

Trail of the Dragon

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based on the article by Howard Blum

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FADE IN:

EXT. CHINATOWN STREET, SAN FRANCISCO - NIGHT

Heavy RAIN falls on cluttered, lonely streets, as a sedan parks beside a liquor store. MATTHEW KING, 34 -- trim, handsome, a serviceman's composure -- emerges.

He looks skyward. Parts his lips to catch some rain.

INT. LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT

King follows BILL BRUBECK, 40 -- a hammer of a fed in streetclothes -- through the store, to the back. Brubeck gives a nod to the Chinese CASHIER as they pass.

EXT. BACK COURTYARD

King and Brubeck cross to the building next door.

INT. STAIRWELL

The two men climb the dim-lit steps of an apartment building.

INT. BARREN APARTMENT - NIGHT

Two surveillance agents, bullet-stocky MAX LEE (45, Chinese) and wiry, gawky CHRIS FICUS (27, white), are stationed at RECORDING EQUIPMENT and an INFRARED MONITOR.

Two seedy-dressed agents, DAVE MILLOY (34, white) and JOEY TAN, (29, Chinese) secure ankle holsters. As Brubeck leads King in, they stand as if the boss has shown up.

KING

Gentlemen.

AGENTS

Evening, Agent King./Evening, sir.

King shakes hands, notes the monitor. There's a HEAT-SILHOUETTE of three FIGURES in a room.

KING

What's he been up to tonight?

LEE

(notes a clipboard)

Ten p.m. Calls his ex, wants to start over, gets shot down. Ten-thirty, sends guys for takeout. Ten-thirty-five, calls his ex, wants to start over, gets shot down. Eleven-ten, chowtime and Discovery Channel.

FICUS

Evil bastard.

KING

Nothing on his network going beyond
the medicinal?

LEE

We've got some names, Shen-Yu Trie,
Cai Kuling -- we'll run 'em.

Milloy lifts his shoe, holds the shoelace like a microphone:

MILLOY

Tigerdick, one, two. Tigerdick,
one, two.

Headphones on, Ficus grins, gives Milloy a thumbs-up. Tan
stubs out a cig.

TAN

There any leftovers over there? I'm
starving.

MILLOY

Let's work the work.

Milloy and Tan head to leave; King claps each shoulder:

KING

Good luck, guys.

EXT. LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT

Milloy and Tan emerge in the rain, jog around the block--

EXT. LIN KIN TAK'S BUILDING

--and reach the apartment building opposite the stakeout
site. They press a buzzer. Door opens.

INT. SURVEILLANCE APT. - SAME

King peeks out a window curtain, seeing Milloy and Tan enter
below. Looks at the apartment opposite. Shades drawn.

On the INFRARED, the three FIGURES are cleaning up. Ficus
hands King headphones. He studies surveillance photos and a
mugshot of a surly-looking Chinese kid, LIN KIN TAK, 22.

KING

This is second contact?

BRUBECK

A month ago, SFO stops him off a
Hong Kong inbound, dog pegs his carry-
on for heroin. Turns out vitamin
powder or something.

(MORE)

BRUBECK (CONT'D)

But he's acting schiz, so they stall him while they sweep his checked bags. It's like Genghis Khan's Rite-Aid: African rhino horn, crocodile gall bladder and goddamn tiger penis.

(to Lee)

Man, what do you people use that for?

LEE

Herbal remedies. Aphrodisiacs. Not me, personally--

FICUS

No, I never pegged you for the rhino type.

BRUBECK

So SFO slides him, calls us. We shade him while he makes his drops. We run Joey into a bone shop as a dove for a New York buyer and the shopkeep turns him onto LKT.

INT. LKT'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Hong Kong movie posters, big-screen TV, lots of speakers. One of two young THUGS welcomes in Milloy and Tan. LIN KIN TAK, 22, rougher than his mugshot, gives a nasty smile.

INT. SURVEILLANCE ROOM

King, Brubeck, Lee and Ficus watch Tan introduce Milloy to LKT in INFRARED silhouette. VOICES faint.

KING

Your old boss, Parker? He wasn't seriously calling this Operation Tigerdick, was he?

The agents smile. Ficus salutes.

FICUS

Operation Tigerdick, Panda Balls Division on duty, sir.

KING

We bust these guys, we have to run a press release. You know that.

BRUBECK

Beauty. "Customs Service declares Tigerdick a big, big, BIG success--"

FICUS

"Tigerdick has Customs Agents swelling
with pride--"

KING

Proudest day of my career...

BRUBECK

Don't worry. The Chron'll run it.

INT. LKT'S APARTMENT - SAME

Lin Kin Tak sets two briefcases on a table. He clicks them open for Milloy and Tan. Inside are vials of various powders, shriveled roots and preserved animal organs.

Milloy steps to examine. Tan smiles at LKT. Behind them, a brief RING, as a thug answers a cell phone.

INT. SURVEILLANCE APT. - SAME

The four men monitor the INFRARED view of same. Meanwhile:

KING

We're saving endangered species here.
Let's work it from that perspective.

FICUS

Yeah, but we're only saving 'em till
the whole cloning thing gets going.
Then it's a pharmaceutical free-for-
all.

BRUBECK

Hippocock, Pandaballs, Monkeypuss,
all of 'em--

KING

So we're just spinning our wheels
here.

FICUS

Believe me, boss. Your grandkids
will be buying Tigerdicks for
breakfast.

BRUBECK

(a la Tony the Tiger)
They're grrrrrrreat!

All the men break into laughter, until suddenly there's
RAPIDFIRE MANDARIN over the headphones--

--and everyone spins back to the INFRARED to see two
silhouettes backing away from three silhouettes--

LEE
THEY'RE MADE, THEY'RE MADE! HIS
FUCKING PHONE!

--and then guns suddenly drawn with white MUZZLE FLASHES!

INT. LKT'S APARTMENT - SAME

--as Lin Kin Tak's thugs GUN DOWN Milloy and Tan before they can free their ankle pistols! Lin Kin Tak yells invectives--

INT. SURVEILLANCE ROOM

KING
GET IN THERE!

FICUS
WHAT THE FUCK HAPPENED?!

But Brubeck is already shoving Lee and Ficus out--

BRUBECK
GO, GODDAMN IT, GO!

They grab guns and race out, Brubeck snatching a radio--

LEE
Transmitter crossed a cell--!

BRUBECK
Pacific and Stockton, officers down!
All PD units, officers down!

--as King's frozen at the monitor, stunned, watching the INFRARED image of the thugs escaping and--

--Lin Kin Tak grabbing a gun of his own and putting two bullets into one of the fallen agents. Coup de grace. Then scrambling the opposite way and climbing...up...

INT. STAIRWELL

CHAOTIC SHOUTS from Brubeck, Ficus and Lee descending--

LEE
He got their transmitter echo when
he picked up his cell!

--as King slams into view and sprints the other way--

KING
ROOF, ROOF, ROOF!

EXT. ROOF OF BUILDING - NIGHT

King slams to roof access, pulling his .45, seeing Lin Kin Tak sprinting the roof opposite with a PPL--

KING
CUSTOMS! DROP IT!

--and Lin Kin Tak spins, FIRING a submachine SPRAY. King hits the deck. LKT keeps running. King FIRES, prone. LKT vanishes over the building's far side.

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE

Adrenaline firing, King stumbles, hurdling steps, charging--
--slamming free the drop-ladder and grabbing it as the ladder shoots street-ward and LOCKS--

--with its momentum shaking King's grip. He falls, BANGS the sidewalk awkwardly. Scrambles up in pursuit--

EXT. LKT'S BUILDING - SAME

--while Brubeck, Ficus and Lee reach the locked entrance to LKT's building, seeing the two Thugs inside stumble from the elevator, spotting the agents--

--and unable to get in, the agents FIRE through the caged glass. Bullets and shatter. The Thugs go down.

EXT. POWELL STREET, CHINATOWN

King rounds a corner, seeing Lin Kin Tak running away a half-block ahead, huffing madly--

--with a handful of midnight PASSERSBY on the sidewalks--

KING
OUT OF THE STREET! GET DOWN!

--as LKT spins at the voice and SPRAYS FIRE. People dive, windshields BURST. King EMPTIES his clip in return.

LKT takes cover, keeps running. King's gun CLICKS empty. He stares at it, hyperventilating:

KING
Load the gun, Matt, load the gun--

EXT. LKT'S BUILDING

Lee and Ficus are battering the window-wire to get inside, with Brubeck screaming into the radio--

BRUBECK
Pacific and Stockton! Shooter's carrying, shooter's on foot!
(searching the street)
Where's King?

EXT. CLAY STREET

LKT rounds westward, SPRAYING FIRE over his shoulder. His gun JAMS. LKT throws it aside and charges straight up the flanks of Nob Hill.

King sprints round, a full block back now, tries two SHOTS--

--but to no avail, as LKT throws some zig-zagging into his run. King's got to stop to fire, and with every stop he falls further behind. He concentrates on the sprint--

--as LKT glances over his shoulder, seeing King over a block behind, huffing straight uphill. LKT cackles--

LIN KIN TAK
(broken English)
Faster! Faster you run!

King keeps charging, but it's a thirty-degree grade. Like sprinting a mountain. He's losing strength--

LIN KIN TAK
You run faster, you want to fuck me,
cop! Fast cops fuck! What you say!

Both men are heaving, exhausted. Start breaking down.

King's gait slows, a struggle. LKT sees, smiling--

LIN KIN TAK
You want to fuck me?!

King staggers, down to a walk, panting. Two blocks ahead, the smuggler stops. Grinning, exhausted:

LIN KIN TAK
You want to fuck me?! What you say!

LKT walks backwards. King raises the gun, too distant to get off a shot.

KING
Suspect's...on...Clay...

LIN KIN TAK
C'mon, cop! Run! Run, cop!

The smuggler slaps his lap, whistles as if for a dog. Keeps walking backwards, seeing he won't be outrun.

KING
(between breaths)
Su...su...surrender yourself!

Lin Kin Tak smiles, as SIRENS wail, coming closer.

LIN KIN TAK
Fast cops fuck.

He darts uphill, onto another street and into shadows. King pants, hands on his knees, as CHINESE FACES appear at apartment windows to spy on the commotion.

King inhales, exhales, failure on his face, until the sound of his BREATHING blocks out the sounds of the street.

Inhale. Exhale. Inhale. Exhale. Inhale--

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. LKT'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A SLOW-MOTION P.O.V enters the aftermath in SILENCE. Crime scene CREW: Customs suits, P.D. uniforms, forensics team. Hong Kong movie posters with martial artists staring from the walls -- frozen mid-kick, mid-scream.

Camera FLASHES. Bullet hits getting numbered FLAGS. The corpses of Milloy and Tan, surprise etched forever.

The SILENCE bleeds away as a voice grows louder--

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Agent King...Agent King...

ON FULL SCENE

King surveys numbly. A UNIFORM COP's hand turns him around... as normal MOTION resumes.

UNIFORM COP
Are you Agent King?

KING
(distant)
It was surveillance...

UNIFORM COP
There's something your men want you
to see.

INT. LKT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Red-lit. Brubeck, Ficus and Lee at a closed door, faces grim. King arrives beside them. Their faces grim.

BRUBECK
We found some more Chinese medicine.

Brubeck swings open the door to a former guestroom--

--revealing cabinets full of FIREARMS and WEAPONS. A massive war chest.

Assault rifles, submachine guns, sawed-off shotguns by the dozen; plus four ROCKET LAUNCHERS and enough ammo to start a minor Cultural Revolution.

Off King's reaction and that of his men...

CUT TO:

EXT. SAUSALITO MARINA - DAWN

The sky lights up beyond distant San Francisco. In the f.g., the masts of sailboats bob and sway in silence.

At the marina's south end stands a community of HOUSEBOATS. One black-wood boxy model is wedged among the rest, distinguished only by the MAN standing on deck.

A craggy, unshaven bear in his fifties, smoking a cig, watching the sun rise. This is GARY STOLTZ.

INT. HOUSEBOAT - DAWN

Stoltz ambles in, with newspapers under his arm. Urban mariner decor. Sketches of boats, and four FISH TANKS. Mini-aquariums laden with all manner of fish...

STOLTZ

Rise and shine, convicts.

Stoltz taps them some fish food, clicks sounds--

--and ambles to his kitchen. He sorts through his papers -- SF Chron, Oakland Trib, SJ Merc -- removing the sports section from each. He keeps those, trashes the rest of the papers--

--and then stops. Grabs the Chron from the trash to read "Chinatown Firefight Kills Two Customs Agents."

STOLTZ

This is gonna be a day...

CLOSE ON A CUSTOMS BADGE

Leaning upright beside a framed photo of Stoltz and a young beautiful Chinese WOMAN on the same houseboat's deck.

Stoltz swiftly snatches the BADGE out of frame.

CUT TO:

INT. CUSTOMS SERVICE, DOWNTOWN OFFICE - DAY

King, unchanged and unwashed from the night before, marches a hall, flanked by Brubeck and undercover agents NAVARRO (35, Latino) and GRIFFIN (33, African-American).

NEWS REPORTER (V.O.)

A San Francisco Customs Service operation turned deadly last night with a Chinatown shootout that left four men dead, two of them agents. Agent David Milloy of Santa Rosa and Joseph Tan of Daly City were gunned down during a medicinal-smuggling sting -- the first city Customs officers in nine years to die in the line of duty. Two suspects were also killed, while a third, Chinatown resident Lin Kin Tak, remains at large...

King and the other three suits march into--

INT. CUSTOMS BULLPEN - CONTINUOUS

An open area of files and clerical desks, with surrounding glass-walls separating senior agent's offices--

NEWS REPORTER (V.O.)

The incident comes just two weeks after Special Agent Matthew King took over the service's city office, replacing the retiring Lucas Parker. The son of New York senator Joseph King, King was previously the head of Seattle's office, where he earned a reputation for unorthodox crime-fighting tactics--

--as King enters to see clerical STAFF watching TV news--

KING

Turn it off!

He stops in his tracks, pointing at the screen, as his own face appears, from a hurried press conference--

KING ON TV

Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of David Milloy and Joey Tan. These two men were--

KING

TURN IT OFF!

A STAFFER hurriedly hits a remote. The TV goes dark. King surveys darkly, stalks into his office--

KING

(to his lieutenants)

Ten minutes. State of the state.

INT. KING'S OFFICE

--and shuts himself in alone. Brubeck and the rest head to their offices. King collapses in his chair, shielded from the glances of staffers outside his glass walls.

And then sweeps paperwork off his desk with a CLATTER. He stamps up, storms back out. Staffers pretend not to see.

EXT. ROOF OF BUILDING - DAY

King BANGS out the stairwell, all tension and hurt--

KING
SONOFAFUCK!

He stands in the whipping wind, overlooking downtown, arms thrown out to the sky. There is, of course, no answer.

King calms, arms fall. Finally turns back for the stairwell--

--and sees, by a ledge behind him, Gary Stoltz. Smoking a cig beside a sign stating "Federally-Approved Smoking Area>>>>Ten Feet Ahead." (The arrow points over the ledge.)

Unlike the staffers, Stoltz stares right at him. King turns away, ticked. Thought he was alone.

Stoltz finishes his cig, flicks it over the side, shuffles to the stairwell door.

STOLTZ
Wasn't your fault, Agent.

King turns. But Stoltz is already on his way.

The door ratchets shut behind him.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

King, Brubeck, Navarro and Griffin flank a table laden with crime scene photos, papers and printouts. Mid-meeting:

BRUBECK
Guy's selling snake oil to bone shops,
what the hell's he doing with a
goddamn war chest?

GRIFFIN
If you can't cure it, kill it.

NAVARRO
Diversification.

BRUBECK
Street gangs, Triads, what about
where those guns came from--

GRIFFIN

They're Chinese.

BRUBECK

I know they're Chinese. But he's not picking them up at baggage claim. He's getting them stateside, which means where, how, who.

GRIFFIN

(perusing his .45)

Remind me to upgrade this to a surface-to-air missile. I hate being behind the times--

KING

Where's Potrero Street?

His agents frown. King is staring at an evidence photo. In LKT's apartment, a Chinese takeout bag.

NAVARRO

South of Market.

KING

How far from the scene?

NAVARRO

Twenty, twenty-five minutes?

King lifts the photo. The bag reads, "Dynasty Garden, Authentic Shanghai Dining, 4219 Potrero, SF, CA."

KING

Why would a native Chinese, in the middle of Chinatown, drive twenty-five minutes from Chinatown...to get Chinese food?

An intrigued beat.

BRUBECK

Maybe it's the fortunes.

EXT. DYNASTY GARDEN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Windows view a modest but well-decorated Chinese restaurant, votive candles and red decor, marble and jade flourishes. A Blazer and a sedan park across the street. King and Brubeck; Navarro and Griffin.

KING

(into/via radio)

Set up a watchtower. I want to know who owns it, runs it, works it, hot fudge and the cherry.

BRUBECK

Want to send somebody in tonight,
take a once-over?

KING

Work the background first.

NAVARRO

(into/via radio)

Hey, that kinda looks like...Billy,
that's Stoltz in there, isn't it?

BRUBECK

What?

NAVARRO

Right side, window table. Am I right?
That's Stoltz.

In the restaurant, a rumpled blue-collar type is dining alone.
It is, in fact, the same Gary Stoltz.

BRUBECK

Sonofabitch...we may have our cover
man already...

KING

Who's Stoltz?

BRUBECK

He's Customs. Field agent -- well,
he was, he's on desk duty now.
Fourteenth floor, fileroom--

KING

Why the desk duty?

BRUBECK

For bullshit. Excessive force on a
collar. He's a vet, Stoltz is solid.

King doesn't respond, watching Stoltz rise from his table,
cross paths with a balding Chinese man in a suit, HAMMOND
KU, 44. They smile, clap shoulders, shake hands.

BRUBECK

One of ours. How strange is that?

GRIFFIN

Thought Stoltz lived across the bay...

They watch as Stoltz leaves, takes time to survey the street,
then walks for his car -- a beat-up Buick.

KING

Navarro. You and Griffin on shadow.

BRUBECK

Shadow? Stoltz? He's one of us--

KING

I said shadow.

