

"LOWLIFE"

written by

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LOWLIFE

FADE IN:

INT. RITCHIE'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Rain trickles down the window. A flash of lightning lights the room. The couch is folded out into a bed. A BEAUTIFUL, NAKED BLONDE is stretched out across it, asleep.

RITCHIE BOLAND, late 30's, not the biggest guy around, but rock-solid, stands in the small kitchen a few feet away. His face is stuck in a permanent frown.

He takes sips of his coffee and admires her from the counter.

The sheets barely cover her moonlit curves.

He walks over and tucks her in.

EXT. DARK ALLEY - NIGHT

It's pouring rain. Ritchie's car squeezes between the buildings. Its headlights can barely make it through the downpour.

INT. RITCHIE'S CAR - TRAVELING

Ritchie drives.

SAMMY "TWO-BALLS", late 30's, sits in the passenger seat. His skeletal features draped in shadow.

SAMMY

Look at this shit. What we do  
for money, eh Ritchie?

Ritchie's eyes go to the rearview mirror.

EXT. DARK ALLEY

They stop.

INT. RITCHIE'S CAR

Ritchie kills the engine. Sammy looks out at the rain.

SAMMY

Check it out.

EXT. DARK ALLEY

Ritchie gets out. The rain is relentless. He's soaked instantly.

The lightning helps him inspect his surroundings. The buildings have their backs to him. He looks up at the fire escapes... nothing.

INT. RITCHIE'S CAR

Ritchie drops into his seat. He shakes off the cold rain. Some of it lands on Sammy.

SAMMY

Jesus!

RITCHIE

Sorry, Sammy.

Sammy pats the drops away. Ritchie blows into his freezing hands and buries them into his wet pockets.

SAMMY

This motherfucker better be on time. We're gonna drown out here.

EXT. DARK ALLEY

The rain pummels the car.

INT. RITCHIE'S CAR

Water streams down the windows as they wait. Ritchie shakes to keep warm, his hands still in his pockets. Sammy stares into the dark storm.

SAMMY

The vultures are circling,  
Ritchie.

Ritchie looks at him.

SAMMY

Some asshole cop is trying to  
push me into a corner.

He turns to Ritchie.

SAMMY

Heard he's tossing deals to my  
people, waiting for a bite.

Ritchie doesn't break eye contact. THUNDER breaks the  
silence.

SAMMY

Did he talk to you?

RITCHIE

No.

SAMMY

No?

Sammy's hand comes up from his side holding a gun.

SAMMY

Should I ask again?

RITCHIE

You'll get the same answer.

Sammy studies Ritchie's face.

SAMMY

If I find out you so much as  
waved to that prick, Ritchie...  
I'm gonna turn your pretty,  
little blonde girlfriend into a  
redhead, I swear to God.

Ritchie's eyes turn cold.

SAMMY

And you? I'm gonna hang you by a power line like an old pair of sneakers. I've done worse for less.

Ritchie is a statue.

SAMMY

You think I'm scared of you?  
 (long, uncomfortable  
 beat)  
 Look me in the eye, Ritchie...  
 Look me in the eye and tell me  
 you're not --

BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! Smoke and broken glass everywhere. Sammy crashes back into his seat. The rain comes through the broken window and washes over him. His eyes still locked on Ritchie.

The nose of Ritchie's .45 sticks out of a smoking hole in his jacket.

EXT. DARK ALLEY

Ritchie drags Sammy's body out into the rain. He hurries back to his car and drives away... LIGHTNING... Sammy's dead eyes stare up at the darkness... THUNDER.

INT. HOSPITAL/WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

Ritchie wakes up in a hard chair and a cold sweat. He straightens himself out.

The JANITOR is mopping the floor near the coffee machine.

A NURSE approaches. Ritchie gets to his feet.

RITCHIE

Still fighting?

NURSE

(smiles)  
 Yes, still fighting.

RITCHIE

Good.

NURSE

Would you like to see him?

He takes a long look down the hall...

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET/RITCHIE'S CAR - NIGHT

Ritchie's arm hangs out the window. A cigarette smolders between his fingers.

He throws a glance at the empty passenger seat. THE WINDOW IS INTACT.

He looks out at the convenience store across the street.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

Ritchie winces at the bright fluorescents as he enters.

The CLERK watches him as he makes his way to the fridges.

He pulls the door open and grabs a large can of beer.

He drops the giant can on the counter and reaches into his pockets.

RITCHIE

Smokes... cheap ones.

Ritchie spots a cute teddy bear on display nearby. He grabs it.

RITCHIE

This, too.

The clerk slides the pack of smokes across the counter and punches up the total. Ritchie pulls out a few crumpled bills.

CLERK

Thirteen fifty.

Ritchie counts the wrinkled paper in his hands. He reaches into his pockets for some more... nothing. He looks up at the clerk's expressionless face.

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

Ritchie walks out with only the smokes in his hands. He tosses the wrapper away and tucks the pack into his jacket. He looks up at the building right next to the store.

He heads for the entrance.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING/HALLWAY - NIGHT

Faded wallpaper lines the hall. Ritchie approaches the door at the end of it.

He brings his ear to the flaking wood. He hears GIGGLING coming from inside.

He knocks.

INT. TOMMY'S APARTMENT

The place is a mess.

TOMMY, a strung-out junky, leaves his equally strung-out GIRLFRIEND on the couch and heads for the door. He trips on a few obstacles on his way there.

She takes a hit off her pipe.

He looks through the peephole.

TOMMY

Shit.

HALLWAY

RITCHIE

Open the door, Tommy.

APARTMENT

GIRLFRIEND  
(exhaling)  
Who is it, baby?

Tommy motions to her to keep quiet.

HALLWAY

RITCHIE  
Open up or it's coming down.

APARTMENT

GIRLFRIEND  
(whispering)  
Who the fuck is it?

Tommy puts his finger to his lips to shut her up.

TOMMY  
(to the door)  
Okay! Okay! Hold on!

He points to the coffee table. It's covered in dirty dishes, beer bottles, napkins... She tries to figure out what he's pointing at and then realizes it's the knife resting on the half-eaten pizza.

She rushes the knife over to him and disappears into the bedroom.

Tommy holds the knife behind his sweaty back. He turns the deadbolt.

Ritchie walks in and takes in the scene...

RITCHIE  
Where's the girl?

GIRLFRIEND (O.S.)  
I'm calling the fucking cops!

Ritchie throws Tommy a heavy look.

TOMMY

Get out here, baby!

She emerges from the bedroom, tweaking and shaking.

RITCHIE

Do you know why I'm here?

They decide to try their luck.

TOMMY

No.

Ritchie takes a deep breath and looks them both over...

HE RAMS HIS HEAD INTO TOMMY'S NOSE and sends him crashing to the floor like a sack of shit.

The knife flies across the room. The girl rushes to it. She picks it up and points it at Ritchie.

Tommy thrashes around on the floor, clutching his bleeding face.

RITCHIE

(to Tommy)

Where is it?

GIRLFRIEND

Leave us alone!

Ritchie makes his way to the girl.

The tip of the blade scrapes the lapels of his leather jacket. He studies her ragged features...

Tears run down her cheeks.

IN A FLASH, his hand sweeps in and grabs her wrist.

She puts up a pretty good fight before letting the knife drop. He kicks it away. She's really shaking now.

RITCHIE

Sit down.

She drops into the couch, defeated.

He notices some cash on the table. He grabs it.

He makes his way back to Tommy.

Blood pours from Tommy's nose. He tries to wipe it from his mouth and eyes, but it's everywhere.

Ritchie looks through Tommy's pockets, but comes up short. He gives the girl a look before turning Tommy over onto his belly.

Ritchie drops his knee onto the back of Tommy's neck and pins him to the floor.

RITCHIE

I'm not asking again, Tommy.

With one hand on Tommy's wrist, the other grabs hold of his elbow. Ritchie puts on the pressure...

TOMMY

The bowl! It's in the fucking bowl!

Ritchie looks up at the girl. She jumps to her feet and scurries to the bathroom.

Ritchie watches her as she lifts the lid off the tank and pulls out a baggy with little vials in it.

She hurries back and tosses it at him.

RITCHIE

Is that all of it?

Tommy is face down in a puddle of blood and spit.

TOMMY

Yeah! That's all of it! Now get off me!

Ritchie looks up at the girl. She stands in anticipation. He looks back down at the mess on the floor and without further hesitation... HE PULLS TOMMY'S ELBOW BACK WITH A VIOLENT JERK and dislocates the guy's shoulder.

Tommy screams and flops around on the floor. His arm dangles from its socket. His girlfriend rushes to him in horror as he thrashes hysterically.

Ritchie picks up the baggy and walks out.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

Ritchie enters. The clerk greets him with no expression.

Ritchie grabs the teddy bear from the display, slaps the money he swiped on the counter, and splits.

EXT. RITCHIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING/SIDEWALK - NIGHT

The street is packed with crumbling buildings and parked cars. POLICE SIRENS fade in the distance.

Ritchie stands in the cool night. He takes smoke from his cigarette deep into his lungs.

Approaching headlights blast his features.

A car stops in front of him.

He flicks his cigarette into the darkness.

The window rolls down to reveal

NIKKI JERGENS, late 20's, a little rough around the edges, but hot as hell. Her smile shines through her long, dark bangs.

INT. NIKKI'S CAR

Ritchie drops into the passenger seat.

Nikki reaches up and turns on the light. He reaches up and turns it off.

He fingers his inside pocket and produces the baggy with the vials. He hands it off to her and she slaps a small stack of bills into his waiting hand.

Nikki unscrews one of the vials and spills a little bit of its contents onto her wrist. She snorts it back fast and hard while Ritchie counts his money.

NIKKI

Shit!

She shuts her eyes tight and rubs her nose.

RITCHIE

Take it easy.

He gets back out into the cool night.

NIKKI

What are you doing for lunch tomorrow?

RITCHIE

Nothing.

NIKKI

Meet me at the diner. My treat.

RITCHIE

What's the occasion?

NIKKI

Job offer. Freelance. Great opportunity.

RITCHIE

For you or for me?

NIKKI

(big smile)

For us.

He gives her a nod and walks off.

NIKKI (O.S.)

Hey!

He turns.

NIKKI

It was good seeing you again.

He continues on his way. She watches him for a beat before taking another hit of the white powder.

INT. RITCHIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING/HALLWAY - NIGHT

Ritchie notices someone standing by his door.

MIKE MOONY, early 60's, decked out in a stained wife-beater and shorts, greets Ritchie with a fake smile.

RITCHIE

Mike.

MIKE

You're a hard guy to catch. Your  
schedule's all over the place.

Ritchie unlocks the door.

Mike loses the smile and gets in closer.

MIKE

Three months you owe me,  
Ritchie... I need at least one  
or you're out on your ass.

