapes cover the windows.

The dining and living rooms look like the control booth of a network television show, stacks of video monitors and consoles, cables, electric wiring, coils of fiber optic cord duct-taped to the floors, walls and ceilings. They snake through holes punched in the plaster walls and hang everywhere like some technological jungle.

At the center of this tangled web is ELECTRA, a beautiful athletic looking woman wearing only her underwear and a worn robe. She is curled up in an overstuffed chair, a bowl of popcorn in her lap.

On the monitors, she is watching what at first might be mistaken for a soap opera; a young couple are having an argument.

What is strange is that the angle never changes; a fish-eye lens staring down into the room.

MAN (V.O.)

I don't give a shit what your mother thinks. I'm not sleeping with your mother, I'm sleeping with you.

WOMAN (V.O.)

You won't be for long, with that attitude.

MAN (V.O.)

Jesus, Jennifer, if you're so god damned worried about your mother's approval, why don't you move back home so she can pat you on the head when you do something right.

ELECTRA

Jerk.

Jennifer is too stunned to say anything. There is a long pause that is not at all like television. It seems very real.

She starts to say something, but stops, trying to keep herself from crying.

MAN (V.O.)

Oh good. Go ahead and cry.

JENNIFER (WOMAN) (V.O.)

Would you please leave?

Electra lifts her head, smelling the air.

ELECTRA

Mmm, smell that, Nikita?

Nikita, Electra's black cat, is stretched lazily across the top of a chair, her tail twitching absently. Every corner of the chair has been clawed open.

Electra reaches for the control board and throws a series of switches.

The monitors flicker as the image changes. We are now looking down into a kitchen. A stove is beneath us, almost like a cooking show, where a round woman is taking out a tray of chocolate chip cookies.

Electra smells them again, smiling as she inhales.

ELECTRA

I hope she saves some for us.

There is a BANG, a DOOR SLAMMING in another apartment, and a MAN YELLING.

Electra switches back to Jennifer's apartment.

The man is still in the living room, but Jennifer is gone.

MAN (V.O.)

Do you think slamming doors is going

to help work this out?

Electra punches a command into a keyboard. Several of the screens change, showing different rooms of the same apartment. Jennifer is in the bedroom, lying on the bed sobbing, her face buried in a pillow.

MAN (V.O.)

I can slam doors too!

We hear the front DOOR SLAM in the hall outside of Electra's apartment and through the monitor speakers. His stomping FOOTSTEPS FADE as he storms down the hall and staircase out of the building.

Electra switches all of the screens to Jennifer.

She watches and listens to her cry alone in her bedroom.

Electra reaches out; her fingers lightly touch the monitor screen.

INT. APARTMENT HALL

Electra's front door opens slowly. Timidly, she steps out of her apartment and walks down the hall until she is standing in front of Jennifer's door.

She starts to knock, but stops herself. She isn't sure she should do this.

She paces, then turns to the door.

She knocks, so softly it's almost impossible to hear.

She stands, trying to force herself to knock again, when she hears Jennifer.

JENNIFER (O.S.)

Hello? Ken, is that you?

Electra panics.

The door knob turns, the door opens and JENNIFER looks out into the hall. It is empty.

INT. ELECTRA'S APARTMENT

On the monitors, Electra watches Jennifer pick up the phone.

JENNIFER (V.O.)

Hi, Mom, it's me. Ken and I just had a big fight.

Electra's PAGER suddenly SOUNDS. She shuts down the screens and pulls out the pager, checking the number.

ELECTRA

Crap.

INT. ELECTRA'S APARTMENT

There is a system set up that is not unlike Rath's system; all of the same components, though the equipment is bigger, more powerful and less portable.

On a table there is a bank of phones, several cellular. Electra is talking on one.

WOMAN (V.O.)

Electra, they are not paying you to sit at home and watch television.

Electra is fiddling with five plastic computer disks; each has a MicroCell trademark and is labeled "Back-Up."

ELECTRA

I wasn't watching television.

WOMAN (V.O.)

The point is, they are paying for information. Real information. Not tooth paste brands. Not whether he wads of folds his toilet paper. And no 16 hours of recorded phone sex. You are wasting everyone's time with this shit.

ELECTRA

I thought it was interesting --

WOMAN (V.O.)

God damnit, Electra. This is not a game. This is business.

ELECTRA

Right. In my hands I have five back-up disks he made of all of his work last night.

WOMAN (V.O.)

Jesus! Why didn't you tell me?

ELECTRA

I'll make my usual arrangements and expect my usual bonus.

WOMAN (V.O.)

Electra --

ELECTRA

A pleasure doing business with you.

She hangs up.

INT. LOBBY

Electra comes down the stairs.

Outside the large glass door she sees KEN, Jennifer's boyfriend, leaving.

On the lobby floor is a letter, apparently slipped under the door, addressed to Jennifer Morgan.

Electra looks out the front door window, making sure that Ken is gone.

She picks up the letter and stuffs it into her pocket.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

Rath is at his computer system.

He is staring at it, like it is a living thing, a person that he despises, the blank screen reflecting his own face. It is an effort to bring himself to touch the keyboard, to type in his code.

He waits.

CONTRACTOR/SCREEN

Hello, Robert.

Rath wants to type something but hesitates.

CONTRACTOR/SCREEN

I know what happened.

RATH

I bet you fucking know!

CONTRACTOR/SCREEN

It cost us.

Rath jumps out of his chair, screaming at the screen.

RATH

I give a fuck? I'm done! I quit!
Do you fucking hear me! I'm fucking gone!

CONTRACTOR/SCREEN

He stole another contract.

Rath turns from the monitor, pacing. Trying to collect himself.

RATH

I'm being set up. Fucking set up!

He looks at the chess board. He hovers over it, the pattern completely familiar.

RATH

Is this how it went, Nick?

CONTRACTOR/SCREEN

Robert? Robert?

Rath turns back to the screen, speaking as he types.

RATH/SCREEN

How did he know?

CONTRACTOR/SCREEN

Know what?

RATH/SCREEN

The fucking contract! How in the fuck did he know.

A long beat.

CONTRACTOR/SCREEN

Such language in front of a lady.

Rath still talking and typing.

RATH/SCREEN

I don't know what the fuck you are.

CONTRACTOR/SCREEN

I know. It was a joke.

Rath stands, no longer typing.

RATH

A joke? A joke?

Rath takes out his gun and levels it at the face of the screen.

RATH

You think this is a fucking joke?

CONTRACTOR/SCREEN

\$1,000,000.

Rath looks at the number.

CONTRACTOR/SCREEN

That's the bonus on the contract.

Rath puts the gun down.

RATH/SCREEN

Deadline?

CONTRACTOR/SCREEN

Tomorrow. The buyer is Japanese.
His retirement a condition of the
bonus.

The FAX MACHINE COMES TO LIFE, printing an inky image.

RATH/SCREEN

Who is the mark?

CONTRACTOR/SCREEN

Freelancer. A woman. Surveillance
specialist.

RATH

A player?

CONTRACTOR/SCREEN

We have an M.O... Her system is
protected by her 'pussy virus.'

Rath looks at the fax; almost entirely black except for
the wide, slit-iris cat eyes.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO AIRPORT - DAY

There is a SCREECH and BLAST of ENGINES as a 747 touches
down, heat rising off the tarmac.

INT. SAN FRANCISCO AIRPORT - DAY

Several passengers walk through the gate into the
terminal.

Across from the gate, Rath sits in a grungy airport
cafeteria, reading a folded paper.

He is wearing an airport security uniform, a gun holstered
to his side.

Taped inside the newspaper is a faxed Interpol photograph
of a Japanese man wanted for "industrial espionage."

At the gate, five Japanese men emerge. Leading the group
is the man in Rath's photo. The other four are obviously
muscle.

Rath watches as they walk down the crowded terminal hall.

When they are almost out of sight, he folds his newspaper and begins to follow.

His pace and manner is that of a cautious predator. His focus shifts continually from face to face, expecting to find Bain's.

His hand hovers near his gun.

Ahead of him a thin young man, wearing a long blue trench coat, stops. Rath cannot see his face.

The man starts toward a drinking fountain.

Rath catches a glimpse of his face. It could be Bain, but he isn't sure.

The young man bends over and slurps at the stream of water. He rises into the barrel of Rath's .22.

A mouthful of water coughs from his mouth.

It is not Bain and in the next instant, the gun is gone.

RATH

Sorry. My mistake.

Rath continues. The young man is unable to move.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO AIRPORT - DAY

The five men stride through the automated terminal doors and towards a waiting limousine.

Further down, Rath, now wearing a black T-shirt and jeans, exits and hails a cab.

INT. CAB

RATH

Hi. Up ahead my boss is in that black limo. We're not sure which hotel we're at, so could you just follow them?

CABBY

Sure.

Rath sits back studying the faces exiting the terminal as the cab pulls away.

INT. LIMOUSINE

The five men sit in silence. Strangely, a PHONE begins to

RING.

The older man, whose name is AKIRA, opens his briefcase, removing a cellular phone.

AKIRA

Hello?

We hear Electra's voice. She speaks in Japanese; he uses English.

ELECTRA (V.O.)

I trust your flight was comfortable?

AKIRA

Your Japanese is excellent.

ELECTRA (V.O.)

Tell the driver: the Hyatt Hotel.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Electra is pacing, talking into the cellular phone.

ELECTRA

I'll call you again in twenty minutes.

She punches a button and shoves the antennae down.

The hotel room looks like her apartment. There is a computer and a series of monitors stacked on top of the wood laminate desk. Cables whip and wind across the carpeted floor to the central air duct.

The panel has been removed and intertwined black and gray coaxial run up inside the duct.

Immediately, Electra is busy finishing her preparations. She snaps in several power cords and the system comes on-line.

On the monitor screen, we see an empty hotel room that looks exactly like the one she is in.

INT. CAB

Rath stares out the window, watching the surrounding traffic, the limo still in sight.

Something occurs to him and he looks down at the folded newspaper where he had hid the contract file.

He flips past several documents before finding what he's looking for; the cat.

He pulls the dark fax of Nikita and stares at it.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

Laying on the bed, in a patch of sunlight, Nikita watches Electra rush about.

Electra grabs the sheet from under the comforter and yanks it out.

ELECTRA

Excuse me, your Highness.

Nikita casually walks off the bed.

Electra takes the sheet to the open duct and tears off a long piece of duct-tape.

EXT. HYATT HOTEL

The limousine pulls up in the lavish circular driveway.

The cab pulls in behind it.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

Electra checks her watch and picks up the cellular phone.

INT. HYATT LOBBY

The Japanese men stand in a cluster looking very rigid and uncomfortable.

The BRIEFCASE RINGS.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

Electra is pacing again.

ELECTRA

Room 1414.

INT. HYATT LOBBY

With several other guests, the Japanese men crowd into an elevator. The doors close.

Across the lobby, Rath enters, walking past the elevators.

INT. ELEVATOR

As the elevator rises, we begin to hear a SOUND, a familiar sound.

Cramped in the corner is Bain. He is PLAYING "TETRIS," wearing dark sunglasses and a WALKMAN PUMPING SPEED METAL into his ears.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

Electra continues to pace, checking the monitors.