BRUBECK

Matt, you don't know this guy. We've worked stings with this guy--

KING

He didn't pay.

Brubeck frowns. King watches the restaurant.

KING

He had dinner. He didn't pay.

EXT. STREET - FULL SCENE - CONTINUOUS

Stoltz drives off in his Buick. A beat later, the Customs sedan slips into traffic to pursue.

The Buick rounds a corner. The sedan stays two cars behind.

INT. GRIFFIN'S CAR - SAME

Griffin and Navarro keep a reluctant tail:

NAVARRO

We're shading him, who's shading us, that's what I'm saying. This is fucked.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET - NIGHT

The sedan rounds a corner, to find the Buick's not there. Traffic stopped ahead. The Buick not part of it.

INT. GRIFFIN'S CAR

NAVARRO

Where's Stoltz?

GRIFFIN

Whoa, whoa, whoa. He made the turn.

NAVARRO

Yeah, so where is he?

Griffin searches the block, seeing no Buick. He trades a glare with Navarro. With a hint of concern.

NAVARRO

We lost him, right? We lost him.

GRIFFIN
 (into his radio)
 Sorry, boss. Situation here. Somehow
 he got ahead of us--

As a .45's COCKED at the side window, halting them--

 STOLTZ
 Federal officer. Nobody speaks,
 nobody moves. Let's have some--

Navarro and Griffin turn. Stoltz frowns, lowering his weapon
 at the sight of familiar faces...

INT. BRUBECK'S BLAZER

 KING
 Griffin? You lost him? Report.
 You lost him where?

 STOLTZ (O.S.)
 Lost him here.

King and Brubeck react to the radio voice.

 STOLTZ (O.S.)
 This is Customs Agent Gary Stoltz.
 And if you don't mind my asking...what
 seems to be the problem?

INT. KING'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Stoltz sits alone, surveying the room. Smoking a cig. He
 studies the items on King's desk -- a nameplate, phone, pen
 holders, in/out boxes, paperweights.

 BRUBECK (V.O.)
 He's been here ten years. Fifteen
 in Miami. Any vet like that's gonna
 have a suspension or two. But check
 the file: 25 years, 75 collars.
 He's a good Agent, Matt.

 KING (V.O.)
 Then he's got nothing to worry about
 from me.

Stoltz's eyes settle on a PAPERWEIGHT of the S.F. skyline.
 He regards it, takes a drag. And coughs.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - SAME

Brubeck, Navarro and Griffin sit beyond the two-way-mirror
 to an empty interrogation cell, as Stoltz's COUGH is heard
 over speakers. Navarro and Griffin glare at Brubeck:

BRUBECK
Whaddya want. Fuckin' new guy.

INT. KING'S OFFICE

King saunters in, with a file folder and a smile. Shuts the door, hands Stoltz the folder:

KING
Dynasty Garden. Probably a hundred Chinese restaurants within a mile of the smuggler, so why's he travel? Help me out here. Is it the food?

Stoltz gives him a slow stare.

STOLTZ
Am I some suspect?

KING
Your colleagues set me straight.

STOLTZ
Super.

KING
See it from Seattle. I'm surveilling a box related to a known smuggler. I see a Customs man there. Customs and smugglers have been known to share company -- I'm sorry.
(offers his hand)
New start. Matthew King.

STOLTZ
I got the memo.

Stoltz refuses the handshake. King nods to the folder:

KING
What do you know about the owner?
This...Hammond Ku?

STOLTZ
What do we know?

KING
Forty-four, father of four. Dynasty Garden's one month new. Two previous restaurants, ten years in business, emigrated from China 1972. Legal resident, no record.

STOLTZ
He's from Shanghai. Like the menu says.

KING

How long've you known him?

STOLTZ

His first restaurant was right around the corner. Tenderloin.

KING

What's that, ten years?

STOLTZ

He knows I'm Customs.

KING

He a friend?

STOLTZ

Like you and me?

KING

Any reason to suspect him on weapons smuggling?

STOLTZ

I wouldn't know.

KING

My word was "suspect."

STOLTZ

See it from San Francisco. I say yeah, you sting him up and shut him down, where am I gonna get my moo shu pork and my Buddha's Delight?

KING

We should all have such problems.

STOLTZ

No shit. Last suit who ran this office lost one agent in nine years. You're averaging one a week.

Stoltz shrugs it off like a joke, but no smile. King waits.

STOLTZ

Lot of chinks come in and out of there, that's a good sign with a chink restaurant, by the way. Gang types? Yeah, maybe. Everybody's gotta eat. But Ku, I don't know, Ku don't strike me. Real family man. Happy to be in country, y'know?
(interested)
Been shading him too or just me?

KING

He rents a warehouse in India Basin, we're working the warrant. Let's say we find something, let's say we find guns. I gotta put a man in there, get to know him, work a cover, work a buy. That'll take months.

(beat)

Or...I have another way.

STOLTZ

I work a desk.

KING

I'd reinstate you as a field agent from this moment forward. Win-win.

STOLTZ

(wary smile)

"Win-win."

KING

That's right.

Stoltz muses, picks up the skyline paperweight on King's desk. Watches King's lack of reaction.

STOLTZ

You have one of these in Seattle?

Stoltz BLOWS on it, as if to clear dust--

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - SAME

Brubeck, Navarro and Griffin cover their ears at the AMPLIFIED CRACKLE that comes over their headphones.

INT. KING'S OFFICE

Stoltz puts the paperweight back. King hasn't moved.

STOLTZ

Guy's running his restaurant. Raising his kids. Something happens he's got no part of...and suddenly his whole world's changed.

Stoltz sighs, seems to find some resolve.

STOLTZ

Say you're wrong about him.

KING

I hope I am.

(MORE)

KING (CONT'D)

(beat)

But two agents were killed on my watch. I want justice. And I'm not going to lose any sleep over anyone who gets in my way.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The door crashes open as King confronts his men:

KING

I want Stoltz, I want Ku, I want that whole restaurant under watch, this second, twenty-four-seven. That's the op. And if anyone doesn't like it, they can hand me their badge right now.

CUT TO:

INT. DYNASTY GARDEN RESTAURANT - NIGHT - BEGIN MONTAGE

Someone's outside POV. Inside, Ku helps an elderly Chinese COUPLE on with their coats. Smiles all around.

EXT. RESTAURANT

Stoltz watches darkly from his parked Buick.

EXT. SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO WAREHOUSE

A Pacific Gas & Electric van pulls up to a storage warehouse. Three uniformed WORKERS get out.

One remains at the van while two others -- Agents Lee and Ficus -- stride to a door with a large strongbox.

EXT./INT. RESTAURANT

Stoltz watches Ku bid a Chinese FAMILY farewell, and as they leave, Ku posts a "Closed" sign on the door.

As he does, he spots Stoltz. Waves. Stoltz nods back.

INT. KU'S WAREHOUSE

Lee and Ficus enter, swiftly spotting an ALARM KEYPAD on the wall. Lee hurries to it--

LEE

Bendler-Kreis S-95!

Ficus opens the strongbox, rifles through equipment to find the right CODEMATCHER. Hustles to the keypad to attach wires. The codematcher scrolls through possible shut-off numbers.

EXT./INT. RESTAURANT

Stoltz crosses the street, slow and grave.

INT. KU'S WAREHOUSE

Lee and Ficus, gloves and flashlights, pry open cases of flour, spices, coffee, dried seaweed...

..and beneath some packs of salt and sugar...they uncover plastic-wrapped ASSAULT RIFLES. Chinese-made.

EXT./INT. RESTAURANT

Stoltz enters the Dynasty Garden. Ku's talking with a CHINESE COOK in back, gives Stoltz a nod.

Stoltz surveys: Ku's wife, VIVIAN, sits with a baby SON at a booth, counting the night's receipts. Ku's two teenage DAUGHTERS are sweeping up, twirling with the brooms as if dancing, to amuse each other. They laugh.

Stoltz sits down at the bar. Staring into space.

INT. KU'S WAREHOUSE

Lee and Ficus open crate after crate, snapping PHOTOS of handguns, rifles and ammo. AK-47's, PPL's, M22's, 56-1's. Crate numbers, serial numbers. GUN after GUN after GUN...

INT. RESTAURANT - END MONTAGE

Ku sidles behind the bar, passes a Tsingtao to Stoltz:

KU

One last drink tonight?

STOLTZ

One last drink.

Ku smiles affably. Notes Stoltz's distant manner.

KU

Something wrong, my friend?

Stoltz looks at him a long moment. Then tips the beer and downs a swallow. Once finished...

STOLTZ

Not now.

CUT TO:

INT. SFO AIRPORT - NIGHT

FLASHES pop as a PRESS CROWD tracks a distinguished man -- SENATOR JOSEPH KING, 58 -- his wife, GLORIA, and a couple AIDES through the terminal:

REPORTERS (O.S.)

Senator King, are California Democrats behind you on a Presidential run?
 Senator, when will you make your official decision? Are you testing the waters in California, Senator?

Joseph stops, turns dramatically to the assembled:

JOSEPH KING

I would like to announce, before all of you now, that I have come to the great state of California...to have dinner with my son.

Reporters GROAN and LAUGH, while Joseph grins, takes his wife's hand and moves on.

INT. KING HOUSE - NIGHT

A dining table, dinner over. King's pretty wife REBECCA and Gloria are chatting in the b.g. kitchen; King and his dad are by themselves:

KING

So I check the personnel records on this guy; he's been in front of more review boards than Clinton! A tech smuggling case, a gambling addiction, mishandling of department funds -- he gets suspended, he gets demoted, but no one can pin him. And y'know what? No one wants to. The agents rally around him. And why?

JOSEPH KING

He's one of the guys.

KING

Damn straight, he's one of the guys. He'll take a bullet for you, they say. He'll also take your wallet and your wife, but hey, remember the bullet?

JOSEPH KING

Where there's one agent like that, there's more.

KING

Not on my watch.

JOSEPH KING

I would caution you, Matthew...that what the city wants to see in its morning paper is not a corruption bust at Customs.

(off King's frown)

They want to see that the killer of your agents has been caught. And then, once public confidence is restored, that'd be the time to move internally. Not before.

KING

Well, that's why I'm not in politics.

JOSEPH KING

But you are, son. But you are.

King's sons, JONAH, 9, and MARSHALL, 7, race past, darting into the kitchen, firing toy laser-pistols.

KING

So what's Mom saying?

JOSEPH KING

She hates the idea of moving all our furniture.

KING

This is her opinion on the subject?

JOSEPH KING

She says the whole country will be scrutinizing what she wears.

KING

Education, health care, world peace?

JOSEPH KING

She's afraid we'll stop fucking.

King smiles. Joseph isn't.

KING

Really?

Joseph nods. King frowns. Joseph pats his arm:

JOSEPH KING

Life isn't that complicated, Matthew. They can indict your staff, call for your head, take your job and reputation.

(smiles)

But if your wife is happy...you'll survive.

King smiles back, then sees it in his father's eyes:

KING
You're gonna run, aren't you...

Joseph says nothing. Just smiles.

KING
Sonofabitch...you're gonna run.

INT. KING'S OFFICE - DAY

CLOSE on the Capitol Hill photo of King and his father. Beside it, a photo of King, wife and kids. Between them was the S.F. skyline paperweight...but not anymore.

King enters, reading reports. Calls to his Secretary:

KING
Get me Mitch Koeppler on the line,
after that I need Sarah Yee. I want
to see Dragonfire agents at nine...

He surveys his desk...and stops. Looking at the photos.

King frowns, turns to check the desks behind him, the bookshelves around the room. Surveys the floor.

KING
Kate, has anyone been in my office
this morning?

SECRETARY (O.S.)
No, sir.

KING
Overnight?

SECRETARY (O.S.)
You locked it, you unlocked it.

Kate appears in the doorway, worried:

SECRETARY
Why, is...something missing?

King frowns deeply.

KING
No. Just...a paperweight.

INT. DYNASTY GARDEN - DAY

A modest lunch crowd. Stoltz at the bar, having baozi and prawns. Ku's perched beside him, showing him photos:

KU

A beautiful building, isn't it?
There is space to imagine. Hanging
gardens, a rushing stream,
brushprints...a restaurant like June
wanted it to be...

STOLTZ

Fuck June.

Ku reacts, slightly stung. Stoltz disregards it:

STOLTZ

And fuck you -- don't you gotta get
, in the black here before you can
think about your next place with the
"rushing stream"?

KU

My friend. What is there to think
about if not the future?

Ku peruses his photos, while Stoltz studies him:

STOLTZ

Well, tell me what you think on this.
You know my time in Miami -- talk
about a town in need of good
Chinese...

(trails off)

I ever tell you stories about a
Richard Salerno?

KU

Someone you worked with?

STOLTZ

Similar interests, different crowds.
Investor kind of guy, money guy.
Connected. You ever hear of the
Riardis?

Ku puts his photos down. Now listening with interest. Nods.

STOLTZ

Salerno's on the inside. So he calls
me, years since I talked with this
guy, it's a long story...he hears
I'm on the West Coast. Wants to
know if I deal with Chinese shipping.
Wants to know what my market's like,
get this...for guns. Chinese guns.

KU

What does he mean, your market...

Stoltz leans forward, voice lowering...

INT. CUSTOMS STRATEGY ROOM - DAY

The Dragonfire agents (Brubeck, Navarro, Griffin, Lee and Ficus) sit with King and Stoltz, listening to a TAPE RECORDER:

STOLTZ (O.S.)

He means, for some money my way...
would I know where the Riardis...
could get them.

KU'S VOICE (O.S.)

Stoltz. How well do you know this
man?

CLICK! The tape shuts off.

The agents stare at it a moment, then turn to Stoltz. His feet are up on the desk. He slowly frowns.

STOLTZ

How long was the tape?

LEE

Thirty minutes.

STOLTZ

I thought you gave me a forty-five
minute tape. It wasn't?

LEE

It was thirty.

STOLTZ

Shit. Sorry. I woulda sworn...
Well let me tell you what went down--

King stops him short.

KING

You're going to tell us what he said
about guns. After you spent twenty-
eight minutes talking about sports,
strippers and Mr. Ku's culinary
dreams.

STOLTZ

I said I was sorry. What am I s'posed
to do, walk into his restaurant and
ask if there's rocket launchers on
the menu?

KING

It'd be an improvement.

STOLTZ

HE'S A FUCKING FRIEND OF MINE!
(MORE)

STOLTZ (CONT'D)

(strong)

And when I tell you to entrap your
friends and not give a damn...you
can show me how it's done!

Stoltz snatches the tape recorder, hurls it against the wall.
It SMASHES soundly.

STOLTZ

Sorry about your tape!

A moment's silence.

KING

So what's the story?

STOLTZ

He wanted to know if I was setting
him up. I told him I wasn't.

The room takes this in.

STOLTZ

I said, hey pal, I'm just passing on
a prospect. If any of your Grant
St. pals are packing rice into boats.
(beat)

So he asks me what kind of money's
at work here -- I give him your
numbers -- and he says he might know
someone who'd want to meet my Salerno.
He didn't say that someone was him.

KING

Well, won't he be shocked to find
the guns in his sugar.

STOLTZ

Hey, you pick up the smart mouth at
Harvard, or you gotta have it to get
in?

KING

Who, me? I bought a book.

BRUBECK

Guys, guys, c'mon...

Stoltz and King just watch each other. Stoltz shrugs:

STOLTZ

He said he'd make some calls. And
if he finds someone...he'll call me.

INT. CUSTOMS HALLWAY - DAY

King strides with Brubeck:

KING

The conversation would've proven a prior history. So what does he do? Sonofabitch runs out of tape.

BRUBECK

We don't know that--

KING

He's dirty, Bill. I don't know what he's been working, whether it's greasing the docks, spying in-house or driving AK's from the ships in his own goddamn Buick, but he's dirty.

King turns a corner, but Brubeck holds his arm. Stops him.

BRUBECK

Agent King. Sir. Can I talk to you for a sec?

King frowns at his "official" tone of voice.

BRUBECK

He didn't kill our two guys.

KING

I know that--

BRUBECK

I don't know if you do.

King's about to speak, but--

BRUBECK

You've been here two weeks. He's been here ten years. A lot of guys here have been undercover with him, shot at with him, had their lives on the line.

(beat)

You go after one of our own...before you are one of our own...

KING

We're five blocks from a hospital.

BRUBECK

What?

KING

In case I hurt your fucking feelings.

INT. TENDERLOIN BAR - NIGHT

Dimlit and seedy. Stoltz is on beer four, watching football, a folded Chronicle beside him. He notes a shifty LATINO GUY enter the bar. Returns to the game.

The Latino Guy saunters down the bar, stops at the stool beside Stoltz. Taps the Chronicle:

LATINO GUY
You reading this?

STOLTZ
Not mine.

The Latino Guy takes the paper, walks off with it. Stoltz sips his beer.

A moment later, the Guy's back. Drops the paper back:

LATINO GUY
Already saw this one.

And he wanders away. Stoltz waits a beat, then puts the paper in his lap. Unfolds it to reveal a ziploc-bag with a U.S. PASSPORT inside.

He tucks it away, then notices a Chinese WOMAN, 30's, at bar's end. Stripper-type, a dragon tattoo. Maybe hooking, hard to say. She looks him over, then looks elsewhere.

Stoltz downs his drink, sidles the length of the bar. Sits next to her. The woman pretends he's not there.

CHINESE STRIPPER
Sorry. I didn't come here for company.

STOLTZ
Shoulda stayed home.

INT. STOLTZ'S HOUSEBOAT - NIGHT

Stoltz wanders in with the stripper, both of them trashed. The woman steadies herself on the walls:

STRIPPER
You were serious, weren't you. We're on a fucking boat.

STOLTZ
Yeah, you're being shanghaied. Next stop's the homeland. You want something?

He's headed for the kitchen. The woman shrugs, wandering the wall.

Noting another picture of Stoltz and the lovely young Chinese woman.

STRIPPER
Who's the girl?

STOLTZ
Came with the frame.

The stripper frowns, surveys the iridescent tanks...

STRIPPER
I like your fish.

STOLTZ
There's a stupid thing to say.