Ritchie stares him down. Mike backs away.

He reaches into his pocket and pulls out his new wad. He  
takes the top twenty from the bundle and slaps the rest  
into Mike's sweaty palm.

Mike smiles at the size of it. Giant yellow teeth take up  
most of his face.

MIKE

Was that so hard?

Ritchie leaves him in the hall.

INT. RITCHIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ritchie tosses his keys onto the short kitchen counter by  
the door.

A lamp lights up the place. The teddy bear sits up against  
a pillow on the folded out couch.

A few frames on a nearby table show PICTURES OF HIM AND  
THAT BEAUTIFUL BLONDE FROZEN IN GOOD TIMES.

He throws his jacket across the room. It lands on an  
already full chair, next to a WOODEN CRIB.

He drops onto the bed, picks up the bear and gives it a  
little squeeze.

INT. RITCHIE'S CAR - DAY - TRAVELING

Ritchie drives in silence. Large, expensive houses pass him by.

EXT. BOBBY GOLDEN'S HOUSE - DAY

Ritchie pulls up to the sprawling estate.

He's already smoking as he gets out of his car.

CHUCK, a mountain of black muscle, greets him at the front door.

CHUCK

Man, put that out.

Ritchie takes one last drag and flicks it away.

CHUCK

Nigga, did I tell you to toss that shit onto my boy's lawn?

Ritchie thinks about it.

He reluctantly makes his way across the lawn.

He reaches down, picks up the butt, and holds it up to satisfy Chuck.

CHUCK

You better wrap that shit in a Kleenex and put it in your pocket.

Ritchie enters the house.

CHUCK

I better not find it floating in one of the toilets again, either!

EXT. BOBBY GOLDEN'S HOUSE/POOLSIDE

Ritchie steps through the patio doors and into a backyard oasis. He shoves the cigarette butt into a nearby plant.

A MAN is doing laps in the pool.

TALIA, early 20's, brown and glistening, barely covered in a white bikini, is laying flat on her belly, taking in the sun.

Her mirrored sunglasses catch his reflection as he approaches.

He waves his hand in front of her face to no reaction.

He gives her the finger.

TALIA  
(smiles)  
That's not nice.

RITCHIE  
What lap is he on?

TALIA  
I stopped counting.

Ritchie takes a seat on the deck chair beside her.

TALIA  
Can you put some lotion on my back?

RITCHIE  
I don't want to get my hands dirty.

TALIA  
That's too bad.

BOBBY GOLDEN pulls himself out of the pool. He's pushing 50, but not going quietly. His fat gold chain glows against his dark skin. He pulls on a robe.

He joins them with a huge smile.

BOBBY  
Ritchie!

Ritchie stands up and goes in for the wet hug.

BOBBY  
You want something to drink?

RITCHIE

How about a coffee?

BOBBY

Coffee? It's like a hundred degrees out here. How about something with ice? Something from a bottle?

Bobby leans in.

BOBBY

I don't think she knows how to make coffee, man.

TALIA

I could make coffee.

BOBBY

Then go make some coffee!

He gives her a slap on the ass that gets her to her feet.

She struts away.

BOBBY

And put something on for chrissake! We've got company!

They watch her shake and bake all the way through the patio doors.

BOBBY

So how's it going? How's your boy? He still hanging in there?

RITCHIE

Yeah.

BOBBY

Well, I suggest you do the same. At least you're keeping busy. Heard you helped Nikki settle a little problem.

RITCHIE

Yeah. She called in a favor.

BOBBY

Favor, huh? She's a freaky fruit, that one. I can show you a picture of her from three years ago that'll empty your balls in three seconds flat.

Bobby reaches for a DVD case that's been sitting on the patio table next to him.

BOBBY

My dad used to tell me: "Your cock and your signature... watch where you put 'em".

He tosses it to Ritchie.

BOBBY

That should take your mind off things.

Ritchie examines the box. A buxom beauty graces the cover - giant tits pushing out of a prison jumpsuit - "The Hard Cell" in fat pink letters across the bottom.

BOBBY (O.S.)

You like porno?

Ritchie tosses the box back onto the table.

BOBBY

You need to go see a guy for me. I dropped some dough into one of his productions and all I've seen so far is that box. He's not returning my calls. I need you to give him a message for me.

RITCHIE

You want me to... talk to him?

BOBBY

Yeah, talk. Bring me my money. The address is on the box.

Bobby gets up and throws off the robe.

BOBBY

You gonna wait for that coffee?  
I'm telling you, it's gonna be a  
while.

RITCHIE

Nah, I'm gonna get going.

BOBBY

I'll see you later.

Bobby gets back in the water.

Talia meets up with Ritchie.

TALIA

Good news: the water's boiling!

RITCHIE

Rain check?

TALIA

Seriously? You don't know what  
you're missing.

He walks away.

TALIA

Hey! Can I ask you something?  
Between you and me? Do you like  
it? You know... hurting people?

Ritchie gets in close and serious.

RITCHIE

Some people need to get hurt.

INT. DINER - DAY

The place tries hard to look like an old-fashioned diner,  
but in the bright daylight, it just looks old. A few  
customers are enjoying their lunches as Ritchie walks in.

He eyes the booths and spots Nikki.

He joins her.

NIKKI

Hey, you made it.

RITCHIE

I never pass up a free lunch.

NIKKI

That's good because that's exactly what I need to talk to you about.

The WAITRESS shows up.

WAITRESS

Coffee?

RITCHIE

Please.

She smiles and pours.

NIKKI

Always with the coffee.

He takes a long sip.

NIKKI

A friend of mine is gonna join us. She's got a situation that you need to hear about. I'll be back.

She slides out of the booth.

NIKKI

(wink)

Gotta go powder my nose.

He sits back and takes in the view outside.

A car SCREECHES across the lot and brakes hard into a spot.

GWEN DUROVA, late 20's, platinum blonde and leggy, jumps out of the driver's side and rushes into the diner.

Ritchie watches her. Her movements are quick and erratic.

She stomps to the booth and jumps in.

He takes another long sip.

GWEN  
Where's Nikki?

RITCHIE  
Little girls' room.

GWEN  
She fill you in?

RITCHIE  
Nope.

GWEN  
Great.

The WAITRESS shows up smiling again.

WAITRESS  
Coffee?

GWEN  
Fuck off.

Her smile fades. She scrams.

Gwen looks like she's been up for a couple of days. Ritchie sips his coffee and watches her.

Gwen's eyes widen as Nikki returns and slides in next to her.

NIKKI  
(big smile)  
Hey!

Nikki grabs her hands.

NIKKI  
You alright?

Gwen throws her a shaky nod.

NIKKI  
Ritchie, this is Gwen. This is  
our free lunch.

Ritchie continues to sip his coffee.

NIKKI  
(to Gwen)  
Go ahead.

Gwen gathers herself before starting.

GWEN  
My husband keeps a gym bag full  
of money in our closet. I've  
never counted it, but there must  
be about fifty grand in there,  
easy. You and Nikki are welcome  
to all of it.

RITCHIE  
How's that?

GWEN  
My husband is a cocksucker. He's  
a very successful, very  
wealthy... cocksucker. And I  
don't want him breathing  
anymore.

Ritchie throws Nikki a cool stare.

RITCHIE  
Right. Well, good luck with  
that.

He jumps out of the booth and heads for the exit.

NIKKI  
(to Gwen)  
I'll handle this. Don't worry.

She catches up with him.

NIKKI  
Hey! What're you doing?

Ice cold stare right at her.

RITCHIE  
Outside.

He throws the door open and storms out.

Nikki looks over at Gwen before following.

EXT. PARKING LOT/RITCHIE'S CAR

Ritchie drops into the driver's seat. Nikki gets in next to him.

INT. RITCHIE'S CAR

He watches Gwen through the window. She tries to stay calm, but looks more and more out of place.

RITCHIE

I can't help her.

NIKKI

We're talking some serious money here.

RITCHIE

We're talking murdering some poor bastard in cold blood.

NIKKI

If it's any consolation, the guy's an asshole.

RITCHIE

It's not.

NIKKI

This is a fucking retirement fund, man. We're gonna be set for a long time.

RITCHIE

We get caught: we get put away for a long time.

NIKKI

I don't understand what the problem is. Whatever it is that you do and whatever it is that I need you to do, are like the same fucking thing.

RITCHIE

You're right, you don't understand.

Nikki notices Gwen shift around in her seat, eyeballing them hard through the window.

NIKKI

Listen, she's gonna bail. I'll fucking do it without you. I don't need to share.

RITCHIE

You're not gonna do anything.

NIKKI

Yeah, I will. You don't know how bad things are.

Her face finally loses its smile. Ritchie takes a good long look at her. He turns back to the nervous wreck inside.

RITCHIE

Who is she?

NIKKI

An old friend.

RITCHIE

How old?

NIKKI

She's cool, okay?

RITCHIE

Who's the husband?

NIKKI

Some accountant or something. Does it make a difference?

RITCHIE

Yeah, it makes a difference. Fifty grand - that's a lot of money - someone's gonna miss that. Successful accountant - someone's gonna miss him, too. Something like this needs planning, research, time --

NIKKI

No time. She wants it done today.

RITCHIE

Today? You're out of your mind. Anything happens to this guy today, how hard is it gonna be for someone to remember all of us chit-chatting over here?

NIKKI

Are you gonna help me or not?

He waits for her smile to come back. It doesn't.

RITCHIE

Tell her I can make it look like a robbery; put the prick in the hospital for a while. But I'm not killing anybody, and definitely not today.

NIKKI

Okay.

She throws open the door and jumps out.

RITCHIE

Walk away from this, Nikki. It's not your thing. Go in there. Calm her down. We'll find another way.

Her smile slowly creeps back.

NIKKI

I'll see what she says.

He watches her. She makes her way inside and back to the booth.

Gwen listens to every word. Nikki's lips stop moving.

Gwen mouths something to her. Nikki turns to the window and slowly shakes her head.

RITCHIE

Shit.

He starts the car up fast and peels out even faster.

INT. "PINK MONKEY STUDIOS"/TRENT'S OFFICE - DAY

HEATHER, a beautiful face in a baggy sweat suit, sits at a desk across from

TRENT ROTHSTEIN, mid 40's, balding, greasy, wearing an expensive suit and a cheap mustache.

The office is small and dank. The far wall is covered in photographs of naked young girls in various poses on a couch. Beneath the collage: the couch.

She chews gum as he looks through some papers and makes a few notes.

TRENT  
Rosie Cheeks?

He looks up at her. She blows a bubble.

TRENT  
(back to the notes)  
What's your real name, honey?

HEATHER  
Heather.

TRENT  
How old are you, Heather?

HEATHER  
Eighteen

He looks up and smiles.