INT. ROOM SERVICE KITCHEN

At the switchboard, a YOUNG HOTEL EMPLOYEE wearing an operator's headset, takes a late breakfast order, typing the order in the hotel computer.

YOUNG MAN (YOUNG HOTEL EMPLOYEE)

Yes, sir. That'll be up in about thirty minutes. You're welcome.

He turns around and Rath is right behind him.

INT. ELEVATOR

The fourteenth floor; the BELL CHIMES, the doors slide open and the clump of Japanese men get out.

Just as the doors begin to close, Bain steps out.

INT. HALL

Bain follows them down the hall, still PLAYING the GAME. There is again an ominous sense of predator moving in on its prey.

As Akira finds 1414 and opens the door, another door burst open, a large family, heading for the pool.

The moment is gone; the Japanese men close the door and Bain continues down the hall again, PLAYING the GAME.

INT. HOTEL SUITE

When the Japanese men enter the suite, we realize that this is the image on Electra's monitors. Surveillance camcorders and microphones are mounted in various locations to display every inch of the room. The group hesitates for a moment, under the electronic eyes.

The four goons have their hands in their jackets.

A small LAPTOP COMPUTER sits on the coffee table HUMMING SOFTLY. It is the only noise in the room until a speaker crackles.

ELECTRA/SPEAKER (V.O.)

Good morning, gentlemen. I apologize for the arrangement, but we all know those aren't business cards you're reaching for. If anyone leaves this room, the deal's off.

INT. ROOM SERVICE KITCHEN

The operator is unconscious, slumped in the corner.

Rath studies the hotel computer screen intently, the information rolling by.

We see that it is the previous night's room service receipts.

RATH

One vegetarian plate and a can of tuna fish. Room 1014.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

Electra stands in front of the monitors watching the men as she speaks into the microphone.

ELECTRA

Ten thousand dollars per disk.
Insert the first disk now.

On the monitor, we see Akira at the coffee table shove the first disk into the laptop disk drive.

INT. HOTEL SUITE

Akira turns from the small computer screen and nods at a goon, who drops a green brick of bound one hundred dollar bills, down the central air duct.

The little clock on the laptop ticks away as it copies.

INT. HYATT HALL

Bain is sitting on a bench entrenched in a fevered game of "TETRIS."

Suddenly, he stops.

BAIN

Yes!

The display of the game reads "Game Over" and congratulates Bain on a new high score.

Bain stands, smiling. He puts the game in his pocket and starts down the hall.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

Electra is crouched at the open duct, grabbing another stack of money, stuffing it into her bag.

A LOUD BANG EXPLODES out of the SPEAKERS and she looks up at the monitor.

INT. HOTEL SUITE

The lock on the door has been broken and standing in the frame is Bain.

BAIN

Surprise!

He raises his arm, his GUN spitting SILENT BULLETS.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

Electra stares in horror at the monitors as Bain grabs the nearest bodyguard, FIRING a SHOT into his belly.

ELECTRA

Oh, God.

INT. HOTEL SUITE

Another SHOT and the second bodyguard falls. The other two draw their handguns and Bain shields himself with the lifeless body of his first victim.

They FIRE at Bain but are unable to hit him.

Bain squeezes off TWO MORE SHOTS and the two men fall dead. He lets his human shield fall to the ground and levels his gun on the shaking Akira.

AKIRA

Don't kill me.

Bain looks at him and smiles, then FIRES.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

Electra leaps at the computer, ripping the cord from the modem.

Bain sees the fiber optic cable and looks right into it.

BAIN (V.O.)

Tricky. Boy, you just can't trust anyone these days.

He licks the lens, leaving a smear of saliva.

She stuffs the disks into her bag. She puts Nikita in her "travel kitty" and charges for the door, grabbing her coat.

Flinging it over her shoulder, she does not notice the letter from Ken slip out of her pocket as she bolts from the room.

INT. HALL

Electra explodes through the door and suddenly freezes. She is staring down the barrel of Rath's .22.

RATH

Don't be stupid and you will live.

The elevator behind Rath opens and closes against a hotel lobby ashtray. He waves her into the elevator with his gun.

RATH

Hurry.

EXT. HYATT HOTEL - DAY

Electra's black CAR ROARS out of the garage, onto the open street.

INT. HYATT HOTEL - DAY

The door swings open. From the hall we can hear the familiar BEEPING of the COMPUTER GAME. The room, 1014, is the same as Electra had left it when she ran out.

Jutting from a shadow on the floor is the corner of Ken's letter.

INT. ELECTRA'S CAR

Electra drives, obviously nervous, as Rath watches out the rear window.

RATH

Turn here.

No one follows. He turns back to her.

RATH

How many bodies were there?

He checks his watch.

ELECTRA

What?

RATH

He has to clean up. How many bodies were there?

ELECTRA

Um, five.

RATH

One hour per man.

Rath sets the timer on his watch for five hours.

INT. HYATT HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Bain has returned to room 1414. Wearing rubber gloves, he clicks open a black leather attache and pulls out a can of rug cleaner.

He picks up the phone for room service.

BAIN

Hi. This is room 1414 --

Behind him, in the bathroom mirror, we see one of the Japanese men hanging from the shower by his feet. He is naked.

BAIN

Yes, could you send up a pot of coffee and my friends are going to need some more towels. Thanks.

He hangs up the phone and walks over to one of the large blood stains on the carpet. He points the rug cleaner at the stain covering it with white foam.

INT. ELECTRA'S CAR

Rath sees the entrance for the expressway.

RATH

Get on the expressway.

ELECTRA

Where are we going?

Rath glances back.

RATH

Nowhere yet.

Electra turns onto the highway and NIKITA HOWLS from the "travel kitty" in the back seat.

ELECTRA

Nikita, hush.

NIKITA wants out and HOWLS again.

ELECTRA

She won't stop unless you let her out.

Rath reaches back and opens the box. Nikita springs into the front seat onto Rath's lap.

RATH

Nikita? She helped me find you.

ELECTRA

What? How did you know I had a cat?

RATH

Took a guess. Lucky for you, I guessed right.

ELECTRA

Who the fuck are you? Who do you work for?

RATH

I work for the government.

ELECTRA

Yeah?

She studies his face, his eyes.

ELECTRA

Bullshit.

RATH

Yeah.

ELECTRA

You're one of them, aren't you? A fucking pro.

RATH

I'm part of the game, just like you.

Electra pounds the steering wheel.

ELECTRA

Jesus!

He reaches into the back seat, grabbing her bag.

ELECTRA

What do you think you're doing?

Rath plucks out the bundles of money.

RATH

Twenty large? That's all?

ELECTRA

What do you mean, 'that's all'?
What in the hell do you know?

RATH

The bonus on the contract for you
was one million dollars.

Electra seems ready to jump out of her skin. The speedometer is floating around 90.

RATH

Slow down.

He pulls out the disks.

RATH

I figure that means these are worth
ten times that, maybe more.

ELECTRA

Ten million --

RATH

Now you understand why I'm here.

Electra wants to scream. The speedometer is climbing over
100.

RATH

I really think you should slow down.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

The room is immaculate; near the door, several over-sized

suitcases line the wall.

Bain is sitting at the desk. His WALKMAN is on, MUSIC BLASTING, as he flips casually through the telephone directory.

His finger eases down a column stopping at "Morgan Jennifer."

There is a KNOCK at the door.

He smiles and tears out the page.

There is another, LOUDER KNOCK which Bain hears this time. He TURN OFF the WALKMAN and opens the door; a BELLBOY is waiting with a luggage cart.

BELLBOY

Hello, sir. Have you some luggage you need carried.

Bain gives him a wink and a smile.

BAIN

Indeed I do.

INT. ELECTRA'S CAR - NIGHT

The red "low fuel" light is on.

ELECTRA

Now what?

RATH

Turn off the engine.

Electra twists the ignition and the CAR DIES. Rath glances around and we see the car is parked in a gas station.

ELECTRA

You want me to pump?

RATH

No, stay in the car. I want you to understand something. If I intended to kill you, you would already be dead.

Electra says nothing.

He reaches over and takes the car keys.

When he is out of the car, Electra slowly releases the strangle-hold she had on the steering wheel.

ELECTRA

Okay, Nikita, stay calm, think,
breathe, think...

Electra checks the rear view mirror, listening as Rath pumps the gas. Her eyes flash down to her bag.

Outside, Rath watches Electra through the windows. She appears motionless.

The electric gas counter races like a stop watch.

In the car, Electra eases her hand into her bag.

The tank full, Rath re-hangs the pump. He walks around the car and heads for the station.

Electra waits until his back is turned. She pulls her tool pouch from her bag, throws it open and finds her wire stripper. Reaching under the dash, she yanks out a tangled handful of wire.

She looks up; Rath is inside paying.

ELECTRA

Come on, come on, it's a cake walk.

Her fingers fly with surgical precision, snipping, stripping, twisting.

Rath steps out of the station as her head pops up, looking for him. It takes only a second for him to realize what she is doing.

RATH

Oh shit.

He runs at the car as she strips the last set of wires and strikes them; the BATTERY GRINDS.

ELECTRA

Please, please.

He is almost there when the ENGINE FIRES. She stomps on the gas, ramming the shift into drive.

TIRES SQUEALING, the car swerves forward as Rath slams into it. He bounces backward, falling to the ground.

The car fishtails away, accelerating as Rath rolls to one knee, his gun automatically in his hand. He draws a bead, but, he does not shoot.

With a concerted effort, he puts the gun away.

RATH

Dammit.

EXT. ELECTRA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Electra's car is parked out front.

She unlocks the lobby door and drags herself inside.

INT. ELECTRA'S APARTMENT LOBBY

Standing at the mailboxes flipping through her mail is Jennifer Morgan. What she was hoping for is not there. She looks up and sees Electra.

JENNIFER

Excuse me --

Electra stops.

JENNIFER

You live here, don't you?

Electra nods.

JENNIFER

I'm sorry, this may sound really weird, but my friend told me he slipped a letter under the door here and I was wondering if you happened to see it?

Electra is in a daze, her hand moving into her pocket.

ELECTRA

Letter?

JENNIFER

Yeah. He said he saw a woman with dark hair going into the building when he dropped it off.

ELECTRA

No. I don't have it.

Electra's mouth opens and she backs away. Jennifer is bothered by her reaction and she doesn't push it.

JENNIFER

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to -- I'm sorry.

She shrugs and unlocks the interior door, leaving Electra in the lobby.

Electra watches her, as her hand moves from pocket to pocket.

A worried expression tightens her face; the letter is gone.

She opens the interior door, following Jennifer up the stairs.

INT. STAIRCASE

Electra climbs the stairs, her mind pouring through the possibilities, filled with fear.

By the time Electra reaches the top floor, Jennifer is entering her apartment.

Electra hurries past Jennifer's door to her own.

INT. ELECTRA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Electra flies across the living room to the monitors.

She clicks them on, putting on Jennifer's channel.

On the screen we see Jennifer in her living room checking her phone messages. One from her mother.

Electra throws a few switches so that Jennifer's entire apartment is in front of her.