He hands her a beer, has one for himself. The woman presses her face to a tank's glass. Fish dart away:

STRIPPER
So what do they think when I do this?
What do they think I am?

STOLTZ
You live your life in a cage, you
don't know it's a cage, do ya?
(shrugs)
You're God. You're Allah. You're
the holy-fucking-ghost.

The woman puts her beer aside without a sip. So does Stoltz.

INT. STOLTZ'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Stoltz and the barfly enter, half-dressed and stroking. They trip onto the unmade bed, working more clothes off:

STOLTZ
Make some sounds.

STRIPPER
What?

STOLTZ
Sounds. Screams. The more noise
you make, the better I do.
(shrugs)
It's a medical thing.

INT. SURVEILLANCE VAN - SAME

RECORDING EQUIPMENT monitors RUSTLINGS and MOANS over the speakers. Ficus and Lee are at work, eating drive-thru.

STRIPPER (O.S.)
Ohh, ohhh, ohhhh.

Ficus and Lee trade a look.

STRIPPER (O.S.)

Oh, Boat Man. Fuck me, Boat Man.
Oh, Boat Man. Yes. Boat Man. OH!

Ficus stops mid-chew of cheeseburger. Lee sips his milkshake.

LEE

Gonna finish your fries or what?

INT. BEDROOM - SAME

Stoltz and the barfly, working hard--

--as the phone RINGS. Stoltz ignores...and while the woman resumes her spoken word performance--

--ANGLE TRACKS to an answering machine as it CLICKS ON...and the ziploc-bag with passport atop it. The new passport is open: to a picture of Stoltz, clean-shaven and glasses, with the alias "William Grundy."

STOLTZ'S VOICE

Gary Stoltz, federal agent. You have the right to remain silent.

A BEEP and then--

KU'S VOICE

Stoltz, it's me. Ku.
(beat)
Stop by for dinner.

INT. CUSTOMS STRATEGY ROOM - DAY

Stoltz takes a long drag on a cigarette. The whole Dragonfire team is waiting for him. Finally:

STOLTZ

He's willing to meet Salerno. He wants to do it this weekend. Personally. In Vegas.

KING

Why Vegas?

STOLTZ

Wouldn't say. Want my guess? The Riardis. He thinks he's getting access to a major syndicate. Salerno meets Ku here, he sees a father of four serving up spring rolls. But if he meets him in Vegas...Ku gets to pretend he's a high roller too.

King studies Stoltz, looking for his angle. Stoltz stares right back. An untrusting moment...

KING

Let's play.

EXT. VEGAS STRIP - NIGHT - BEGIN MONTAGE #2

An AERIAL VIEW swoops down over Sin City. A metropolis teeming with risk, glamour and greed.

INT. STRATEGY ROOM - DAY

CLOSE ANGLES of Armani suits and shirts placed on a table. Pictures and maps of Miami taped to a wall.

GRIFFIN (V.O.)

Your name is Richard Salerno. You work for the Riardi syndicate. Officially, you're an exec for Keystone Mutual Funds, which handles the corporate accounts for the Riardi's fronts.

CLOSE ANGLE on Brubeck, in a tanning bed. Moments later come hair gel, cologne, a Rolex and jewelry. Trim, tasteful.

NAVARRO (V.O.)

You own a house in South Beach, an apartment in Manhattan, and vacation homes in Park City, Southhampton and Barcelona. No wife, no kiddies.

In a PHOTO ROOM, a backdrop of a beach is projected. Brubeck stands with Kate, King's secretary before it, casual dress and smiling. A PHOTO is taken...

CLOSE ANGLE on same photo put in a wallet. Brubeck and Kate, looking like a couple.

FICUS (V.O.)

Your current s.o. is a professional escort-slash-aspiring actress. You drive a bulletproof Aston-Martin. You have an MBA from Wharton, a stockbroker's license, a handgun permit and people who do your killing for you.

EXT. MANDALAY BAY HOTEL - NIGHT

Brubeck, dressed as the gangster "Salerno," enters a waiting limo. The limo heads into traffic.

LEE (V.O.)

You'll be staying at the Mandalay Bay. At eight p.m. you'll be driven to the Bellagio to meet Ku in the Grand Salon Bar. Stoltz will be with him.

INT. BELLAGIO HOTEL BAR - NIGHT

Ku's dressed in his best suit (which still doesn't fit right), at a table, antsy. Stoltz sits across, smoking a cig. Watches a keno screen. Sneers at a losing game.

By the bar, a COCKTAIL WAITRESS chats with the bartender, eyeing Ku and Stoltz, holding a hidden ashtray.

LEE (V.O.)

Once you meet, a Vegas field agent planted as a waitress will replace the ashtray on your table. The new ashtray will house our transmitter. Op-base will be across the Strip in the Paris, in the event Ku has the Bellagio under watch.

INT./EXT. PARIS HOTEL - NIGHT

King paces a room, with Lee, Ficus and Griffin. Surveillance equipment. Lee listens to a fed radio, Ficus views the Strip through binoculars--

--with a POV of the Salerno limo headed their way.

KING (V.O.)

Stoltz you know, Ku you don't. Stoltz you trust, Ku you don't. Show him every reluctance to make a deal -- make him work for it.

INT. CUSTOMS STRATEGY ROOM - DAY

The source of the V.O. dialogue. Agents working in b.g. King's alone with Brubeck, looking grave:

KING

And Mr. Salerno...

(beat)

For all we know, Ku knows. For all we know, he and Stoltz have got new passports and they're just waiting for a diversion that'll get 'em the hell outta here.

Brubeck's about to protest...but nods.

KING

Watch. Your. Back.

EXT. VEGAS STRIP - NIGHT

The Salerno limo pulls into a left turn lane for the Bellagio.

INT./EXT. LIMO

Navarro behind the wheel. Brubeck sits in back, practicing:

BRUBECK

Salerno. Richard Salerno. Hi,
Richard Salerno, Keystone Mutual.
Call me Dick and I kill ya...

The limo starts to make its turn. Over Brubeck's shoulder,
the cross-traffic has stopped, except for a SPORTSCAR--

--speeding through the light, swerving and slamming BRAKES--

EXT. VEGAS STRIP

--as the sportscar COLLIDES with the limo, bashing it in the
side! Both cars skid to a SMOKING HALT.

INT. PARIS HOTEL ROOM

The agents hear the BANG, and Ficus sees through the binocs:

FICUS

Jesus Christ! They got hit!

AGENTS

What?!

FICUS

The limo's hit! Somebody ran the
light!

They hurry to the windows, King at the fore--

LEE

(into radio)

Navarro, you there? You guys all
right? Navarro?!

EXT. STRIP/INT. LIMO

Navarro's in the back seat, tending to Brubeck, who's wincing
from a bleeding skull. Shattered glass.

Over their shoulder, a pair of DRUNK KIDS are stumbling out
of their bashed sportscar. PASSERSBY gathering.

NAVARRO

(grabs radio)

We're here, we're all right. What
the fuck...Billy's banged up pretty
bad here...

INT. PARIS HOTEL ROOM

King stares at the distant accident in disbelief...

KING

This is not my night...

LEE

Agent...? What's the call?

(no response)

The meet...

King sets his jaw.

KING

We're doing the meet.

GRIFFIN

What? Who's supposed to be our
gangster? One of us?

They trade looks: one black guy, one Chinese guy, one white
geek who looks like he's still in high school.

KING

You heard me. We're on.

INT. BELLAGIO HOTEL BAR - NIGHT

Stoltz hands a keno slip to the ATTENDANT, while Ku tugs at
his cuffs nervously:

KU

He's late, why's he so late?

STOLTZ

He'll show, relax. What, he flew to
Vegas not to show?

Ku mutters. Stoltz eyes him.

STOLTZ

What's the matter? You've been
worrying sick since I got here.

Ku says nothing. Stoltz holds the stare.

STOLTZ

Ku. Something going on here?

KING (O.S.)

Gary-Goddamn-Stoltz...

Stoltz frowns, turning to see King behind him, dressed in
Brubeck's Armani. A smile and swagger:

KING

Still alive...

Stoltz stares dumbly. Ku rises. King claps Stoltz's arm:

KING

You must be Mr. Ku. Richard Salerno.
(shakes his hand)

I've heard a lot about your
restaurant. When I'm next in the
City, I'll be sure to stop by.

KU

It'd be a pleasure, Mr. Salerno.

King puts a hand on Stoltz's shoulder. Stoltz glares.

KING

And this guy. When's the last time
you paid for a meal, I wonder.

STOLTZ

You look good, Richard. I hardly
recognize you.

KING

Y'know, Mr. Ku, he never told me how
you two met--

STOLTZ

We'll get you a drink first. Still
drinking what, Chivas? Ku, another?

KU

Actually, I was hoping we might
continue our discussions in a hotel
suite I've arranged.

King's smile wavers. Stoltz frowns:

STOLTZ

What hotel suite?

KU

Forgive me for not mentioning this
earlier, Mr. Salerno...however, I
asked you to Las Vegas at the request
of my investment partners.

KING

"Partners."

KU

I regret the subterfuge...but they're
here on a business trip, and when I
mentioned that I'd be meeting someone

(MORE)

KU (CONT'D)
of your stature...they proposed that
your paths might cross.

KING
My stature? My stature's five-ten.
What's the story, Gary?

STOLTZ
What "partners," Ku...

KU
I'm sorry, Stoltz. I regret, how to
put it, their discretion. What can
I say? They are Chinese.
(worried smile)
You think you are careful in American
business. You have no idea.

King trades a dark look with Stoltz, who's very unsettled.

KING
So it would seem...

KU
My partners wish me to say that if
you, too, have partners you must
consult with before you would feel
comfortable with such a meeting,
then they regret very much the waste
of your time--

KING
I've had my share of Chinese girls,
Mr. Ku.

Ku frowns. King shrugs, all adrenaline.

KING
Discretion's nothing new to me.

INT. BELLAGIO LOBBY - NIGHT

King, Stoltz and Ku stand awaiting the elevator. Stoltz
does his damndest not to put a fist through someone...

KING
Gary, may I have a word for a sec?

Ku nods graciously. King pulls Stoltz several steps away:

KING
(faux smile, low)
Long story short: I'm Salerno,
live with it.

STOLTZ

Then I suggest you find a suit that fucking fits.

KING

Did you know about these Chinese?

STOLTZ

Getting what we want, aren't we?

KING

Did you know about them?

STOLTZ

If they are who I think they are...then you so much as sweat the wrong drop and we die, all three of us. Right here. Right now.

INT. PRESIDENTIAL SUITE - NIGHT

Two ominous Chinese BODYGUARDS open doors for Ku, Stoltz and King. They enter to see--

--massive windows overlooking the Strip. Huge couches surrounding a small fountain built into the living room. A pretty, professional Chinese woman, RACHEL CHEN, 30, sits with ledgers, speaking Mandarin into a cell phone. A bookish brushcut, ZE MIN ZHAO, 39, at a laptop. Scarred face.

Standing in front of a TV, watching "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire", is military-trim VINCENT XIA, 35. A princeling -- a handsome young Turk, born into wealth, leading China's first generation of capitalists.

VINCENT

Mr. Ku. Welcome.

(points to TV)

This fat woman was awarded two hundred and fifty thousand dollars for knowing that sake is technically a form of beer. Fascinating, yes? A rice farmer in Guangdong Province would not see so much money in the life of his entire family.

He crosses to offer handshakes--

KU

Mr. Salerno, meet Vincent Xia, president of Pacific Rim Enterprises, China's second largest corporation. Sir, Mr. Richard Salerno, and Mr. Gary Stoltz.

VINCENT

Mr. Salerno, I propose this is the problem with your country.

KING

Television? You're not the first.

VINCENT

A lack of respect...for wealth.

He invites them to the couches, snaps fingers at Rachel to shut off her cell phone. She doesn't. Keeps chatting...

VINCENT

Your game shows, your lotteries, these slot machines like insects. Such a society will not stand.

KING

Supply and demand, right?

VINCENT

I speak morally, Mr. Salerno.

He studies King's eyes, then smiles and shrugs:

VINCENT

It interests me. No matter. Please, sit.

He BARKS at Rachel in Mandarin. Flustered, she wraps up her cell phone conversation--

VINCENT

Those fucking phones. I hate them.
(shakes his head)
I make them...

Rachel hurriedly clicks off, steps to shake hands--

VINCENT

Miss Rachel Chen, Mr. Ze Min Zhao -- my vice-presidents of exports.

RACHEL

Mr. Salerno, Mr. Stoltz...

They sit at the couches, with the Strip outside beyond.

VINCENT

How is it you've come to know our associate Mr. Ku?

KING

Is it "associate" or "partner"? Ku said "partner."

Vincent gives Ku a sidelong smile. Ku pales. Vincent shrugs.

VINCENT
Whatever Mr. Ku wishes.

KING
I know Gary from Miami. I know his
areas of...expertise.

Vincent eyes Stoltz, with some amusement:

VINCENT
Mr. Stoltz. So we owe you for the
honor. In so many ways.

Stoltz locks eyes, stern. King studies the unspoken something
there. And nearly loses his focus--

VINCENT
Where in Miami are your offices, Mr.
Salerno?

KING
You know the city?

VINCENT
I know it well.

KING
Well, ah, the main Keystone offices
are at Fifth and Central. My private
office is on Beach Street.

VINCENT
Ah, one of my favorite restaurant's
on Beach. With the seafood risotto
and the lobster brochettes, the chef's
from Singapore, what's the name...
Mosaic, maybe. You know it?

King starts to speak--

STOLTZ
Murala. It's named Murala.

VINCENT
(eyes him)
I thought it was new.

STOLTZ
I'm in Miami sometimes.

VINCENT
You know it, Mr. Salerno?

KING
Haven't tried it.

Vincent gives Rachel a glance. She rises, leaves the room.

KING

So Pacific Rim Enterprises, what enterprises would those be?

VINCENT

We're heavily diversified -- primarily electronics, appliances, semiconductors. Weapons engineering. And investments in the West.

KING

How's it work there in China? With Communism and all. Companies are government-controlled, aren't they?

VINCENT

We're an autonomous operation, affiliated with the People's Liberation Army.

(shrugs it off)

Many of your own Western companies -- Intel, Hughes, The Dunking Donuts... also use military labor and resources. It's the way it's done in China.

INT. SUITE'S BEDROOM

Rachel steps in, dials her cell phone:

PHONE VOICE (O.S.)

City and listing, please.

RACHEL

In Miami, Keystone Mutual Funds. Beach Street office.

INT. MAIN SUITE

The men as before, amidst conversation:

KING

Our clients are primarily in South and Central America. Assault rifles, submachines. But the real demand's for tacticals. Rocket launchers, surface-to-air's, anti-tanks.

VINCENT

We have clients in Asia and the Middle East whom we deal with directly. Why shouldn't we enter this market the same way? Why deal with you?

KING

Because we have the relationships already built. Colombia's a long way from Shanghai, and trust me, Mr. Xia, they ain't got the restaurants.

INT. SUITE'S BEDROOM

Still in shadow, Rachel has scribbled a number for "Keystone Mutual Funds." She re-dials her cell-phone...

INT. MIAMI CUSTOMS SERVICE

There's a Customs seal on a wall, as an AGENT steps into a room labeled "Miami Comm Room -- Authorized Personnel Only!"

Inside, is a bank of FIFTY PHONES. Soundless. All with labels. One reads "Dragonfire, S.F." Its LIGHT blinks.

INT. SF CUSTOMS STRATEGY ROOM

Beneath surveillance photos of the Dynasty Garden, Ku, etc. are five phones: with labels reading "Keystone Mutual, Salerno Miami, Salerno New York, Salerno Park City, Salerno Barcelona." The "Keystone Mutual" line is RINGING.

As a female Customs Agent, SHANNON, picks up:

SHANNON

Keystone Mutual Funds.

INTERCUT VEGAS BEDROOM

RACHEL

Richard Salerno, please.

SHANNON

Mr. Salerno's away on business, may I take a message?

RACHEL

It's urgent that I speak with him. My name is Sarah Brown, I work with his attorneys. He's expecting my call.

SHANNON

Hold on a moment, Ms. Brown, I'll see if I can reach him.

Rachel waits. From the other room, she hears a PHONE ring.

INT. MAIN SUITE

The RINGING comes from King's coat. He interrupts himself--

KING

I'm sorry, this has to be my office--

As he answers his cell, Rachel returns. Nods to Vincent.

KING

Salerno. Yeah. Who? Brown? Don't know her. Bullshit, don't know her. Keep her on hold, trace the call.

King clicks off, re-pockets the phone:

KING

Sorry. I hate these things too.

(resumes)

Anyway, so my question is the kind of quantity we're looking at, does Pacific Rim have the resources to move that through San Fran?

VINCENT

For this we rely on Mr. Ku. And Mr. Stoltz, of course.

(subtly relaxing)

After five years...we have yet to have a problem.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

King and Stoltz leave; Ku stops in the doorway:

KU

Mr. Xia has asked me to speak privately. We will talk later, then?

(to Stoltz)

Tonight?

STOLTZ

Casino. Eleven.

Ku nods, half-bows to King, leaves. The two bodyguards remain in the hall, watching Stoltz and King.

They wait for the elevator. Trade a look but say nothing.

The elevator door opens...and they step inside.

INT. ELEVATOR

They stand apart. Stoltz presses the "Lobby" button. King stares daggers, as the door closes--

KING

Five years.

STOLTZ

Fuck you.

KING

The money good, Stoltz?
(anger building)
Make you feel like a big man?!

STOLTZ

Wanna arrest me? Arrest me, then.
Lock me up, you lose it all, Glory.
So long chinks--

KING

Two agents you worked with died by
your guns--

STOLTZ

Fly home. Fuck your wife.

King grabs Stoltz by the arm, rushing him--

KING

You fuck your lawyer--

--and Stoltz immediately BATTLES back, surprising King with his ferocity! Stoltz SLAMS King back off a wall. King struggles for leverage, but Stoltz trips him up--

--and spins him to SLAM the floor, Stoltz atop him:

STOLTZ

You send me down and see what happens!
Senator's son, right? Hate to see
something happen to a senator's son!

