

Burn Notice

"Pilot"

by  
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TEASER

EXT. KAZAKHSTAN STREET CORNER - DAY

A crowded street in Qaraghandy, Kazakhstan. It's a decaying industrial city of crumbling Soviet-era architecture. Street vendors haggle with housewives and oil workers, and ancient cars negotiate the chaotic traffic.

MICHAEL WESTON (40) stands on a corner. He's good looking, clean-cut, with blue eyes and a crooked smile. He's athletic, but not huge... like a college professor who goes to the gym. His Western attire attracts a few looks, which he ignores. As he checks his watch, we hear his dry, sardonic voice in V.O:

MICHAEL (V.O.)

*Covert intelligence involves a lot of waiting around. Know what it's like being a spy? Like sitting in your dentist's reception area 24 hours a day. You read magazines, sip coffee... and every few weeks someone tries to kill you. That's what it's like being a spy.*

Finally a black Mercedes pulls up. ABAI (27) emerges from the car. He's a big guy with a submachine gun. Michael raises an eyebrow at him, and the man nods at the car.

ABAI

In.

INT. MERCEDES - DAY

Michael sits, squeezed tight between Abai and another armed man in the back seat. He frowns, uncomfortable...

MICHAEL

You know, Mercedes makes an SUV now. Big back seat. It's great. Surprisingly affordable, too.

Abai looks at the other man, then scowls at Michael.

ABAI

CIA.

Michael rolls his eyes and looks out the window...

MICHAEL (V.O.)

*What do you say to that? No? Give the guy a lecture on intelligence work? Explain that most spies don't work directly for the CIA?*

EXT. STREET - DAY

The car weaves through the traffic. In the distance, oil rigs pump away at a vast field...

MICHAEL (V.O.)  
*In a place like Kazakhstan, an  
 American in a suit is CIA, period.  
 Hell, in Kazakhstan, an American in  
 swim fins and a fur hat is CIA.*

EXT. KAZAKHSTANI HOTEL - DAY

The car pulls up to a hotel. A sign reads "Grand Hotel" in Kazakh. Maybe it was grand once, but now it looks like a Ramada made out of stained concrete.

MICHAEL (V.O.)  
*If you're going to be visiting the  
 oil fields near Qaraghandy anytime  
 soon, I highly recommend the Grand.*

The valet takes the car, and everyone piles out...

MICHAEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*The beds are mostly insect-free,  
 you can get a late checkout for a  
 pack of American cigarettes, and  
 armed guests are always welcome.*

Abai and the other guard lead Michael inside.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER

A shabby hotel room. Not disgusting, but well-worn. A TV plays "Who's The Boss" dubbed in Russian. Several armed men surround BORIS (40's), a small-time warlord in a Gore-tex track suit and a knockoff Rolex.

BORIS  
 CIA?

MICHAEL  
 I work for various players on the international scene, but they don't employ me directly. That's how I get to do stuff like give you \$750,000 to stop blowing up the Petrolex gas pipeline.

BORIS  
 (laughs knowingly)  
 CIA.

The men laugh as well, agreeing. Michael just sighs, shrugs.

MICHAEL (V.O.)  
*You know the world is getting  
 paranoid when the truth sounds like  
 a bad cover story.*

Michael opens his suitcase, pulls out an oil field map and takes a seat at the table. He nods at the TV...

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
 Well, I've got a flight to catch,  
 and I don't want to keep you from  
 your important business...

BORIS  
 Yes. Business now.

Michael smooths the map on the table. He points to an area outlined in red marker.

MICHAEL  
 You guarantee security from the  
 Tengiz oil field to the border...

BORIS  
 Yes, yes. Is no problem.

MICHAEL  
 Okay, then.

Michael reaches for his jacket; the bodyguards stiffen, raising their weapons. He opens the jacket, slow and careful.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
 Just getting the man his money.  
 You have the account number?

Boris barks at the men in Russian, and they lower their guns. He hands Michael an account number. Michael pulls out a phone and dials, as Boris flips open a laptop.

Michael waits as the phone rings... A man's voice answers.

CONTACT (O.S.)  
 Hello?

MICHAEL  
 Yeah, I have the wire transfer  
 information. ABA number 021 001  
 017, SWIFT Code IRPTUS-

CONTACT (O.S.)  
 (interrupting)  
 It's off.

MICHAEL  
 Excuse me?

Uncomfortable pause. The contact clears his throat...

CONTACT (O.S.)  
 We're... terminating. Tell them we  
 decided not to move forward.  
 (a beat)  
 We got a burn notice on you.

Michael looks around the room. ANGLE ON the guns at everyone's side... He interrupts, the strain barely showing.

MICHAEL  
 I think there's been a mistake.  
 Maybe you don't understand the  
 situation. I'm here with our  
 friend Mr. Yablonovich, and Mr.  
 Yablonovich would like his wire  
 transfer for \$750,000. Now.

CONTACT  
 I'm sorry.

CLICK. The line goes dead. Boris taps at the keyboard.

BORIS  
 Is not changing. Where is money?

MICHAEL  
 It's a mix-up. Computers...

He dials again. This time a woman's voice answers...

SECRETARY  
 Hello?

MICHAEL  
 I need to speak to Ray. Now.

SECRETARY  
 I'm sorry. There's no one here-

MICHAEL  
 I was just on with him. There's  
 been a serious mistake. I need to-

The line goes dead again. Michael looks at Boris. Boris looks at Michael. Michael smiles, uncomfortable...

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER

Michael is on the floor of the hotel room. Boris' men are KICKING THE LIVING SHIT out of him with great gusto. Boris paces the room, screaming into a phone in Russian.

BORIS  
(subtitled)  
Hit the pipeline! Now!

Boris hangs up, screaming at Michael in Russian and English:

BORIS (CONT'D)  
You think you steal from me? Piece  
of shit American CIA-

Boris joins in the ass-kicking. So many people are stomping Michael there's barely room to land a decent kick.

MICHAEL (V.O.)  
*Sometimes the truth hurts. When  
the truth is you're left high and  
dry with a warlord who thinks you  
owe him three quarters of a million  
dollars, it really hurts. In these  
situations, I recommend lying.*

Michael takes a boot to the ribs. He rolls over and spits blood as he screams:

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
I'm CIA! CIA! I've got the money!

Boris puts up a hand and the guys stop kicking... Michael catches his breath, talking fast.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
I have it in cash. Not here. I  
can take you.

Boris looks at him, suspicious.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
I was going to steal it, and blame  
your men... Twenty minutes, you  
have your money. Please.

Boris considers this. He kicks him again in the stomach, hard, then nods at Abai.

BORIS  
(subtitled)  
Take him. We'll finish this later.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - A FEW MINUTES LATER

An elevator DINGS, and the doors slide open to reveal Michael with Abai and another thug. Michael's in bad shape, limping and coughing blood. The lobby is filled with foreigners and oil men. A few stare, but most mind their own business.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

*No amount of training can keep you from being scared in a situation like this. Training just helps you be scared of the right things. Like a shootout in a hotel lobby where everyone's armed.*

Michael looks at Abai. He croaks:

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Bathroom. I need...

The guy frowns. Michael clutches his stomach. He mimes steering a car, then mimes vomiting...