On one of the monitors we see a shadow slide across the oak floor as something moves along the edge of the room.

Jennifer has moved to the bathroom and is drawing a bath.

Electra clamps her hand over her mouth when he steps out. Bain moves into the dining room where Jennifer had just been.

Wearing rubber surgeon's gloves, he picks up the mail that she had dropped on the table and sorts through it.

Bain moves about the apartment with complete indifference to Jennifer's presence; as if he were invisible, as though he knew she couldn't see him.

He moves into a room, just as she moves out.

Electra watches, dizzy, sick with terror, but she is unable to turn away.

Bain searches through a desk drawer, while Jennifer starts undressing for her bath.

He walks down the hall and stands outside of the bathroom. If Jennifer would turn around she would see him.

Electra is about to run, to call out when --

Something catches Bain's eye.

He moves into the bedroom, and is turned so that he is looking straight up into the camera.

He inches towards it, not sure what it is. The fiber optic cable is hidden in the light fixture hanging over the bed.

Staring at it, he is looking right at Electra.

Bain steps up onto the bed, his face distorting as he moves close to the fish-eye lens. Poking it with his finger, he realizes what it is. A warped smile stretches across his face as he whispers --

BAIN (V.O.)

Oh, you sick little bitch --

Electra tears away from the screen, panic seizing hold of her.

She rips entire drawers out of her dresser, dumping them into a suitcase, stuffing in anything that looks important. She grabs Nikita in the "travel kitty."

EXT. BACK PORCH

The door opens and Electra jumps out, slamming it behind her as --

Bain turns from the back stairs.

She leaps back inside as he whips out his GUN, PUMPING TWO HOLES in the door.

INT. ELECTRA'S APARTMENT

She scrambles from the kitchen, throwing her suitcase, still clutching the "travel kitty," as --

The back DOOR EXPLODES from its hinges, Bain charging, FIRING his GUN.

BULLETS HISSING past her, Electra crashes through the front door into the hall.

INT. HALL

The stairs are at the far end. She is only halfway, when --

Rath rises up the stairs, his gun cocked.

Electra drops to the floor as --

Behind her, Bain barrels from the apartment.

Rath FIRES.

The wood DOOR SPLINTERS, BULLET HOLES surrounding Bain.
Off balance, he lunges back into the apartment.

Rath continues FIRING, grabbing hold of Electra.

They run down the stairs.

EXT. REAR STAIRCASE

Bain leaps down the flights.

EXT. ALLEY

Bain rushes into the street, looking in every direction.
They are gone.

BAIN

Fuck me!

EXT. LARGE CHAIN HOTEL - NIGHT

Somewhere in the city.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

Electra and Rath enter the room together but they are both
immediately alone.

She walks across the room to a chair in the corner,
curling into it even as Nikita jumps up and curls into her
lap.

He sets his briefcase on the table at the opposite end of
the room and sits.

They watch each other. Silence.

Between them is the liquor cabinet. Rath knows a good
idea when he sees one.

RATH

Want a drink?

Her face is as expressionless as Nikita's.

He pours himself a very large bourbon and slugs it down.
Takes a deep breath, then pours himself another one.

RATH

Okay...

He returns to his table with his drink.

RATH

I'm not good at this sort of thing,
but we don't have a lot of time, so
I'll just go ahead and get started.
First: you. I ask myself, 'What is
she thinking?'

Her body tightens, coils.

RATH

Simple. She's scared. She's almost
been killed twice and now she is
alone in a room with a man that she
believes is an... assassin.

Another deep pull on the bourbon.

RATH

Furthermore she was brought here not
entirely on her own accord which
only increases her fear and
suspicion. Thus, as long as she is
afraid, her first, maybe her only
thought will be escape. Does that
leave me any other option?

He slugs down the rest of his drink and stands, whipping
out his gun.

RATH

No.

Crossing the room, he turns the gun around and offers it
to her. She looks at it. Back at him.

He puts it on the bed beside her, turns his back and walks
to the bar.

She picks up the gun.

RATH

The gun is silenced. She could
shoot me right now.

She stands, Nikita jumping from her lap.

RATH

She could take the car and be far

from here before the maid comes in
the morning, but --

She starts squeezing OFF ROUNDS; the LAMP EXPLODES, the
CHAIRS around him ERUPT, tufts of white stuffing leaping
into the air.

ELECTRA

Shut up!

He freezes, bottle in one hand, glass in the other.

ELECTRA

Stop trying to tell me what I'm
thinking!

She moves closer to him, the gun squeezed in her fist.

ELECTRA

I'll tell you what you're thinking
-- you think I'm not going to shoot
you but right now you're not so
sure, are you?

A slight shake of the head, no.

ELECTRA

You're thinking that maybe it was a
mistake to give me this gun, that
maybe I'm not going to think about
things logically because I'm a woman
and I'm freaked out and I'm going to
do something impulsive and
irrational -- right?

She FIRES the GUN to both sides of his head. He's
surprised to be alive.

ELECTRA

You don't know shit about me! Now
sit down!

He returns to his chair and sits with the same expression
she had worn sitting a moment ago.

She opens the cabinet and grabs one of the sample bottles
of liquor. She sucks it all down and throws the bottle
across the room.

Grabbing another, she sits on the edge of the bed.

ELECTRA

Okay. How did you find me?

RATH

You're the computer hacker, you tell
me.

ELECTRA

You didn't know anything about me.

Nikita rubs up against her leg.

ELECTRA

Nikita?

RATH

Yellow Pages. V for veterinarian.
There aren't that many.

She nods, slurping at her bottle.

ELECTRA

You're one of them, aren't you?

RATH

'Them'?

ELECTRA

An assassin?

RATH

Until a minute ago.

ELECTRA

What does that mean?

RATH

If I still was what I used to be,
you would not be pointing that at
me.

Electra eyes him, considers shooting him right now.

ELECTRA

Who is that other guy?

RATH

Another contractor.

ELECTRA

Someone hired both of you?

RATH

No. They hired Bain. The contract
would have been mine, but Bain took
it from me as he took the previous
one.

ELECTRA

So this is something between you and
him?

RATH

He stole the contract knowing that
I would come after him.

ELECTRA

Why?

RATH

Because he is trying to retire me.

ELECTRA

He wants to kill you?

RATH

Yes.

ELECTRA

Why?

RATH

The nature of the business. You
remove your competition.

ELECTRA

And you want to use me to get him?

RATH

Yes.

ELECTRA

Forget it!

RATH

We don't have a choice.

She FIRES the GUN, pocking the wall behind him.

ELECTRA

Don't tell me I don't have a choice!

RATH

Right.

ELECTRA

I'm two seconds away from making my
choice which means you've got two
seconds to tell me why I shouldn't
shoot you.

RATH

It's simple. You need me. I need
you. And we will both need money.

ELECTRA

I don't need you to get the money --
my money!

RATH

If it hadn't been for me, you would
be dead.

She's up pacing, knowing there is some truth in that.

ELECTRA

I don't need the money.

RATH

This is something that is never
going to end. You can never work in
the business again with this
contract, because he will find you.
To survive, you have to go into deep
hiding. And that's going to take
money, a lot of money.

ELECTRA

Then you can have the disks and I'll
just walk out that door --

RATH

If you walk out that door, Bain will
still come after you.

ELECTRA

Why?

RATH

Because he took a contract on you.
He'll come for you and he'll find
you.

ELECTRA

You don't know that -- you're trying
to scare me.

RATH

No. It's the truth. I know what
you are. Like me, like Bain, you're
a ghost, you're not part of the real
world. You don't have a social
security number. You don't pay
taxes. You've probably used ten
different names over the last ten
years. A long time ago something
probably happened, something illegal
and you ran, you disappeared and it
was easy. You think you can do it
again. But I'm telling you, fading
from the law is nothing. No matter
what you do, where you go, I swear
to you that Bain will find you.

ELECTRA

How?

RATH

Right now, as we sit here, he is tearing through your apartment. He is digging through your drawers, emptying your closets. He will take your telephone and address books, your appointment books. If you keep a diary, he is reading it. He'll go into the kitchen and find out what kind of food you eat, liquor you drink, cigarettes you smoke. In the bathroom he will find any prescription drugs you take and where you get them filled. If you have video tape or recordings he will watch and listen to all of them.

She is coming unglued. Imagining him watching her tapes, going through her possessions. She is moving, pacing, ready to explode.

ELECTRA

Oh Jesus Jesus...

RATH

He will know everything about you. Everything. I know, because I've done it. Once you've been inside a mark's home, you're in their head. If you're any good, you'll find the mark in a week, and Bain is good because I was the best and I couldn't take him.

She whirls and starts FIRING the GUN, firing it everywhere, fear and anger rocketing out of her in WHISTLING hot wads of LEAD.

When she stops, he starts to say something but she levels the gun at him.

ELECTRA

Shut up! All right! You've said enough!

She forces herself back, grabbing handfuls of the sample bottles.

ELECTRA

I need to think... To be alone.

With the gun and an armful of booze and Nikita following at her feet, she goes into the bathroom and slams the door.

INT. BATHROOM

She locks the door and then collapses. Her body seems to fold up onto itself as she slides down the wall; the GUN and the BOTTLES falling from her arms, CLATTERING SOFTLY on the bath rug as she buries her face in her hands.

INT. BEDROOM

Very mechanically, Rath begins setting up his chess board, putting the pieces into the same positions. It is a ritual, and with it he enters a kind of trance.

From the bathroom, almost inaudible, he hears Electra **CRYING**.

INT. BATHROOM

With her head now buried in her arms and knees, she is sobbing, her body rocking. The crying seems very similar to Jennifer's; a complete emotional release.

INT. BEDROOM

Rath stares at the board. The CRYING grows LOUDER. He stands and walks to the door. He starts to knock but stops himself.

Like Electra with Jennifer, Rath would like to help, he just has no idea how to. He turns back to the desk, to his chess game.

INT. BATHROOM

Her eyes are now burning red. She stops crying long enough to suck down an entire sample of Scotch. Nikita rubs against her and she strokes her.

ELECTRA

Oh shit, Nikita.

INT. BEDROOM

Rath is setting up his computer system. He hears the TUB **FILLING UP**.

INT. BATHROOM

Nikita jumps up onto the toilet seat and starts drinking.

ELECTRA

Cheers.

Electra finishes another sample and drops it to the floor where we see that many of the bottles are now empty.

In the tub, steam rising off the surface, she wrings out a wash cloth and covers her face, sinking deeper into the water.

INT. BEDROOM

When Electra comes out of the bathroom, Rath is again at his chess game. She sits down across from him and sets the gun on the table between them.

Rath looks up at her.

ELECTRA

Listen -- I don't even know your name.

RATH

Rath. Robert Rath.

ELECTRA

Electra.

RATH

Just Electra?

ELECTRA

Yeah.

RATH

As in daughter of Agamemnon?

ELECTRA

No. Just Electra.

The conversation dies.

ELECTRA

What I'm trying to say is that -- I'm not sure I can do this, help you, unless I know more about you.

RATH

What do you want to know?

ELECTRA

If Bain hadn't taken the contract on me, would you have?