TRENT  
That's a good answer.

She returns the smile.

TRENT  
It says here that you've done some modeling. What are we talking, Internet?

HEATHER  
Uh-huh.

TRENT

(back to his notes)  
Have you done anything like this  
before?

HEATHER

You mean, "Make movies"?

Trent stops writing. He looks up at her again, this time  
without the smile.

TRENT

Films... yes.

HEATHER

Not really.

He looks her over carefully...

TRENT

You okay with rough stuff? Gang  
Bangs? Weird shit?

HEATHER

Sure.

TRENT

Girl on girl?

HEATHER

Of course.

TRENT

Of course. Can you squirt? You a  
squirter?

HEATHER

Not that I know of.

TRENT

Not a big deal. Listen, Heather,  
before we go any further, I need  
to know what your boyfriend  
thinks of this career path  
you've decided to take.

HEATHER

I don't have a boyfriend.

The smile is back.

TRENT

That's another good answer.

He makes a final note in his papers and sits back with the smile still on his face. He looks the young lady over some more.

TRENT

Any questions before we get started?

She shifts in her seat.

HEATHER

Um... well... I have Herpes.

TRENT

(still smiling)  
Okay?

HEATHER

I was told that you don't care about that stuff.

TRENT

I wouldn't say that I don't care. I do, however, manage to work around "that stuff". Hey, we all gotta eat, right?

She looks more at ease.

He reaches into his desk and pulls out a small digital camera.

TRENT

Heather, I'd like to take some pictures now, if that's alright with you. See what kind of treasures you got hiding underneath all of that awful clothing.

HEATHER

Sure.

He gets to his feet. He motions to her to do the same.

She unzips her sweatshirt. Her skin-tight t-shirt struggles to hold down her giant breasts.

Trent fumbles with his camera.

HEATHER  
Everything?

TRENT  
Please.

She sits on the couch and unlaces her sneakers.

A loud BUZZ fills the room.

BETTY (V.O.)  
(over speaker, filtered)  
Mr. Rothstein? There's a  
gentleman here to see you?

Trent manages to turn the camera on. Heather continues to undress.

TRENT  
Who is it?

BETTY (V.O.)  
(over speaker, filtered)  
He says he's an associate of  
Bobby Golden's.

TRENT  
Tell him to fuck off. I'm busy.

BETTY (V.O.)  
(over speaker, filtered)  
Um...

Trent looks up, annoyed.

TRENT  
You have me on speaker again,  
don't you?

Silence. Trent rushes over and grabs the phone.

TRENT  
(into phone)  
Pick up the phone.

INT. "PINK MONKEY STUDIOS"/LOBBY

BETTY, late 40's, short and round, looks over at Ritchie through her black-rimmed glasses.

TRENT (V.O.)  
(over speaker, filtered)  
Pick up the phone, Betty!

She picks up the phone.

INTERCUT BETWEEN TRENT AND BETTY

TRENT  
Is he a big guy?

Betty looks Ritchie over.

BETTY  
Big enough, I guess.

TRENT  
Big enough for what?

BETTY  
I don't know.

TRENT  
Stall him.

BETTY  
He's already on his way.

TRENT  
Great!

He slams the phone down and rushes over to Heather. He quickly picks up all of her clothes.

TRENT  
Heather, we're gonna have to  
reschedule, but so far, I love  
what I'm seeing.

He pushes her clothes into her chest and leads her to the door.

TRENT

Betty will give you everything  
you need on your way out -  
paperwork, release forms,  
standard shit. We'll call you.

He pushes her into the hallway just as Ritchie shows up. He escorts him in with a forced smile.

TRENT

Hey, give me one second. Have a  
seat.

Trent sits at his desk and straightens himself out a bit. He puts his notes into one neat pile.

Ritchie takes a seat in front of him.

TRENT

Great girl. Big... big future.  
So... what can I do for you?

RITCHIE

(deadpan)  
Bobby wants his money.

TRENT

Really? Well, you can tell Bobby  
the film's in post. He's gonna  
have to wait like everybody  
else.

RITCHIE

I'm not his secretary.

TRENT

I don't know what else to tell  
you.

Ritchie eyes him for a moment.

He takes in the scene. He notices the wall across the room with the dirty collage and the dirtier couch.

He turns his attention back to Trent.

RITCHIE

I'm leaving here with a fistful  
of your money or a fistful of  
your teeth. I'll give you a  
minute to decide which one you'd  
like to part with today.

Trent's face goes cold.

He casually reaches into his drawer. He pulls out a gun.

He lays it on the desk.

TRENT

You know what that is? It's  
goodbye.

The two men are in a standoff.

Ritchie glances between the piece on the desk and Trent's  
smug face...

A VIOLENT KICK TO THE DESK sends the whole fucking thing  
flying into Trent's ribs. He's thrown backwards onto the  
floor.

Ritchie leaps over the desk and lands hard on top of him.  
Trent gasps for air under the weight.

His collar disappears into Ritchie's clenching fists as  
he's lifted off the floor. Trent tries to bat Ritchie's  
hands away, but they don't budge. His shirt starts to choke  
him out.

PETE (O.S.)

Let him go.

Ritchie loosens his grip. Trent drops to the floor.

PETE SOMMERSED, early 50's, a gorilla dressed like a man,  
hogs the doorway.

Ritchie gets to his feet. Trent crawls away.

RITCHIE

I thought I smelled dogshit.

Trent makes it to the couch. Pete crosses the scene.

TRENT

I think the fucker broke a rib!

Pete picks up Trent's gun from the floor and examines it.

RITCHIE

It's a prop.

PETE

I know.

He pulls back his jacket and reveals a holstered .38; a detective badge hangs off his belt.

PETE

This one isn't.

He lifts the chair and straightens it out.

PETE

I need you to sit down, Ritchie.

TRENT

You know this guy?

Pete takes a seat behind the desk.

PETE

Sit down.

Ritchie sits. Pete plays with the prop gun.

PETE

It's been a long time.

RITCHIE

Seems like yesterday to me.

PETE

You still holding that grudge, huh? I did you a favor, man. If I hadn't stepped in, you'd be up to your larynx in prison cock right now.

RITCHIE

What do you want, Pete?

PETE

Actually, believe it or not, I might have some more work for you.

TRENT

What're you doing?

Pete raises his finger and shuts Trent up - eyes still on Ritchie.

RITCHIE

I paid my debt.

Pete finds that funny.

PETE

Debt? You're never done owing the devil, Ritchie.

A BUZZING comes from Ritchie's jacket. He pulls his phone out just enough: "Nikki cell" flashes on the screen. He quickly presses a button and silences it.

RITCHIE

I didn't come here for a job. Call an ambulance. Your friend doesn't look too good.

PETE

You come work for me again and you'll be hitting the big time... or at least the bigger time.

BUZZING again. Nikki again. He ignores it again.

RITCHIE

I never worked for you. Get it straight.

PETE

Call it what you want.

BUZZING again. Ritchie shuts it off.

RITCHIE

I'm here for Bobby's money. If you don't have it, I'll be back tomorrow. If you don't have it then, I'll be back the next day, and the next. And I can't guarantee how many bodily functions your friend over there will still have control of until I get it.

PETE

Bobby, huh?

Pete takes a second before turning around to Trent.

PETE

Give him the money.

Trent massages his chest. His shirt is still wrinkled from the tussle.

TRENT

It's in whatever's left of my desk.

Pete struggles with the drawer. He opens it and pulls out a fat envelope. He tosses it to Ritchie.

PETE

See? We can all be friends.

Ritchie grabs the envelope. He opens it and runs his thumb across the bills inside.

PETE

There's a hell of a lot more where that came from. You're wasting your time running fetch missions for Bobby. Think about it. My door is always open.

Ritchie puts the envelope away. He takes one last look around and is out the door.

Pete's face turns to stone.

EXT. "PINK MONKEY STUDIOS"/STREET - DAY

Ritchie quickly pulls out his phone and dials.

NIKKI (V.O.)  
(over phone, filtered)  
Hi! It's Nikki! Leave a message!

He hangs up and gets into his car.

EXT. BOBBY GOLDEN'S HOUSE - DAY

Ritchie's car comes to a quick stop. He jumps out and heads for the front door.

He flicks his cigarette across the lawn. Rings the doorbell.

Talia opens the door. Her face lights up.

TALIA  
Hey! Back for that coffee?

Ritchie storms past her.

INT. BOBBY GOLDEN'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM

Bobby watches TV. Chuck sits nearby.

Ritchie walks in. Talia follows.

Chuck gets up. Bobby waves him down.

BOBBY  
How did it go?

RITCHIE  
How do you think it went?

BOBBY  
What happened?

RITCHIE  
Pete Sommersed showed up.

BOBBY  
Shit.

Bobby turns the TV off.

RITCHIE

I need the work, Bobby, but I don't need the bullshit.

BOBBY

He's never there. If he was, something's up... What did you talk about?

RITCHIE

He tried to recruit me.

BOBBY

For what?

RITCHIE

Work.

BOBBY

Work? Come here.

Bobby takes him aside.

BOBBY

Look, I fucked up. I wasn't thinking, okay? I'm sorry. Forget about that piece of shit.

RITCHIE

Why would you send me there?

BOBBY

Hey, money's money, right? I don't send you on jobs for fun. I already apologized now get over it. Sammy's days were numbered. There was a fucking line forming behind you. At least you got something out of it.

RITCHIE

You shouldn't have sent me there, Bobby.

Bobby tenses up.

BOBBY

Don't tell me what I should or shouldn't do. Take a step back and realize where your place is, Ritchie. You're lucky I'm not making you pick up my dry cleaning at this point. We go way back, but that doesn't mean we have to go any further.

Ritchie looks around. He pulls out the fat envelope from his jacket and drops it on the table.

RITCHIE

I know my place, Bobby. You don't need to remind me. But if you put me in a situation like that again, I'm coming back here and redecorating.

Chuck stands up.

BOBBY

We're done, Ritchie. No more handouts. Walk away or crawl, it's up to you.

Ritchie stares them all down. He walks away.

RITCHIE

(to Chuck)

He doesn't get through that door again.

INT. RITCHIE'S BUILDING/HALLWAY - NIGHT

TWO BIG GUYS are on their way down the hall as Ritchie rounds the corner.

FRANKY wears a shiny green tracksuit and

ROCCO sports a thinly shaved beard that follows his jawline like a night crawler.

Mike stands in his doorway slobbering over an apple, eyes on Ritchie. The two men disappear into his apartment.

Ritchie ignores them.

INT. RITCHIE'S APARTMENT

The place is dark. Ritchie tosses his keys on the counter and heads for the bathroom.

BATHROOM

He turns on the light. The mirror is fogged up. He runs a finger across it. He hurries out.