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

*Sick. I need toilet. Please... I'll be sick in the Mercedes, you understand? In the Mercedes...*

Michael retches loudly, splattering some blood on Abai's shoes. Abai looks down at his shoes, annoyed, and shoves Michael toward the rest room.

INT. REST ROOM

A third-world hotel rest room. Inexpensive tile, some sinks with faded rust stains. The door swings open, and Abai walks in. Michael staggers in behind him...

...and STOPS IN THE DOORWAY.

Lightning fast, Michael kicks back into the groin of the second gunman. The man doubles over, and Michael brings up his elbow and CRUSHES the man's nose. Blood spurts...

Michael grabs the man by the necktie, and YANKS him into the bathroom. He takes his arm and FLIPS him over...

...just as Abai turns, bringing up his pistol. The men COLLIDE, and Abai's gun skitters across the floor.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

*In a fight, you have to be careful not to break the little bones in your hand on someone's face. Never happens in movies, but in real life a busted hand will get you killed.*

Michael grabs Abai, pulling the larger man's jacket down over his arms and sending him head-first into the tile sink.

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

*That's why I like bathrooms. Lots of hard surfaces.*

ANGLE ON the closet bathroom door. There are grunts, CLANKING SOUNDS...

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

From behind the closed bathroom door, we hear two sharp GUNSHOTS. A beat, and Michael limps through the door, alone, his shirt a little bloodier than it was before.

Moving as fast as he can, he heads to the valet at the front of the hotel. Behind him, other hotel guests mill around the entrance to the men's room, unsure what to do...

EXT. HOTEL VALET - DAY

The Valet brings up an Audi... Michael brushes by its owner, a German businessman, and steps into the car. He looks out just long enough to apologize to the shocked owner.

MICHAEL  
(subtitled German)  
Sorry. I'll leave it at the  
airport.

Michael guns the motor, peeling out into the street.

INT. CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Michael speeds away from the hotel, weaving through the traffic. Behind him, a CAR pulls into traffic. It ROARS toward the Audi... Michael checks the rear view mirror as a machine gun emerges from the passenger side window...

AND FIRES, spraying the back of the Audi with bullets. The window spiderwebs, then SHATTERS. Michael swerves...

MICHAEL (V.O.)  
*I can say this much for Kazakhstan:  
best place in the world to get your  
window shot out. Some places,  
people freak out. In Kazakhstan,  
people just change lanes.*

Michael cranks the wheel; the car disappears into traffic.

IN MONTAGE: Michael hurries through a run-down airport, pushing his way up to a counter... He staggers up the stairs of a decrepit Russian-made jet... He flops down in a seat. His bruises are ripe, and he's pale and shaking.

MICHAEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*If you're going to collapse on a  
plane, I recommend Business Class.  
The seats are bigger if you start  
convulsing...*

FROM MICHAEL'S POV, we see images of other planes, faces of police, doctors... ABRUPTLY, EVERYTHING GOES BLACK.

MICHAEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*...once you pass out, of course, it  
doesn't really matter.*

INT. MIAMI HOSPITAL - DAY

FADE IN on Michael, lying in a hospital bed. He looks awful, bruised and broken, with a tube in his nose.

MICHAEL (V.O.)  
*The only question then is where  
they dump you when you land. If  
you're lucky, it'll be someplace  
where you know the ground, where  
you have contacts and can get back  
on your feet.*

Through the window, we see a sign: Miami General Hospital. Palm trees sway in the breeze...

MICHAEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*Turns out I'm not lucky.*

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF TEASER

ACT I

INT. MIAMI GENERAL HOSPITAL - DAY

Through a window, we see a peaceful Miami scene: tall modern buildings; beyond them the sun glints off the water...

As we pull back, we see we are in a hospital room. Michael lies in a bed - he's in no shape to appreciate the view. He's bruised everywhere, and his chest looks like someone took a baseball bat to it. His eyes flutter open...

FIONA GLENANNE (30), a hard-eyed redhead in jeans and a blouse, sits in the corner of the room, going through his wallet. She smirks, speaking with a slight Irish lilt.

FIONA

You're a lucky man. The doctor's never seen a patient with so many broken ribs. He thought you fell under a truck. I told him the truck was possible, but there's no way you fell.

(holds up his license)

Not an organ donor, I see.

Michael looks at her, disoriented.

MICHAEL

How... What are you doing here?

FIONA

I'm still in your wallet as next of kin, luv. You're supposed to take that out when you leave someone, you know.

Michael starts to laugh, then stops, wincing in pain.

MICHAEL

Thanks for coming. I'm flattered.

FIONA

Don't be. I needed to get out of New York anyway. Old associates sniffing around... and I wanted to try someplace sunny.

She smiles. It's dazzling, and affectionate in a way...

FIONA (CONT'D)

Plus, I thought I might get the chance to pull the plug. Couldn't pass *that* up, now could I dear?

Michael's head is clearing... he looks out the window.

MICHAEL  
Sunny. Where is this?

FIONA  
Miami. You collapsed on the flight  
from Sheremetyovo to JFK.

MICHAEL  
(alarmed)  
Then why the hell am I in Miami?

FIONA  
The airline said they were  
"instructed" to fly you here.

MICHAEL  
*Instructed?* What does that mean?

FIONA  
Well, it's home, in a manner of  
speaking, isn't it? Your mum's  
here. Oh, by the way, your  
insurance was cancelled. The  
hospital called her...

MICHAEL  
*My mother?* Oh, Christ...

Michael goes pale. He begins stripping monitors off his  
chest. He tugs out his I.V....

FIONA  
Michael. What are you doing?

MICHAEL  
Leaving.

Fiona watches, amused, as he struggles to dress.

FIONA  
Yes, leaving. You're good at that.

He looks at her. Their eyes meet... lots of history there.

MICHAEL  
Fi... Somebody put a burn notice  
out on me. I've got to take care  
of this *now*, or a few cracked ribs  
will be the least of my problems.

Fiona's eyes go wide. That's not good.

FIONA  
Well, you might want to give your  
mum a call.

MICHAEL  
 (winces at the thought)  
 No, ahh... I... won't be in town  
 that long...

Fiona raises an eyebrow at his reaction... Michael frowns.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
 Listen, things just work better  
 when my mother and I are in  
 separate hemispheres.

He glances out the door, then back at Fiona.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
 Would you mind going down to the  
 nurses' station and making a scene?  
 I can't deal with the "leaving  
 hospital against medical advice"  
 paperwork right now.

FIONA  
 You'll owe me dinner.

MICHAEL  
 Done.

She grins, slipping out the door. Michael waits; O.S. we  
 hear Fiona yelling... he hurries out the door. SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - LATER

Worth street in South Beach. It's a gorgeous day; expensive  
 boutiques line the street. Tourists and beach-goers stroll  
 up and down.

Michael could scarcely look more out of place. He negotiates  
 his way around a group of BIKINI-CLAD GIRLS (20's) without  
 giving them a second glance. They stare at him, though...  
 unshaven, in his beat-up Armani suit, he's oddly handsome.