He stares at her.

RATH

No.

ELECTRA

Why?

RATH

Because I'm done.

ELECTRA

This is crazy. I can't trust you.
You can't trust me. How can we
possibly help each other?

They sit in silence, the gun and the chess game lying
between them.

RATH

Do you play?

She looks at the chess board.

ELECTRA

With computers.

RATH

It's not the same, is it?

ELECTRA

Better than playing with yourself.

He smiles.

RATH

I had an opponent.

She understands that he is trying to tell her something.

ELECTRA

Had?

RATH

He was Russian. Nicholai
Tachlinkov. A legend in the
business when I was just starting.
I admired him. When I heard he
loved chess I became obsessed with
the game.

Electra studies the board.

ELECTRA

He was white?

Rath nods.

ELECTRA

It looks like white's game.

RATH

We played with a code using The New York Times obituaries. Over three years we played twelve matches. I never won.

ELECTRA

Why didn't you finish this game?

She reaches over and lifts a White Knight and takes a Bishop. Rath counters, taking her Knight.

RATH

He was... taken.

ELECTRA

He was killed.

Rath nods.

Throughout the entire conversation they continue to play out the chess game.

ELECTRA

By who?

A long beat.

RATH

I killed him.

ELECTRA

Why?

RATH

Because that's how it works. That's what it's about. He was the best. He was on top.

ELECTRA

Where you wanted to be?

RATH

Yes. As soon as you get into this business, all you can think about is getting to the top. That's all there is. Until then, there is nothing. You are nothing.

ELECTRA

How did you get into the business?

RATH

The same way everyone does; the government, the Agency.

ELECTRA

The C.I.A.?

RATH

More or less.

ELECTRA

How old were you?

RATH

They recruited me when I was in high school.

ELECTRA

Jesus -- why?

RATH

Languages. I was already fluent in nine languages.

ELECTRA

You were like a boy genius?

RATH

Some people said that. I never thought so.

ELECTRA

Why not?

RATH

I was just different.

ELECTRA

You went from high school to the Agency?

RATH

No. I graduated from George Washington University. Then I entered the Agency training program.

ELECTRA

They didn't give you a choice, did they?

RATH

No, they didn't.

ELECTRA

But you knew what they were training you for?

RATH

Of course. I was going to be James Bond.

ELECTRA

Ahhhh...

RATH

They are very good at what they do. It's very seductive. The training, the weapons, the travel --

ELECTRA

The exotic women.

RATH

Women? No... not really.

ELECTRA

Why not?

RATH

Women... I don't... I don't want to talk about women.

ELECTRA

Why?

RATH

Because you are a women.

ELECTRA

Why did you leave the Agency?

RATH

The same reason everyone does. You hear your name on C-SPAN and you realize you're a skeleton in someone's closet and they're coming to bury you.

ELECTRA

They tried to kill you?

RATH

Yes. It didn't matter much to them as long as I disappeared.

ELECTRA

Then you went freelance?

RATH

The only thing different about the private sector is that a General Contractor takes less of a percentage than the government, so you make more money. Then once you make the transition, you realize you were never working for the government; it was always the private sector, the vested interests

and it's the same vested interests
that continue to buy your plane
tickets.

ELECTRA

Tell me about the first time.

RATH

My first take?

ELECTRA

Yes.

RATH

Why?

ELECTRA

Because I want to know.

RATH

It was... mechanical. Very precise.
It was exactly like the training
drill except for the adrenaline.

ELECTRA

Are they usually like that?

RATH

No. Just the first one.

ELECTRA

After that?

RATH

They become complicated... messy.

ELECTRA

Did it ever bother you?

RATH

Did it ever bother James Bond?

ELECTRA

That's fiction.

RATH

This is fiction! Don't you see
that? This is another reality. And
the people that come into the world
to play this game -- nobody forces
them! They're here, they know the
rules, the stakes, the risks! Do
you understand what I am saying? No
one is innocent -- including you!

ELECTRA

Does that mean it didn't bother you?

Rath leans back and stares at her. She waits.

RATH

You get a job swinging a hammer, the first day you get a blister, it tears open, it bleeds and it stays sore a long time. You keep swinging the hammer, you get a good hard callous that covers that spot and it never bothers you again.

Electra says nothing. He leans forward and slides a rook into her back row.

RATH

Check.

He leans back.

RATH

Is that what you wanted to hear? Something cold blooded... something remorseless...

ELECTRA

No. Something honest.

A beat. Rath likes this woman.

She moves her Queen.

ELECTRA

Mate.

He smiles.

ELECTRA

I hope your plan is better than your game.

INT. CHEAP HOTEL - NIGHT

The room is ugly. Shag carpeting, wood paneling and polyester patterned curtains.

We hear a COMPUTER KEYBOARD CLICKING away as we MOVE ACROSS a table. The hotel phone is in a modem, which is held together with duct tape. Between the modem and the computer is a scrambler constructed out of a series of naked circuit boards.

It is a very similar set up to Rath's, only it has been put together with a fraction of the resources.

Bain sits, typing at the computer, his shirt off. Beside

the desk-top is a six pack of Old Style beer, a bag of Doritos and his Gameboy.

On the floor, disassembled neatly on a small white towel is his cleaned gun.

Bain finishes punching in a code, sits back and sucks down his beer.

CONTRACTOR/SCREEN

Where have you been, Michael?

He belches.

He is communicating with his General Contractor.

On the table is a collection of personal objects, much of it stuffed in pillow cases, taken from Electra's house.

BAIN/SCREEN

Tracking the mark.

Bain fingers a pair of satin panties. He smiles as he smells them.

BAIN

I'm on the scent.

CONTRACTOR/SCREEN

You're too late.

Bain slams his beer down.

CONTRACTOR/SCREEN

I've learned from MicroCell, Rath fulfilled the contract.

BAIN/SCREEN

How?

CONTRACTOR/SCREEN

He took out the mark and sold the disks back to MicroCell.

Bain falls back in his chair, thinking. He runs his hands through his sweaty hair.

CONTRACTOR/SCREEN

Michael?

BAIN

No. No. No. I don't believe it.

CONTRACTOR/SCREEN

They money will be standard bank transfer. We believe we will know where and when.

BAIN

What?

BAIN/SCREEN

How?

There is no response.

BAIN/SCREEN

How in the fuck do you know that?

A long beat.

CONTRACTOR/SCREEN

Such language in front of a lady.

BAIN

I don't give a fuck what you are. I asked you --

He hits the repeat key.

BAIN

(types)

How in the fuck do you know that?

CONTRACTOR/SCREEN

Do you want Rath or not?

Bain stares at the screen, thinking. Thinking hard.

INT. LARGE CHAIN HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Another computer screen, but we don't know that it is different.

CONTRACTOR/SCREEN

It will take three days to arrange the transfer.

ELECTRA

Three days?

We are in Electra and Rath's hotel room. She is standing behind him, reading as he types.

CONTRACTOR/SCREEN

Which account?

ELECTRA

Are you going to tell him?

RATH

It. Tell it. For all I know it could be a machine.

ELECTRA

You said you didn't trust it.

RATH

I don't.

CONTRACTOR/SCREEN

Which account?

ELECTRA

What kind of bank is going to allow us to withdraw ten million dollars the day it is transferred?

RATH

The kind preferred by drug smugglers, arms dealers and politicians.

Rath types in an account number.

RATH

Do you have a passport?

ELECTRA

Several.

RATH

Good.

ELECTRA

Where is it?

RATH

Mexico.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Rath and Electra are sitting in the first class section, which she is obviously enjoying, smiling and sipping champagne.

ELECTRA

God, I love first class. I remember when I was a little girl, I would wonder what it was like up here. I would always try to peek through the curtains.

Rath says nothing, staring out the window.

Electra shakes her head.

ELECTRA

I hope Nikita's all right.

He still does not respond.

ELECTRA

Hey, where are you?

RATH

Thinking.

ELECTRA

About?

RATH

Nothing.

Electra sips the last of her champagne.

ELECTRA

I've never been to the Gulf of Mexico. Is it as nice as they say?

RATH

I don't know.

ELECTRA

You were there?

A long beat.

RATH

Yes.

EXT. SMALL MEXICAN AIRPORT - DAY

The plane lands.

EXT. TERMINAL CAB STAND

Rath and Electra hand their bags to a CABBY who puts them in his trunk.

INT. CAB

Rath speaks perfect Spanish.

RATH

(in Spanish)

Good afternoon. We have reservations at the Hotel Paraiso in Costa Blanca.

CABBY

(in Spanish)

Yes, sir.

EXT. HOTEL PARAISO - DAY

The cab pulls up in front of a large, brand new glass hotel, which shimmers in the blue green reflection of the gulf water.

Rath is upset.

RATH

(in Spanish)

No, no. I said the Hotel Paraiso.

CABBY

(in Spanish)

Yes. This is the Hotel Paraiso.

RATH

(in Spanish)

No, the other Hotel Paraiso, in the city. Near the Plaza del Sol.

CABBY

(in Spanish)

I'm sorry, sir. A year ago there was a fire in the old Hotel Paraiso. This is the new Hotel Paraiso.

RATH

(in Spanish)

Take us there.

EXT. COSTA BLANCA - DAY

American tourist dollars have built up the coasts, but much of the out-lying city is very poor.

The old Hotel Paraiso is a five story blackened husk. The face of the building is burnt black and it seems to hang in space as something non-corporeal, like the shadow of the building rather than the building itself.

Rath stares at it, remembering.

Electra is behind him, standing in the midst of the Plaza del Sol.

He looks up to the fifth story window, then turns directly opposite of that.

The International Banco de Mexico, an enormous, beautiful old building; its exterior walls are white-washed concrete, blindingly bright white.

Electra looks at the bank and smiles.

ELECTRA

So, that's where all that S & L
money is?

Rath is not listening to her. He is somewhere else. He
turns back to the fourth story window.

RATH

That's where he'll be.

ELECTRA

What?

RATH

I wasn't expecting this. I need to
think.

EXT. HOTEL PARAISO - NIGHT

Beyond the lights of the hotel the gulf darkens to
midnight oil.

INT. HOTEL PARAISO ELEVATOR

On one side of the elevator is a young couple who look
like newlyweds. They are cuddling, kissing and giggling
as though they are alone.

Electra and Rath are on the other side of the elevator.
It is a strange contrast.

Electra is staring at them.

Rath, behind his sunglasses, is in his own world.

The ELEVATOR CHIMES and opens.

Nobody moves.

The DOORS CHIME again and start to close, as everyone
realizes that this is their floor.

Rath and the other man grab the doors, which spring back
open.

It is a funny, awkward moment, as everyone apologizes and
smiles politely, on the way out.

INT. HALL

The couple move down the hall, the newlyweds finding their
door first.

Rath reaches the door to their room, opens it and enters.

Electra lingers, watching the other couple, watching as he fumbles for his keys, her hand running up between his legs and over his ass.

He finally manages to open the door and she pushes him inside.

Electra softly closes her door.

INT. HOTEL PARAISO - HOTEL ROOM

Rath is sitting in a desk chair staring out of the sliding balcony doors at the dark gulf water.