LIVING ROOM

The light from the bathroom reveals Nikki sitting on the floor near the window. Her hair is wet. Her hands are shaking. He approaches with caution.

RITCHIE

What are you doing here, Nikki?

NIKKI

Regrouping.

He gets closer. Her eyes are somewhere else.

NIKKI

I fucked up.

He lifts her chin up.

RITCHIE

You need to tell me what happened.

NIKKI

I need a priest.

RITCHIE

What did you do?

NIKKI

I did like you said. I tried to calm her down - get her mind off things.

RITCHIE

How?

INT. GWEN'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Gwen lets out a DEEP MOAN.

Nikki sits beside her on the couch. Her arm is stretched across her lap, her hand buried between Gwen's legs.

Gwen's panties are stretched across her thighs. Her skirt conceals what's happening underneath.

Gwen leans back, exhausted.

Nikki wipes her hand on the couch and takes care of a line of cocaine waiting for her on the glass coffee table.

The living room is gigantic: Paintings, sculptures... very classy.

Nikki looks over at Gwen and sees that she's sobbing.

NIKKI

Hey! Come on.

She moves in to comfort her.

GWEN

I can't do it.

NIKKI

It's a party, right? No tears, remember?

GWEN

I'm suffocating. This house, these walls, this fucking furniture!

She kicks the table.

NIKKI

Hey!

Nikki rushes to make sure the drugs are okay.

GWEN

I can't go on like this. I can't.

NIKKI

You can do a lot worse. I mean,  
he's not even around. Who cares  
what he's doing? Look at this  
place!

She goes down for another line.

GWEN

You don't understand

Nikki tosses her head back and rubs her nose.

NIKKI

Nope.

GWEN

He's a terrible person.

NIKKI

Who isn't?

GWEN

He... the things he's done.

She looks off into the distance.

INT. RITCHIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (PRESENT DAY)

NIKKI

She told me he knocked her  
around a lot. One time... hard.  
She lost a baby and her uterus.

INT. GWEN'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

A large duffel bag drops at Nikki's bare feet.

Gwen rummages through her closet. She sets off an avalanche  
of shoeboxes. She grabs the one she wants.

She approaches Nikki. Their noses are red, their eyes,  
watery and alive.

Gwen hands her the box. Nikki holds it as Gwen lifts the  
lid. She reaches in and pulls out a revolver.

GWEN

Look. It's all here. See?

Nikki's eyes try to focus.

NIKKI

Holy shit.

GWEN

Take it.

She knocks the box away and places the gun in Nikki's still outstretched hands. She forces Nikki's fingers around the cold metal. Gwen gets in real close.

GWEN

I'll call him. Right now, I'll call him and I'll tell him to come home. I'll say we've been robbed. I'll get him here. Please do it. Please.

Nikki struggles with the situation. She says nothing. She sees the desperation in Gwen's eyes. Her hands are closed firmly on top of hers. Her toes touch the duffel bag as Gwen pulls in closer.

NIKKI

Listen, Gwen. I --

BANG! The gun goes off and sends Gwen's brains flying across the room. Her body drops to the floor in a second. Nikki is left standing in total, freaked-out silence.

Her face is covered in blood; her hands still gripping the revolver; her eyes wide open.

INT. GWEN'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Nikki dials her phone. Brains and blood are caked on her face and in her hair. No answer.

NIKKI

Shit!

Nikki wipes the table clean and gathers her things. She picks up her shoes and gets the fuck out of there.

EXT. GWEN'S HOUSE - DAY

Nikki walks out barefoot into the quiet street. She takes quick, nervous steps to her car. She gets in and peels out.

INT. RITCHIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (PRESENT DAY)

Ritchie is speechless. Nikki sits, rubbing her hands.

RITCHIE

Did anybody see you?

NIKKI

I don't think so. But the gun made a lot of noise.

Ritchie paces. He peeks out at the street from the cracks in the curtains.

NIKKI

There's something else.

Nikki reaches into the darkness beside her and pulls out the duffel bag. She slides it over to Ritchie.

He freezes. He crouches down and unzips it. He pulls it open to reveal a shit load of cash.

NIKKI (O.S.)

There's a lot more than fifty grand in there.

RITCHIE

(staring at the money)  
Are you sure no one saw you?

NIKKI

Ninety nine percent.

Ritchie looks up to meet her eyes...

BUZZING interrupts their moment. It's coming from Ritchie's pocket. He reaches in and pulls out his phone. His eyes widen as he looks at the caller ID: "Nikki cell" flashes on the screen.

RITCHIE

Where's your phone?

Nikki rushes to her feet. She throws open her jacket. Nothing. She empties out her purse. No phone. She joins Ritchie and looks down at the flashing screen.

NIKKI

Oh, fuck!

Ritchie's face tenses. The BUZZING doesn't stop.

NIKKI

Don't answer it.

Ritchie answers it. He swallows hard as he holds the phone to his ear.

RITCHIE

Hello?

PETE (V.O.)

(over phone, filtered)

Hello, Ritchie.

INT. GWEN'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Pete stands over Gwen's body. He's wearing rubber gloves, holding Nikki's phone inches from his face.

PETE

I bet my voice sounds like  
Christmas morning to you now,  
huh?

INT. RITCHIE'S APARTMENT

Ritchie doesn't blink.

NIKKI

(whispering)

Who is it?

PETE (V.O.)

(over phone, filtered)

You think we can talk about that  
job offer now?

INT. GWEN'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

DIMITRI DUROV, late 60's, nice suit, bad hair, sits on the couch. His leg shakes nervously.

ALEXEI, his giant goon, stands by the front entrance.

Pete comes down the stairs. Dimitri rushes to him.

DIMITRI  
(thick Russian accent)  
You saw?

PETE  
You did good by calling me  
first.

Pete looks around. He notices smudges on the coffee table but gets back to his man.

PETE  
You said you found her like  
that?

DIMITRI  
I did not know she was so  
unhappy.

PETE  
I'm gonna clean this up for you,  
Dimitri. You know what that  
means, right?

DIMITRI  
Anything you want.

PETE  
You know what I want.

DIMITRI  
I cannot touch him. I can do  
anything else but that.

Pete looks at Alexei by the door. Back to Dimitri.

PETE  
What if it wasn't suicide?

DIMITRI

What are you saying?

PETE

You don't squeak. You got enemies. Maybe it's a message.

DIMITRI

Only a coward would behave this way.

PETE

How much would a name mean to you?

Dimitri drops into the couch, thinking.

DIMITRI

Who would do such a thing?

PETE

If there is a "who", I'll find him.

DIMITRI

Deliver the coward and I will speak to bosses.

PETE

Wait a half hour after I leave. Then, call the cops. They won't find anything. Try to act broken up. It'll help.

DIMITRI

Is there any way we can keep them out of this?

PETE

She's your wife. You can't just bring her up to the cabin. The neighbors are gonna notice she's not driving around anymore. Play dumb. Trust me. It'll blow over.

DIMITRI

I cannot go to jail.

PETE

It's prison, actually... but nobody's going anywhere. They'll stop at suicide. They won't dig any deeper.

Silence. Pete looks them both over.

PETE

Half hour.

He squeezes passed Alexei on his way out.

INT. RITCHIE'S APARTMENT/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Coffee brews on the counter. A burning cigarette dangles between Ritchie's fingers as he stands by.

He watches Nikki make neat little stacks of hundreds on the living room floor. One last bill is placed on one last pile.

RITCHIE

So?

NIKKI

Two-fifty... even.

RITCHIE

(to himself)

Two-fifty.

NIKKI

What do you wanna do?

Smoke spews from his lips.

NIKKI

You think the cop knows about it?

RITCHIE

I don't know what he knows. I know what he wants.

NIKKI

What does he want?

RITCHIE

Blood.

The machine BEEPS; the coffee's ready. He turns to the waiting mugs.

RITCHIE

How do you take it?

CLICK! CLICK!

He turns. Nikki has a gun in her hand.

She makes her way to him. He keeps his eyes on the gun.

She sets it down on the counter.

NIKKI

I was gonna do it, Ritchie. I was gonna blow him away for her... for that pile of paper over there.

Her gaze drifts towards the little money village on the living room floor.

He reaches out slowly and takes the gun. He flicks the safety on and slides it away from her.

NIKKI

Why can't we just run?

RITCHIE

Do you know who this guy is?

NIKKI

Some dirty cop?

RITCHIE

That's a fucking understatement.

She gets back to the stacks. He sips and watches her as she gets on the floor.

RITCHIE

Do you remember the guy I used to run with? Sammy "Two Balls"?

NIKKI

Yeah.

RITCHIE

Do you know what happened to him?

NIKKI

He was shot. Drug deal gone sideways, right?

RITCHIE

This "dirty cop"... He busted Sammy one day with half a key in his pants, but instead of booking him, he tried to make a deal... Sammy didn't make deals with cops.

Nikki runs her hands through the stacks.

NIKKI

So he shot him?

RITCHIE

No. He wanted to make an example out of him... He had a dozen dealers just like Sammy in his pocket. Not to mention cookers, junkies, gangbangers, psychos and half of the downtown police department. He had a reputation to protect.

The cash covers the floor now.

RITCHIE

He makes a call one day and sends Sammy a message that not only makes it to his ear, but right through his fucking skull.

NIKKI

Where were you?

Ritchie struggles with the answer.

RITCHIE  
I delivered it.

NIKKI  
(looks up)  
No shit?

RITCHIE  
He caught me with blood on my  
hands about a month earlier.  
Figured we can "help each other  
out".

NIKKI  
How much blood?

RITCHIE  
Enough to put me away for a long  
time.

NIKKI  
So, let's make a deal, then.  
Either that or we kill him.

RITCHIE  
I thought of that. Dirty or not,  
though, he's still a cop. That's  
a hard kill.

NIKKI  
What do you wanna do, then?

Ritchie looks at the thick carpet of money at her feet.

RITCHIE  
Got any blow left?

INT. RITCHIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING/MIKE'S DOOR - NIGHT

MRS. DELUCA, decked out in curlers and a bathrobe, shows up  
and knocks. There's some COMMOTION coming from inside.

The door opens and Mike greets her with a big yellow smile.

She looks inside and sees Franky and Rocco sitting at a  
table in the middle of the room. It's covered in beer  
bottles and stacks of poker chips.

MIKE

Mrs. DeLuca, how are you?

MRS. DELUCA

How am I? That jerk in 3C is smoking again. My kids are trying to do their homework, but instead they're getting lung cancer!

Mike throws a glance down the hall.

INT. RITCHIE'S DOOR

Mike knocks. Mrs. DeLuca watches from a distance.

MIKE

Open up, Ritchie!

He turns to Mrs. DeLuca and gives her a nod.