MICHAEL (V.O.)  
*Most people would be thrilled to be  
 dumped in Miami. Sadly, I am not  
 "most people."*

Michael glances down a street, looking for a cab. Through  
 the buildings, we see a beach covered with sun-worshippers.

MICHAEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*Spend a few years as a covert  
 operative, and a sunny beach just  
 looks like a vulnerable tactical  
 position with no decent cover.  
 Plus, I've never found a good way  
 to hide a gun in a bathing suit.*

Michael coughs painfully as he hails a cab. It pulls up.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
Delano Hotel, please.

INT. CAB - DAY

The TAXI DRIVER (30's) smiles, impressed as he pulls away from the curb. He speaks with a Haitian accent...

TAXI DRIVER  
Delano? Nice place, the Delano.

MICHAEL  
I'm not here long. Might as well get a good night's sleep.

TAXI DRIVER  
This your first time in Miami, or...

MICHAEL  
My family lives here.

TAXI DRIVER  
You visit them-

MICHAEL  
Nope.

The driver looks at Michael and sees a guy who doesn't want to talk. Michael looks out the window, frowning.

MICHAEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*Then there's the family thing. See, people with happy families don't become spies. A bad childhood is the perfect background for covert ops. You don't trust anyone, you're used to getting smacked around, and you never get homesick.*

INT. DELANO HOTEL - LATER

The Delano Hotel. 5-stars, and looks it. Gleaming lobby, white-clad staff. Businessmen check out each others' expensive trophy wives lounging at the elegant lobby bar. Michael hands his credit card to the desk clerk.

MICHAEL  
Need a room.

CLERK  
Welcome to the Delano, sir. And how long will you be with us?

MICHAEL

Not sure. One, two days?

CLERK

We've got a 10th floor suite with an ocean view, if that's acceptable-

Michael nods, distracted, as he looks around the lobby.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

*A burn notice is a big deal. See, when a spy gets fired, he doesn't get a call from the lady in human resources and a gold watch. They cut him off, make sure he can never work again. They can't take away his skills, or what's in his head. So they take away the trust that makes him useful. They burn him.*

CLERK

Um... sir? I'm terribly sorry, but this card has been declined.

Michael frowns and hands her another credit card. She runs it... ANGLE ON the display: DECLINED - CONFISCATE CARD.

INT. BANK - LATER

An elegant private bank. Deep carpeting, quiet... the kind of place you put your money if you own a jet. Michael sits at a desk with a blonde ACCOUNT MANAGER. He's pissed.

MICHAEL

*...I don't care what the computer says. I need to withdraw my money from my account.*

ACCOUNT MANAGER

I understand that, sir. I'm happy to get the bank manager...

She gets up. The teller and the bank manager confer.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

*When you're burned, you're labeled DO NOT TOUCH. You're out in the cold. Nobody talks to you, nobody helps you. Or else.*

The manager walks back over, suspicious...

BANK MANAGER

All I can tell you is the code on the account is government related.

(MORE)

BANK MANAGER (CONT'D)  
 If you care to discuss this with  
 the police, I'm happy to-

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

Michael stands at the JetRoute Airways counter at Miami International Airport.

MICHAEL  
 I'd like to check my frequent flyer  
 balance.

The clerk taps a few keys, raises an eyebrow.

CLERK  
 I have you at... 2.3 million miles.

Michael smiles. The first good news all day. JUMP CUT TO:

INT. GATE - DAY

Michael stands at a gate, ticket in hand, waiting for a flight. He taps his foot, impatient... The boarding announcement comes on the loudspeaker.

BOARDING ANNOUNCEMENT  
 JetRoute Flight 3472 to Washington  
 D.C.'s Reagan International Airport  
 is now boarding all passengers...

Michael starts toward the gate as a couple of AIRPORT SECURITY GUARDS walk over. He doesn't meet their gaze...

AIRPORT GUARD  
 Can you come with us, sir?

MICHAEL  
 My flight's boarding...

AIRPORT GUARD  
 Well, you're not. You're on the no-fly list.

The guard takes him by the arm... Michael follows, resigned.

MICHAEL  
 Can I at least keep my miles?

EXT. MIAMI AIRPORT - DAY

Michael is escorted to the sidewalk in front of the Miami Airport... He stands there in the bright Florida light, surrounded by excited folks arriving for their sun-drenched vacations. He looks miserable.

A hot PROMO GIRL (19) wearing a tight "Got Some Time... for a Time Share?" tee-shirt smiles at Michael, sympathetic.

PROMO GIRL  
Hi... You look like you could use a  
free hat.

She hands him a promotional baseball cap.

MICHAEL  
Uh... thanks.

Michael stands there with his free hat. He sighs...

MICHAEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*Bottom line is, when you're burned,  
you're screwed. Want a job? Good  
luck without a job history or  
references.*

We pull back, as Michael makes his way over to the bus stop.

MICHAEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*Got the stomach to work for the  
Chinese? North Korea? Go ahead,  
but you're top of the watch lists.  
Chances are your career will end  
with a lethal injection. The top  
career move for an ex-spy?  
Drinking yourself to death.*

A bus pulls up; on the side of the bus is an ad for the Coral  
Gables Biltmore; a SEXY COUPLE TOASTS EACH OTHER IN THE  
MOONLIGHT WITH GLASSES OF CHAMPAGNE.

MICHAEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*Just my luck... I don't drink.*

The bus pulls away; we fly over the city as we FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. BEACHFRONT PAY PHONE - DAY

The beach spreads out behind Michael, the water glinting in  
the sunlight. Beachgoers cruise by on roller blades, and a  
couple of kids play in a beach shower behind him. Michael  
feeds coins into a pay phone as a Haitian tee-shirt vendor  
bugs him to buy a "Free Breast Exam" tee-shirt.

TEE-SHIRT VENDOR  
Two for fifteen bucks. A deal.

MICHAEL  
I'm on the phone.  
(into phone)  
This is Michael Weston. I need to  
talk to Dan Siebels.

The vendor holds up two hands, mouthing "ten dollars?"  
Michael shoos him away.

INT. WASHINGTON D.C. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

A SECRETARY (30's) sits at a desk in a nondescript office building. Through her window we see the WASHINGTON, D.C. SKYLINE. She speaks with calm efficiency. INTERCUT AS NECESSARY between Michael and the secretary.

SECRETARY

I'm sorry. There's no one here by that name.

MICHAEL (O.S.)

There is. Listen, he's my case officer... I need to talk to him.

SECRETARY

I'm sorry-

MICHAEL (O.S.)

Listen, I know the protocol, and I know you're just doing your job, but I don't have access to a secure line. This is Michael Weston-

SECRETARY

Sir. I can't help you.

MICHAEL (O.S.)

Just put Dan on the phone! He was my handler! I WORKED WITH HIM FOR 20 YEARS! This is MICHAEL-

SECRETARY

I'm going to hang up...

EXT. BEACH PAY PHONE - CONTINUOUS

Behind Michael, one of the kids in the beach shower points at him, frightened by his shouting. The kid's mom rushes over.

KID

That man... he's yelling...

The mom glares at Michael; he lowers his voice.

MICHAEL

Please... we trained together. He has a Lucite plaque on his desk with a bullet hole in it. He drinks Sprite. He's a friend. I cannot emphasize enough how urgent this is... DAMNIT, DON'T HANG UP ON ME!!