KING

You sonofabitch--

STOLTZ

I protect my interests, same as you.

Stoltz BANGS King off the elevator floor, choking him--

STOLTZ

What's it gonna be, Glory?! Want to
bust some chinks, you work with me.
Want to send me down, that's all you
get.

KING

(gasping, scared)
Get off me, you're under arrest--

Stoltz presses harder, strangling. King can't breathe.

STOLTZ

'Bout five seconds, that door's gonna
open up.

(MORE)

STOLTZ (CONT'D)

And if you don't think the chinks
are down there, you've been watching
cartoons. So what're they gonna
see, huh? WHAT ARE THEY GONNA SEE?!

INT. BELLAGIO LOBBY - NIGHT

A lobby full of milling GUESTS...as an elevator door opens
up to reveal--

King and Stoltz, striding out calmly. King straightens his
suit, red-faced, as Stoltz leans in to whisper with a smile.
King appears to chuckle. They walk on--

--passing a young Chinese MAN on a cell phone, watching them
go amidst a group of GAMBLERS.

EXT. BELLAGIO - NIGHT

King and Stoltz reach the taxi stand. In a nearby limo,
Ficus spots them and navigates to pick them up.

INT. LIMO - NIGHT

Stoltz climbs in back, followed by King...to be greeted by a
panicked Lee and Navarro:

NAVARRO

What happened? We lost you in the--

KING

He's goddamn under arrest--

As he helps him in, King reaches inside Navarro's jacket and
swipes his service pistol, turning on Stoltz--

KING

Who's the tough guy now?!

NAVARRO/LEE

Hey, King, hey--

KING

(gun in Stoltz's face)
WHO'S THE TOUGH GUY NOW, HUH?!

STOLTZ

Yeah, pull the trigger, Glory!

KING

YOU'RE HISTORY!

STOLTZ

So pull the trigger! You think you're
hard? PULL THE TRIGGER!

NAVARRO/LU

HEY! KING! KING!

The agents physically pull King off, taking the gun. King and Stoltz keep eyes locked. Stoltz smiles.

STOLTZ

I gotta meet Ku at eleven. Gives you guys one hour to write up immunity papers or it all goes away.

(to King)

Got that, Salerno? All of it.

INT. MANDALAY BAY HOTEL - SUITE - NIGHT

King sits glumly, jacket off, staring into space. He takes a drink, looks at a faxed piece of paper before him.

Putting the drink down, he studies a ring on his finger. A bracelet. His "mobster" attire.

He puts a hand out, as if feigning a handshake:

KING

Richard. Richard Salerno.

BRUBECK (O.S.)

Pleasure to meet you.

Brubeck's in the connecting doorway to the suite, where the other agents are at work. He sports bandages and a sling.

BRUBECK

Your suit's too big.

King gives him a long look. Hands him the faxed paper.

KING

There's your hero. There's the pension he was after.

INT. BELLAGIO CASINO - NIGHT

Bristling with action. Stoltz sits at a blackjack table, one of four PLAYERS. A COCKTAIL GIRL sidles by:

COCKTAIL GIRL

Another beer, sir?

STOLTZ

Here's how we'll play it. Everytime you swing by, you see my glass empty? Means I'm ready for another.

(tips her a chip)

Government money.

COCKTAIL GIRL

Is there any other kind?

She heads off, just as Stoltz sees Ku entering the tables area. Ku spots Stoltz, grabs the seat beside him:

STOLTZ

What's the story?

KU

They thought he'd be tan.
(off his look)
Miami, you know? Tan.

STOLTZ

He had skin cancer.

KU

Really?

STOLTZ

The sun, he fuckin' hates it. What else did they say?

KU

They want to make some calls about something, I don't know what. I think they want his business, Stoltz.

STOLTZ

Well, all right. Win-win.

KU

(frowns)
Something wrong with you?

STOLTZ

I'm between drinks, I'm down a grand. Other than that, I'm happy for both of us.

Stoltz antes a bet. Ku surveys the casino, musing proudly:

KU

We will be where he is someday. Own the richest things, know the finest people, live like this...this for my wife and children...

STOLTZ

What the fuck're you talking about--

KU

Salerno. We would learn from him, I think.

STOLTZ

What happened to running restaurants?

KU

What happened to being Customs agent?

They trade a grave look. Ku shrugs it off.

KU

To sell to someone like him... The Chinese, they look at me different, Stoltz. They look at me different already.

Stoltz grumbles, pushes out two stacks of chips. One stack of four, one stack of ten.

STOLTZ

See this stack? That's how you used to look. See this stack? That's how you look to 'em now. Is that what's got you feeling good?

Stoltz pulls the bottom chip from the ten-stack. The rest collapse and spill.

INT. MANDALAY BAY SUITE - NIGHT

CLOSE ON SURVEILLANCE PHOTOS of Vincent Xia, Rachel Chen and Ze Min Zhao. In the Bellagio lobby, at a restaurant.

King studies the photos with Brubeck and Lee, as well as faxed file info on Pacific Rim. Room service is scattered before them, as Ficus enters with a clipboard:

FICUS

Okay, Salerno, tonight's itinerary: 12AM, that's now, you head downstairs, settle in at roulette. At 12:30, a lady escort who works with FBI-local starts playing your table. At 1AM, take her to the bar, buy her a drink. At 1:15, bring her back here. She'll stay with us until 4AM, then we'll send her off.

KING

Guys, doesn't Salerno just stay in his room some nights and watch TV?

FICUS

No, he doesn't. We need to sell this.

KING

Look, I gotta make some calls first--

FICUS

We need to sell this now, boss.

King looks at Brubeck and Lee. They just shrug.

KING

You're telling me I can't call my wife and wish my kids goodnight 'cause I gotta play high-stakes roulette and rendezvous with a prostitute.

LEE

Some people work at McDonald's.

INT. MANDALAY BAY CASINO - NIGHT

The young Chinese WATCHER met in the Bellagio lobby is here now, wandering the gaming floor, eyes on--

--King at the roulette table, with a gorgeous LADY ESCORT at his side, celebrating with him on a successful bet.

INT. BELLAGIO CASINO - SAME

A SECOND WATCHER, a fortyish Chinese man, stalks the gaming floor here too, eyes on--

--Ku, who sits at a slot machine with a bucket of quarters. He spins the reels, entranced, and cheers as the machine spits out a jangling payback.

INT. BELLAGIO TABLES AREA - SAME

Where Stoltz remains at his blackjack table. He's the only one left. Dutifully keeps placing his bets. And downing his beer. With dark eyes.

INT. PARIS HOTEL SUITE - DAWN

Lee's sprawled asleep on a couch. Ficus sleeps in a chair, with headphones still on. A digital recorder before him. A faint RINGING phone wakes Ficus...

INT. STOLTZ'S HOTEL ROOM - DAWN

Stoltz is asleep, tangled in sheets. His room's phone is RINGING. He stirs, winces at a hangover, then answers:

STOLTZ

Yeah.

(listens, a frown)

What do you mean, alone?

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. NEVADA DESERT - DAY

Heat shimmers on a barren landscape. A black limousine speeds across a sandy dirt road.

The limousine kicks up dust, leaving a cloud in its wake as it cruises beneath rocky buttes in the middle of nowhere. As from the horizon appears--

A SECOND LIMOUSINE

Sitting parked in the desert. Like a black tombstone.

EXT. END OF ROAD

The first limo slows to a stop beside the second. A cloud of dust sweeps over both of them, then settles.

As it does, a driver, NAVARRO, steps out and opens a door... letting King emerge. Gangster suit and shades.

The Chinese DRIVER of the second limo opens a door, allowing Vincent Xia to step into the sun.

Vincent steps to King as his Driver gets back in the limo and drives away. Vincent shakes King's hand:

VINCENT

Tell him thirty minutes.

King watches Vincent's limo leave. Vincent nods assurance.

KING

(to Navarro)

Come back in thirty.

Navarro hesitates, but nods. Gets back in his car.

And drives away, following his predecessor.

Two shadows disappearing across the shimmering sands.

VINCENT

Who are you, Mr. Salerno?

King studies him, unmoving.

KING

Metaphysically or what?

VINCENT

How do you see yourself? How do you define yourself?

(beat)

It's always my question when I meet Americans.

(MORE)

VINCENT (CONT'D)

You have perhaps seven generations of history. My family has seven hundred. When you say you're American, what does that mean?

KING

No disrespect intended, Mr. Xia, but what the fuck are we doing out here?

VINCENT

I'm asking what allegiance you feel to your country.

KING

I vote. How 'bout you? You selling me guns or aren't you?

VINCENT

We are. However, we're unable to accept your money.

Vincent hands him some folded papers from his breast pocket.

VINCENT

The bulk of our business is in the developing world, too. North Korea, Iraq, Pakistan. But our production can't always meet demand.

(points to papers)

And the West persists in refusing us access to such technologies they deem -- outdated, I assure you -- security risks.

King studies the papers -- pictures and professional articles on a micro-machine labeled a "Lithotripter."

KING

What's this?

VINCENT

A medical tool. It removes kidney stones via an energy-pulse from a precision electronic switch. It's called a lithotripter.

KING

And the West won't let you buy it?

VINCENT

Apparently thirty-two such switches -- with modifications -- would work similarly well in detonating a nuclear warhead.

KING

"Apparently."

VINCENT

You mentioned your Riardis own a hospital supply subsidiary -- Kelly Medical, I believe. Which would be able to purchase such switches without suspicion.

KING

And pass them to you.

VINCENT

For whatever weaponry you require.

KING

Arms technology for arms technology.

VINCENT

Progress, yes? Three hundred years ago...it was tobacco for silk.

INT. KING'S HOUSE - DAY

Rebecca King is cooking dinner, while Jonah and Marshall do homework at the kitchen table:

JONAH

Eight times four. Thirty-two. Eight times five. Forty. Eight times six. Forty-eight...

MARSHALL

(trying to distract)

Fifty-four. Twenty-two. Three hundred. Sixty-eight.

The phone RINGS. Rebecca grabs it, stirring pots:

REBECCA

King residence.

INTERCUT INT. CUSTOMS PLANE - DAY

King lounges in a cluttered private jet, surrounded by paperwork. The Rockies thirty thousand feet beneath him.

KING

Hey, beautiful.

REBECCA

Who's this?

KING

Stop it. How're the kids?

REBECCA

Oh, the other day Jonah took his first steps. And Marshall said "Daddy" for the first time.

KING

You should do stand-up.

REBECCA

Tell me you'll be back tonight.

KING

Something's come up. I just left Vegas, but now I have to be in Washington, then Miami for a few days. We're closing in with the Chinatown case.

REBECCA

Can you be more specific on dates? I'm trying to schedule my affair.

KING

Rebecca. You understand, I know you.

REBECCA

What I understand is that in Seattle you wore a suit and had a nine to five job. In San Francisco...

(trails off)

Do you remember San Francisco?

INT. CUSTOMS PLANE - FRONT CABIN - DAY

Stoltz sits reading the sports page, circling teams in the betting line. Sitting nearby are Brubeck, Ficus, Lee, Navarro and Griffin. All watching him.

Stoltz glances up, sees the agents' looks of distaste.

BRUBECK

We stood up for you, Gary. King was gunning for you...and there we were standing up.

Stoltz surveys them. Shrugs.

STOLTZ

I forgive you.

EXT. WASHINGTON, D.C. - DUSK

A FLYING perspective, SHOOTING PAST the Washington Mall.

INT. TREASURY DEPT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DUSK

A SURVEILLANCE SHOT of Vincent Xia stares from a wall SCREEN. Replaced by a CORPORATE PRESS PHOTO of Xia. Then a PHOTO of Xia at a banquet, in tux, dancing with a Chinese model.

KING (O.S.)

Vincent Xia, president of Pacific Rim Industries, a privately-run conglomerate in name only. Because Mr. Xia's father happens to be General Wen Xia, China's Vice-Minister of Defense, head of the P.L.A.

On the wall screen appears a shot of GENERAL XIA, in his 80's, in full uniform. With other Chinese officials.

ANGLE TO REVEAL

That King, with Brubeck and Lee, presents his report to a trio of Treasury OFFICIALS -- most prominently Customs Commissioner STEPHEN REGAN, 54.

KING

What we have here is the Chinese government engaged in the manufacture and export of illegal arms. Not only to North Korea, Burma, the Taliban...but they're building markets here. In the West.

(beat)

And right now, China believes a relationship with the Riardis will help them build their nuclear program.

REGAN

It's public knowledge that the Chinese are nuclear exporters.

KING

To terrorist nations. For profit.

REGAN

CIA's been telling us that for years. We normalized trading status all the same. That's a State Department battle, not Customs.

KING

Well, what's our battle?

REGAN

The guns they're shipping to San Fran. That's gotta stop.

KING

That's what we're after here, Stephen. The closer we get to Xia, the closer we get to who's giving Xia his orders. We tie these guns to government names over there, we have a serious act of international aggression on our hands.

REGAN

And you're after those names.

KING

I'm after intent.

REGAN

So what would be your strategy?

KING

Sting these guys long enough to learn China's master plan. Lure 'em back in country and lock 'em away.

REGAN

Who says there's a master plan?

KING

Don't we have a master plan for China?

Regan leans back in his chair, pondering.

REGAN

We'll need to bring in the Agency, also the State Department--

KING

Bring in whoever you have to.

REGAN

What are your plans for Agent Stoltz?

KING

Well, he'll never work again, for starters--

REGAN

I didn't authorize immunity.

KING

I had an hour to make a decision, Stephen. It was get China or get Stoltz. What would you do?

REGAN

I don't like dirty agents walking away--

KING

He doesn't "walk." He's outta work,
he wears the rep--

REGAN

We can do better than that.

King looks surprised. Regan studies some paperwork:

REGAN

You handed him immunity on whatever
turns up with Ku. His case file
lists five prior suspensions, '99,
'93, '90 and '88. I want you to
reopen those cases. If he's smuggling
for Ku, he's smuggled before. Find
someone who'll talk and draw up
charges. Gary Stoltz goes down.

KING

I won't renege on my--

REGAN

The guy's a fucking criminal, Matt.
He's helping you in the present? So
bust him for his past. Fuck him.
(adamant)
Find a way.

King hesitates. Then nods.

EXT. CAPITOL BUILDING - DAY

Establishing. The great dome of the House and Senate.

INT. CAPITOL BUILDING - DAY

King walks with Joseph King toward his Senate office, upset:

KING

So yesterday I'm thinking task force,
right? CIA, FBI, State, real
international law time. Today Regan
calls me up, says shut down the sting.

JOSEPH KING

Shut it down?

KING

He says my targets are Ku and Stoltz.
Stop the guns at the border. Let
the CIA step in with the Chinese.

JOSEPH KING

Step in how?

KING

That's what I said. Ku's our link to them. We sweep in and arrest Ku, the Chinese disappear, the CIA's left, y'know, tapping pay phones. And I'm left busting some corrupt cop--

JOSEPH KING

Thought that was what you wanted.

KING

I need some help on this.

(beat)

The Chinese are not here to make a couple million on guns. There's a greater agenda, and the CIA's not in position to find it.

(beat)

I am, dad. I am.

EXT. MIAMI SKYLINE - DAY

An AERIAL VIEW of beachfront Miami. The Customs jet descends.

INT. LIMOUSINE - DAY

King sits in back, in his Salerno attire, looking over the paperwork on the lithotripter. He tosses it in disgust.

Then looks out the window, with a stare of surprise:

KING

They're kidding...

EXT. SOUTH BEACH ESTATE - DAY

A huge, gated mansion, fronted by all manner of palm trees and landscaped gardens. The limo pulls through the gates.

EXT. SALERNO MANSION DRIVE - SAME

The limo stops at the mansion proper. Navarro opens the door for King to emerge. He gawks at the property.

NAVARRO

Record exec. We dangled a tax break.

INT. SALERNO MANSION - DAY

King wanders in, past expressionist paintings and rock and roll paraphernalia. Huge rooms, lavishly furnished in post-modern style. From somewhere, a TV FOOTBALL GAME is heard.

IN THE ENTERTAINMENT ROOM

King finds Stoltz lounging in an inlaid jacuzzi pool, watching a basketball game on a big-screen TV.

STOLTZ

Hey. Welcome home.

King just stares.

KING

Meeting.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

A makeshift conference area. King at the fore; Brubeck, Lee, Navarro, Griffin and Ficus. Stoltz sits in a corner, musing over The Sporting News.

KING

We have a problem in Washington. Regan feels we're out of our jurisdiction and wants to handoff the tech-theft to the CIA.

AGENTS

What? Bullshit--

KING

He wants us to raid Ku's warehouse, bust the stateside conspirators. Gun charges only.

Stoltz looks up from his magazine, disturbed.

BRUBECK

What about Salerno? All our work?

KING

Salerno disappears as soon as Ku's arrested. CIA tracks Pacific Rim from then on.

LEE

"Tracks"? What happened to arrests?

STOLTZ

Someone wants to keep China out of it.

The room registers this. And that it's Stoltz who said it.

KING

I've asked a friend in high places to help us here.

(MORE)

KING (CONT'D)

In the meantime, all we can do is stall the deal because Treasury's not gonna authorize any lithotripters, rewired or otherwise.

FICUS

Then the Chinese walk.

STOLTZ

What happens to Ku?

The room turns to face him. Seemingly disinterested at the start, Stoltz is all attentiveness now.

KING

What do you think happens to Ku?

STOLTZ

He's led you to the head of a foreign corporation on the payroll of a foreign government...and Ku plays Al Capone?

KING

For now. Per Treasury.

BRUBECK

Fuck you, Stoltz. Be glad you're not asking what happens to you.

King looks away at this. Stoltz darkens.

KING

In Washington's view, we've brought them nothing new. China wants nuclear technology, given. China's willing to sell it to rogue states, given. China's corrupt, given. But China's also fucking fragile and they're not gonna antagonize them unless there's a security threat-level reason.

(beat)

My feeling is there is.

BRUBECK

Goddamn Washington. What they don't know, they don't wanna know.

NAVARRO

We're through, is what you're saying.

There's a silence in the room.

STOLTZ

What if we got hold of those lithotripters?