MIKE

Ritchie! If you don't open this goddamn door, I'm gonna call the cops and they can --

The door opens a crack. Ritchie's eyes are wild - cigarette dangling from his lips.

RITCHIE

Fuck off.

MIKE

Fuck off? This is a non-smoking building, you understand? People are trying to live here... Put it out or get out.

Ritchie shuts the door. Mike looks over at Mrs. DeLuca. She shakes her head.

He gathers himself and bangs on the door again.

MIKE

Ritchie! If you don't put that shit out, I'm gonna come in there and put it out for you, I swear to Christ!

The door opens fast and wide. Mike jumps back.

Ritchie steps out and holds up a thin stack of cash.

RITCHIE

Fuck. Off.

Mike cautiously approaches and takes it from him.

He takes a quick peek inside and sees Nikki sitting in the pile of money, doing a line of coke off her wrist.

Ritchie gets back inside and shuts the door.

Mike stands for a beat, thinking.

He heads back to his apartment. He counts the bills as he walks by Mrs. DeLuca.

MRS. DELUCA

That's it?

MIKE

Go home, Mrs. DeLuca.

He shuts the door behind him.

INT. RITCHIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ritchie grabs the gun from the counter and makes his way to the couch. He picks up the duffel bag.

RITCHIE

Come on. We gotta go.

He tosses the gun into the bag and begins filling it with handfuls of money from the floor. She watches him.

NIKKI

How many people have you killed?

RITCHIE

What?

NIKKI

He found you with blood on your hands. Counting Sammy, that's at least two, right?

RITCHIE

I wouldn't say they were people. Ten years ago, you catch me with a smoking gun, I surrender, no problem. What did I know? But... after five years inside... your perspective changes a bit. You tend not to wanna go for the repeat. After that, the choice between smoking some lowlife and doing hard time again isn't a choice at all.

NIKKI

I've never killed anyone before.

RITCHIE

It was an accident. Don't torture yourself.

NIKKI

What am I supposed to do?

He avoids the question. Continues to fill the bag.

NIKKI

Do you believe in God, Ritchie?

RITCHIE

(filling the bag)  
What's the difference?

NIKKI

It changes things.

RITCHIE

Oh, yeah?

NIKKI

Yeah. We're either a bunch of meat and bones, or there's a soul swimming around in here somewhere.

His eyes go to the teddy bear on the kitchen counter.

NIKKI

If he's just make-believe, we have nothing to worry about, but if he's out there... we're in deep shit.

He's done filling the bag.

RITCHIE

I wouldn't worry too much about God.

NIKKI

Why not?

RITCHIE

Look around... he ain't here.

There's a KNOCK at the door. They look at each other.

NIKKI

Maybe that's him.

RITCHIE

Get your stuff.

Ritchie goes to answer it...

THE DOOR IS KICKED IN, smashing him over the face. He's sent flying across the room.

Nikki jumps to her feet.

Franky and Rocco enter the apartment followed by Mike. He manages to get the rattled door closed behind him. She grabs the duffel bag.

NIKKI

What do you retards want?

Mike paces behind his two large friends. Ritchie tries to catch his breath.

MIKE

My sister has a boy with Down Syndrome. Great kid. That term cuts like a knife every time I hear it.

Mike looks around.

MIKE

We're gonna take all that dough  
I saw you rolling around in  
earlier, plus whatever's left of  
that shit you were putting up  
your nose.

Mike sizes her up.

MIKE

And while we're at it, I think  
we'll have that dirty mouth of  
yours wrapped around our cocks  
later, too. Your boyfriend,  
here, can watch.

NIKKI

He's not my boyfriend.

Franky licks his lips. Nikki reaches into the bag.

MIKE

I think I'll have Franky knock  
your teeth out first, though...  
you look like a biter.

Ritchie spits out some blood.

RITCHIE

Take your boys and go, Mike.  
That's all the warning you're  
gonna get.

MIKE

(laughing)  
Are you serious?

Ritchie stumbles to his feet.

MIKE

I'm not giving you a warning,  
Ritchie. I'm making you a  
promise - a promise that these  
men will do terrible things to  
you and your girl tonight if you  
don't step aside.

Ritchie's shoulders and neck let out a couple of awful cracks as he straightens out.

He looks over at Nikki. She has her hand deeper in the bag. Their eyes meet.

RITCHIE  
(to Mike)  
This isn't a fair fight.

Nikki's hand is elbow deep in the duffel bag.

RITCHIE  
You should go get a couple more  
guys.

Everyone is frozen...

Mike laughs.

MIKE  
Fuck him up, boys.

Franky winds up a powerful right that slices through the air. Ritchie ducks out of the way and lands a knee hard into his ribs. His elbow follows fast and shatters Franky's jaw.

Franky's body slumps to the carpet, revealing Rocco coming right for them.

He lunges at Ritchie and is stopped in his tracks by a big boot to the balls. A ferocious right to Rocco's face sends blood and spit flying onto Mike's wife-beater.

He's knocked out instantly and crashes to the floor at Mike's feet.

A yellow smile appears on Mike's sweaty face.

MIKE  
Bygones?

INT. RITCHIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING/HALLWAY - NIGHT

Mrs. DeLuca mumbles to herself as she storms towards Ritchie's door.

MIKE COMES CRASHING THROUGH IT and hits the wall hard. He doesn't get up. Mrs. DeLuca screams.

Nikki and Ritchie step through the shattered doorway and disappear down the hall.

INT. RITCHIE'S CAR - NIGHT

They jump in. Ritchie puts the key in, but doesn't turn it.

NIKKI

What are you waiting for?

RITCHIE

We have to make a stop.

EXT. HOSPITAL/PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Ritchie's car pulls into a spot.

RITCHIE

Wait here.

NIKKI

(smiles)

Sure. I'll watch the bag.

He doesn't smile back.

INT. HOSPITAL/HALLWAY

Ritchie walks with the duffel in his hands. Nikki catches up with him.

NIKKI

You know, technically, that's my money.

RITCHIE

When this is over, you'll get your cut.

NIKKI

My cut? You steered clear remember? I'm the one who got the fucking brain facial.

He looks around trying to find his way. She stops him before he turns down another hallway.

NIKKI

Hey! Seriously, we split the money now. We go our separate ways. Fuck deals. Fuck the cop.

RITCHIE

He's gonna find you.

NIKKI

Let him. He has my cell phone. So what?

The nurse spots Ritchie and approaches.

RITCHIE

This guy goes into people's closets, pulls out all their skeletons and dangles them over their heads every chance he gets. I've seen your closet. You don't want him in there.

She quiets down.

NURSE

Mr. Boland?

RITCHIE

Can I see him now?

She throws a probing look at Nikki.

NURSE

I'll see what I can do.

INT. HOSPITAL/NURSERY

Ritchie washes his hands. A sign next to the sink tells him how to do it properly.

Above his head is a shelf labeled "CLEAN". It's covered in folded hospital gowns. He puts one on over his clothes.

He follows the nurse to a lone incubator near the back window.

The nurse steps aside with a smile and reveals a tiny body inside - blindfolded, attached to a mess of wires and tubes, little chest breathing heavily.

NURSE

It's alright.

Ritchie pulls the teddy bear out and rests it on the plastic box.

NURSE

Take your time.

He examines the helpless little guy in the box.

INT. HOSPITAL/WAITING ROOM

Nikki sits with the duffel bag in her lap.

The nurse goes to the nearby coffee machine and drops some change in its slot. She pushes some buttons and waits for the machine to do its thing. She glances at Nikki while she waits.

Nikki can see into the nursery down the hall. She watches Ritchie with a frown.

NURSE (O.S.)

Going through something like  
this alone must be impossible.  
You must be a good friend.

NIKKI

(cold)  
I'm not his friend.

THE MACHINE FUCKS UP AND COFFEE SPILLS EVERYWHERE. The nurse jumps and tries to control the mess.

NURSE

Shit!

INT. RITCHIE'S CAR - NIGHT - TRAVELING

Ritchie is focused on the road. Nikki throws glances at him through the silence.

EXT. "PINK MONKEY STUDIOS"/STREET - NIGHT

Ritchie's car comes to a stop.

INT. RITCHIE'S CAR

He kills the engine.

RITCHIE

You ready?

NIKKI

No.

RITCHIE

Well, get ready.

NIKKI

When were you gonna tell me?

RITCHIE

Tell you what?

NIKKI

About, whatever that was back there?

RITCHIE

I wasn't.

NIKKI

Just like that? What we had - that doesn't entitle me to some answers?

RITCHIE

That was a million years ago and no, it doesn't. Let's go.

EXT. RITCHIE'S CAR

He jumps out. She stays put.

He comes around to her side. She stares out the windshield without even blinking.

He looks around... The street lamps sparkle in the wet pavement.

He lights a cigarette, takes a deep drag and drops his head in defeat.

He knocks on her window.

She rolls it down; her eyes still focused on the street.

RITCHIE

There was a girl... Things got serious, but then quickly turned to shit, so she bailed. Showed up six months later with a sob story and a baby-bump.

She finally turns to face him.

NIKKI

How do you know it's yours?

RITCHIE

I don't.

NIKKI

Where is she?

RITCHIE

A blast from her past saw her crossing the street one day and decided to run her over with his Camry.

A car speeds by and interrupts him.

RITCHIE

They managed to save the kid, but he won't wake up... They tell me I'm wasting my time and money - that I should pull the plug and move on. His heartbeat's stronger than mine and they're telling me to shut it down like it's nothing.

NIKKI

What are you holding on to? That kid doesn't belong here.

RITCHIE

Like you said... we're more than  
just meat, right?

He flicks his cigarette into the street.

NIKKI

You think buying a teddy bear is  
gonna absolve you of all your  
sins, Ritchie? Wake up. You're  
not a father. You don't bring  
people into this world, you take  
them out. Let's take this money  
and get the hell out of here.

He walks away.

EXT. "PINK MONKET STUDIOS"/ENTRANCE

She jumps out and catches up to him at the door.

NIKKI

What do you think this guy is  
gonna ask us to do? Paint his  
house? We take the money and  
run... right now.

Ritchie pushes the door bell.

RITCHIE

We need to end this right. Pete  
is one loose end you don't want  
dangling in the wind.

The door BUZZES open. Ritchie enters. She hesitates before  
following.

INT. "PINK MONKEY STUDIOS"/TRENT'S OFFICE

Pete sits in Trent's chair with Nikki's phone in his hands.  
He looks through its contents.

Trent is occupied with Heather on the couch. He whispers  
bullshit into her ear and she fakes a few giggles. She's  
practically bursting out of a skin-tight dress.

Ritchie and Nikki walk through the door. Pete stands up.

PETE

(to Nikki)

We meet at last. The pictures on this phone do not do you justice.

He reaches out his hand.

PETE

Peter Sommersed... Detective  
Peter Sommersed.