CLICK. The little kid is sobbing now, as his mother tries to calm him. Michael smiles at her apologetically...

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Michael walks along the Miami oceanfront. It's north of the strip, filled with college kids with Audis, not playboys with Ferraris. Michael eyes various motels...

MICHAEL (V.O.)  
*When you suspect you're being  
 watched, what you need is contrast.  
 A background that will make the  
 surveillance stand out.*

Michael passes a staid-looking hotel; a middle aged couple emerges from the front door and goes to a cab.

MICHAEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*An FBI field office is full of guys  
 in their 40's. At the ComfortStay  
 business hotel, it'd be tough to  
 figure out **which** pudgy white guy in  
 a suit was watching you.*

ANGLE ON: The Miami Sands motel. Straight out of a Girls Gone Wild video on late-night TV; it's a cheap motel for drunk college students. A group of SORORITY GIRLS carrying wine coolers emerges from the front of the motel...

MICHAEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*So you stay in the place where  
 everyone is a jello shot away from  
 alcohol poisoning. If you see  
 someone who can walk a straight  
 line? That's the Fed.*

Michael walks into the Miami Sands. Through the window we see THE POOL. A good portion of the Florida State Greek system seems to be there. The desk clerk arches an eyebrow.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
 I'd like a room.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Michael sits on the bed in a little motel room. Through the window, a group of college kids lurches by carrying a keg. Michael ignores them, flipping through the Yellow Pages.

MICHAEL  
 Yeah, I need the address for MH  
 Security Associates... uh huh...  
 suite 500? Thanks...

Michael rips the listings for used clothing stores from the Yellow Pages and sticks it in his pocket.

Behind him, on the little balcony, there is the loud THUD of someone landing on the concrete. Instantly ready, Michael whirls around, grabs the table lamp, and is about to hurl it-

ANGLE ON a couple of sorority girls on the floor of the balcony. They wave, embarrassed and drunk...

SORORITY GIRL  
Sorry... wrong room...

EXT. STREET - LATER

The street in front of the motel. Michael, now freshened up, glances at a Pontiac parked across the street with a middle-aged white guy inside. He talks to a couple of KIDS (10) skateboarding in front of a fountain, nodding at a COP at the other end of the street.

MICHAEL  
You see that cop over there? I'll give you 5 bucks each if you tell the cop that the guy in the Pontiac tried to make you sit on his lap. Can you do that for me?

SKATEBOARDER  
Ten bucks each.

MICHAEL  
Fifteen, and you split it.

The boys look at each other, then the first boy nods. Michael hands over the cash.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
For fifteen bucks, I want tears.

INT. BUS - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Michael looks at the Pontiac from a bus window. The cop has the surveillance guy out of the car; the kids are on the sidewalk. Sure enough, one of them has a tear on his cheek.

As he drives past, he waves to the kids, mouthing "THANKS." He pulls the torn sheet from the Yellow Pages out of his pocket and circles a listing.

EXT. MIAMI BEACH OFFICE BUILDING - LATER

A sleek Miami-modern glass and steel building with windows, designed to reflect as much ocean as possible. One of the names on the building directory is "MH Security Associates."

INT. OFFICE LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

A sleek, spare, expensive lobby. Asian art, with a floor-to-ceiling slate waterfall. Michael stands at the security desk wearing a MESSENGER OUTFIT- blue collared work shirt and brown slacks. He carries a clipboard and an envelope.

SECURITY GUARD  
You can leave it here.

MICHAEL  
I'm a bonded courier. I gotta give  
it to her direct and have her sign.

Michael holds up the envelope, apologetic. The security guard looks at him for a long moment, then picks up a phone.

INT. OFFICE - LATER

The office is a match for the lobby. Expanse of white carpet, and acres of window looking out on the ocean. A large black desk is decorated with simple Asian pottery worth a fortune. MINH (30), an attractive, tomboyish Vietnamese woman in a business suit sits behind the desk.

MINH  
Show him in...

A SECRETARY opens a door, and Michael walks in. Minh STIFFENS as she sees him... Michael smiles.

MINH (CONT'D)  
Janet... can you give us a minute?

The secretary leaves. As the door shuts, Minh gets up and closes the blinds. Michael flops on a pricey modern chair...

MICHAEL  
Nice office. Chairs this  
uncomfortable cost a fortune.

MINH  
Michael? What are you doing here?  
You can't be here.

MICHAEL  
You heard, then?

MINH  
About the burn notice? Of course I  
heard. People on the moon heard.

MINH (CONT'D)  
Why didn't you call?

MICHAEL

Would you have seen me if I did?

MINH

Of course not. Michael, what did you *do*? You were always good at pissing people off, but this?

MICHAEL

I don't know... An analyst probably got pissed at a report, or I got spotted with a bad guy by someone who didn't know which side I'm on. It's a mistake.

MINH

I don't know details. I just heard you're out. That's it.

MICHAEL

What the hell is that supposed to mean? I bust ass for 20 years, and *that's it*? No explanation-

MINH

What am I, your complaint hotline? It's what I *heard*.

A beat. Michael calms himself, then:

MICHAEL

Bottom line, they trashed my credit and froze my bank accounts. If I'm going to sort this out I need to get some money together.

MINH

So you came to me? I don't have stacks of cash lying around. And even if I did, I can't have the Feds nosing around. Most of my clients are corporate-

MICHAEL

Minh... I need help here.

MINH

Michael, you got my family out of Vietnam. You trained me. I'm grateful. But there are limits. I have my own...

Michael doesn't say anything, just looks at her. She sighs, defeated, then sits.

MINH (CONT'D)  
There might be something. You  
remember Sam?

Michael smiles, pleased.

MICHAEL  
Sam Axe? What's he up to?

MINH  
Drinking, mostly. Sponging off  
every rich divorcee in the greater  
Miami area. I throw him a job now  
and then when he's between sugar  
mommies. I'll make a call, but you  
keep my name out of it.

MICHAEL  
What's the job?

Minh frowns, looking up the information on her computer.

MINH  
Guy's an operations manager at an  
estate in Miami Beach. We did a  
security consult over there once, I  
guess he liked our work. Place got  
robbed a while back, and he's in  
some kind of trouble.

MICHAEL  
What kind of trouble?

MINH  
He didn't want to get into it. We  
talked price, and the guy's  
breaking open his piggybank. I  
told him it was a little small for  
us, but he sounded desperate... I  
told him I'd look around.

MICHAEL  
You're all heart.

MINH  
You want it or not?

Michael nods. There's not much choice.

MINH (CONT'D)  
I'll call Sam.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SOUTH BEACH BAR - SUNSET

Michael sits at a Tropical beachfront bar with SAM AXE (50's), a good-looking ex-Navy Seal with a good-natured grin. Sam nurses a beer, checking out the parade of girls and partiers on the beach, as they talk.

MICHAEL

So I assume you got word about my... situation?

SAM

You know spies. Bunch of bitchy little girls. Good news for you is I'm a drunk and a washout already. I can talk to whoever I please, burned or no.

MICHAEL

You hear anything more?