ELECTRA

Did you see them?

Electra moves about the large suite.

ELECTRA

They looked like they were in love.

Rath says nothing.

ELECTRA

Well, I think I'll take a bath.
Come on, Nikita!

The two of them walk into the bathroom, leaving Rath to himself.

INT. BATHROOM

Electra sits on the edge of the over-sized tub, water running through her fingers as she adjusts the temperature.

After a beat she hears a SMALL CRASH, a GLASS BREAKING. It is followed by other MUFFLED NOISES, a WOMAN GIGGLING and a THUMPING. The sounds are coming from the other side of the tub wall, from the other suite. Electra puts her ear against the tile to listen.

The WATER FILLING her TUB is too loud for her to hear. She turns it OFF.

There is more BUMPING and THUMPING, the WOMAN LAUGHING and then, the LAUGHS SHORTEN into SOFT WHIMPERS.

Electra hangs on each sound, slowly lifted by it, moving up toward the over-head fan and ducts.

The SOUNDS get LOUDER as she moves closer to the vents,

until she is standing precariously on the edge of the tub,
listening to what is clearly the sounds of TWO PEOPLE
MAKING LOVE.

Their MOANS and SHRIEKS CLIMAX and Electra smiles.

INT. BEDROOM

It is dark now. A single desk light is on, under which
Rath is setting up his chess board, putting the pieces in
their familiar pattern.

Electra comes out of the bathroom. She seems very clean
and fresh, wearing a long white T-shirt and thin robe.

ELECTRA

That felt great. You should try it.

She watches him setting the pieces onto the board.

ELECTRA

Don't you ever get tired of playing
the same game?

He looks at her.

RATH

No.

ELECTRA

Why not?

RATH

It helps me to focus. It centers
me, helps me think.

ELECTRA

Oh. What do you think about?

RATH

Work. The things I need to get
done.

She sits across from him looking at the board.

ELECTRA

Do you think about the game?

RATH

Yes.

ELECTRA

But you've never figured out a way
to win.

RATH

No.

ELECTRA

Not even a stalemate?

RATH

No.

ELECTRA

What happens if you do?

This strikes Rath as a very strange question and he is suddenly annoyed by her.

ELECTRA

Can I ask you something?

He knows she will anyway.

ELECTRA

What will you do if this works, if we get the money?

RATH

I don't know... maybe I'll live on a boat, sail to all the places I've never been.

ELECTRA

That sounds nice.

He finishes his glass of bourbon.

She is not sure what to say next, if she should say anything at all.

ELECTRA

I'm kind of tired. I think I'd like to try and get some sleep.

RATH

You can have the bed. The chair is fine for me.

He pours himself another drink, dropping in some ice from the ice bucket.

ELECTRA

Thanks.

She slips out of the robe and in between the sheets.

Rath sits across the room, his back to her.

She tries to make herself comfortable, but cannot.

ELECTRA

Do you think he's here?

RATH

Here?

ELECTRA

In Costa Blanca.

RATH

Yes.

She thinks.

ELECTRA

What do you think he's doing?

RATH

I don't know... But I'm sure he's
not sleeping.

She pulls the covers tightly to her chin. Her eyes do not close.

INT. HOTEL (COSTA BLANCA) - NIGHT

A small hotel in the city, away from the beaches, built before there was such a thing as central air conditioning.

Bain is naked, except for a small pair of camouflage jockeys and his Walkman strapped to his shoulder. His head is pumping wildly with the speed metal thrashing in his ears.

He is tearing open a long box wrapped in "Happy Birthday" paper.

Inside the box is a massive black hi-tech assault rifle. He smiles.

He assembles it quickly, snapping it together with automatic ease. When the sight is tightened in place, he jumps up.

In the mirror over the dresser, he poses down with the gun.

Not satisfied, he grabs his shades and checks himself again. He starts moving with the music, playing with the gun, first as a guitar, then whipping it around, spinning it expertly, like a drum and bugle corpsman. The gun zips and flashes around as he whirls in place, then freezes.

The butt of the rifle to his shoulder, he peers down the scope at his own head reflected in the mirror. He is sweating and breathing, but the barrel does not move.

BAIN

You're dead, motherfucker.

EXT. HOTEL PARAIISO - DAY

Electra leans out over the railing, smiling, inhaling the warm air, the scent of the shimmering blue-green sea.

Rath stands in the shadow of the door frame.

RATH

Breakfast.

ELECTRA

Why don't you bring it out here?
It's beautiful out here.

Rath steps a little farther out. He looks down either side of the building, checking sight lines. He looks out and sees another hotel with windows facing them.

He turns to her. Says nothing. Moves back inside.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

The breakfast trays are empty. Rath is sipping coffee, scribbling notes and diagrams on a piece of paper.

Electra comes out of the bathroom dressed for the beach.

He stops working.

ELECTRA

I know what you are thinking. I'm not going to disappear, okay? I'm not going anywhere, just down there, to that beautiful beach. I got to get out of this room, just for a little while.

RATH

Okay.

ELECTRA

Really?

RATH

He won't be looking for you. Just be careful. Buy a book. Keep your sunglasses on.

ELECTRA

Book. Sunglasses. Great.

INT. HOTEL HALL

Electra steps out of the hotel room ready for the beach. At the end of the hall, she sees the newlywed couple get on the elevator. She starts to call to them to hold it for her, but she stops herself.

The elevator closes.

She edges slowly down the hall, stopping outside the door to their suite. She touches it with the tips of her fingers.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Rath is still at the table.

The curtain begins to billow, a soft breeze blowing through the open patio door. They swell open and fall. It seems for a moment that there is a figure, a shadow, in the changing shape of the curtain.

Rath stands. He walks to the open door. Standing in the frame, he looks out at the blue ocean below.

He slides the door closed, and the curtains fall still.

EXT. PLAZA DEL SOL - DAY

Bain moves through the market, booths lining the edges of the plaza. His eyes shift rapidly behind his sunglasses.

He buys an apricot and strolls into the center of the plaza.

He looks at the bank, at the military-style security guards that patrol the front.

He turns in the plaza, checking the perimeter, his gaze falling on the tall, burned-out building.

He looks back at the bank, imagining the sight line.

He bites into the apricot, its juice gushing, running down his chin.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

Rath is leaning back in the bed, NIKITA PURRING in his lap.

He did not sleep last night and is very tired. His eyes fight to stay open.

The sound of the TELEVISION momentarily hangs in the hotel room as he sleeps. The program is a SPANISH DUBBED version of GOLDFINGER.

The door bangs open and Rath springs off the bed, a gun flashing in his hand, leveling it at a dazed, blinking Electra.

Rath sighs slowly, letting the hammer of the GUN CLICK back into place.

RATH

You should knock.

ELECTRA

Sorry.

RATH

How was the beach?

ELECTRA

The beach? It was nice.

She smiles.

EXT. HOTEL PARAISO - DUSK

The sun burns a tropical red against the mirrored windows of the hotel.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

Electra is sitting on the bed, her back against the wall. In her hands is a paperback romance novel that she is looking over the top of, staring intensely across the room.

We can hear Rath, his breathing deep and even. He is doing Tai Chi, wearing only his boxer shorts. His body is coated in a sheen of sweat, his muscles strained as he moves fluidly through space.

Electra begins to breath with him.

She moves her body slightly, her hips rising as though to meet his.

He empties his lungs entirely in one exhale and stops, his eyes closed, rested.

ELECTRA

That was beautiful.

He looks at her.

ELECTRA

Tai Chi, right?

He nods.

ELECTRA

Where did you learn it?

RATH

Taiwan.

ELECTRA

Not that I would know, but you look like you're really good at it.

RATH

Thank you.

ELECTRA

I've always wanted to learn something like that.

RATH

You should. It's very important, that the body release the energy that builds in it.

Electra nods, watching him bend, reaching for a change of clothes.

RATH

I'm going to shower. If you're hungry, go ahead and order some dinner.

Electra nods again.

INT. COSTA BLANCA HOTEL - NIGHT

Bain is doing push ups. He is naked except for his camouflage bikinis.

He has his feet up on a chair, making it harder, the dip deeper.

His body is gushing sweat, his face a burning red.

He is like a piston firing up and down. The muscles in his neck and shoulders are bulging cords.

Slowly, his arm begin to tire, the strain seen in his knotting and twisting expression.

Half way up, he collapses, feet falling off the chair.

He rolls onto his back, rubbing a tricep. It hurts. He

licks the sweat off his upper lip and smiles.

INT. HOTEL PARAIISO ROOM - NIGHT

Rath checks his watch. It's after eight o'clock. He lifts the phone and plugs it into the modem.

RATH

I'm going to call.

Electra drops her book and climbs off the bed.

He dials, types the code and waits.

CONTRACTOR/SCREEN

Hello, Robert.

RATH/SCREEN

The contract?

CONTRACTOR/SCREEN

Paid in full.

ELECTRA

Oh, my God. Ten million dollars.

CONTRACTOR/SCREEN

Transferred to the specified account.

Rath stares at the screen.

CONTRACTOR/SCREEN

Goodbye, Robert.

Rath disconnects. The PHONE HUMS.

Electra picks it up, placing it back in the cradle.

RATH

Sit down.

She does.

He opens a case and pulls out his gun, some paper and pens and two small mikes that look like hearing aids.

RATH

Okay --

He starts drawing several squares on the paper, as Electra picks up the mike. She looks over it, frowns.

ELECTRA

Two way?

RATH

Transmits and receives.

ELECTRA

Cheap as shit.

He looks at her.

RATH

I paid a lot for these.

ELECTRA

They saw you coming a mile away. If I had known we'd be using --

RATH

It's too late now. Okay? We'll have to deal with these.

ELECTRA

Fine.

He goes back to his drawing.

RATH

This is the bank. This is the hotel. In the morning I will enter the bank.

ELECTRA

Check.

RATH

He will be hidden somewhere out here, probably somewhere low, in the crowd. He'll stay there until he sees me enter the bank.

ELECTRA

But he won't shoot you right then?

RATH

No. It would be amateur. A risk. He'll wait for the prime shot, that he knows is coming. Once I'm inside, he'll move to the hotel. He'll go up the back, too much traffic in the front.

He draws another square.

RATH

You'll be here. A restaurant. A public place far enough away that he won't notice you, but with a good enough view you'll be able to see him when he moves inside.

ELECTRA

Okay. Then what?

RATH

Then, we wait.

ELECTRA

Aiiee. More waiting? I don't know if I like this plan.

RATH

It will take the entire day, but he will begin to doubt himself. He will begin to believe that he missed me, that somehow I slipped by and am already on a plane to Europe.

He describes this as though remembering it.

RATH

The sun will be low, almost dark, the air cool and the bank will almost be closed. 5:45. 5:50. He will put the rifle down, he will get up and he will walk across the plaza to the bank.

ELECTRA

Why won't he wait until the bank closes?

RATH

He won't be able to. He'll have to go inside. He'll have to see with his own eyes, whether or not I am there. If the bank closes, he won't know for sure. He'll come. I'm sure. And when he does you'll go into the hotel, go upstairs and take the gun.