Her eyes go to Ritchie. Pete takes back his meaty paw.

They sit down. He continues browsing through her phone.

PETE

There are a lot of pictures in here. Some of them, I have to confess, I already jerked-off to, but a few others... I'm just not that into.

He flips the cell over so they can see a picture of a bloodied Gwen on the screen. He shuffles blindly to more shots of her from different angles.

Nikki's face goes white.

PETE (O.S.)

I'm no Ansel Adams, but --

RITCHIE

What do you want, Pete?

He puts the phone down.

PETE

I live in the shade, Ritchie, as you know. I pull the strings on dozens of puppet shows, but that doesn't mean I'm not a serious businessman. This... studio... is one of the good ones. We make quality movies here.

TRENT

(interrupting)

Films.

PETE

Films... The talent, as you can see, is top notch.

Ritchie looks over at Heather.

PETE

Cash and pussy go in and out of here like fucking clockwork. Most of it lands right into our laps, too, but a lot of it... doesn't quite make the trip.

He leans in closer.

PETE

(To Nikki)

Can you give us a minute, honey? Maybe ten?

Nikki looks around.

NIKKI

Where do you want me to go?

PETE

Trent! Why don't you give this young lady the tour?

Trent drops Heather in a flash and gets to his feet.

TRENT

Of course!

He straightens his tie and pats down his hair as he struts to the desk. He gives her his hand.

NIKKI

(to Pete)

I don't want the tour. I wanna know what I need to do to get out of this shit.

PETE

(deadpan)

You need to take the tour.

Nikki looks at Ritchie. He nods.

NIKKI

Whatever.

She walks out. Trent follows.

Pete turns around to Heather who is still on the couch.

PETE

You, too, sweetheart.

Heather jumps up and jiggles all the way out the door. Pete gets back to business.

PETE

In order for this machine to keep working, we have to deal with certain silent partners; backers that provide various, necessary services that keep the whole thing moving smoothly. These guys... they partnered up with a local financier and made him their official talent scout. The guy's a fucking scumbag.

RITCHIE

That's funny.

PETE

He takes all the best girls and leaves us with scraps. So instead of getting a decent stable set up, we're left scrounging the bottom of the pile every time. Make-up and lighting can only do so much.

RITCHIE

Seems like a no-brainer. Your reach should go way past this type of shit.

PETE

Believe it or not, it doesn't.

He leans back again, hesitating for once.

PETE

The backers are in the Russian mob.

Ritchie's face goes cold.

PETE

And, like I said, they're head-over-heels for this jerk-off, so he's not budging.

RITCHIE

Russians?

PETE

I don't want this to go down like a regular hit. I need it to be done different.

RITCHIE

Different? How long is it gonna take for the Russians to find out who fucked up their new BFF?

Ritchie pulls out his pack of smokes and lights up.

PETE

This morning, I show up and there you are, like a fucking sign, so I asked... You said "no". Now... you're here...

He holds up the phone.

PETE

And here... So, I'm asking again. Same deal as last time.

RITCHIE

Asking, huh?

Ritchie lets out a cloud from his lungs.

RITCHIE

What do you mean by "different"?

Pete leans in closer.

EXT. MANSION - NIGHT

A monster of a house is perched on the edge of a cliff.

PETE (V.O.)

He throws a party every Friday  
night.

The driveway wraps around the front. Expensive cars are everywhere. A PAIR OF LONG LEGS pops out of one of them.

PETE (V.O.)

He invites new talent to his  
house every week for some fucked  
up meet 'n' greet. Invite only.

INT. MANSION/REC ROOM - NIGHT

The long legs are escorted through the party - about a dozen half-naked men and women, drinking, dancing, snorting, fucking, you name it.

INT. MANSION/BEDROOM

PETE (V.O.)

He likes to handpick his stock,  
so he makes sure to be there  
every time.

A FIGURE sits in the shadows, waiting. He takes a sip of his drink as the legs stop in front of him. The shoes come off and the dress drops to the floor.

INT. "PINK MONKEY STUDIOS"/TRENT'S OFFICE

PETE

Trent's bringing Heather  
tonight... plus two.

RITCHIE

Tonight? I need at least two  
weeks for a job like this, and  
with the Russians sniffing  
around, two weeks if you're  
lucky.

PETE

I don't have two weeks. You don't have two weeks. There's nothing to plan here. I'm telling you how I need this to go down. You should be taking fucking notes.

Ritchie leans back and sucks back some more smoke.

RITCHIE

Russians aren't gonna have a hard time getting to that guest list.

PETE

Everyone there's gonna be zonked out of their asses. Get him alone. Make it look like an overdose.

RITCHIE

Overdose? Give me the address. I'll wait until the party's over, get him alone, pop him in his sleep.

PETE

If there's even one fucking clue left behind that this was a hit, the Ruskies will scour the earth for our asses. This way, they'll chalk it up to poor judgment.

He reaches into his pocket and pulls out a bottle of pills.

PETE

He's a pill-popper. He's gonna think it's his birthday.

Ritchie grabs the bottle and examines it.

PETE

You gotta look like you're there to fuck and take names. Wipe that frown off your face and get into character.

RITCHIE

You're not giving me much time to prepare. Overdose? Tell me to turn this guy into hamburger meat and I won't bat an eye, but this... I'm not exactly dressed for the part, either.

TRENT (O.S.)

You can grab something from wardrobe.

Ritchie turns around. Trent stands with the girls by his side. Nikki is decked out in a slinky little number and in full makeup.

PETE

There's one more thing you need to know.

RITCHIE

What's that?

PETE

His name... it's Bobby Golden.

RITCHIE

Bobby?

Ritchie looks at Nikki. She throws him a pissed "I told you so" look.

PETE

He's not your friend, Ritchie. He's not worth this second thought. What did he tell you about me? Did he come clean? My guess is "no". We've been down this road before. You're torn up, I get it, it sucks, but there's no time to discuss this any further.

(gets up)

You leave in an hour.

Pete walks out. Trent and Heather take off right after.

NIKKI

That's it?

RITCHIE

I'm thinking.

NIKKI

Not one of your strong suits.

Ritchie dials his phone and paces.

RITCHIE

Come on, Bobby. Pick up.

NIKKI

What's the plan?

RITCHIE

He's not answering.

NIKKI

This is it... we take the back door out of here.

RITCHIE

We play along; we go to Bobby's; I'll figure something out.

His eyes lock onto hers.

INT. "PINK MONKEY STUDIOS"/LOBBY - NIGHT

Pete leans up against the front desk. Trent horses around with Heather near the door. Ritchie shows up wearing a cheesy, shiny gray suit. Somehow, he makes it work. Nikki follows close behind.

RITCHIE

(to Pete)

We're done after this. No more deals.

Pete holds up Nikki's phone with a dead Gwen still up on the screen.

PETE

You'll get it back when it's over.

He puts the phone in his pocket.

PETE

As for future business together,  
well... that's up to you, isn't  
it?

He gives Ritchie a dirty smile.

TRENT (O.S.)

Let's go!

Ritchie heads for the door where everyone is waiting.

PETE

Hey!

They all turn. Pete approaches. He reaches into Ritchie's  
pants and pulls out his gun.

PETE

My way, remember?

Pete slides the gun into his own pants and walks away.

TRENT

(to Ritchie)

You drive.

He tosses Ritchie the keys.

EXT. TRENT'S MERCEDES - NIGHT - TRAVELING

The car cruises through the suburbs.

INT. TRENT'S MERCEDES - NIGHT - TRAVELING

Ritchie is focused on the road.

Trent continues his dead-end efforts with Heather in the  
back seat.

TRENT

(to Ritchie)

Hey! I heard about you and  
Sammy.

Ritchie eyes him in the rearview mirror.

TRENT

If that's how you treat your  
friends, I'd hate to see what  
you do to your enemies.

Ritchie's eyes are locked onto Trent. Trent drops the  
smile.

EXT. BOBBY GOLDEN'S HOUSE/DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

The Benz makes its way around. It passes a couple of parked  
cars.

TRENT (V.O.)

Looks like we're early.

They stop and get out. Ritchie looks up at the house.

EXT. BOBBY GOLDEN'S HOUSE/ENTRANCE

The door opens and IOSIF, a boulder of a man with no neck  
and no personality, blocks the way.

Ritchie and Nikki exchange worried glances.

TRENT

Iosif. You look fetching  
tonight. Let me guess... new  
chin?

Iosif stares them all down. He motions to Trent to raise  
his arms. Trent obliges and Iosif proceeds to pat him down.

He gives Ritchie the same gesture. Ritchie lifts his arms.  
Iosif finds the small pill bottle.

Ritchie doesn't break eye contact.

Iosif pockets them. He looks over at Nikki and Heather.  
Their dresses cling to their bodies like plastic wrap. He  
smiles and steps aside.

INT. ENTRANCE HALL

Iosif leads them across the empty hall.

TRENT  
Where's the party, Slim?

INT. REC ROOM

They turn the corner and enter. They stop in their tracks.

Bobby is hunched over on the couch; face down on the coffee table. Blood pools under his face.

Talia is sprawled across a nearby couch. Dead.

Chuck lies motionless a few yards away. Also dead.

Dimitri sits on the couch beside Bobby, smoking a cigar. Alexei stands close by as Iosif mans the exit.

DIMITRI  
The party is over.

TRENT  
What the fuck is this, Dimitri?

DIMITRI  
You came here to do same thing,  
yes? I save you trouble.

Trent fumbles.

TRENT  
We came here to party. New  
girls, new guy, see?

Heather is becoming an expert with the fake smiles. Dimitri likes what he sees.

NIKKI  
(to Ritchie)  
That's Gwen's husband. The  
cocksucker.

RITCHIE  
Pete set us up.

Dimitri gives Iosif a nod. Iosif steps forward and drives a fist into Ritchie's back, sending him to his knees.

He grabs Nikki and drags her to Dimitri.

NIKKI  
(fighting)  
Get off me!

TRENT  
Hey! Hey! Take it easy, Dimitri!

Dimitri examines Nikki's face.

DIMITRI  
Where is my money?

TRENT  
(butting in)  
What money?

NIKKI  
I don't have it.

Ritchie gets to his feet.

RITCHIE  
I have the bag.

All eyes on Ritchie.

TRENT  
Listen, Dimitri, whatever's going on, it looks like you have everything under control here. So, we're just gonna get outta your hair and go party some place else, alright?

Trent and Heather turn and get a face full of Iosif.

RITCHIE  
Tell Frankenstein to go easy on the girl and I'll tell you where it is.

Dimitri gives Iosif another nod.

Iosif rushes over and knocks Ritchie out cold.

INT. IOSIF'S CAR/TRUNK - NIGHT

MUFFLED RUSSIAN RAP MUSIC fills the darkness.