BRUBECK

He just said, Washington's not gonna--

STOLTZ

I didn't say what if Washington got hold of them.

Stoltz looks at King. King nods for him to continue.

STOLTZ

Let's say we knew a guy who works in shipping. To hospitals. Let's say we've known him to, oh, appropriate certain pharmaceuticals and send 'em southward, to support a dependency. Let's say a lithotripter could be appropriated. For an appropriate fee.

(beat)

You stall Treasury, you could set up the sale, get the guns, and have Pacific Rim nailed. Fuck with the gadget, reprogram it, whatever--

KING

You're serious about this. You know someone--

STOLTZ

Only way they're gonna listen is if you show 'em China's got them in its sights. No gadget, no go, right?

The other agents look to King, awaiting his order.

KING

What's in it for you?

STOLTZ

I work here.

BRUBECK

Fuck you, Stoltz.

KING

What's in it for you?

Stoltz leans forward, puts his magazine away.

STOLTZ

If you're willing to stall Washington...I'll get you your gizmo.
(surveys agents)
What's the team say?

INT. DYNASTY GARDEN - NIGHT

Ku's seating some DINERS when his daughter holds out a phone at the maitre d' station. Ku takes the phone:

KU

This is Ku.
(beat, smiles)
When?

INT. MIAMI AIRPORT - DAY - BEGIN MONTAGE #3

Ku strides confidently with the throng of tropical TRAVELERS.

INT. MIAMI OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Navarro enters an empty office suite, with VIEWS of the city, where Griffin instructs an INTERIOR DESIGNER.

INT. SALERNO MANSION - DAY

Furniture MOVERS carry in couches and bookshelves, as other MOVERS pack out the artwork and rock and roll gear.

Stoltz sits across a table from King:

STOLTZ

First things first, you talk too much. The less you speak, the more the other guy's gotta.

INT. LIMO - MIAMI STREETS - DAY

Ku cruises downtown Miami, smiling at the street scene.

INT. EMPTY OFFICES - DAY

A sign gets posted reading "Keystone Mutual Funds." Inside, a desk and shelves are up, an administrative area, a stock ticker. On the desk, staged photos of King (as Salerno) on a yacht/with a model/shaking hands with Bill Clinton.

STOLTZ (V.O.)

Ninety percent of your goddamn job is small talk. What do gangsters small talk these days?

INT. OFFICE BUILDING LOBBY - DAY

Ku cruises into the downtown high-rise. Checks a directory for "Keystone Mutual Funds -- Suite 2708."

STOLTZ (V.O.)

Wall Street Journal, Investors Business Daily, Fast Company and, to spice it up, some People magazine.

INT. EMPTY OFFICES - DAY

Empty bookshelves are stocked with book after book. The stock ticker is plugged in. A pot of coffee is made.

STOLTZ (V.O.)

I ask you what the stock market did today, you say in New York, Hong Kong or Brazil...

INT. KEYSTONE OFFICES

Now made up perfectly to resemble a small executive branch of a major investing firm. A pretty RECEPTIONIST greets Ku.

STOLTZ (V.O.)

When you smile, keep your lips together. Never make a sudden movement. If someone pulls a gun on you -- do you hear me -- brush the dust from your clothes.

Ku follows her down a short hallway, passing the anteroom stock ticker and several TV's broadcasting CNN, FNN, MSNBC, C-SPAN, BBC, etc--

STOLTZ (V.O.)

Check your watch. Admire the scenery. Because that bullet will not hit you.

--and directs him to enter an open door--

INT. SALERNO'S OFFICE - END MONTAGE

--into what was once the barren office suite. Now painted and furnished as if it's been lived in for years.

King sits behind the desk, facing a quartet of computer monitors. Downtown Miami beyond.

KING

(rises and smiles)

Mr. Ku. Welcome to temperate climes.

INT. SHANGHAI OFFICE - DAWN

Outside, dawn rises over ultra-modern downtown Shanghai. Inside, Rachel Chen is on the phone:

RACHEL

(in Mandarin, subtitled)

Ku says he's seen the device. Salerno wants a trial trade -- 200 M-22's and 50 Falconers for a sample one -- and invites us to Miami to accept delivery. How do we wish to answer?

INT. BANQUET ROOM - NIGHT

Vincent Xia is on a cell phone, in a corner of a crowded ballroom. Formally dressed.

VINCENT
(in Mandarin, subtitled)
Make him wait.

Vincent clicks off, pockets the phone and turns--

AS WE WIDEN TO REVEAL

The full ballroom, decked out with PARTYGOERS, most of them Caucasian. A banner reads "New York Council on Democratic Action." Vincent joins Ze Min Zhao as a LOBBYIST finds them--

LOBBYIST
Mr. Xia, there you are. Follow me,
we have our opportune moment--

Vincent nods as he and Ze Min follow the Lobbyist toward a small gathering of TUXEDOS--

--to where Joseph King is holding court, making the rounds.

LOBBYIST
Senator! I want you to meet a friend
of mine, Mr. Vincent Xia.

JOSEPH KING
Mr. Xia, it's a pleasure--

VINCENT
The pleasure is mine, Senator--

LOBBYIST
Mr. Xia's company has plants in
Europe, Asia and the Middle East.
He's seeking to open a factory in
North America and he's considering
upstate New York.

JOSEPH KING
Well, by all means, your jobs are
good here. I may need one myself in
a year or two.

King laughs, as do the tuxedos around him. Vincent smiles.

JOSEPH KING
Seriously though, New York would be
happy to have you. You want strong
labor, you want innovation, you're
in the right place.

VINCENT

Thank you, Senator. When I was a boy, it was inconceivable that America would ever own businesses based in my country. I am happy to see the day has come for Chinese businesses...
 (thin smile)
 ...that the favor may be repaid.

INT. KING'S OFFICE - DAY

A plastic-cased lithotripter sits on King's desk. King studies it, with Brubeck alongside.

Brubeck gazes out to the administrative bullpen, where Stoltz is chatting up Kate, King's secretary:

BRUBECK

What do you think he's up to here?

KING

He's trying to survive. If he has to set up Ku, he'll do it.

BRUBECK

I don't know...

King muses, puts down the medical device.

KING

Bill. I need you to do something for me. Work through the file on his past suspensions. Start talking to witnesses.

BRUBECK

What about the immunity?

KING

Washington wants an example made.

(nods)

No one knows, you with me? You, me and no one. 'Cause if he has to be our leverage to keep this sting alive...that's what he's gonna be.

INT. STOLTZ'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Dark, as Stoltz enters, picking a small package off the mat. He clicks on Sportscenter, unwrapping the package--

--and plops on his couch, pulling out a bound stack of newspapers, maps and pamphlets. Atop is a scrawled note that reads "Hope these help, old pal. See you soon!"

Stoltz examines the papers: an "Investor's Guide to Indonesian Real Estate," a English-newspaper classified section, "Boats for Sale." A map of Bali.

STOLTZ
(to the fish tanks)
Still swimming, convicts. We're
still swimming...

Stoltz muses, glances to the framed wall photo: Stoltz and his Chinese sweetheart, on some paradise beach.

Then starts researching his stack...

EXT. DYNASTY GARDEN - DAY

A limousine pulls up outside the restaurant. ANGLE across the street to an apartment building opposite--

INT. SURVEILLANCE APT. - SAME

--where Ficus, Lee, Brubeck and Griffin are set up in a barren room. Headphones on, infrared camera watching:

KU (O.S.)
A pleasure to see you in San
Francisco, Mr. Salerno...

INT. DYNASTY GARDEN - SAME

A sparse lunch crowd. Ku walks King and Stoltz to a back booth, offering them seats:

KING
Hoping we would've heard something
by now.

KU
Yes, yes, I don't know why it's taken
such time...but I told them you'd be
in the city...and I do have news--

Ku's younger daughter arrives with hot hand towels--

KU
(in Mandarin, subtitled)
Bring me the Pouilly-Fuisse, some
baozi, jiozi and Mei Long Zhen--

King waves away the proffered towel, harsh--

KING
Do we have a deal or don't we, Ku?

Ku blanches, waves away the girl. He looks at Stoltz, who shrugs. Ku works up a smile.

KU

Your weapons have been shipped. Their freighter is a week away from Oakland. However, Mr. Xia's schedule prevents him from accepting your invitation to Miami. He wishes to invite you to Shanghai. He will take payment there.

Stoltz grimaces privately. King tries not to react.

INT. SURVEILLANCE APT.

Brubeck grabs headphones, shooting a look at the others:

BRUBECK

Shanghai?! No goddamn way.

INT. DYNASTY GARDEN

STOLTZ

China? What's he think, Salerno doesn't have a business to run?

KING

That won't be possible.

KU

Mr. Xia assures you'll be well treated. He wishes to show you his plant, discuss future investments.

STOLTZ

You can't ask the man to go to China, with an illegal tech export--

KU

I'm sorry, Stoltz. I say only what I know. If he doesn't wish to provide payment in Shanghai...his weapons will not arrive as planned.

STOLTZ

This is fucked, Ku!

Stoltz mutters, leaves the table. Storms for the bar.

Ku is left alone with King, gives a sheepish gaze:

KU

You must understand the Chinese ways. Their word is "guanxi." It means bonds of personal trust. Contracts and deals mean little, guanxi is everything. Mr. Xia does not mean to offend.

King nods. A silence.

INT. SURVEILLANCE APT.

The agents hear the silence. Realizing:

BRUBECK

No! No, you sonofabitch! No one is going to China! No!

INT. DYNASTY GARDEN

KING

I hear Shanghai's a helluva place.

INT. SURVEILLANCE APT.

Brubeck throws down his headphones:

BRUBECK

GODDAMMIT!

INT. DYNASTY GARDEN

While King and Ku continue talking in their back booth, Stoltz stays behind the bar, drinking a beer and glowering--

--as the door opens and a ragged young CHINESE MAN ambles in, shaggy-haired and shades, black leather and jeans. One of Ku's daughters meets him:

KU'S DAUGHTER

Good afternoon. One for lunch?

The Chinese man pushes by without a word. He half-scans the restaurant, half-keeps his head hidden--

--as he wanders to the bar. Regards Stoltz with a frown, as now we see it's LIN KIN TAK. The Chinatown gangster.

LIN KIN TAK

Man, what you say, where's Ku?

Stoltz slugs his beer, lazily looks at the newcomer...and tenses immediately.

LIN KIN TAK

You hear me? Ku. He here or what?

Stoltz betrays a glance over his shoulder. LKT turns, spots Ku talking to King. He can't see King's face.

LIN KIN TAK

Get me a Tsingtao, what you say.

Stoltz nods, giving LKT a look-over--

--glimpsing a SHOULDER HOLSTER between jacket and shirt--

--while he gets a Tsingtao for him. LKT drops some cash on the bar, settles in to wait for Ku. Head low.

Stoltz sidles further down the bar, trying to catch King's eye. Ku's daughter arrives with some food--

--giving King a moment to glance backward, and see Stoltz making a casual "X" with his forearms. Does it again.

King frowns, then follows Stoltz's look--

TO THE MIRROR BEHIND THE BAR

--and sees the reflected face of Lin Kin Tak. King sits up straight, as LKT meets his eyes in the mirror--

King looks away quickly.

LKT merely sips his beer, antsyly eyeing the door.

Stoltz sidles back to the booth, putting his body between King and LKT's line of sight...

ON FULL SCENE

KU

Stoltz. Sit, eat. All is settled.
Shanghai it is, Mr. Salerno, yes?

KING

(eyes on Stoltz)
Why not? Probably safer than here.

Stoltz nods for King, shrugs for Ku. King rises:

KING

If you don't mind, gentlemen, where
would I find...

STOLTZ

Down the hall. Second door.

King steps quickly for the hall, without another glance to the bar. In the mirror, Lin Kin Tak notes him pass.

INT. MEN'S ROOM

King crashes in, checks for feet beneath two stalls, then speaks into a cufflink on his sleeve--

KING

Lin Kin Tak! In the restaurant.
You hear me? Lin Kin Tak!

INT. SURVEILLANCE APT.

Headphones on, Brubeck and Ficus react with shock:

KING (O.S.)

The minute he leaves, trail him. Do not attempt arrest within a goddamn mile of here, or Ku's gonna know he's under watch. Let him leave, take him down. Do not lose sight.

INT. DYNASTY GARDEN

Stoltz slides in the booth, nods to the bar:

STOLTZ

Ku. Some guy wants to see you.

Ku looks up, sees LKT's reflection. Ku's smile fades. He swiftly rises--

--and crosses to the bar and Lin Kin Tak. Whispered:

KU

(in Mandarin, subtitled)

Not now.

LIN KIN TAK

I'm in San Jose. I need my action going, what you say.

KU

Come back tonight, I can't talk to you now.

LIN KIN TAK

You got better business? Who's your business? I'm your business.

KU

Not now, you hear me, boy?

Ku's eyes flare. LKT studies him:

LIN KIN TAK

The boy waits.

LKT slides off the stool and saunters for the bathroom hall. Watching from the booth, Stoltz tenses.

INT. DYNASTY GARDEN - HALLWAY

Lin Kin Tak ambles the hall: two bathrooms and a back exit. He checks the payphone for change, then enters--

INT. MEN'S ROOM

Apparently empty. But as LKT steps in, he hears a lock CLICK home for one of the stalls.

LKT notes it, steps to the sinks. Sees King's shoes beneath a stall door in the mirror. LKT washes his hands.

IN THE STALL

King's vantage is a thin sliver. He pulls a pistol from the small of his back, sitting silently.

ON FULL SCENE

LKT dries his hands, notes the shoes under the stall:

LIN KIN TAK

Man. You, man. Whatever he's selling you, I get the same thing for you, better deal. What you say?

King tenses, unmoving.

LIN KIN TAK

Uzis, AK's, what you say? You think he's rich man, right? He no rich man. You don't know him.

Silence. LKT rips out a paper towel, writing:

LIN KIN TAK

I leave you a number. You call number, I make you better deal. You don't need him, man. You don't know.

LKT leaves it on the sink, studies the stall, then switches direction for the door:

LIN KIN TAK

Money talks. I'm the money.

IN THE STALL

King waits, hearing the door swing SHUT. He puts his pistol away, unlocks the stall, steps out and--

ON FULL SCENE

--sees Lin Kin Tak still standing within! At the door, arms folded and smiling--

LIN KIN TAK

So what you say?

--and then suddenly his smile vanishes, seeing King full-on for the first time, and making the connection--

--and as King sees the look in his eyes--

--he pulls his pistol from the small of his back, just as LKT goes for his shoulder holster--

--both of them raising GUNS, but King's there first--

KING

Don't, don't, don't!

King has his pistol aimed squarely at LKT. LKT's gun is out, but pointed floorward. LKT freezes.

KING

Why do you think we're here, huh?
Think we knew you were walking through
the door? We don't want you--

LIN KIN TAK

Bang-bang, cop-cop.

KING

You do what I say, you walk out of
here and nobody knows.

LIN KIN TAK

Bang-bang.

He's edging his gun higher. King advances, gun shaking.

KING

Move that gun again and I kill you,
I swear to God.

LIN KIN TAK

(a macabre grin)
Bang-bang says the cop-cop.

But he stops. Slowly, King shows him his sleeve:

KING

See the pin? They're listening.
They're right outside. Shoot me,
you haven't got a chance in hell.
You want a chance, you run.

INT. DYNASTY GARDEN

Stoltz eyes the hallway anxiously. Ku is by the maitre d' station, looking up with a frown--

--to see Ficus and Griffin march into the restaurant in sportcoats, flashing badges as they enter:

GRIFFIN

SFPD, robbery/homicide.

(MORE)

GRIFFIN (CONT'D)

Was there a guy in here, Chinese,
leather jacket, five-eight, maybe a
few minutes ago?

KU

What...why...

FICUS

Witness saw him. Woman got robbed
on 14th.

GRIFFIN

You know who we're saying? Was he
here? Is he still here?

Ku meets eyes with Stoltz. Ku swallows--

KU

He's...

Ku nods to the back hall. Ficus and Griffin march for it--

INT. MEN'S ROOM

King and Lin Kin Tak, tension high, as before:

KING

I want you to run, hear me? No one
shoots if you run. No one shoots.

LIN KIN TAK

No one shoots...

KING

That's right.

LIN KIN TAK

No one shoots 'cept me.

He flashes his gun up and FIRES, falling sideways--

--as King instinctively leaps aside, FIRING back as he falls
into a stall. BULLETS slam into stall and wall--

INT. DYNASTY GARDEN

--as diners SCREAM in the restaurant, taking cover. Ku spins,
shocked to see--

--Ficus and Griffin pull guns, racing forward in the hall--

--as Lin Kin Tak BURSTS out of the bathroom, FIRING at them.
Ficus and Griffin dive for cover.

LIN KIN TAK

BANG-BANG! BANG-BANG!

With an insane ROAR, he hurls himself backward out the rear exit, still FIRING. An ALARM sounds.

Ficus and Griffin scramble up, with Griffin giving chase as--

INT. MEN'S ROOM

--Ficus darts in, to see legs sticking out of a stall. He races forward--

--to see King's on his back, unharmed. Struggling up--

KING

No one was in here. You saw no one.

INT. DYNASTY GARDEN

Diners are running out. Ku has taken cover on the floor, only to be hauled up by Stoltz--

STOLTZ

I was never here.

--who storms outside with the rest of the diners.

EXT. DYNASTY GARDEN

But as soon as he's outside, Stoltz breaks into a SPRINT, pulling his gun and racing down the street--

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND RESTAURANT

While Lin Kin Tak sprints the alley, FIRING random shots to slow down Griffin's pursuit--

INT. DYNASTY GARDEN

Ku stands, totally stunned, amidst an empty restaurant. His wife and daughters cower in the kitchen doorway--

--as King calmly steps from the bathroom, walks straight for Ku. Returns his gun to his waistband.

KING

You run a nice restaurant, Mr. Ku.
But I'd get rid of the pickpockets
in the restrooms.

(smile fades)

You don't know me. You never saw
me. I want that fucker's name.