ELECTRA

What? What if he brings it with him?

He shakes his head.

RATH

He can't. The bank has an expensive security system; metal detectors and X-ray machines.

ELECTRA

That means you won't have a gun.

RATH

That's right.

ELECTRA

And with the mikes, I'll tell you when he leaves the hotel and you'll tell me when he leaves the bank.

RATH

If things go well, I don't have to. You'll already be in a rented car waiting for me.

ELECTRA

You'll have the money. How do I know that you won't --

RATH

I'll be walking out of the bank, unarmed. You'll have the gun and I'll drive the car.

ELECTRA

We split the money?

RATH

Five million apiece. You get on your plane, I get on mine.

ELECTRA

Sounds pretty well figured out.

RATH

I've been thinking about it for a long time.

ELECTRA

Except --

RATH

What?

ELECTRA

Except, if he doesn't come out of the hotel.

RATH

I told you, he will.

ELECTRA

You can't know for sure, how can you? I mean, you're not him.

RATH

I was.

She waits for him to explain.

RATH

Ten years ago, I sat there in that same hotel window, sweat pouring off of me waiting --

ELECTRA

For Nicholai?

RATH

Yes.

ELECTRA

You killed him here? In this city, outside that bank?

Rath nods.

ELECTRA

What is it? I don't like this at all. What is going on here?

RATH

I don't know. It just happened. I was here ten years ago, I'm here now. That's it.

ELECTRA

I don't believe that.

RATH

It wasn't planned or premeditated. I swear. Things happened beyond my control. I understood; I saw where they were leading and I suppose that it just made sense.

ELECTRA

Ten years ago.

RATH

Yes.

ELECTRA

What happened?

RATH

I waited until I was insane and then I walked into the bank. He was sitting there, very calm, waiting for me.

ELECTRA

What did he want?

RATH

He wanted what I want now; to get out of the business. To disappear

to some empty Greek island.

RATH

What did he say?

RATH

He said I couldn't win. That no one wins at this game.

ELECTRA

Was that it?

RATH

Then he offered me one million dollars to walk away, to quit the business.

ELECTRA

You didn't take it.

RATH

No. I went back to the hotel. And waited.

ELECTRA

Ten years later, here you are again.

RATH

Yes. Here I am again.

POV - THROUGH TELESCOPIC LENS - MARBLE STATUE

The cross-hairs of a telescopic sight are lined-up on the head of a marble statue.

INT. COSTA BLANCA HOTEL - NIGHT

Bain is laying on the floor in the dark. The rifle is under him as he aims out of his balcony, down the street at the statue.

He looks up from the scope, checking the street. It is dark and empty and he shifts back looking into the sight.

His finger squeezes, the GUN ALMOST SILENT, as --

INTERCUT WITH:

STATUE

A chunk of STONE EXPLODES out the head of the statue. Again, the GUN SPITS and another cloud of dust and ROCK BURSTS from the head. His finger is pumping the trigger, until the head cracks and falls.

He's laughing, hysterical, looking down the street at the headless statue.

He rolls onto his side still laughing. Then, suddenly, he stops, staring up at the stars in the night sky.

INT. HOTEL PARAIISO ROOM - NIGHT

Electra is still at the table, staring at the diagrams, in another world.

Rath pours a glass of bourbon and sets it in front of her.

ELECTRA

This has been the longest day of my life.

Rath nods, pouring himself a drink. Electra looks at the drink, downs the whole glass. He refills it.

ELECTRA

Do you have ulcers?

RATH

No.

ELECTRA

I think I got one today.

RATH

Five million dollars will buy a lot of Roloids.

She smiles. They both gulp down their drinks and he fills them again.

ELECTRA

What do you suppose he's doing now?

Rath shrugs. He is no longer looking at her; staring at the board, moving his mind into the chess game.

She watches him and then begins to study it with him, the way a child does, almost imitating him. She does not want to be left alone right now.

She reaches over and moves a white knight.

He blinks. His eyes shifting, sorting the possibilities.

He picks a bishop and counters.

After another sequence, he takes her bishop and she takes his knight.

RATH

Why did you trade a bishop for a knight?

ELECTRA

I hate bishops. They're useless. I like knights.

RATH

They're worth less points.

ELECTRA

So?

There is no point in arguing.

As they continue to play, we begin to hear in the distance, the COUPLE in the adjoining suite MAKING very vigorous LOVE.

Electra watches Rath to see if he hears them. He shows no sign of it, concentrating on the game.

ELECTRA

Do you hear them?

He looks up.

ELECTRA

Listen.

He hears it. Not interested.

ELECTRA

Did you think they were newlyweds?

RATH

I didn't notice them.

ELECTRA

When I first saw them I thought they were married.

RATH

How do you know they're not?

ELECTRA

I went into their room this afternoon.

RATH

What?

ELECTRA

It was no big deal. I saw them leave, I went in.

RATH

Jesus, if someone had --

ELECTRA

Nobody ever sees me.

RATH

Why in the hell would you take that chance?

ELECTRA

I heard them last night and it made me want to know something about them. I wanted to, so I did.

Rath shakes his head. In the b.g., the WOMAN is ALMOST SCREAMING.

ELECTRA

She is married, but not to him. Another man, much older. She has four kids. The young guy works for her. And I think she likes kinky sex.

RATH

Thank you.

ELECTRA

Isn't it interesting though? I mean, look at us, in this room. Or yesterday, when we were walking in the plaza market. I mean, we look like just another couple. But what are we? Doesn't it seem so crazy?

RATH

No.

ELECTRA

No?

RATH

It's always been that way. The world has always functioned on two levels.

ELECTRA

I know. It makes me crazy.

RATH

Why?

ELECTRA

I don't know. When I was in college, I was forced to go to a psychiatrist because I was caught drilling holes in my dorm room

floor.

RATH

And you were drilling these holes...?

ELECTRA

So I could watch the girl that lived under me.

RATH

Apparently this doctor was unable to cure you.

ELECTRA

He told me that my curiosity became unnaturally entangled with my sense of self-preservation.

RATH

Did he explain how this happened?

ELECTRA

He believed it all went back to one night, when as a little girl. I watched my parents have this big fight, really big. I thought my mother was going to kill my father. Then they went into their room and made up. And I watched them make love through the keyhole.

The WOMAN SCREAMS a final time in CLIMAX.

Electra moves her queen, taking his other knight.

RATH

What are you doing?

ELECTRA

What?

RATH

That's a ridiculous move.

ELECTRA

Why?

RATH

Because, I'll take it.

ELECTRA

I'm playing white, remember. You can't tell me which pieces to move. It doesn't work that way.

He shrugs and takes her queen, the game continuing.

ELECTRA

Can I ask you something?

RATH

I'm sure you will.

ELECTRA

Am I attractive?

This gets his attention.

RATH

Yes.

ELECTRA

Are you attracted to me?

RATH

Yes.

ELECTRA

Why?

RATH

Why? I don't know.

ELECTRA

Is it a physical thing, or a mental thing?

RATH

Both.

A good answer. Electra smiles.

ELECTRA

Is that why you didn't want to talk about women before?

RATH

I didn't want to complicate the situation.

ELECTRA

Attraction is a complication?

RATH

It can be.

ELECTRA

It happened to you before?

RATH

Yes.

ELECTRA

Who was she?

RATH

Someone like me, like you. A pro.

ELECTRA

What happened to her?

RATH

She was taken.

ELECTRA

Did you --

RATH

No. I tried to stop it. I couldn't.

ELECTRA

Was she the only one?

RATH

After her, I realized that to survive I had to live without... It's dangerous to let things become complicated.

ELECTRA

Is this becoming complicated?

RATH

I'm not sure that I care anymore.

He looks up from the game.

ELECTRA

Were you attracted to me right away?

RATH

No.

ELECTRA

When did it start?

RATH

Honestly?

ELECTRA

Uh-huh.

RATH

When I gave you my gun and you almost shot me.

ELECTRA

Maybe you should see a psychiatrist.

RATH

Why?

ELECTRA

That doesn't sound normal.

RATH

I'm not normal.

ELECTRA

I know. That's why I'm attracted to you. I mean, you make me nervous. You're intimidating. Maybe it's my curiosity/self-preservation thing, but all I can really think about right now is kissing you.

They rise up from the table, together, knocking over the chess game. The pieces fall to the floor.

They grab at each other, kissing, both of them hungry, aggressive. They tear at each other's clothes and at their own clothes; it has a very awkward sense to it, as they become naked in front of each other. There is nothing smooth or fluid about it, which makes it seem very real.

He takes her, lifting her onto the table.

She scoots and wiggles back, the chess pieces falling out of the way.

She opens her legs and he moves in between them.

ELECTRA

I wanted to tell you --

Her breath rushes out, then back in.

ELECTRA

My real name is Anna.

He smiles.

RATH

Martin.

ELECTRA

Martin.

Her legs wrap up around his hips and he pushes deeper into her.

ELECTRA

Nice to meet you, Martin.

INT. HOTEL PARAISO - HALL - NIGHT

Outside of the room, we can hear the MUFFLED SOUNDS of TWO PEOPLE MAKING LOVE.

EXT. COSTA BLANCA - NIGHT

We are MOVING DOWN the street, LOW, OVER the old flagstones, TOWARDS the marble statue that Bain shot.

On the ground are the shattered pieces of the head.

CLOSER

We see one of the pieces is part of the face, the eyes, which seem like the iris-less eyes of a chess king.

CLOSER

We MOVE INTO the blank white of that eye.

DISSOLVE TO:

WHITE SQUARE GLOSSED WITH LIGHT

We PULL BACK, RISING UP and AWAY, and see other squares, black and white like a chess board.

A woman's HIGH HEELS CLICK past.

RISING HIGHER, we see the woman walking. A man crosses behind her, in another direction.

HIGHER STILL, and we realize that we are looking at the black and white marble floor of the --

INT. INTERNATIONAL BANCO DE MEXICO - DAY

It is a strange and beautiful bank.

The ceilings are vast, the suspended lights elaborate, baroque, the enormous clock on the wall, built to resemble a sun.

It looks almost as though it could be a museum, with its massive oil paintings and bronze statues of important Mexican figures.

Already it is crowded, people and security guards moving about beneath us.

Rath steps onto the checkered floor and remembers.

EXT. OUTDOOR CAFE

The cafe is off the plaza.

Electra sits at a patio table. Down the street she can see the back of the burned-out hotel.

She hears Rath in her ear-piece.

RATH (V.O.)

All right. I'm in the bank. He'll move now. How are you doing?

She is nervous.

ELECTRA

I'm ready.

INT. BANK

RATH

Good.

Rath is wearing a well-tailored, gray silk suit and dark sunglasses. In his hand is a very large briefcase. He crosses the checkered floor to the teller windows.

TELLER

May I help you?

RATH

Yes. Could you check on a transfer for me?

TELLER

Your name, or account?

RATH

Rath. Robert Rath.

EXT. CAFE

Electra smiles when she hears him, mouthing the name "Martin."

INT. BANK

A BANK OFFICIAL walks over to the window, carrying a printed receipt, with a very bright smile.

OFFICIAL

Senor Rath, we have received your transfer.