SAM

Naah. Nobody tells me anything. I still get phone calls because of the war hero thing, free beer on the Fourth of July, but I'm not security clearance material anymore.

Michael nods, glum. Sam claps him on the back:

SAM (CONT'D)

Look on the bright side. If they wanted you dead, you'd be dead. Florida will do you good. I been down here a year, and I've never been better.

MICHAEL

I understand your main source of income is an *allowance* from a lawyer's wife.

SAM

Don't knock it. New clothes, beach view apartment, and an unlimited supply of little blue pills.

MICHAEL

Speaking of apartments, you know a place I can stay? The Girls Gone Wild kept the Feds off my back for a few days, but if we're going to work...

SAM

I might know a guy. I'll put in a call. How long are you staying?

MICHAEL

Just until I can put together some cash and run down that burn notice.

SAM

Speaking of cash... this job tomorrow. You want to do the meeting? Or you need me to come along and hold your hand?

MICHAEL

I'll be fine.

SAM

You always are, Mike.

Sam smiles, holds up his beer in a toast.

EXT. MIAMI ESTATE - MORNING

A large Miami Beach estate, with a lawn the size of a golf green, a palm-lined driveways, and a breathtaking view of the water. Michael walks up the driveway. He looks at a marble statue in the turnaround, the Porsche Cayenne parked by the front door, and grimaces...

MICHAEL (V.O.)

*When there's this much money around, things are going to be complicated. It's a law of the universe. You go into a place like this to change a light bulb, and a week later you're on a speedboat in the Cayman Islands with someone shooting at you.*

Michael trudges along the side of the estate, past uniformed gardeners trimming trees, past a crystal-clear infinity pool, to an outbuilding. He knocks on the door.

INT. OPERATIONS OFFICE - DAY

The operations office is a modest space with a few filing cabinets. There are some security monitors along a back wall. Behind the desk is JAVIER (50's), a salt-and-pepper haired Cuban man with a slight paunch.

JAVIER

I... I spoke to Minh. She said you, ah... You have experience? In this kind of...

MICHAEL

Yes. Yes I do.

JAVIER

Oh. You do investigations, or-

MICHAEL

I've done... a lot of things.

Javier waits for Michael to elaborate. Michael just sits there, waiting. Javier takes a couple of newspaper clippings, slides them across the desk to Michael.

JAVIER

A month ago, there was a robbery. The thieves came at night. It was very bad. Twenty two million in art, jewelry, antiques...

Michael looks at the newspaper clippings. A headline reads "Pyne Estate Robbed." He skims an article.

MICHAEL

Looks like the police are into it. Says here they're talking to "persons of interest..."

Michael looks up at Javier, who frowns, his face red... Michael nods, realizing:

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Ah. You're a person of interest.

JAVIER

The police talked to me, asked questions... When all of this happened, I was at home, watching TV with my kid. But the security code, the one they used for the alarm? It's the master code, my code. They came in between shifts... it looks very bad.

MICHAEL

(nods)

Yeah. That looks pretty bad.

JAVIER

I told the police, I've had this job fifteen years. I would never do something like this. Mr. Pyne talked to them, told them. But there's no one else. They took my passport, told me not to travel. If they arrest me, Mr. Weston... my son is 8 years old. I'm all he has-

Javier is near tears. Michael nods, impatient.

MICHAEL

Right, yes, 'I'm desperate, I need help, don't make my son an orphan,' I got it.

(sighs, weary)

Just so we're clear here, you want me to catch whoever made off with twenty two million dollars in stuff, find the bad guys, and clear your name. For... what is it? Forty five hundred dollars?

JAVIER

Forty six hundred.

MICHAEL

Ah. Well. That's much better.

JAVIER

It's all I have. I'm sorry. I have nowhere else to turn. Please.

Michael stands, nursing a headache.

MICHAEL

Just stop, okay? Stop. I'll see what I can do.

INT. PYNE'S OFFICE - DAY

The interior of the estate decorated like a Tuscan villa. Michael climbs a staircase with GRAHAM PYNE (60). He's a sleek, silver-haired man in an impeccably tailored suit - pleasant enough, with a slight southern accent..

PYNE

Most of the things were insured, but the art was irreplaceable Impressionist works. Mostly houses, landscapes. I'm a real estate developer, so I've got a thing for houses...

PYNE chuckles... Michael pastes on a smile.

MICHAEL

Houses. I get it. That's funny. I'm sure you know that the police consider your operations manager a suspect. Any thoughts on that?

PYNE

Javier has been with me for fifteen years. I trust him completely.

(MORE)

PYNE (CONT'D)  
 (off Michael's look)  
 Listen, this is Miami. I wish it wasn't the case, but whenever there's an incident, the police blame the nearest Cuban. Or Haitian. You should have seen what they put the gardeners through.

MICHAEL  
 And the security codes?

PYNE  
 God knows. The police are looking into it... To be honest, I'm just glad no one was hurt.

MICHAEL  
 Was there anyone unknown to you around? Guests? Any business associates come to the house?

PYNE  
 Not that I can think of. My driver, Vince, does my personal security. He can answer your questions.

Pyne opens the door to his office, showing Michael in.

INT. PYNE'S OFFICE - DAY

The interior of Pyne's office is all leather-and-mahogany. Everything's gorgeous - financial news on a flat screen TV, two 30-inch computer screens, a high-tech safe with a fingerprint scanner. Vincent Newby (30's), a well-built guy with a military-style crew cut, sits on the couch.

MICHAEL  
 I just have a few questions. See if anyone missed anything-

VINCE  
 I don't have a lot to tell you. We talked to the police.

MICHAEL  
 I know, and I'm sorry for the inconvenience, but it would be a big help. Does Mr. Pyne have any enemies-

VINCE  
 Anybody worth a hundred mil has enemies.

Michael forces a smile, his patience wearing thin.

MICHAEL

Which is no doubt why he hired a bodyguard... I mean a 'head of personal security.' I'm specifically talking about enemies that might rob his home, though.

VINCE

Listen, I think we know who did this. Mr. Pyne has a soft spot for Javier. I don't. Far as I'm concerned, the sooner he's arrested, the better.

Michael stands, forcing another smile.

MICHAEL

Great. Well, you've been very helpful.

INT. CUBAN RESTAURANT - LATER

Michael sits in a Cuban diner with Sam. He picks at a sandwich...

MICHAEL

What is this? A pickle?

SAM

It's a Cuban sandwich. You've never had a Cuban sandwich?

MICHAEL

What do you want from me? I worked Eastern Europe and the Middle East. I know pierogis and goat.

SAM

Well, you've been missing out.

Michael picks at the sandwich, unimpressed.

SAM (CONT'D)

So? How's the job?

MICHAEL

How do you think? It's a pain in the ass. Operations manager swears up and down he had nothing to do with it, but it looks bad... hell, if I was a cop, I'd arrest him.

SAM

You think he did it?

MICHAEL

No. He had a good job, a kid. Too much to lose. And he's not the type to fence an art collection.

SAM

Yeah, and he's probably not going to embarrass himself offering 4500 bucks for the job if he's guilty.

MICHAEL

Forty five hundred bucks? You kidding? It's forty *six* hundred.

SAM

Guess you're buying lunch, then. So what do you think?