EXT. DYNASTY GARDEN

King strides out, dropping his guard and now his whole body shaking. He staggers for the waiting limousine--

--where Navarro rushes out to open the door for him--

NAVARRO

He's on foot down South Van, we're
after him -- are you all right?

King struggles into the limo, breathing hard--

KING

Get the guy.

EXT. SOUTH VAN NESS STREET - DAY

Lin Kin Tak darts through TRAFFIC, as he sees Stoltz racing toward him around the corner ahead.

LKT swiftly switches direction, nearly getting clipped by a DELIVERY TRUCK. But sprinting the other way.

INT. KING'S LIMO

Navarro drives. King has hold of his radio:

FICUS' VOICE (O.S.)

South Van to 15th, running west!

KING

Where's SFPD!? Brubeck, we need
homicide up to speed and on the story!

EXT. 15TH STREET - DAY

Lin Kin Tak runs into a new street, scattered with PEDESTRIANS--

STOLTZ

OUT OF THE STREET! OUT OF THE STREET!

--as Stoltz pursues, waving them aside. Lin Kin Tak hears SIRENS up ahead, and darts right--

INT. ONE-WAY ALLEY

--into a narrow connecting street, using parked cars for cover. He FIRES back at Stoltz--

--who lays low, still charging. Steadily closing the distance as LKT reaches a cross-street ahead--

EXT. CROSS-STREET

--at the same time that King's limo does! Lin Kin Tak runs right into the hood as it skids to a halt, sending him flipping over it, hitting the street hard.

A second later, King jumps out, has gun ready--

--but LKT's vanished! King spins--

--to see that LKT's rolled under the limo, and sprung up on the other side. His gun pointed at King's back.

King's motionless. But so is LKT--

--because behind him, stands Stoltz. Twenty feet away, gun on LKT. A standoff. As LKT grins bloodily, daring him:

LIN KIN TAK

Bang-bang.

Stoltz FIRES without blinking an eye. King dives to the ground, but Lin Kin Tak doesn't fire--

--having been hit in the chest. Lin Kin Tak's on his back, lung-shot, eyes wide, blood running.

King spins, advancing...while LKT pulls a switchblade from his belt, struggles to raise it--

KING

It's over, drop it! It's over!

LIN KIN TAK

You don't fuck me.

--as he just grins and jams the blade into his own neck. He convulses, jerks the knife sideways. And slumps still.

King stares, shaking, adrenaline and shock.

Stoltz just stows his gun and walks away.

EXT. ALLEY - DUSK

POLICE have cordoned off the area. Some DETECTIVES are conferring with Brubeck.

Stoltz on a stoop, smoking. King sits beside:

KING

Thank you.

A silence.

STOLTZ

My job.

KING

What is that, a joke? I'm supposed to laugh at that?

Stoltz turns, studies him for a stern moment.

STOLTZ

What do you think you are, the law?
(MORE)

STOLTZ (CONT'D)

'Cause you got a gun? You're not the law. We're tax collectors. Tollbooths. That's what we do.

KING

That what happened to you? That's your world? Not right, no wrong, just money--

STOLTZ

You don't know me.

KING

I know your kind.

STOLTZ

I know yours too.

(eyes flare)

You want cowboys and convicts, there's no such thing. There's debt and there's credit, my bull is your bear. Nobody wins, see? People survive.

KING

I don't understand what you're saying.

STOLTZ

No. You don't.

Stoltz stubs out his smoke.

STOLTZ

No such thing as bad guys, kid.

Just bad bets.

(shakes his head)

Just bad bets...

He gets up and walks away, leaving his gun on the stoop. King stares at the gun. Sits alone.

INT. HOMICIDE OBSERVATION ROOM - NIGHT

King and Brubeck stand with SFPD DETECTIVES behind a two-way mirror, watching Ficus and Griffin, still dressed as homicide d.t.'s...shaking hands with a leaving Ku.

GRIFFIN

Thanks for coming in, Mr. Ku. We'll let you know if we need anything further...

King turns to the Lead Detective, claps his shoulder:

KING

We owe you one, Lieutenant.

SFPD LIEUTENANT

Hey, anytime you need us.
Commercials, student films, school
plays...

INT. POLICE DEPT. BULLPEN - SAME

Ku exits the interrogation room, eyes darting right and left as he passes DETECTIVE desks. Ficus and Griffin wave friendly farewells. Ku raises a hand. Tight smile.

INT. DYNASTY GARDEN - NIGHT

Dark and empty as Ku enters. The damage has been swept up, tables replaced. He shuffles in, wanders to the hall.

And notes a bullet hole in the wall. He turns back to the front doorway--

--and jumps to see Stoltz in the doorway, silhouetted.

STOLTZ

They ask you about him?

Ku relaxes. Kicks at some trash. Nods his head.

STOLTZ

Can they link him to you?

A shrug.

STOLTZ

Ku. This is important -- can they link the guy to you?

Ku meets eyes with him. A strange, new look.

KU

Are you working for them, Stoltz?

STOLTZ

Who the fuck you talking to?

Ku stays silent. Nods, then:

KU

How well do you know Richard Salerno?

STOLTZ

Whoa, we can stop this right now.
He ever hears you talking that way--

KU

Why would Lin have tried to rob him?!
Shoot him?!

STOLTZ

'Cause he was crazy, 'cause he was doped, 'cause the man looked like cash -- you think I know? Look, I talked to Salerno, he's settled down, he's not holding you responsible--

KU

Yes. You are always talking, you two.

Stoltz sets his jaw, staring darkly.

KU

Swear on your life I am safe. That my family is safe.

STOLTZ

I swear on my life.

KU

Swear on June's.

Stoltz's stare darkens further.

STOLTZ

I swear on June's.

Ku nods. Stoltz walks to him, a hand on his shoulder:

STOLTZ

Look at yourself. Some hophead shoots up your restaurant and your thinking goes to hell. That's the rest of your life, chink-town gangs and migraines. What you made off that dooper, Salerno spends on clothes, man. You want to give him up?

KU

My children need their father.

Stoltz SLAPS him soundly. Ku recoils, stunned.

STOLTZ

You're gonna take Salerno to Shanghai. And you are gonna come back to your goddamn children...like new.

Ku stares at him. There's rare rage in his eyes.

KU

I will go to Shanghai, Stoltz. Only if you go with me.

STOLTZ

They don't want me over there.

KU

I want you.

STOLTZ

Waste of my time.

KU

Who is a waste of your time? Me?

Beat.

KU

You stand by Salerno? You will stand
by Salerno. And you will stand by
me, in Shanghai. Or nothing stands.
I'm sorry, Stoltz...
(trails off)
But I'm frightened.

Stoltz regards him.

STOLTZ

Not as sorry as me.

INT. KING'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Pitch dark. A tired King opens the door from the hall--

--to see Rebecca sleeping soundly. King slips off his shoes,
sheds his clothes and slips into bed, trying not to wake his
wife, who murmurs and reaches for his arm.

King's head hits the pillow, exhausted. Staring skyward.

He kisses Rebecca and turns on his side to set an alarm clock.
As he does, his gaze crosses a bookshelf across the room,
and a GLINT of light--

--that causes him to frown. Something's REFLECTING the
moonlight on the bottom shelf. Tucked behind books, something
protrudes, something shiny.

King gets out of bed.

He crouches at the bookshelf, moves books aside--

--and reveals the San Francisco-skyline PAPERWEIGHT that
went missing from his office. The light glinting off the
Transamerica pyramid replica.

King stares, stunned. Then swiftly unscrews the plastic
base -- to expose a secret compartment. Which is empty.

EXT. SAUSALITO MARINA - NIGHT

Stoltz shuffles down his slip, reaching his boat, stepping
on deck and putting a key in his entry door--

--and then stops. He kneels, running a finger along the crack between door and jamb. Then surveys the floor. And finds a fallen piece of BLACK THREAD.

INT. STOLTZ'S HOUSEBOAT - SAME

In a single motion, the door is thrown open and Stoltz steps in, gun raised--

--to see King sitting in a chair. Facing the door. Waiting.

Stoltz holds the gun on him for a moment. Then stows it. Calmly walks to the kitchen, gets a beer.

STOLTZ

Took you long enough.

KING

No one threatens my family.

STOLTZ

Where'd you learn that, Dirty Harry?

KING

When were you in my house?

STOLTZ

Who says it was me?

Stoltz pops his beer, swigs. King watches, simmering:

KING

How do you live? Everything you are is a lie.

Stoltz regards him. Steps to his stereo system, grabs a tape lying on top and pops it in. Presses play.

KING'S VOICE (O.S.)

(over the speakers)

Work through the file on his past suspensions. Start talking to witnesses.

BRUBECK'S VOICE (O.S.)

What about the immunity?

KING'S VOICE (O.S.)

Washington wants an example made. No one knows, you with me? You, me and no one. 'Cause if he has to be our leverage to keep this sting alive...that's what he's gonna be.

Stoltz clicks stop. King swallows.

STOLTZ
Transmitter's under your desk. If
you're looking for it.

King says nothing. Stoltz smiles slightly.

STOLTZ
Are you my friend, Matt?
(no response)
It's a yes or no question. Are you
my friend?

KING
No.

STOLTZ
I'm not your friend either, Matt.
So what's there to get all worked up
about?

Stoltz strides to the fridge. Gets another beer. Pops the
top and hands it to King. King won't take it. Stoltz shrugs,
leaves it next to him. Steps to feed his fish:

STOLTZ
Ku got freedom when he was 17. Washed
dishes, swept floors, shoveled shit.
For twenty years. Opened his own
place back in '91.

(beat)
Him and his wife, they lived in the
restaurant. Literally. Storerooms
were bedrooms, raising their babies.
And I'm thinking, aren't they making
money? Restaurant does business,
aren't they making money?

KING
Well?

STOLTZ
They were sending it back to China.
Parents, cousins, supporting the
family tree. Smuggling stacks of
cash in coffee grounds till they got
found out.

KING
By Customs?

STOLTZ
By the chinks.
(beat)
Chinks put his relatives in prison,
said the only way Ku could get 'em
out...was to smuggle for the chinks.

KING
Guns. For Pacific Rim.

Stoltz has stopped, eyes on the beach photo, of him and the Chinese girl. Distant:

STOLTZ
He doesn't get help, they kill his family. Nothing our government can do for him. Nothing nobody can do for him. 'Cept me.

KING
And that was five years ago.

Stoltz turns back.

STOLTZ
So now everybody's happy. China's making money, Ku's making money, and his family's alive in Shanghai.
(beat)
And the minute this is over...they won't be.

He lets it sink in, then shrugs:

STOLTZ
That's life. You walk into some restaurant, it kills ten people half a world away. You're the reason and you never know.
(frowns)
What do they call that? There's a name for that. I forget.
(eyes him)
Still looking for the win-win?

KING
We can expose the Chinese. Ku can tell his story.

STOLTZ
Didn't sound like Regan's plan.

KING
We can hold China accountable.

STOLTZ
Ku and I do the time.

KING
A crime's a crime, Stoltz! I can't save you! And I can't save Ku!

STOLTZ
You can try.

Stoltz leans forward, the hook baited:

STOLTZ

Ku won't go to Shanghai without me--

KING

What? Why?

STOLTZ

Because that shootout got him scared. He wants me with him. Without me, there's no you.

King takes this in.

STOLTZ

It works like this. We take you to Shanghai, you see what the chinks are after, and we're gone. Except you take a plane back to San Fran...and we take a plane somewhere.

KING

No.

STOLTZ

This is non-negotiable.

KING

You told Ku.

STOLTZ

I don't get what I'm after, I will.

KING

You think I'm gonna let you leave the country?

STOLTZ

I have the option of going to prison and getting Ku's family killed, or just getting Ku's family killed! What do you think I'm gonna choose!?

KING

And your guns haven't killed anyone?

STOLTZ

THE GUNS WOULD'VE GOT HERE, WITH OR WITHOUT ME! NOBODY GIVES A SHIT IN THIS COUNTRY ABOUT GUNS!

Stoltz sidles to the door, holds it open. End of negotiation.

STOLTZ

Whose head do you want, Agent?

(MORE)

STOLTZ (CONT'D)

'Cause you don't get both.

(shrugs)

It's the dragon or me.

INT. CUSTOMS SERVICE, MAIN OFFICES - DAY

King storms in, linking up with his secretary--

KING

Right away, I need Brubeck in my office. I need the files on Pacific Rim, I need--

SECRETARY

There's someone in your office.

King stops in his tracks. Steps around the corner--

--to see Joseph King standing at King's window. He smiles. King relaxes to see him, and as he steps forward--

--Customs Commissioner Regan emerges from behind the door.

King's smile vanishes.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

King, Joseph King and Regan. A judge's chambers atmosphere.

REGAN

Joseph called me to express his surprise that I have my department heads doing undercover work. I told him no one was more surprised than me.

KING

So I get a bipartisan visit. I'm thrilled.

REGAN

I understand you're still pursuing Pacific Rim. Thought we were handing off to the CIA.

KING

So why hasn't the CIA called me? Asked for reports--

REGAN

I passed on your preliminary--

KING

(to his father)

Why's he want this shut down?

JOSEPH KING

A policeman remedies the world through punishment. A diplomat's methods are subtler.

KING

Someone smuggles surface-to-air missiles into my city, it doesn't cry out for "subtlety."

REGAN

China's not our ally or our enemy. It's in between and that makes it dangerous.

JOSEPH KING

Right now the Chinese are finding their free market footing. And the more we encourage them -- the freer their market becomes -- the freer their people become. To one day bring down a wall of their own.

KING

What does that mean, a crime's not a crime if it has capitalist instincts?

REGAN

We help the Chinese people and American business. Win-win.

KING

And what do I tell Lacey Milloy and Elizabeth Tan? The man who sent the guns that killed your husbands is named Vincent Xia, but we can't indict him because it would depress the value of your 401-k?

REGAN

Their husbands' killer is dead.

KING

So why do I feel like an accomplice?

JOSEPH KING

We've embarked on a course with China, Matthew. We must adhere to it.

(a nod to Regan)

He's giving you one week to arrest Ku. Your authority goes no farther than that. It's time for the war games to stop.

EXT. CUSTOMS BUILDING - DAY

Joseph King gives a farewell wave as he enters a waiting sedan. King watches from the steps, Brubeck next to him.

King waves in response. Watches the sedan disappear:

KING

We're going to Shanghai.

BRUBECK

You're serious? They gave approval?

KING

We're going.

(gravely)

And you answer to no one but me.

CUT TO:

INT. DYNASTY GARDEN - NIGHT - BEGIN MONTAGE #4

ANGLE RUSHES AT Ku, behind the bar on the phone:

KU

(in Mandarin, subtitled)

Salerno will go. He wants to fly within the week.

INT. STRATEGY ROOM - DAY

King and his agents surround a CALTECH TECHNICIAN, holding the lithotripter:

CALTECH TECHNICIAN

I've replaced its circuitry. The parts are legit but without the right semiconductors, you're essentially smuggling them a toaster.

(beat)

If they're any good at all, you'll have about twelve hours before they figure it out.

INT. KING'S OFFICE - NIGHT

King briefs Brubeck, Ficus and Lee:

KING

I arrive at noon, supposedly off an LA connection from Miami. Stoltz and Ku land from SF at twelve-thirty. We're escorted by train to Pacific Rim Headquarters, after that Vincent wants to wine and dine.

INT. STOLTZ'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Stoltz stares at his "William Grundy" passport. Then slips it into the split-lining of his shaving kit. And takes a needle and thread to sew up the hiding place.

KING (V.O.)

We do the dinner, back to the hotel and instead of an overnight, we're on midnight flights outta there.

INT. STRATEGY ROOM - DAY

King and all the agents, including Stoltz:

KING

While we're in country, that shipment's gonna show up stateside. Access the cargo container, log the launchers and missiles, make us a goddamn case.

INT. KING'S OFFICE - NIGHT - END MONTAGE

King holds a satellite-phone for Brubeck, Ficus and Lee:

KING

We have no guns, no badges, no authority over there. Something goes wrong...here's our only weapon.

INT. KING'S HOUSE - NIGHT

King holds Rebecca; she's been crying. He rocks her gently. The house is dark and quiet.

REBECCA

You want to do this, don't you. You want to go. You say it like it's not your decision, but it is.

KING

If it was me we'd lost in Chinatown... what would you want?

REBECCA

Does your father know?

KING

I'm the only one who can do this, Rebecca.

(firmly)

And I'm coming home.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO AIRPORT - DUSK

An Air China jetliner pivots into position at runway's end.
And then REVS engines, hurtling forward.

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL - SAME

Beyond a window, the jetliner noses into the air. Inside,
Stoltz stands watching it ascend.

Ku arrives beside him, some newspapers in hand. Smiles at
Stoltz regarding the departing flight:

KU

The land I left so long ago...

(marvelling)

...it owns my future, all the same.

INT. PLANE - NIGHT

Sleeptime for first-class. King among the dozing TRAVELERS,
until a FLIGHT ATTENDANT rustles him awake:

ATTENDANT

Mr. Salerno, sir? I'm sorry to wake
you. But a federal agent named
Richard Brubeck contacted the pilots
via radio.

(hands him AirFone)

It seems important that you give him
a ring.

INT. STRATEGY ROOM - NIGHT

Late. Brubeck is on the phone, anxious:

BRUBECK

Problem, Matt. Checked Stoltz's
story out: Ku's parents both died
in the eighties. He opened the
restaurant in ninety-one, you
following? They were already dead.

INTERCUT INT. PLANE

Where King has his head held, AirFone pressed:

BRUBECK (O.S.)

You don't smuggle cash to dead people.

KING

He lied to me...?

BRUBECK (O.S.)

He told you the reason this started.
And his reason isn't true.

King's eyes dart worriedly. Is he alone on this plane?

BRUBECK (O.S.)

You have to consider the possibility,
Matt...that we're not the only
government he's cut a deal with.

INT. PUDONG AIRPORT, SHANGHAI - DAY

King strides amidst business TRAVELERS, both Western and Eastern, entering the terminal--

--where two Chinese SECURITY AGENTS flank the jetway's end, scanning passengers. King averts his eyes, approaching--

--and passing right between them. They note him, but make no movement. King walks on.