Ritchie wakes up. His wrists are tied. He manages to get to his phone. He turns it on to a "no signal" screen. The light illuminates the tight space.

Bobby's body is crammed in next to him, wrapped in plastic.

RITCHIE

Hey!

He kicks and screams until the music stops.

The trunk opens. Alexei blocks the moonlight. He pulls Ritchie out. His phone goes flying in the struggle.

EXT. CABIN/BACKYARD - NIGHT

They're in the middle of nowhere. Darkness surrounds them. A small cabin sits in the distance; the lights are on inside. AN OLD WOODEN SHED sits a few yards away from it.

Alexei drags Ritchie by the car. Iosif sits on the hood. Headlights illuminate the ground.

They pass Talia and Chuck, also wrapped in plastic, dead in the dirt.

A bit closer and Ritchie sees Nikki, chest deep in a hole, shoveling.

Alexei throws him to the ground. She's excited to see him. Makeup and sweat run down her face. She drops her shovel and claws at the edge of the hole to get closer.

NIKKI

(whispering)

We're fucked, Ritchie. We're so fucked.

IOSIF (O.S.)

(thick Russian accent)

Where is money?

Ritchie gives Nikki a reassuring nod and gets to his feet.

RITCHIE

One last time... Let her go.

A DEAFENING GUNSHOT rings out through the night air.

Nikki collapses into a pile of dead weight and disappears.

Ritchie's eyes go wild. He drops to his knees and reaches into the darkness after her, but only comes up with fistfuls of dirt.

Dimitri emerges with a gun in his hand. Trent right behind him.

DIMITRI

A shame. She was very good digger.

Ritchie turns quick, his eyes burning with rage. The goons stand by ready for anything.

Dimitri hands Alexei the gun and he holsters it.

DIMITRI

(to Trent)

Talk.

TRENT

Yeah, okay.

Trent circles around to Ritchie. He keeps his distance.

TRENT

Listen, Ritchie... these guys are not negotiating. I know what they're saying sounds a lot like questions but they're really not asking. Just tell them where the money is.

Heavy breathing comes from Ritchie but not one move.

TRENT

They're gonna put you in that hole with her. Is that what you want?

RITCHIE

Where's Pete?

TRENT  
He's on his way.

Alexei and Iosif drag Talia and Chuck to the hole. They toss them in.

Trent throws Dimitri a look before getting in a bit closer.

TRENT  
(quiet)  
Pete said you have a kid in the hospital.

Ritchie's eyes go to Trent.

TRENT  
Do you want these guys to go see him? Because if I tell them, that's exactly what they'll do. They'll go bring your boy back here and put him right there in that hole, too.

Ritchie looks at Trent hard.

RITCHIE  
I'm waiting for Pete.

Trent gives up and heads back to Dimitri.

TRENT  
He's waiting for Pete.

Dimitri gives Alexei a nod. They drag Ritchie to the nearby shed. They toss him in like a rag doll and bolt the door behind them.

The men walk to the cabin. Iosif stops and turns his car off.

INT. SHED - NIGHT

Ritchie sits up and tries to make out his surroundings. The shed is empty except for some buckets, a few empty crates and a beat-up bicycle.

He bites at his restraints but the rope doesn't give.

INT. CABIN/KITCHEN - NIGHT

The kitchen looks like it hasn't been touched since the seventies.

The men take their seats at the table. Trent tries to comfort Heather.

Alexei turns on a small radio and RUSSIAN RAP fills the room. Iosif takes Heather from the hand and leads her to the table.

DIMITRI

You dance, yes?

She throws a concerned look at Trent and he throws her back a reassuring nod. She climbs up onto the table.

SHED

Light comes shining through the shed's wood planks. Ritchie gets to his feet. He looks through the cracks.

RITCHIE'S POV

A car approaches. It stops. The door swings open. Pete steps out. He walks to the cabin.

INT. CABIN/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Heather is giving the men a pretty good show.

Pete enters. Trent jumps up.

TRENT

Pete! What the fuck, man?

PETE

Sit down.

Trent sits down. Heather stops dancing. Alexei turns down the radio.

PETE

(to Dimitri)

Tell me I didn't come all the way to this shithole for a fucking bachelor party.

DIMITRI

(eyes on Heather)

I make call to bosses. They are upset, but not surprised.

(to Heather)

Please, continue.

Heather starts shaking her stuff again.

PETE

So we're good?

DIMITRI

No, not good.

PETE

What do you mean? I give you the assholes that blew your wife's head off and you take care of Bobby. We're all good.

Alexei turns the music up again.

TRENT

(to Pete)

Dimitri noticed a big "bag 'o' cash" missing from his closet.

PETE

How big?

TRENT

Two hundred and fifty Gs.

PETE

Where are they?

TRENT

The girl's in the hole.  
Ritchie's in the shed?

PETE

Where's the shed?

INT. SHED - NIGHT

The door swings open. Pete stands in the doorway with Dimitri's goons behind him. Ritchie sits in the corner.

PETE

Get him up!

He storms out as they storm in.

EXT. CABIN/BACKYARD - NIGHT

Ritchie is dragged back to the hole.

PETE

Leave us.

The goons go to the car. Ritchie can barely stand.

PETE

I need that money, Ritchie.

Ritchie looks him in the eyes.

RITCHIE

I need a cigarette.

Pete watches him carefully.

PETE

(to the goons)

Hey! Do either of you meatheads  
smoke? "Sigareta"?

Alexei approaches.

He pulls out his pack and hands Pete a cigarette. Ritchie notices Alexei's gun, holstered inside his jacket.

Pete puts the cigarette in Ritchie's mouth. Alexei lights it.

He lights one for himself as he walks back to the car.

Ritchie takes a huge drag. His bound hands come up and take the cigarette from his lips. His wrists are badly bruised. He brings them back down into the darkness and empties his lungs into the mountain air.

RITCHIE  
(RE: the hole)  
They killed her for nothing.

PETE  
She shot his wife.

RITCHIE  
It was an accident.

PETE  
Is that what you think? I think  
she wasn't ready for that much  
blood. I think she got scared.  
Didn't wanna go through it  
alone... looked for a friend.

Ritchie is locked on the hole.

RITCHIE  
It's in my car.

PETE  
Your car?

RITCHIE  
In the trunk.

PETE  
Are you lying to me?

Ritchie takes another massive drag.

Pete studies his face.

He takes off toward the cabin.

PETE  
(to the goons)  
Put him back.

Iosif grabs Ritchie and pushes him back into the shed.

INT. SHED - NIGHT

The door shuts behind him and the lock snaps shut.

Ritchie presses his face to the cracks.

## RITCHIE'S POV

Pete motions to Iosif to get into his car. He mumbles something to Alexei who heads back inside.

Pete gets into his car and drives off with Iosif.

## BACK IN THE SHED

Ritchie quickly turns around and produces the cigarette. He holds it near his ropes and tries to get a burn going. He takes a few drags to keep the tip lit and goes to work on the fibers.

## INT. CABIN/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Heather is down to her bra and panties.

Alexei approaches and whispers into Dimitri's ear. Trent looks on with a nervous gaze.

Dimitri stands up and takes Heather's hand.

DIMITRI

Come. We go now.

Trent moves in as Dimitri helps Heather off the table.

TRENT

Go where, exactly?

DIMITRI

To bedroom... for the sex.

TRENT

The sex? Dimitri, that's my girl. You can't just --

Alexei blocks his way.

Dimitri and Heather disappear into the bedroom. The door closes behind them.

Trent slumps back into his chair.

INT. SHED - NIGHT

The cigarette's down to a roach. Sweat pours down Ritchie's face.

A few fibers begin to give. Slowly, one strand pops apart and that's all it takes. Ritchie uses all his strength and tears himself free.

He rubs his wrists and goes for the bicycle.

INT. CABIN/KITCHEN - NIGHT

MOANING comes from the bedroom. Trent exchanges looks with Alexei.

Alexei reaches over and turns up the RUSSIAN RAP.

EXT. SHED - NIGHT

The door is kicked into a cloud of splinters. Ritchie walks out with the bicycle's chain wrapped tight around his fist.

INT. CABIN/KITCHEN - NIGHT

There's a KNOCK at the door. Alexei gives Trent a pat on the back as he goes to it. He opens the door and...

RITCHIE'S CHAINED FIST LANDS ON ALEXEI'S CHEEK LIKE A WRECKING BALL. His face is split open. He's sent flying across the tiny kitchen. He crashes onto the table and doesn't get up.

Trent is already on his feet as Ritchie enters - bloodied and panting like a wild animal.

TRENT

Ritchie! Thank God! We gotta get  
out of here!

Ritchie drives his metal-clad fist deep into Trent's skull. He's sent crashing through the bedroom door revealing Heather on the bed masturbating, and Dimitri sitting in a nearby chair with his pants around his ankles.

## BEDROOM

Ritchie stomps in.

RITCHIE  
(to Dimitri)  
Don't get up.

With one swing, Dimitri is sent to the floor; blood spatters all over Heather.

Ritchie picks him up and puts him back into his chair. Heather is hysterical.

RITCHIE  
(to Heather)  
Out.

Heather gets the hell out of there.

She hops over Trent. He crawl away after her.

Ritchie undoes the chain from his bloody fist.

Dimitri's face is torn open. He barely clings to consciousness.

RITCHIE  
It's not your money anymore.  
Call your bosses. Straighten it  
out. We don't see each other  
again, yes?

Dimitri turns his bloody head to look at him.

DIMITRI  
You are dead man. Your family...  
your friends... it is not  
cliché, it is promise.

Ritchie looks tired and disappointed. He hurries to the kitchen.

## KITCHEN

Ritchie goes to Alexei. He pulls out the gun from inside his jacket. He makes sure it's loaded.

Trent is half way across the kitchen now.

Ritchie puts one round into the radio and shuts it up.

BEDROOM

Ritchie jams the gun into Dimitri's gaping cheek. Dimitri SHRIEKS.

RITCHIE

We're done, yes?

DIMITRI

Fuck... you.

Ritchie looks him in the eyes. Blood pours from his face and all over the gun. Ritchie hesitates, but finally PULLS THE TRIGGER.

INT. KITCHEN

Trent is inches from the exit.

Ritchie stops to put a bullet in Alexei's head. He walks across the torn up kitchen and gets to Trent.

Trent's face is barely holding together as he scratches at the doorstep.

Ritchie pushes his head to the floor with the tip of his gun. One shot paints the welcome mat red.

EXT. CABIN/BACKYARD - NIGHT

Ritchie approaches the hole. He goes to Iosif's car and turns the headlights on.

He looks down at the hole but sees only darkness.

He drops to his knees and reaches down into it. He grabs at anything for a while before finally finding something.

He steadies himself, and with one hard pull, he drags Nikki out of the hole.