MICHAEL

I don't know. Pyne's got a Soldier-of-Fortune type doing security... I'd say there's a decent chance he talked to his army buddies about his fancy new job and someone started seeing dollar signs.

SAM

You want me to check him out?

MICHAEL

Yeah. See what you can do.

SAM

Will do. Oh, I almost forgot... more good news: I got you a place to stay.

EXT. NIGHTCLUB - AFTERNOON

Michael stands in front of WAREHOUSE 360, a Miami beach nightclub. Under the chrome, neon, and black velvet ropes you can still see the brick of an old shipping warehouse. Michael talks to OLEG (45), the Eastern European owner of the place. He's well-dressed, with a sort of world-weary good humor and an affection for Russian curse words.

OLEG

The place is in the back. \$200 a month, and...

MICHAEL

If anyone finds out I'm there, I tell them I broke in. Sam told me.

OLEG  
Is not so easy to live, this place.  
All night, club is boom, boom...

MICHAEL  
It's fine.

OLEG  
Other thing. The neighbor, next  
door? Sells drugs to my customers,  
make fight with people. I try to  
talk, he puts a gun in my face. At  
home, I can deal with the *zasranek*.  
But here, with immigration, liquor  
license... is big risk for me-

MICHAEL  
I can handle it.

Oleg nods, pleased, as he leads Michael down an ALLEY to a  
door at the back of the club. He hands Michael the key...

OLEG  
You are real Michael Weston?

MICHAEL  
Yeah.

OLEG  
In the old days, you were a story  
the KGB tells, to scare. They say  
you were not one person - one name  
for many people, a special  
operations team. The think one  
person cannot, uh...  
(darkly)  
...make so much problems.

MICHAEL  
Nope. Just me.

Oleg shakes his hand, laughing as he hands him a key.

OLEG  
Is good to meet you, Michael. Is a  
new world, yes?

INT. MICHAEL'S LOFT - AFTERNOON

A nice loft space. You'd pay a lot of money for it if it  
wasn't behind a nightclub. High ceilings, exposed brick, a  
skylight. There are rudiments of a living space - a bed, a  
hot plate. As Michael sits, the phone rings. He checks the  
caller I.D. - unknown. Cautiously, he answers...

MICHAEL

Hello?

A woman's voice comes through the line - a smoker's voice.  
It is MADELINE WESTON, Michael's mom.

MADELINE

Michael?

MICHAEL

(alarmed)

Mom? How did you get this number?

MADELINE (O.S.)

That's a nice way to greet your  
mother. I got it from your  
girlfriend. Fiona?

MICHAEL

She's not my... What do you want?

He sighs, rubbing his temples...

MADELINE (O.S.)

Were you going to come and see me?

MICHAEL

I'm not in town long...

MADELINE (O.S.)

Come now, then. You can drive me  
to the doctor. We'll talk.

MICHAEL

Mom, I don't even have a car-

MADELINE (O.S.)

You'll figure something out.

She hangs up. Michael looks at the phone, stunned. He hauls  
himself up, gathering his things and going to the door...

MICHAEL (V.O.)

*My mom would have been a great NSA  
communications operative. Drop me  
in the middle of the Ghobi desert,  
hide me on top of the Himalayas,  
bury me in a Goddamn cave on the  
moon... and somehow, some way,  
she'd find a way to call me and ask  
me for a favor.*

END OF ACT

ACT TWO

INT. CAR - LATER

Michael drives his mom through the Miami suburbs in a BMW five series. Leather seats, custom stereo. It's a nice car... but it's not Michael's. The steering column is cracked open, and there are a couple of exposed wires.

MICHAEL (V.O.)  
*I don't like stealing cars, but sometimes it's necessary. I have rules, though. I'll keep it clean, and if I take your car on a work day I'll have it back by five.*

MADELINE WESTON (60) glares at him as she lights a cigarette.

MADELINE  
 Things have gone to hell since you left. Thank God you're back-

MICHAEL  
 I'm not back. Don't smoke in the car. It's... not mine.

Michael coughs, snatches the cigarette away from her. Michael checks the rear view mirror, noticing a Ford weaving through traffic toward them.

MADELINE  
 I sent letters to that office where you get your mail... You get them?

MICHAEL  
 Uh... no. They don't, uh... I've been out of the country.

Michael's usually a good liar, but not now. He checks his rear view for the Ford as he turns down a side street. Madeline lights another cigarette.

MADELINE  
 Michael, where are you going? the hospital is on 20th-

MICHAEL  
 This is a shortcut. Mom, don't smoke in the car, *please*-

He reaches for Madeline's new cigarette. She pulls it away; he grabs it, burning himself, and throws it out the window. Michael sucks his finger; Madeline gives him a baleful look.

MADELINE  
 You know, you missed your father's funeral. By eight years.

MICHAEL

The last time I saw him he said  
he'd see me in Hell. So I figured  
we had something on the books.

MADELINE

You always *had* to antagonize him-

Michael is getting aggravated; this is an old argument.

MICHAEL

Mom, I antagonized him by being  
*alive*. Everything I did was  
another reason to slap me around-

Michael checks the rear view mirror again. There's the Ford.  
Calmly, Michael begins to TAKE EVASIVE ACTION. He turns into  
a gas station, then pulls out of the station and guns it up  
the block. He notices an alley, reverses, and turns...

MADELINE

What are you *doing*?

MICHAEL

Who's driving? You or me?

BEHIND HIM, the larger Ford squeezes into the alley and  
stops, stuck. Michael turns out into the street.

MADELINE

God, Michael. You don't know how  
hard it's been. You were the only  
one that kept the family going-

MICHAEL

I've been sending money. And what  
about Nate?

MADELINE

Don't get me started. Your  
brother's a mess. You should go see  
him, Michael.

MICHAEL

I think it's better if we stay away  
from each other.

Michael pulls into the hospital parking lot, relieved.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

We're here.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM - DAY

Madeline lies on a gurney, hooked up to a blood pressure  
machine and an O2 monitor.

Michael talks in low tones with DR. MENDEZ. He pages through forms on his laptop computer as he talks.

DR. MENDEZ

She's here every week, claiming to have every disease with a name. I prescribed antidepressants, but... she needs company, someone to help with her hospital bills... it's common in lonely older patients.

MICHAEL

Hospital bills? How much?

DR. MENDEZ

Check with billing, but it's tens of thousands. She needs help, Mr. Weston. It's lucky you showed up.

Michael looks at the doctor. He doesn't feel lucky.

MICHAEL

I'll leave cab fare for her. I've got work to do.

EXT. NIGHTCLUB - EVENING

A line is already forming at the entrance to the nightclub... tan Paris Hilton clones in miniskirts, sleek playboys in \$300 shirts. Michael walks up, carrying a hardware store bag. He smiles politely...

MICHAEL

Excuse me. I'm just through here.

The line parts to let him past, not sure what he's doing; Michael brushes by a breathtaking blonde and disappears down the alley. We follow him...

INT. MICHAEL'S LOFT - LATER

From O.S., we hear the thump, thump, thump of the club music. Michael's bed is covered with equipment, and he works carefully, unfazed by the deafening music...

MICHAEL (V.O.)