INT. AIRPORT CUSTOMS - DAY

King steps to a counter, hands his passport to a Customs OFFICIAL opens it. Studies "Richard Salerno."

He types on a computer keyboard. Notes the screen.

OFFICIAL

Purpose of visit?

KING

Business.

OFFICIAL

How long you stay in China?

KING

Two days. Shanghai.

King glances up at a ceiling-mounted CAMERA, pointed at him. The Official slips a hand beneath his counter. At the same moment, a red light pops on beside the camera.

The Official stamps King's passport, hands it back.

OFFICIAL

Welcome.

King walks through, toward baggage claim. He notes a cluster of Customs OFFICIALS, by a station desk. Returning his gaze.

King looks away, then over his shoulder back at the counters. The camera he passed under has its red light now off.

INT. CUSTOMS BAGGAGE CHECK - DAY

King collects his sole suitcase and heads for a baggage inspection area--

--and walks right through without being stopped by INSPECTORS.

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL - DAY

King steps to an Arrivals/Departures screen, setting his suitcase down on a seat, seeing a listing for San Francisco blinking "Arrived."

He pulls his sat-phone, glances to see "No Messages," pockets it and turns--

--to see two uniformed Chinese SECURITY GUARDS right behind him. Staring stoically.

One points to his suitcase, says something in Mandarin.

KING

I'm sorry, I don't speak--

The guard barks in Mandarin again, points to the suitcase.

The second guard hands King a paper ticket, written in Chinese, with a number circled on it.

KING

I don't understand, I've been through Customs--

The first guard grabs King's suitcase off the seat and drops it on the floor. The second guard points to the ticket, jabbars in Mandarin.

The first guard points at the suitcase on the floor, folds his arms. The second guard holds out a hand.

King studies them with a frown, then pulls his wallet.

The second guard nods.

King checks the number on the ticket, "1000," and hands over an equivalent amount in yuan.

The first guard takes the money, counts it. Both guards then nod stoically and leave.

King surveys the terminal. No one around him meets his eyes. He picks up his suitcase, decides he'll hold it.

EXT. AIRPORT TERMINAL - DAY

King paces in front of the Customs exit, when Ku appears among TRAVELERS. He's by himself.

King frowns, though Ku smiles to greet him warmly:

KU

Mr. Salerno. A pleasure to see you.

KING
Where's Stoltz?

KU
Customs, I'm afraid.

KING
What do you mean, Customs?

Ku shakes his head regrettably.

KU
A formal interview. It's to be expected. He is a federal agent.

KING
Wait, detainment or arrest?

KU
He'll be interviewed and asked to pay a fee. If he does, he'll be released.
(shakes his head)
You see why I left this country.

KING
What are they gonna interview him about?

Ku frowns slightly. Then spots a DRIVER, holding a sign in Chinese. Ku raises a hand, snaps his fingers. The Driver hurries forward for their bags.

KU
Who knows. He'll meet us at the hotel. Was your flight all right? Are you rested?

King's eyes are on the Customs exit. Where two OFFICIALS flank the doors, arms folded, eyes on him.

KING
I'll survive.

EXT. SHANGHAI OUTSKIRTS - DAY

A limousine negotiates traffic, heading for the sprawling modern city, skyscrapers and glamour. In the river beyond, old-world barges, sampans and sailing junks float by.

INT. LIMOUSINE - DAY

Ku and King sip green tea, perusing the wild urban blur:

KU
Shanghai.

(MORE)

KU (CONT'D)

She's the birthplace of its communism and its capitalism too. There has always been money here, but now...you would have had to be born in China to understand how impossible all this seems.

KING

You sound optimistic.

KU

Only if the money reaches the people. Right now it does not.

KING

So why do your business here? If you're so morally opposed to who's running the show?

Ku turns from the window, gives him a slow stare.

KU

What has Stoltz told you, about how he knows me?

KING

He said there are no bad guys. Just bad bets.

Ku nods, chews on this for a moment:

KU

Did he tell you about June?

INT. GRAND HYATT SHANGHAI - BAR - DAY

A lavish Western-style hotel, the tallest in the city, with an 87th floor bar overlooking the modern world. Ku and King are at a window table...

KU

June was a waitress at my first restaurant, in the Tenderloin. Ninety-one. She was on a student visa, then stayed. Chinese, very smart, very pretty -- everyone loved June. Stoltz was no different.

KING

There was a relationship.

KU

He loved her. He'll say fuck you if you ask him, but love's the proper word.

(MORE)

KU (CONT'D)

She'd asked Stoltz for help, sending money to her parents here. They were very poor, she said. Stoltz helped her smuggle them money and jewelry, for three years--

KING

--in coffee grounds, right?

KU

He has told you about her?

KING

He said it was you who needed his help.

KU

(amused smile)

Sometimes I wonder if I will ever know the real Gary Stoltz.

KING

So we're all here today to save his girlfriend's family?

Ku's smile turns grave.

KU

June's parents were executed after Tiananmen Square. The money June smuggled had been going to democratic cells, the student underground in China. Her relationship with Stoltz was for this purpose.

KING

The girl was using him...?

KU

For democracy.

(beat)

When he learned the truth about the money...he beat her so badly he nearly killed her. He'd been risking himself for her, not her politics.

(beat)

In '95, she went back to support the movement at home. Within a year she was arrested and sentenced to death.

King reacts.

KU

Stoltz was contacted and told that her fate was in his hands.

(MORE)

KU (CONT'D)

He would help the Chinese smuggle as he had helped June smuggle...or June would die.

KING

But their relationship was over--

KU

It's not easy to be told...that whether someone you once loved lives or dies...is up to you.

(beat)

Stoltz needed a partner, I needed the money. He asked my help.

KING

He came to you?

Ku shrugs modestly, stares at the city below...

KU

We receive a letter from her each year. From a prison in Zhejiang Province. She writes that she's a loyal party member now, and that the work we do is the best way to help the Chinese people.

(beat)

It is possible...that the letters are hers.

King takes this in. Ku drinks up and smiles:

KU

Politics, you see. What use? Who we are helping, who we are hurting, it would be too complicated to get out of bed. Live by money, and it keeps life simple. With money I can feed my children. And know they will have better lives than me--

STOLTZ (O.S.)

See, this is why I don't travel.

King and Ku turn. Stoltz ambles over, with his suitcase, tired but none the worse for wear:

STOLTZ

Somebody buy me a better fortune cookie.

KING

What happened?

STOLTZ

Chinks wanted a sit-down. You know these guys, they got a file on everybody. They went through the whole thing, ex-girlfriends mainly...
(a glance to Ku)
I'm here, though. Goddamn homeland.
Good to see you guys.

Stoltz finishes Ku's drink. All three regard each other. An unspoken tension.

STOLTZ

So we doing business or what?

EXT. SHANGHAI OUTSKIRTS - DAY

A passenger TRAIN rockets out of the city. Headed for an industrial landscape in what once was countryside.

KU (O.S.)

When I was a child, there was nothing out here. Hills, rivers, rice fields.

KING (O.S.)

I wouldn't call that nothing.

KU (O.S.)

You do not know.

ANGLE to REVEAL the landscape ahead: the occasional willow or magnolia, but otherwise smokestacks, transformer stations, and drab gray warehouses for miles.

EXT. PACIFIC RIM MANUFACTURING PLANT - DAY

A massive military base, retrofitted to serve as a manufacturing complex. Huge STEEL GATES open with stone buildings astride. A sedan pulls inside.

EXT. EXECUTIVE OFFICES - DAY

A modern-looking structure in the center of the compound. King, Ku and Stoltz emerge from the sedan.

They trade a look, as the steel gates SLAM shut behind them.

INT. VINCENT'S OFFICE - DAY

A plastic case is opened, to reveal the LITHOTRIPTER.

King, Stoltz and Ku stand before Vincent, who raises the device, perusing it. Rachel Chen and Ze Min Zhao there too.

VINCENT

And additional acquisitions will be possible?

KING

Possible and promise-able.

Vincent says something in Mandarin to Ze Min, hands him the lithotripter. Ze Min leaves the room. Outside, two TECHNICIANS are waiting.

VINCENT

Our two companies have much to look forward to, Mr. Salerno.

KING

Sure. If our countries don't blow each other up.

VINCENT

Now, now. There's no money in that.
(smiles)
I'd like to show you some of our products...if Mr. Ku and Mr. Stoltz wouldn't mind waiting.

King turns to Stoltz and Ku, who nod.

KU

By all means. Take your time.

INT. FACTORY FLOOR - DAY

Sweatshop conditions, conveyors and machinery as sooty Chinese WORKERS assemble gun parts. Vincent leads King on a catwalk above, followed by his two Chinese BODYGUARDS.

VINCENT

We've learned from the West that when you upgrade to the latest technology, there's a whole market for your obsolescence.

KING

You're one big nuclear thrift store.

VINCENT

China has nothing to fear from North Korea, Iraq, Afghanistan. We would annihilate them in an instant. But they want to be part of the playing field. Why should someone else profit from that?

KING

Mr. Xia...my thoughts precisely.

INT. VINCENT'S OFFICE - DAY

Rachel sips tea with Stoltz and Ku, when her cell phone RINGS. She answers in Mandarin, then excuses herself:

RACHEL

Gentlemen. I'll be back.

Stoltz watches her leave. She can be heard o.s. on her phone, right outside the door.

Stoltz surveys Vincent's desk. He springs up and over--

KU

Stoltz?!

Stoltz spins with a finger to his lips. He points to his ears, then points around the room.

KU

What are you--

Stoltz makes the "shh" motion again, threatening. He rips a paper scrap off a pad, scribbles on it. Balls it up and throws it over to Ku.

Ku uncrumples it to read: "INSURANCE."

Stoltz pulls open the drawers of Vincent's desk. He rifles files, labeled with FLAGS of different nations.

STOLTZ

What do you know about that Rachel, huh? She single? Seeing somebody? What's her story?

Ku's wide-eyed, scared and confused. Stoltz nods to the walls, indicating they're bugged:

STOLTZ

You think I'd stand a chance with her? I'm serious, what do you think?

Stoltz finds a file with the American flag. He opens it, flips papers. Frowning at what he sees.

KU

I...I think you do not know what danger is...

STOLTZ

Who, Rachel? What's a relationship without a little danger in it?

Stoltz folds some papers, pockets them. Returns the file.

KU

Stoltz!

STOLTZ

You think Vincent's fucking her?
(MORE)

STOLTZ (CONT'D)

I don't know, I don't see it. I don't think he fucks anything he doesn't pay for.

Stoltz returns to the chairs, sips his tea -- as Rachel returns with a smile. Stoltz sits down. Ku's sweating.

RACHEL

Sorry. Business.

STOLTZ

Makes the world go round.

INT. MISSILE ASSEMBLY AREA - DAY

Vincent and King walk another catwalk, this time overlooking a high-security area. No sweatshop here; highly skilled TECHNICIANS put together East Wind ballistic missiles.

VINCENT

Markets develop, they say. I say, markets are developed -- by force. In the future, there will be no countries. Only "markets."

KING

Companies and their consumers.

VINCENT

You think of yourself as a peaceful nation. In truth, you are a motley land of conflicted "markets." There are wedges for you everywhere -- class, race, religion -- which, with the right funding, could allow you new revenues. Christian and Muslim extremists, Negro and Mexican gangs--

KING

American fringe groups with the capacity for violence.

VINCENT

A focused investment in their development...

KING

Pays off when they need their weapons.

VINCENT

America funds our extremists -- the democracy movement, the Falun Gong. Why can't we fund yours? An American market is there for the taking. It's simply a matter of the proper partnerships...

King's sat-phone RINGS. He frowns at it, as does Vincent.

KING
Pardon me a moment.

King answers the sat-phone, steps away for privacy:

KING
Salerno.

INTERCUT INT. KING'S OFFICE - PRE-DAWN

Brubeck is on the phone, with Ficus, Lee, Navarro and Griffin. They look like they've all been awakened early:

BRUBECK
Matt, code red. D.C. H.Q.'s getting calls, the Times, the Post, the Chronicle -- they all know we've got a China gun-bust, they want to know when they can run with it.

King's face pales, but he must keep a smile up for Vincent, who's watching him patiently.

KING
Could you say that one more time, it's the connection--

BRUBECK
We're stalling as best we can, we're saying national security, we've got Regan calling editors...but if it's out in the press, Matt...

KING
Any sense of the problem's origin?

BRUBECK
The leak's out of Washington.
(beat)
We don't get it -- they know you're over there, don't they? Don't they?

KING
I'll be back to take over as soon as I can--

BRUBECK
You need to be on a flight out now. Hear me? Not the next flight, not tomorrow morning. Now.

KING
I understand the severity.

King clicks off the phone. Trembles slightly. Vincent sees.

VINCENT
Something wrong at home?

KING
Seems one of our brokers has made a series of unfortunate investments. And we're just finding out now.

VINCENT
How unfortunate?

KING
I have to return to Miami. I'm sorry, this is...significant.

VINCENT
My sympathies, Mr. Salerno. I'll have Rachel find you the first flight.

INT. PACIFIC RIM LOBBY - DUSK

Rachel's on her cell phone, hurrying toward where Vincent and King are waiting. Stoltz and Ku trail, privately:

KU
What were you doing in there?!

STOLTZ
Who do you think's the disposables here? We are. I want something on these fuckers in case we ever need it.

KU
Why would we?

STOLTZ
Bad bets...

KU
What did you take, Stoltz?

STOLTZ
I told you. Insurance.

And as they reach King, Vincent and Rachel:

VINCENT
Mr. Salerno will be leaving us, I'm afraid.

STOLTZ
(a glance to King)
What's that mean?

KING
Business problem back home.

RACHEL

The earliest flight is midnight, Mr. Salerno.

VINCENT

Then midnight it is. Still leaves time for dinner, yes? You won't deny us your company, will you? There's really nothing you can do from here.

King trades a look with Stoltz. Vincent waits.

KING

If I can't leave till midnight, I can't leave till midnight.

VINCENT

Splendid.

He says something in Mandarin to Rachel. She nods, leaves.

VINCENT

There's an shareholders banquet tonight for the company. You'll be my guests.

KING

I thought you didn't have shareholders.

VINCENT

We have patrons. In uniform.

EXT. SHANGHAI OUTSKIRTS - DUSK

A passenger TRAIN cruises back toward the gleaming city.

INT. TRAIN - DUSK

Vincent rides with Rachel, Ze Min Zhao and his two bodyguards. Rachel's on a cell phone.

Ku and Stoltz sit across the aisle from them. Stoltz glances into the next compartment, where King paces on a phone.

Stoltz excuses himself. Ku watches worriedly.

INT. ADJOINING COMPARTMENT

Stoltz enters, edging next to King, who clicks the phone off, unable to get a signal.

STOLTZ

What's the play?

KING

Someone's leaked Dragonfire to the press. Treasury's trying to keep it quiet.

STOLTZ

'Less it's Treasury who leaked it...

King gives a look that says they're his thoughts exactly.

KING

We get out of this dinner as soon as we can. I head to the airport, you and Ku to the hotel. From there, you get to the airport. Thailand, Australia, wherever you're going, go.

The compartment door opens as a Bodyguard steps through. Slips between Stoltz and King with a look, enters a restroom.

STOLTZ

So much for snatching Chinese secrets.

KING

They're looking for a partner. Somebody to fund fringe groups in the States. Militants, extremists--

As Stoltz reveals the filed papers he stole--

STOLTZ

They're looking for a partner 'cause they're tired of paying for it themselves.

King surveys the papers: a chart of organizational names and pay schedules. With some familiar names...

STOLTZ

Palestinian cells. Osama's boys. KKK, Posse Comitatus. Whole schedule of charitable donations to fuckers who've probably no idea where the cash is coming from.

(beat, smiles)

And we thought they were only paying Democrats and Republicans.

KING

They're funding terrorists in America...

STOLTZ

Pacific Rim Enterprises: destabilizing the West, one dollar at a time.

King stares at the paperwork, now with new fear...

KING

We have to get out of here.

INT. JOSEPH KING'S OFFICE - DAY

Joseph King strides into his Senate office, morning cheer:

JOSEPH KING

Morning, Evelyn--

SECRETARY

Your son's on line one, sir.

Joseph frowns, picks up his outer office's phone:

JOSEPH KING

Matthew?

INTERCUT INT. TRAIN RESTROOM - NIGHT

King locked inside, on the sat-phone, adrenaline surging:

KING

Did Regan say he'd leak the sting?

JOSEPH KING

Leak? What are you talking about?

KING

Did he tell you? DID YOU KNOW?!

JOSEPH KING

If it's public, then you're wasting your time talking to me. No, I didn't know, Matt, but make your arrests and fight Treasury later--

KING

I'm in China, dad.

Joseph stops still.

KING

The Chinese are making cash payments to destabilize our law and order and I have evidence and the reason I have evidence is that I GIVE A GODDAMN!

JOSEPH KING

Where are you, right now--

KING

Shanghai. I'm having dinner with some Armani-wearing Communists and any minute now what's been leaked there will reach here.

JOSEPH KING
Jesus Christ, Matt!

KING
They don't have him here, dad. He
can't help.

Joseph King whirls, helpless, while his secretary and OFFICE
AIDES look on. He motions them to clear the room.

JOSEPH KING
Why aren't you getting out of there?

KING
I'm goddamn trying! I need two hours!
Someone's gotta get Treasury silent
on this now! Whatever pull you have --
just get me two hours!

JOSEPH KING
Matt--

KING
That's all I need. And if I don't
get it, here's goodbye.

King clicks off the sat-phone. Rests his head on the wall.

IN THE SENATOR'S OFFICE

JOSEPH KING
Matthew?! Matthew?!

The connection's gone. Joseph grips the phone, distraught--
--and then swiftly dials another number. It RINGS once:

JOSEPH KING
This is Senator Joseph King. I need
to speak with the President.

EXT. SHANGHAI PEACE HOTEL - NIGHT

A lavish old-style building, dragons and lanterns, on the
Bund. A procession of limousines and sedans disgorges COMPANY
EXECUTIVES and MILITARY OFFICIALS.

Exiting a limo, King brushes against Stoltz with a whisper:

KING
You see what we just drove by? We're
ten blocks from the consulate.