He hands Rath the receipt. He glances at it, checking the

zeros. There are seven of them.

RATH

Good. Now I'll need to close this account. I'd like you to ready the paperwork.

The smile fades.

OFFICIAL

You wish to close this account today?

RATH

That's correct.

OFFICIAL

How would you like the funds?

RATH

American currency.

OFFICIAL

This will take some time.

RATH

I have all day.

EXT. CAFE

Electra looks up over her book and Bain is there, moving down the side street, gliding through the crowd with the menacing indifference of a shark.

INT. BANK

The Official is talking to the teller in Spanish, when Electra whispers in Rath's ear.

ELECTRA

He's here.

Rath freezes.

EXT. CAFE

Electra watches as Bain moves along the plywood wall, covered with bills and posters, built to keep people out of the burned hotel. He is carrying a long nylon duffel bag.

At the corner, a section of the plywood has been pulled loose and Bain squeezes through, into the hotel.

ELECTRA

He's inside.

INT. BANK

Rath is sitting in one of the high backed leather chairs set in pairs along the wall of the bank.

He glances at the enormous clock, which reads 10:10. He checks his Rolex.

RATH

Now, we wait.

INT. BURNED HOTEL PARAIISO

The center of the hotel is open. Interior hall balconies, which line each floor, look down onto an old atrium courtyard. The fire did the most damage here, spreading easily throughout the entire building.

The skylight and ceiling at the top of this open area, has been destroyed and sunlight streams through throwing broken patterns of shadow and light onto the blackened floors and walls.

Bain enters, and carefully begins climbing the charred staircase to the fifth floor.

INT. BURNED HOTEL ROOM

The room has been heavily burned, stained black from smoke. The charred carpet crunches and cracks, as Bain walks across it to the window.

As he nears the exterior wall, several FLOOR BOARDS BREAK with a brittle SNAP and he almost falls through.

BAIN

Shit.

He pulls his leg free.

Outside the window, across the plaza, he sees the bank; a perfect site.

Quickly he unzips the bag and lifts out the gun.

He grabs a magazine and snaps it into place.

He aims down at the bank's bright white stairs. A man is walking down the steps and Bain finds the center of his forehead in the cross-hairs of the scope.

Bain makes a gun noise, followed by the sound of a head bursting open.

He giggles.

Leaning against the wall, in the shadows of the window, the gun in his lap, he waits.

Time slows to a crawl.

Without taking his eye from the bank, Bain rummages through his bag and finds a pack of cigarettes. He pulls one out with his lips and lights it.

Taking a deep drag, he lets the smoke slowly leak out and drift up into the night.

DISSOLVE TO:

SUN

White hot.

INT. BURNED HOTEL ROOM

There are five cigarette butts ground into the blackened window sill, where Bain extinguishes another.

BAIN

What in the fuck are you doing in there?

The room is hot, a streak of sweat up his back and front. It is difficult to breathe.

A man walks out of the bank, wearing a suit similar to Rath's. Bain's body snaps erect, rifle instantly leveled.

He sights the man's head, his finger tightening on the trigger, but he is not sure it is Rath.

He looks over the scope, looks back. The man reaches the bottom of the stairs. Bain's body sags.

BAIN

That's not him. Jesus, Bain, baby, chill the fuck out.

He takes a deep breath and wipes the sweat from his forehead, leaving a smear of black from the charcoal wood.

He again fumbles through his bag, finding a container of bottled water. He chugs the whole thing.

INT. BANK

The Official walks over to Rath with a number of papers to sign.

OFFICIAL

Your signature, senor. Everything is ready.

Rath signs them, but does not get up.

OFFICIAL

Excellent, senor. If you could follow me?

RATH

I'm sorry, but I am waiting for an associate. Can you hold everything for me until he arrives?

OFFICIAL

Of course, senor.

RATH

Thank you.

EXT. CAFE

Electra is sipping at some iced tea, dizzy at the thought of all that money.

ELECTRA

Ten million dollars, sitting there. Waiting... this is insane.

INT. BANK

There is a faint smile on Rath's lips.

EXT. PLAZA

The shadows are getting longer.

INT. BURNED HOTEL ROOM

Bain is rocking back and forth, breathing through his teeth. He has to urinate. Bad.

He is checking every face that comes out of the bank with the scope. Still nothing.

BAIN

This is fucking insane.

He grabs the empty plastic bottle, unzips his pants and begins refilling it.

A man in a suit appears on the steps and Bain fumbles the bottle, spilling it as he lifts the gun. It is not Rath.

BAIN

Fucking God dammit!

He hurls the bottle of piss across the room.

INT. BANK

The sun clock on the wall, perfectly still, reads 5:20. After a long beat a single minute clicks off.

INT. BURNED HOTEL ROOM

The sun is getting low. The room much darker now.

Bain sits at the window; his body a knot.

A large group of tourists flow out of the bank and Bain's eyes light up. One by one, the scope passes over each face.

They trickle down the steps and into the plaza.

The stairs are again empty.

Bain screams, pounding the butt of the gun down, splitting open the floor.

He looks at the bank. Nothing. He checks his watch. In fifteen minutes the bank will close.

He stands up.

EXT. CAFE

Electra is watching the back of the hotel, when Bain emerges from the shadows.

ELECTRA

Oh my God.

He is moving like a bullet, knocking into people who don't get out of his way.

ELECTRA

He's coming.

INT. BANK

Rath looks up at the clock, smiles.

RATH

Four minutes.

ELECTRA

What?

RATH

I waited another four minutes.

ELECTRA

Shit.

RATH

Wait until he is on the stairs.

ELECTRA

Right.

RATH

I'm taking off my mike.

ELECTRA

Okay.

RATH

Electra --

ELECTRA

What?

RATH

Last night --

EXT. CAFE

Electra smiles.

ELECTRA

Was nice.

RATH

Yes.

She sees Bain storming up the stairs. She stands, tosses several bills on the table and leaves.

INT. BANK

Bain charges into the bank, tearing off his sunglasses, scanning the room. His face is a twisted grimace, streaked with black charcoal. His body and clothes are covered in sweat and large salt rings. His breathing

labored.

He sees Rath sitting comfortably, calm, his suit not even wrinkled and realizes that Rath has been waiting for him.

His first instinct is to turn and run, but he stops himself. He is confused, unsure.

Then, as though understanding he has no choice, he puts his sunglasses back on and strides over to Rath, BOOTS CLICKING against the polished MARBLE.

Bain sits down in the leather chair across from him.

BAIN

How'd you know? Just tell me that.
How'd you fucking know?

RATH

I knew the same way in ten years
you're going to know.

BAIN

What does that fucking mean?

RATH

It means that I'm going to tell you
things, even though I already know
that you're not going to listen to a
God damned thing I say.

INT. BURNED HOTEL

Electra carefully moves up to the fifth floor, then navigates around a large hole, towards the last room.

INT. BANK

RATH

It's irony. That's what it is. But
the real irony is that you won't
know it's irony until you're sitting
over here.

Bain isn't listening. Instead he's watching, everyone who walks near them.

RATH

When you walked in here and you saw
me, sitting here, waiting; the first
thing that went through your head
was that you were a dead man.

This catches Bain's ear.

RATH

You're thinking that you've been sold out. That's the only way I could know you were out there. Why would you think this? Because you don't trust your contractor. You don't trust anyone. It's automatic. It's the first and last commandment. It's the only thing that keeps you alive. So, try as I might to tell you the truth, you can't believe me. Do you see the irony of the situation? It's kind of funny, isn't it?

Bain is not laughing.

INT. BURNED HOTEL ROOM

Inside the burned out closet, Electra finds Bain's nylon duffel bag.

Digging through it, she finds his Gameboy, his Walkman, his .22, ammunition clips and several issues of Soldier of Fortune and a Punisher comic book.

The rifle is not here.

INT. BANK

RATH

Listen to me, Bain. Two days ago, you contacted your contractor, who told you that they knew when and where I was going to pick up the transferred money from MicroCell. You don't know how they got the information. It bothered you, but you didn't care. How do I know this? Because ten years ago, I was sitting in that chair, as scared shitless as you are now.

BAIN

I ain't scared of you.

RATH

Yeah you are and you hate it. You hate the fact that your hand is shaking and mine isn't. That you're sweating your balls off and I'm not. You've got fear and hate in your belly like battery acid, all because of me.

BAIN

If you think you can take me, quit fucking bullshitting and try it.

RATH

All right, Bain. Pay attention, because this is where everything changes.

INT. BURNED HOTEL

Electra is beginning to panic. She cannot find the gun and has started looking in other rooms.

INT. BANK

RATH

You're a businessman, right? This is a business deal. Behind that counter, I have over ten million dollars. I'll give you half of it, more money than you'll make in the next ten years if, you walk away.

Bain's face changes, muscles relaxing, the tension slipping out of him.

BAIN

Five million dollars?

RATH

That's right.

BAIN

Shit. That sure is a lot of money.

Bain is smiling.

RATH

Did you see how I did that? Magic wasn't it?

BAIN

What?

RATH

You understand what's going on? It makes sense, right?

BAIN

Oh, yeah.

RATH

What I just said, no assassin would say. What I've said, only a mark

would say.

They stare at each other.

BAIN

You think I would be an idiot to pass up five million dollars.

RATH

You would be.

BAIN

You don't know a fucking thing about me. You don't have the slightest fucking clue.

RATH

Why don't you tell me.

BAIN

I'll tell you this. After Cleveland, I thought I was lucky to be alive. But now, here, I just realized that you were the lucky one.

RATH

Now I'll tell you something. It wouldn't fucking matter if I offered you one hundred million dollars. You'd still be thinking the same thing, that you're going to take me. And here I am, sitting through this, knowing it's bullshit, looking at you and the only thing going on in my mind, the only thing I can think is that, in just a few minutes I'm going to take you.

Bain jumps out of the seat.

BAIN

Yeah, okay! I'm ready! Let's fucking go!

He's walking, turning, watching everything, everyone. He's out the door.

INT. BURNED HOTEL

Electra is on the fourth level, searching desperately for the gun, rushing through the black skeletal remains of the hotel.

In her ear she hears Rath.

RATH (V.O.)

Electra?

She shrieks.

INT. BANK

Rath is at the counter, as the Official loads perfectly stacked blocks of crisp one hundred dollar bills into the case.

RATH

Electra?

INT. BURNED HOTEL

Electra is frantic.

ELECTRA

God, I can't find it! I can't find it! I can't find the fucking gun!

INT. BANK

For Rath, everything has changed.

EXT. PLAZA

In long, pounding strides, Bain crosses the square, twisting, glancing back, watching.

INT. BURNED HOTEL

Electra nears the room below the fifth story window.

ELECTRA

It wasn't with his other stuff!

INT. BANK

Rath is now afraid.

RATH

Electra, get out.

EXT. SIDE STREET

Bain nears the opening in the plywood wall.

INT. BURNED HOTEL

Electra looks up and there is the gun; supported by black plumbing pipe and charred lathe. It hangs in the space between two joists, hidden in the upstairs floor.

RATH (V.O.)

He's coming, Electra! Get out now!