He wipes the hair and dirt from her face; she's still beautiful, even in death.

INT. IOSIF'S CAR

Ritchie carefully props Nikki up in the back seat. He gets in the front.

He looks at her through the rearview mirror. She almost looks like she's sleeping.

Ritchie turns the key and the engine roars to life.

INT. CABIN/KITCHEN

THE CAR CRASHES THROUGH THE DOOR and stalls in the middle of the kitchen.

Ritchie stumbles out and goes to Alexei. He looks through his pockets and comes up with his lighter.

He grabs Heather's discarded dress and heads to the back of the car.

He unscrews the gas tank and shoves the dress deep into the hole.

He takes one last look at Nikki.

He flicks the lighter and lights it up.

INT. TRENT'S MERCEDES

Ritchie drops into the driver's seat and starts up the engine. The car takes off like a rocket.

EXT. CABIN

The whole place goes up in A HUGE FIREBALL.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

The Mercedes cuts through the dark countryside. The tires scream with every curve.

INT. TRENT'S MERCEDES - NIGHT - TRAVELING

Ritchie looks up ahead and sees Heather in his headlights. Her bare skin glows as he approaches. She stumbles out of the way and disappears in his rearview.

INT. PETE'S CAR - NIGHT - TRAVELING

Pete and Iosif cruise in silence.

Suddenly, light shines through Pete's mirror and into his eyes. He squints at the approaching headlights.

PETE

Look at this prick.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

RITCHIE PLOWS TRENT'S MERCEDES INTO PETE'S CAR. It swerves off the road and straight into a tree.

The Mercedes grinds to a stop.

Ritchie gets out. He holds his gun tight as he approaches the wreck. Smoke and fluids spew out of the demolished car. There's broken glass and pieces of engine everywhere.

Iosif lays face down a few feet from the mess. Ritchie quickly fires a shot into him as he passes.

He slowly approaches the driver's side. Pete's face is glued to the steering wheel.

He pulls him back against the seat and searches through his pockets...

PETE

(groggy)

Ritchie?

Ritchie ignores him and keeps searching. Pete's face is covered in blood. Ritchie finds his gun and shoves it into the back of his pants. He continues searching Pete's pockets.

PETE

Ritchie?

RITCHIE  
 (searching)  
 You got blood in your eyes,  
 asshole.

Ritchie comes up with nothing.

PETE  
 You gotta get me out of here,  
 Ritchie... I don't feel right.

Ritchie watches him struggle.

RITCHIE  
 I'll help you, Pete... but you  
 have to do something for me  
 first. You know the drill.

PETE  
 Anything you want... name it.

RITCHIE  
 When you see the Devil...

Ritchie points the gun at Pete's forehead. Pete can't see it through the blood.

RITCHIE  
 ...tell him we're even.

BANG! He tosses the gun and walks off.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

The road is hard on Heather's bare feet. She staggers down the dark road with nothing but her earrings on.

A light comes up from the horizon. A car quickly approaches. She tries desperately to flag it down, but the beat-up Mercedes speeds by her again.

Her arms drop to her sides. The car disappears.

EXT. TRENT'S MERCEDES - NIGHT - TRAVELING

The bumper dangles from a thread. Only one headlight illuminates the road.

EXT. CABIN - NIGHT

The flames continue to engulf the building.

Ritchie pulls up. He gets out and hurries towards the blaze.

He searches the ground where the car was parked. The flames pick up something shiny a few feet away - his phone.

He picks it up and heads back to the mangled Mercedes.

He takes one last look at the raging fire.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

Heather shuffles across the middle of the road like a naked zombie.

A lonely headlight appears in the distance and gets closer. She doesn't even bother to look this time.

The Mercedes comes to a stop behind her. She turns and sees Ritchie at the wheel.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

The Mercedes struggles past empty streets.

EXT. "PINK MONKEY STUDIOS"/PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Ritchie barely manages to park it before the engine dies. A sign hangs over the spot that reads: "TRENT ROTHSTEIN - PRODUCER".

INT. TRENT'S MERCEDES

Ritchie pulls the keys from the ignition and hands them to Heather. She has his suit jacket draped over her shoulders.

RITCHIE

One of those should get you into  
the office. You can get some  
clothes, get cleaned up.

Ritchie leaves her in the jalopy.

EXT. "PINK MONKEY STUDIOS"/STREET - NIGHT

Ritchie's car is right where he left it.

He pops open the trunk and takes out the duffel bag. He opens it up and pulls out Nikki's gun. He pulls his from his pants and shoves it in the bag.

INT. RITCHIE'S CAR

He tosses in the bag and gets behind the wheel. His phone BUZZES and startles him.

He checks the screen and answers it quick.

RITCHIE

Hello?

NURSE (V.O.)

(over phone, filtered)

Mr. Boland?

EXT. "PINK MONKEY STUDIO'S"/ENTRANCE

Heather fumbles with the keys to the front door.

RITCHIE (O.S.)

Hey!

She turns and sees Ritchie in his car.

She approaches.

Ritchie hands her Nikki's gun.

He speeds away.

INT. HOSPITAL/HALLWAY - NIGHT

Ritchie turns the corner, duffel bag in hand.

The nurse greets him with a smile. It quickly fades as he approaches; he's covered in blood and dirt.

NURSE

Oh my God.

He looks like he's been through Hell and back.

NURSE  
Are you alright?

RITCHIE  
Peachee.

INT. HOSPITAL/NURSERY - NIGHT

Ritchie scrubs his hands vigorously. Blood and dirt circle the drain. He washes his face and neck and gets as much of the night off of him as he can.

He grabs some clean scrubs. He puts them on and turns to find two NIGHTSHIFT NURSES staring at him. He picks up his bag and walks past rows of incubators and finally gets to his boy.

RITCHIE  
(whispering)  
Hey, Buddy.

The little guy opens his eyes and looks up at him.

Ritchie's eyes tear up.

GRISWALT (O.S.)  
Mr. Boland?

Ritchie's moment is cut short. He turns around to find SERGEANT GRISWALT, early 50's, standing behind him with OFFICER LEE, mid 30's, in uniform, close by.

GRISWALT  
Richard Boland?

The nurse pops up from behind them.

NURSE  
(to Ritchie)  
That was blood on your clothes... I'm sorry.

INT. HOSPITAL/OFFICE - NIGHT

Medical charts and posters cover the walls. Griswalt sits on the desk while Officer Lee stands near the door. Ritchie is slumped in the chair between them, the duffel at his feet.

GRISWALT  
You going on a trip?

Ritchie looks over at Officer Lee by the door.

GRISWALT  
Do you know where Detective  
Peter Sommersed is, Ritchie?

Ritchie doesn't answer.

Griswalt looks over at Lee before reaching into his jacket. He pulls out Nikki's phone and sets it down on the desk.

Ritchie focuses on it.

GRISWALT  
He said you might show up here  
if things went south at the  
cabin. Told me to hold you down  
until he showed up. But he's not  
answering his phone.

He has Ritchie's attention now.

GRISWALT  
Detective Sommersed was involved  
in a multitude of illegal  
activities including blackmail,  
robbery, drug dealing and  
murder. You know why I used the  
past tense, right?

Griswalt picks up the phone and approaches him.

GRISWALT  
About an hour ago, Detective  
Peter Sommersed... was found  
wrapped around a tree, in the  
middle of nowhere, like some  
early Christmas present.

He stops in front of Ritchie.

GRISWALT

(beat)

He won't be missed.

He tosses Ritchie the phone.

GRISWALT

My new promotion's got me in a giddy mood, so I'm gonna give you a few days before coming after you. I suggest you use them wisely and get the hell out of Dodge ASA-fucking-P.

Griswalt joins Lee at the door.

RITCHIE

What about the Russians?

GRISWALT

Last I heard the place is still burning. They're not gonna find anything out there but ashes.

RITCHIE

You're just gonna let me walk?

Griswalt casually approaches with a smile.

GRISWALT

Time can bury a lot of things, Ritchie. But some things... you gotta bury yourself.

They exit.

Ritchie looks down at Nikki's phone. The screen flashes "battery low". He drops it in the trash. He grabs his bag and heads down the hall.

INT. HOSPITAL/HALLWAY

For the first time, a smile appears on Ritchie's face. His strides get more confident as he heads back to the nursery.

Suddenly, A LOUD VOICE BLARES OVER THE PA SYSTEM.

VOICE  
(over PA, filtered)  
Code Pink! Code Pink!

Ritchie's smile is history.

Nurses and orderlies rush past him down the hall. They burst through the nursery's entrance.

A BEAUTIFUL ANGELIC VOICE pierces through the chaos and drowns out all the sound - A CHOIR SINGER belts out a haunting hymn as Ritchie approaches the nursery's open doorway.

The medical staff struggles to resuscitate his boy.

THE VOICE HITS ITS HIGHEST NOTE as the heart monitor flat-lines.

All emotion drains out of Ritchie's face.

INT. DOWNTOWN CHURCH - DAY

A cavernous altar, lit up only by candles.

A CHOIR is in the middle of a practice.

The angelic voice continues to engulf all the world's sound. It belongs to A BEAUTIFUL YOUNG GIRL at the front of the group.

A few parishioners are spread out in the pews.

Ritchie sits way in the back row. His trademark frown planted firmly back on his face; his hand on the duffel bag beside him.

He's motionless, lost in thought, watching, but not focused.

A priest emerges from a confessional and greets one of the parishioners.

The girl's voice fights to get into Ritchie's heart, but suddenly gives up. Silence. Ritchie snaps out of his trance.

He looks down at the bag and slowly takes away his hand.

He gets up.

The priest spots him.

Ritchie walks out. The duffel stays behind. The priest approaches.

EXT. DOWNTOWN CHURCH/STEPS

Ritchie stands in the cool morning air. He lights a cigarette and takes the smoke deep into his lungs.

POLICE SIRENS in the distance. CAR HORNS and the YELLS of drivers in the throws of road-rage mix with jumbled MUSIC and a ton of INDISCERNIBLE CITY NOISE.

Ritchie takes it all in. The chaos speaks to him.

RITCHIE

(sotto)

Shit.

He flicks his cigarette away.

INT. DOWNTOWN CHURCH

The priest has the duffel open. His eyes wide at the sight of the cash inside.

PRIEST

Praise the lord.

A hand reaches in and quickly cuts his moment short.

The priest jumps back as Ritchie takes the bag. He even fights to let go for a second; joy replaced with shock.

RITCHIE

Sorry, father. Forgot my bag.

Ritchie exits and leaves the priest standing there, speechless.

EXT. RITCHIE'S CAR

Ritchie tosses the bag into his car before dropping into the driver's seat. He starts it up fast and peels out even faster.

He disappears into the chaos.

FADE OUT.

THE END