STOLTZ
Might as well be ten miles.

They enter the hotel, all nerves, passing a dozen Chinese ARMY GUARDS at attention out front. Then King stops him.

KING

You should've told me about June.

Stoltz studies him, surprised. Then shrugs:

STOLTZ

A crime's a crime...

INT. BANQUET HALL - NIGHT

Vincent enters the large room, filled with white-clothed circular tables, greeting ATTENDEES in Mandarin. An ORCHESTRA plays on a raised stage.

King, Stoltz and Ku follow, with Rachel directing them toward a center table. She seats them--

RACHEL

Please. Enjoy yourselves.

The tables on either side of them are filled with Communist Party OFFICIALS and P.L.A. OFFICERS in military uniform.

King watches Vincent working the room, shaking hands and accepting congratulations from diners.

KING

Be right back.

STOLTZ

Better be.

King leaves the table. Stoltz surveys, to Ku:

STOLTZ

So how come they say this country is poor?

INT. SIDE OF HALL

King walks past a cash bar, querying the BARTENDER:

KING

Excuse me, men's room? Men's room?

The bartender nods, points to a corridor--

INT. RESTROOM CORRIDOR

King passes some exiting DINERS, seeing two restroom doors, and then a third door, marked differently. A balding MANAGER exits, with invoices in hand.

King waits till he's gone and the corridor's clear. Then tries the knob of the third door.

INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE

A small storeroom, converted into a workspace. A desk, file cabinets, calendar of events...and a fax machine.

King darts to the fax, pulling the folded papers Stoltz stole and punching in a number. Inserts the pages and hits start.

INT. BANQUET HALL

Vincent steps onstage, behind a podium mic. Diners stand and applaud. He welcomes them in Mandarin. Ku watches Stoltz downs a glass of wine, too swiftly...

KU

What's wrong, Stoltz?

STOLTZ

Relax.

KU

Something's wrong. What is it?

STOLTZ

I don't trust these bastards, that's all. What's new?

INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE

King paces anxiously, waiting for the pages to feed through. The door handle turns behind him. Catches. Locked.

King spins, hearing a key enter the door. He whirls for a weapon, then snatches up the phone--

--as the balding MANAGER enters with a frown:

KING

(into the phone)

Look, dump the Celera, dump the Amgen, dump it all! Get us out of that goddamn sector now!

He slams down the phone, as the Manager is barking at him in Mandarin, apparently upset to find him a stranger--

KING

Goddammit! Fucking Nasdaq's in a freefall and where am I? Some Chinese goddamn dinner theater! What the hell are you yelling about? Have you lost half a billion this morning? Have YOU lost half a billion?

The Manager is still barking. King pulls his wallet, stuffs some yuan in the Manager's shirt--

KING

I'll pay for the damn call!

--and spins to snatch up his fax as it BEEPS finished. The Manager frowns, confused as King storms by--

KING

Stay out of biotech. Stick with the service industry.

--and he's out of the office.

INT. KING'S HOUSE - DAY

Rebecca King is packing her boys off to school in the b.g. In the f.g, a PAGE scrolls out the family fax machine... scrawled on the top page is "HIDE FROM EVERYONE."

INT. WASHINGTON POST NEWSROOM - DAY

ANGLE PAST the paper's logo, as a harried EDITOR arrives at a REPORTER's desk:

EDITOR

Time out. I'm getting all kinds of pressure from the White House to sit on this Dragonfire thing.

REPORTER

Now? Outta nowhere? It's a Chinese restaurant in California -- how can that be a national security issue? It's my story, Ken! Come on!

PASSING BY comes a STOCKROOM WORKER, a young Chinese man in glasses, pushing a supply cart. He slows as he hears the conversation. Dull eyes flicking to life...

INT. BANQUET HALL - NIGHT

King returns to the table to join Stoltz, Ku, Rachel, Ze Min...and Vincent, who's now seated. WAITERS are wheeling LOBSTER TANKS through the tables, for presentation:

VINCENT

Mr. Salerno, there you are. Some wine to take your thoughts off your troubles?

KING

Pour me eight figures worth.

VINCENT

Mr. Ku and I were just discussing modern Shanghai. Mr. Stoltz wonders whether such modernization will inevitably lead to a capitalist system. A little angel once told him so.

STOLTZ

Watch it.

KING

And what's your response?

VINCENT

I think it will. But I also think you in the West confuse capitalism with democracy.

KING

They've worked well together.

VINCENT

China's different. Democracy would cripple China, like Russia. To empower the Chinese peasant is to affix a motor to a horse.

STOLTZ

You ever meet a Chinese peasant?

VINCENT

Mr. Stoltz, I know our relationship is awkward--
(deftly)
--but the woman you refer to knew the stakes. It's not a system we will ever let be changed.

A WAITER wheels a LOBSTER TANK to Vincent's side. Vincent peruses them, gestures to select one...

VINCENT

The poor will always be poor. The rich always rich. The mistake of the West is to let the poor feel contempt for the rich, and not respect. Not fear.

The waiter wheels the tank to Rachel and Ze Min.

STOLTZ

The fish in the tank.

VINCENT

I'm sorry?

STOLTZ

The fish in the tank. You don't show them what's outside the tank... they think they're in the ocean.

VINCENT

Mr. Stoltz. It is not a Chinese invention. It is as American as killing Indians.

Vincent sees Stoltz is not returning his smile.

VINCENT

I am sorry about Miss Shi. But she suffered because she refused our rules. Whereas you succeed -- because you learned to play.

Vincent sips his wine, pushes back and smiles--

VINCENT

Pardon me a moment. Please, eat--

--then rises, making his way for the restroom corridor.

Ku picks at his food, smiling weakly at Rachel and Ze Min.

KU

The jiozi is delicious. A dinner like this, it's all for the party officials?

RACHEL

It's a token.

Stoltz watches Vincent go. King eyes Stoltz.

As Rachel's cell phone rings. She answers in Mandarin.

Her face slowly tightens as she looks at King. Listening...

KU

Remarkable flavor. There are spices, for me, that are unmistakably Shanghai. I taste them and I am immediately returned to my youth. In my own restaurant, it is difficult--

King and Stoltz both see the look on Rachel's face. Ku, too, sees that Rachel has gone rigid and pale.

Rachel says a single word in Mandarin. Clicks off the phone. Her hand is shaking. Eyes locked on King.

STOLTZ

End of the road, Glory...

KU

What? What are you talking about?

Rachel leans to Ze Min, stutters a whispers. Ze Min looks at her sharply. Swiftly stands and exits.

KING

Something wrong, Rachel?

Rachel shakes her head.

STOLTZ

End of the road...

At the room's entrance, Ze Min is talking with some GUARDS. He motions them to block the entrance.

RACHEL

I must ask you gentlemen to come with me.

KU

What's happening?

STOLTZ

I was gonna get you out, Ku. I had you covered.

KU

What are you talking about?

RACHEL

Please stand from the table and do as I say.

KING

That's not going to happen.

RACHEL

YOU will say nothing to ME!

Ku jumps at the burst of venom. Wide-eyed at Stoltz:

STOLTZ

I was gonna get you out...

KING

Our government knows we're here. The President knows we're here. If anything happens to us, there'll be reprisals--

RACHEL

Stand from the table.

KING

We're going nowhere.

KU
 (to Stoltz)
 Who is he?!?

STOLTZ
 He had us. It was the only way.

RACHEL
 I said, stand from this table!

KING
 You're taking us out? Then you're gonna have to get your soldiers to take us out, and when they march, we're gonna make the scene to end all scenes, and you're gonna lose all the fuckin' face you ever had when you have to tell all these generals why American federal agents were IN THEIR FUCKING HOUSE!

Ku gasps, shivering to hear the words--

KU
 I didn't know. Rachel, I swear, I didn't know--

KING
 And if you don't want that to happen, you get the American consulate on the phone and we want a goddamn escort--

Rachel spins and CALLS to Ze Min in sharp Mandarin. The guards immediately STORM for the table, causing commotion among the diners.

King turns to Stoltz, scared now, seeing the end charging...

KING
 Bad bet.

Yet Stoltz seems strangely calm.

STOLTZ
 Wrong.

Stoltz gives a small smile, with the guards almost upon them--

--and springs up from the table, making a break for the side of the room. Half the guards peel off to intercept him--

--but he LEAPS atop a table and slips past, throwing chairs in his wake behind him. The guards pull weapons, SHOUTING warnings. DINERS scream, dropping low. But the guards dare not shoot inside the room--

--while Rachel and Ze Min are SHOUTING orders and other guards grab King and Ku--

--allowing Stoltz to scamper into the restroom hallway.

INT. MEN'S ROOM - SAME

Stoltz BURSTS inside, knocking past a leaving MAN:

STOLTZ
WHERE IS HE?!

He spins around, KICKING in a stall door, then another--

--and finding Vincent seated on a toilet, pants at his ankles, staring upward in shock. Stoltz smiles--

STOLTZ
This is from June--

Stoltz rushes in as Vincent tries to pull his pants up--

--but Stoltz is upon him too fast, slamming his backward into the wall. Stoltz BATTERS fists into him as Vincent shrieks for help in Mandarin--

--and Stoltz grips him by the hair, SMASHING his skull into the toilet pipe, again off the porcelain, skidding on piss and paper--

STOLTZ
YOU THINK YOU'RE THE KING OF CHINA?
ARE YOU, YEAH? YOU THE KING OF
CHINA?! YEAH? YEAH?

Stoltz BLOODIES his face, as guards BATTER into the restroom. Stoltz swiftly hauls Vincent from the stall, a forearm locked around his neck, twisting severely--

--as Vincent sputters in Mandarin, telling the guards not to shoot. Pants at his ankles, naked from waist-down. Smearred in piss, shit, blood and tears--

--as twelve pistols quiver, pointed at Stoltz.

Stoltz stands over Vincent, on his knees, breathing hard, the forearm locked tight. Vincent can barely breathe--

VINCENT
Stoltz. Stoltz--

STOLTZ
Hey Vincent.

He regards the guns facing him. Slightly smiles.

STOLTZ

Win-win.

And SNAPS his neck with a wrench, as guards OPEN FIRE--

INT. BANQUET HALL

A BARRAGE OF GUNSHOTS ring out from the restroom corridor.

KING

STOLTZ!

Ku goes rigid with shock. The diners immediately RUSH for the exits, disregarding guards' shouts to stay down.

And as Rachel and Ze Min rush for the restrooms, along with most of the remaining guards--

King SPINS on his guard, slipping free and sprinting into the exiting melee!

The guard YELLS for help, SHOOTS a clearing shot into the ceiling. Diners duck but King keeps running.

Ku tries to run, too, but his guard hangs on. PISTOL-WHIPS Ku into the ground. Ku falls SCREAMING...

INT. SHANGHAI HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

Banquet-goers are running for the exits. King is among them, darting the other way, down a service staircase--

INT. BASEMENT LEVEL

King races through LAUNDRY ROOMS, passing hotel workers, looking frantically for an escape route--

EXT. HOTEL ALLEY - NIGHT

King BURSTS out a service exit. Hears YELLS in the night, racing FOOTFALLS, SIRENS in the distance.

KING

Consulate, consulate...

No idea of his direction, he sprints for the darker of the exits, away from the cacophony--

EXT. NANJING LU STREET

Bustling with TRAFFIC as King sprints straight into it, sending cars swerving, including a POLICE TRANSPORT. He darts right across, into a--

EXT. PEDESTRIAN MARKETPLACE

--full of open-market CARTS and STALLS. King runs for his life, flashing past CHINESE SHOPPERS--

--as POLICE FORCES pour into the marketplace after him--

EXT. YAN'AN DONGLU STREET

King darts out the other end, back into traffic. He spins around, recognizes a building--

KING

Yan'an, yes, yes!

--and picks a direction with renewed energy. SIRENS wailing close, SHOUTS filling the street.

King runs on, calling on desperate reserves of strength.

POLICE forces appear in the distance, guns brandished, SHOUTING threats. King runs on, eyes on a corner dead ahead--

GUNFIRE sounds behind him. King keeps running, finally making it to the corner and skidding around to see--

EXT. CROSS-STREET

--that the street has been barricaded by police VEHICLES. And twenty kneeling POLICEMEN, guns held steady.

King stops in his tracks, dripping with sweat, breathing hard. Staring down twenty barrels.

King just breathes, gasping. A breath. Another. Another. Not knowing which one will be his last as we--

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. STOLTZ'S HOUSEBOAT - DAWN

The skyline of San Francisco is out a porthole window, as another SUN rises. The boat sways slightly--

--as ANGLE MOVES across the soulless houseboat's walls, past the picture of Stoltz and June, to the five fish tanks.

The water in all of them is still. The fish are floating on the surface. The boat sways.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. DARKNESS - TIME UNKNOWN

Gradations of shadow. Some echoing Mandarin CRIES. The CLANG of metal gates.

ANGLE TRACKS along a stone floor, caked with dirt and blood, past scampering roaches and rats, past a brimming pisspot--

--to find a barefoot MAN in the stone corner. Sitting in shadow, black-eyed and swollen face, wearing rags.

REVEAL INT. PRISON CELL

A sliver of light comes through a square in a metal door. The man -- King -- finally turns his beaten face to it.

As the sounds of FOOTSTEPS rise, and a MAN'S VOICE babbling in Mandarin. Desperate, pleading, getting closer--

--and as shadows cross the light-sliver, two GUARDS are seen hauling a PRISONER, his face covered with a drawstring sack, as he struggles, his cries reaching a crescendo with--

KU (O.S.)
I AM AMERICAN!

--as the guards haul him past. He continues his pleas in Mandarin, the voice soon fading.

King still sits in the corner, too weak to rise. He closes his eyes with sadness.

A silent moment passes. King opens his eyes.

The MUFFLED SHOTS of an o.s. firing squad RING OUT. It jolts King with shock. Then silence again...

INT. PRISON CELL - LATER

King lies sprawled on the floor, sleeping with the roaches, as a lock RATCHETS free. The metal door SWINGS OPEN--

--and two GUARDS step in. They bark at him in Mandarin, hauling King up, as he stirs awake--

KING
What do you want...

--and a guard reveals a drawstring sack. King snaps alert--

KING
Wait, no, wait! WAIT!

--and the sack is forced over his head, plunging everything again into BLACKNESS.

A long, silent moment in the dark...

EXT. CHINESE AIRFIELD - DAY

As a blindfold is WHISKED AWAY to reveal King's squinting face. Brightness all around him.

His bruises have faded, his rags are gone. He wears an sweatshirt and khakis, his hands cuffed.

Two GUARDS march him toward the staircase of a waiting U.S. military airplane. There, a U.S. ARMY OFFICER stands with several Chinese MILITARY OFFICERS.

Disoriented, King is marched to the staircase and the waiting men. His guards remove the handcuffs.

U.S. ARMY OFFICER
Agent King. We're here to take you home.

CUT TO:

EXT. PENTAGON AIRFIELD - DAY

The Washington monument and Capitol building sit majestically in the b.g. as the military plane drops into frame.

EXT. AIRFIELD - MOMENTS LATER

A staircase lowers from the plane. The Army officer emerges, and steps aside to let King pass.

Below, a sedan is parked, with diplomatic flags fluttering. Stephen Regan stands waiting, with two other TREASURY OFFICIALS...and Senator Joseph King.

King surveys the city beyond. Surveys the tarmac. Four men and one vehicle. No press. No hero's welcome.

King descends the stairs. Joseph steps to embraces him.

JOSEPH KING
Thank God--

KING
No one knows.

Joseph tenses, steps away from the embrace.

KING
No one knows.

JOSEPH KING
It was the arrangement, Matthew.

KING
Two Americans were murdered.

Joseph doesn't answer. Instead smiles:

JOSEPH KING
Rachel and the kids are here, in Washington. They're staying with me--

KING

Two Americans.

JOSEPH KING

They're happy you're home.

KING

What was the arrangement?

JOSEPH KING

The Chinese accused us of sending spies. We accused them of smuggling guns. We reached an agreement on your return, with the mutual understanding that the entire affair will be kept out of the press.

KING

Why are you protecting--

JOSEPH KING

Because you're my son!

King falls silent for a moment.

JOSEPH KING

The President himself secured your release. Upon my request. And in return...I will not be running in November.

(beat)

That was the price.

KING

There's always a price.

JOSEPH KING

There is. Yes.

KING

And no one will know what happened to Hammond Ku. Or Gary Stoltz.

JOSEPH KING

The game is peaceful relations with China, Matthew. And in this game, you and I? We're nothing. Because the pot is billions of dollars, and millions of American jobs. And a world without enemies.

KING

A world run by money's not a world without enemies.

(beat)

We just presume we're smarter at the game.

A shadow seems to pass over Joseph's face.

JOSEPH KING

You said you had evidence on Pacific Rim. You said proof of payments, of destabilizing us at home. What, you took something? Sent something?

(beat)

Where is it?

KING

Who wants to know?

JOSEPH KING

We're going to get into that car and go to the White House. The CIA, the State Department, the President... they're waiting for your briefing. They want to see your evidence.

KING

And what'll they do with it?

JOSEPH KING

This is your country, Matthew. This is your home.

KING

And what do we do with the truth in my home?

The shadow seems to darken. The face grows cold.

JOSEPH KING

So you tell your wild story, what, to who? The press? The Net? You'll be discredited, you'll be smeared, the administration will not let it happen, Matthew. China means too much. No one will believe you were ever there. Do you hear me? No one will believe you.

KING

Do you?

Joseph shuts his eyes. Then stares sadly.

JOSEPH KING

Come home, son.

(hopeful)

Come home.

Joseph turns and walks to the sedan. Says something to Regan and the Treasury officials. They enter the sedan.

Joseph stands at the sedan, holding a door open.

At long last, King walks for it.

And walks right by.

Leaving his father and the car behind, its American flags fluttering. As he trudges his own way down the tarmac.

Joseph watches him go sadly. Steps into the sedan. It drives off, with a sweeping turn, and speeds away.

King keeps walking.

The monuments are distant, but somehow seem within reach. So King keeps walking, eyes set on the future.

A free American. And all alone.

FADE TO BLACK.