*Sleep through an aerial bombing or two, and noise isn't an issue. You just need some privacy and a bed. In a pinch, you can lose the bed, but the privacy's important...*

ANGLE ON a mess of wires connecting a battery to a mousetrap and a length of pipe... Michael fills the pipe with hand soap and sprinkles nitro-grow fertilizer on it.

MICHAEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*A casual observer might mistake  
 this for a pipe bomb, rather than  
 see it for what it is... an urgent  
 message to an old friend.*

Michael fills out a UPS label to **Dan Siebels, 14 K Street,  
 Washington, D.C. 20571.** Satisfied, he flops into bed as we  
 FADE TO BLACK.

INT. JAVIER'S HOUSE - DAY

A pleasant middle-class living room. Michael sits on the  
 couch across from DAVID (8), a clean-cut Cuban kid on the  
 small side.

DAVID  
 Are you a soldier?

Michael smiles awkwardly, not sure how to handle this.

MICHAEL  
 No. Er... sort of.

DAVID  
 My dad says you're here to help us.

MICHAEL  
 I might be. I have to talk to your  
 dad first. And get some money.

DAVID  
 Then are you going to shoot the  
 people that robbed Mr. Pyne?

MICHAEL  
 Uh... no. That shouldn't be  
 necessary.

DAVID  
 What if they shoot at you?

MICHAEL  
 Well, in that case it would be  
 necessary. So yes.

Michael is beginning to get uncomfortable... Javier walks in  
 from the kitchen carrying a tray of coffee.

JAVIER  
 David. Go play.

DAVID  
 I can play here.

JAVIER  
In your room.

David turns to Michael.

DAVID  
You want to see my room?

JAVIER  
David. Go.

David leaves, never taking his eyes off Michael. Javier sits, apologetic.

JAVIER (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry.

DAVID  
It's fine.

JAVIER  
So you will help?

MICHAEL  
I'll need half the money up front.  
So that's... what is that? Two  
thousand, three hundred dollars?

Javier pulls out an envelope. He goes to hand it to Michael.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
Wait. I need you to understand  
something. I'm going to follow  
this wherever it leads. You can  
count on me to finish what I start.  
But we do it my way. I want access  
to everything. All the security  
codes, every nook and cranny of the  
estate. That understood?

Javier presses the money into Michael's hand.

JAVIER  
Thank you.

EXT. POOL - AFTERNOON

Sam, in sunglasses and a bathing suit, lies next to the pool at an expensive condo complex. Michael, still in his battered suit, sits on a chaise lounge next to Sam.

MICHAEL  
Working hard?

SAM

Tanning's an art and a science,  
Mike. You want something to drink?  
They got guys here, they'll bring  
you whatever you want.

MICHAEL

I'm fine. You find out anything  
about Pyne's hired gun?

SAM

I asked around. He washed out as a  
Ranger after two years. Went to  
work for a P.M.C. in Iraq.  
Meathead mercenary, it looks like.  
I'll keep digging.

(grins)

So how do you like the new place?  
Oleg set you up?

MICHAEL

Yeah. What's his story?

SAM

Old Minister of Agriculture in  
Soviet Georgia. Came West to make  
money. He likes having muscle  
living in the back- I guess they've  
had some problems. I dropped your  
name, he got all excited... You're  
the ultimate guard dog, Mike.

MICHAEL

I'm thrilled.

SAM

So? You make any headway?

MICHAEL

I checked the security logs. It's  
pretty solid... there's nothing  
there.

SAM

(grins)

So it's the hard way, then?

MICHAEL

Best angle is probably the art.  
They'll fence the jewelry anywhere,  
but the art's tougher. I find the  
buyer, I can work my way back to  
whoever pulled the job.

SAM

How you gonna pull that off?

MICHAEL  
 (shrugs)  
 I still have a friend or two.

Michael tosses the suntan lotion to Sam and turns to go. Sam watches him, a flicker of concern crossing his face...

EXT. BEACHFRONT TOURIST AREA - DAY

Michael talks on a pay phone in a touristy area of Miami beach, jotting some information down on a pad.

MICHAEL (V.O.)  
*If you need to find someone shady  
 in an unfamiliar city, you can't  
 exactly look in the Yellow Pages  
 under "criminal."*

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
 Uh huh... I need a contact in  
 Miami. Yeah... want to set  
 something up for next week... Uh  
 huh... I'll be there.

Michael jots down an address and a time on the pad.

EXT. BUSINESS DISTRICT STARBUCKS - LATER

Michael walks through the downtown Miami business district. He's cleaned up, looking like a more or less respectable businessman, and carrying a briefcase.

MICHAEL (V.O.)  
*There is one thing that everyone  
 involved in any kind of illegal  
 activity needs, though. Whether  
 you're a coke dealer, a thief, an  
 arms dealer or a spy, you need  
 someone to clean your money.*

Michael sits with a smooth-looking MONEY LAUNDERER (35) in sunglasses and a summer suit at an outside table of a Starbucks. He shakes the guy's hand as he sits...

MICHAEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*They've got friends in every city  
 around the world, and they'll  
 always take your phone call, burn  
 notice or no burn notice, if you've  
 been a good customer in the past.*

MONEY LAUNDERER  
 (smiles)  
 Our mutual friend tells me you're  
 looking to do some business?

MICHAEL

I need something regular. High six figures, every month or two.

MONEY LAUNDERER

You need access to funds? How long you want to park the cash before you turn it around?

MICHAEL

Liquidity's not a problem.

The Money Launderer considers this for a moment...

MONEY LAUNDERER

You like stamps? Coins? Nice and portable. Make a nice return...

Michael frowns, shaking his head...

MICHAEL

I got burned on stamps. How about art? I did some collecting a few years back, so my accountant can paper it for the IRS...

MONEY LAUNDERER

I can hook you up. Commissions are higher, but you can stick it on your wall.

Michael smiles, grateful...

EXT. ART GALLERY - EVENING

Through a large PICTURE WINDOW, we see Michael sits in an art gallery at night, talking to a middle-aged ART DEALER. They shake hands...

MICHAEL (V.O.)

*A guy who thinks you're going to be bringing in \$750,000 in cash in a suitcase every month? He's going to be more than happy to introduce you to anyone you care to know.*

INT. ART GALLERY - CONTINUOUS

The Art Dealer is visibly excited as he pours a couple of glasses of champagne. Michael takes a glass politely...

ART DEALER

Pleasure doing business with you. Anything else I can do for you?

(MORE)

ART DEALER (CONT'D)

I can get you reservations anywhere you like, or... maybe you want some company for the evening?

MICHAEL

No thanks.

(as an afterthought)

I was wondering, though... I've been looking to make a, ahh... 'specialty purchase.' Some works that I've heard might be coming on the market.

The Art Dealer gives Michael a knowing smile...

ART DEALER

I'll make some calls.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Michael returns home from the evening's business. The music is thumping as he walks through the crowd of beautiful people and into the alley, to find...

A HALF-DRESSED COUPLE IS NECKING IN HIS DOORWAY. Michael clears his throat. The couple looks over; the girl covers herself, embarrassed. The guy points at the building next to Michael's, laughing nervously...