ELECTRA

Oh, God. I see it!

She reaches for it, but it's too high.

RATH (V.O.)

Electra, listen! You have got to come to the bank for the money! The money!

She is not listening; she is rushing down the hall, back toward the stairs.

Just as she grabs the rail, she hears BAIN STORMING INTO THE LOBBY below.

She begins climbing the stairs, quickly but quietly.

Bain is a rampaging beast, lunging up the stairs.

INT. BANK

The bank is almost empty. Rath has begun to sweat.

RATH

Electra!

The Official looks at him strangely, stacking the last of the green paper blocks.

INT. BURNED HOTEL

Electra peeks over the rail to see Bain right behind her.

RATH (V.O.)

Electra!

The voice screams in her ear and she tears the mike off, stuffing it in her pocket.

INT. BANK

RATH

Electra, what's happening? What are you --

The Official closes the case and snaps the clasps shut.

OFFICIAL

Finido, señor.

INT. BURNED HOTEL

Electra turns into the hotel room just as Bain reaches the fifth floor. There is no time.

She slips into the closet, as Bain whips around the corner into the room. He rushes to the window, slamming himself against it.

BAIN

You're gonna take me? Come on!
Come on, motherfucker!

He bends down and from the hole that he fell into, pulls out the assault rifle.

BAIN

Take this! Take this, you fuck!

Electra watches through the slits of the blackened wood lathe.

He pounds his fist rapidly into his thigh and then through the wall.

BAIN

Motherfucker!

He stands suddenly, perfectly still, gun aimed at the bank.

BAIN

Comeon-comeon-comeone-it'sover-
gameover-comeon.

INT. BANK

The sun clock reads six o'clock.

There is no one left in the bank except for employees and guards.

The Official is at Rath's elbow leading him towards the metal gates.

OFFICIAL

We are closed, señor. Thank you for
banking with us.

It is happening as it happened ten years ago. Rath knows that he is unable to stop it.

INT. BURNED HOTEL

Bain is rigid, cast in iron, the rifle rammed under his chin, sight tight to his eye, finger wrapped around the trigger.

Electra silently, ever so delicately opens her bag, lifting out her gun.

BAIN

Make me shit, you sorry ass piece of
mark meat! Come on, come on. It's
over! I know it! You know it! We
know it!

In the...

TELESCOPIC SIGHT

we watch Rath step out of the bank, the doors closing behind him.

BACK TO SCENE

Bain smiles.

INSIDE CLOSET

Electra slowly rises, still watching Bain.

EXT. PLAZA

The sun has begun to set and the entire plaza has a deep orange and auburn cast.

Rath looks down at the descending, white, stone steps.

He steps down to the first stair.

INT. BURNED HOTEL

BAIN

Lift your head, motherfucker.

Electra is standing. The gun clenched in her shaking hand.

BAIN

Look up here.

TELESCOPIC SIGHT

The cross-hairs are an "X" on Rath's head.

BACK TO SCENE

BAIN

Look up. Look at me. I want to see
your face.

EXT. PLAZA

Rath looks across the square, up the side of the hotel, at
the window; there is only black shadow.

He knows it is over.

INT. BURNED HOTEL

BAIN

Yes.

Electra shoves open the door, leveling the gun --

As Bain turns.

BAIN

Wha --

She FIRES.

His shoulder explodes, blood spraying the black wall.

EXT. PLAZA

Rath hears BAIN SCREAM.

RATH

Electra.

His eyes, his whole body comes to life.

INT. BURNED HOTEL

Bain is twisting in mid-air, diving as --

She FIRES again, moving at him. A chunk of WOOD EXPLODES
as she misses.

He falls, the burned FLOOR SHATTERING, charred JOISTS SHEARING with the sound of BREAKING GLASS.

She watches him fall through, hears him HIT the FLOOR below, ASH and WOOD CLATTERING around him.

The gun trained on the hole, she peers over the edge, but he is gone.

EXT. PLAZA

Rath races wildly across the darkening market square.

INT. BURNED HOTEL

Bain, lying on his back, aims the rifle at her FOOTSTEPS.

BAIN

Die, bitch!

He FIRES, finger pumping, BULLETS ERUPTING through the floor around her feet.

Screaming, she leaps out of the room, into the hall.

His shoulders oozing blood, Bain clenches his teeth and rises, listening as --

She sprints for the stairs at the far end of the hall.

Beneath, he moves to the railing and aims at the staircase, waiting, until --

Electra freezes at the top of the stairs, realizing that they are exposed.

She flashes her head, quickly dipping back as the WALL is PERFORATED with BULLETS.

BAIN

Fuck! God damn bitch! What are you doing? I don't believe this is happening!

She can hear him coming, his voice ECHOING through the hollow building. She looks down the stairs, the hall, above; there is nowhere to go.

BAIN

You're dead! You're fucking dead!
I'm going to kill you a hundred
fucking times for this!

Bain FIRES up at the ceiling, the BULLET tearing through the floor, WHIZZING past Electra's head. If she moves

he'll know her position.

He FIRES another.

Electra sinks down, her back against the wall and aims at the floor.

Another SHOT.

She FIRES back.

Bain closes, as they both start FIRING, silenced WEAPONS, flashing, PUMPING LEAD at unseen targets.

Her gun empties first.

He laughs hearing the CLICK.

BAIN

Game over, bitch!

RATH

Bain!

Rath's scream ECHOES up through the building.

Before Bain can target him, Rath is gone; a shadow, a ghost. He scans the hotel's courtyard. The last light from the setting sun slips through the slits, cracks and broken window panes, casting patterns; a surreal dream-like grid resembling a chess board.

Electra sees her chance. She leaps to her feet, throwing the gun over the balcony.

The two men watch the GUN CLATTER to the floor as she races back to the room.

BAIN

Fuck no!

Rath grabs the gun tracking Bain hurling up the stairs to the fifth floor. Rath pulls the trigger and finds the gun is empty.

RATH

Shit!

Bain reaches the top of the stairs before Electra gets to the end of the hall.

Rath sees it all happening.

RATH

Electra!

Bain snaps into a targeting stance.

Electra is flying toward the door, her feet hardly touching the floor --

TELESCOPIC SIGHT

When the cross-hairs find her back.

BACK TO SCENE

RATH

Electra!

Time becomes syrup.

RATH

Down! Get down!

Bain FIRES.

Electra dives.

The blackened DOOR JAMB SPLINTER-BURSTS in front of her.

She bounces, scrambling on all fours into the room.

Bain hurries down the hall after her as Rath bolts for the stairs.

Seeing Rath exposed on the stairs, Bain whips around and FIRES, the WALL SHREDDING behind Rath as he dives back down into the shadows.

Ripping open Bain's duffel bag Electra grabs Bain's .22.

Bain advances steadily, the rifle trained on the door.

Inside the room Electra grunts, hurling the duffel bag out the door. It spins over the balcony and plummets to the ground and bursts open.

A GUN CLIP SKITTERS across the stone tile coming to rest in the middle of the courtyard.

Rath and Bain both see it.

Staying hidden, Rath immediately circles towards it.

Bain sweats, looking at the door, down at the clip, then back at the door. Something's got to give.

Unsure what to do Electra waits, the gun clenched between her two hands, covering the empty, dark space of the door.

Bain makes his choice, moving towards room 502.

Rath sees that Bain is going after Electra. He takes a slow breath and tears from the shadows --

Bolting into the open, Rath is focused wholly on the clip, the ground a blur beneath him --

Bain reacts; the rifle swings, rushing, arcing after Rath.

Two more steps and Rath dives, sliding, snagging the clip as --

The RIFLE SPITS --

Rath screams, his leg erupting with blood.

TELESCOPIC SIGHT

The scope glides up zeroing the back of Rath's head.

BACK TO SCENE

Rath rams the clip in place.

BAIN

Game --

Bain squeezes the trigger --

CLICK -- the rifle is empty. Bain screams in disbelief.

Rolling over, Rath jacks back the slide and sights the balcony but Bain is gone.

Electra searches the room for a way out. Keeping the gun trained on the door she steps carefully over to the hole that Bain fell through.

Grimacing, Rath struggles to his feet.

RATH

Electra!

Bain explodes through the wall, charred wood and plaster flying.

Electra spins to shoot but the FLOOR suddenly CRACKS OPEN, swallowing her.

Limping, lurching up the stairs, Rath hears the CRASH.

Jarred by the fall, Electra drags herself away from the open ceiling.

RATH

The gun! He needs the gun! Get rid
of it! Throw it!

She looks up for Bain but he has again disappeared. She
looks at the gun, thinking, turning it over in her hands.

His leg soaked with blood, Rath rumbles down the hall.

Black with soot, Bain descends soundless, serpent-like to
the fourth level through another burned opening.

Electra moves towards the door aiming at every sound, at
every dark corner. She is almost there when we see Bain,
a shadow coming to life, emerging behind her.

Lumbering, Rath is halfway there, his eyes riveted on the
door to room 502.

Hearing Bain, Electra turns. In one smooth motion, he
snatches her arm and breaks her wrist. The gun falls.

Rath hears her scream.

Electra kicks at his groin but he drops, leg sweeping her
to the ground.

She gropes for the gun when he kicks her in the face,
jack-knifing her body back, knocking her unconscious.

Bain grabs the gun.

Rath whips into the room BLASTING --

BULLETS CHASING Bain as he disappears into a blackened
hole.

Rath goes to Electra not knowing if she is alive or dead.
Gently he turns her, cradling her head, her face, smeared
with blood.

From within the labyrinth, Rath hears BAIN begin to LAUGH.

BAIN (O.S.)

Hey! Tell me something, Bobby-boy.

Electra comes to, her eyes blinking open.

BAIN (O.S.)

Are you still thinking that you're
going to take me?

Electra is trying to focus, as Rath listens to the voice,
searching the shadows but the voice seems to come from
everywhere.

BAIN (O.S.)

No, I don't think you are. You know

what I think?

The voice is closer. Rath wipes the stinging sweat from his eyes.

BAIN (O.S.)

I think you're thinking what I'm thinking.

Still dizzy, Electra taps her fist against Rath's chest.

BAIN (O.S.)

You know what I'm thinking, Bobby-boy?!

It seems as though Bain is in the room.

BAIN (O.S.)

You know what I'm thinking?!

Electra opens her fist and inside Rath sees the handful of bullets from the other gun.

Bain whirls INTO VIEW, his gun whipping around to Rath who turns too slow.

Bain pumps the trigger. ONE CLICK. ANOTHER. And ANOTHER. The gun is empty.

RATH

Yeah, I know what you're thinking.

He levels his gun.

RATH

Game over.

Rath FIRES, OVER and OVER, emptying the GUN into Bain's head and chest, even as he crashes through the balcony railing and falls, twisting through lightless space, slamming to the stone floor dead.

EXT. PLAZA DEL SOL - NIGHT

The sun is gone, the market is closing, the crowd drifting from the plaza.

A man and a woman emerge from the shadows of the alley beside the boarded hotel. Although they walk a bit slow, leaning on one another, they become it seems, like just another couple, arm in arm, holding tightly to each other and to a very large suitcase.

FADE OUT.

THE END