CLUB GUY

Sorry, man. We were just waiting for Sugar. Got carried away...

MICHAEL

Sugar?

The club guy nods at the building with corrugated steel walls next to Michael's - another converted warehouse space. There is a steel door at the back, with a mail slot midway up the door; it's a classic dealer pad.

CLUB GUY

Yeah... I don't know his real name, but he hooks us up. We wanted to score some E. Are you...

The club guy looks at Michael, clearly assuming he's another dealer. He reaches for his wallet. Michael glares at him...

MICHAEL

Leave.

They look at him for a beat... And hurry off up the alley.

INT. MICHAEL'S LOFT - MORNING

Light streams through the skylight. Michael is asleep. The phone rings. Michael rolls over and answers, groggy...

MICHAEL  
Mom... whatever it is-

DAN SIEBELS (O.S.)  
*This isn't your mom.*

Michael is instantly awake, sitting up on the bed.

MICHAEL  
Dan. Good to hear from you. I was worried you lost my number-

INTERCUT between Michael's loft and Dan's office...

INT. OFFICE - DAY

A modest office, with shelves filled with books on world affairs. DAN SIEBELS (55), a weary-looking guy in a tweed jacket, sits behind his desk. A pencil protrudes from a bullet-hole in a Lucite plaque on his desk.

DAN  
Just spent 3 hours with the FBI, discussing your little present... Nice work. You take woodshop?

Dan looks at Michael's fake letter bomb. Affixed to the mousetrap is a small slip of paper that reads "Call Me."

MICHAEL (O.S.)  
Like it? I thought you might. What the hell is going on, Dan?

DAN  
I don't know. The burn notice is eyes only. Listen, for what it's worth, I think it's bullshit, but I don't control these things-

MICHAEL (O.S.)  
Tell me who to talk to. Or I'm coming to D.C. to raise hell.

DAN  
Don't do that, Michael. Just listen. As far as the FBI is concerned, you're a terrorist.

MICHAEL (O.S.)  
What? What the hell-

DAN

Patriot Act. If they say you're a terrorist, that's it. Point is, whoever did this wants you on ice. Leave Miami and you heat up fast. Manhunt, police in every state-

MICHAEL (O.S.)

I've been there. I can handle-

DAN

Where, in *Bulgaria*? This is different. This is Fox news vans on your mom's lawn. Is your family ready for that? Things may change, but... for now, be smart. Lay low.

MICHAEL (O.S.)

Can I see the burn notice? Can you do that for me? I find out who issued it, who it went to... maybe I can do something.

Dan shakes his head, playing with Michael's mousetrap...

DAN

I risked enough calling. Listen, some of us are still on your side. Pull another stunt like this, though, and I won't be one of them.

Dan hangs up, exhales... The mousetrap SNAPS, as we cut to:

EXT. ALLEY - MORNING

Michael emerges from his apartment. Standing in the alley is SUGAR (20's), bleached-blond in designer jeans, a party boy who turned his drug habit into a career. He steps in front of Michael, menacing.

SUGAR

Hey, bro. You new around here?

MICHAEL

Yep.

SUGAR

I'm Sugar. I heard you hassled some of my friends last night.

MICHAEL

I told some of your *customers* to get lost, yeah.

SUGAR

What's your problem?

MICHAEL

Right now, my problem is that a prettyboy drug dealer with a bad dye job is standing in my way.

Sugar shoves Michael, catching him in the ribs... Michael gasps and begins to cough painfully as he falls to his knees. As he catches his breath...

SUGAR

You shouldn't pick fights, buddy.

Sugar goes to hit him again; Michael catches his hand, twisting it at an angle till something pops. Sugar yelps, as Michael gasps through his own pain...

MICHAEL

*I'll... break it. I don't... want to, but I will.*

SUGAR

All right! Let go! Aaah-

Sugar nods, in agony. Michael lets him go, brushes himself off, and limps off down the alley.

EXT. SOUTH BEACH STREET - MORNING

A bus pulls away from a bus stop on a pricey South Beach street. Michael stands there with a half-dozen other bus passengers who have just disembarked, the lone suit among the low-wage workers. He walks off toward the fancy boutiques and galleries on the strip...

INT. ART GALLERY - DAY

A sleek art gallery. Modern pieces line the walls; a handful of patrons browse. Michael sits at a desk with WALTER (45), the owner - handsome, elegantly dressed, a little bitchy.

WALTER

You come very highly recommended, Mr. Weston...

MICHAEL

So do you. They say you're the man to talk to.

WALTER

(smiles)

And what are you interested in, specifically...

MICHAEL

British impressionists. Sisley, Steer...

WALTER

We haven't seen much of that lately. Most of our "specialty stock" is out of the East these days. Iraqi antiquities. Russian icons, although that's mostly forged garbage. I have access to some French Impressionist works, early 19th century-

MICHAEL

My collection is focused on the London Impressionists, really. Camden Town group...

WALTER

Very nice. I wish I had something.

Walter bites his lip, thinking... then shakes his head, recalling something...

WALTER (CONT'D)

Several pieces were on the market about six months ago... There was a Sisley, and several Clausens, but they didn't sell...

MICHAEL

Really? Do you know who-

WALTER

I don't remember the name... One of these condominium developers that are everywhere these days.

Walter spits out the term "Condominium developer" like an epithet. Michael nods, interested, as Walter continues.

WALTER (CONT'D)

He bought during the Impressionist bubble in the '90s. He was asking around, every major gallery in Miami, wanted to dump it all. It was all very discreet, but of course people talk...

MICHAEL

Dump it? Really? What happened?

WALTER

Nobody was interested, is what happened. Not at the price he wanted. It happens *all the time*. These rich boys want to put their money on the walls.

(MORE)

WALTER (CONT'D)

They overpay, and then the market dips, or real estate cools, and they expect the galleries to give them top dollar.

(smiles apologetic)

Sorry I can't help you at the moment, but do keep in touch...

MICHAEL

Oh, you've been very helpful, believe me.

Michael gets up, shaking Walter's hand...

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Michael exits the gallery. He dials his cell phone. A couple of rings, and Sam answers.

SAM (O.S.)

Mike. I was just gonna call you. How'd you do with the fence?

MICHAEL

Guess who tried to dump his art collection six months ago? Sounds like it was insured for a lot more than it was worth. I guess Mr. Cherished Multi-Million Dollar art collection is in financial trouble...

SAM

This a hunch, or-

MICHAEL

For now. I'm going to do a little fact-finding later. Listen, uh... there any chance I could get a ride? The number 24 bus doesn't come for an hour, and I don't really feel like, ah... borrowing another car.

EXT. ESTATE - NIGHT

Michael walks around to the back entrance of the Pyne house.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

*Most folks, when they break in someplace, run around in the bushes in a ski mask. Bad idea. Somebody catches you with a ski mask in the bushes, what are you going to say? You want to look like a legitimate visitor until the very last minute.*

Michael flips up the security keypad, consulting a sheet of codes from Javier's office... He types one in. The door beeps, and he is inside.

INT. PYNE'S HOUSE - DAY

Michael walks through the kitchen and opens the fridge...

MICHAEL (V.O.)  
*If you can't look legit, confused works almost as well. Maybe you get a soda from the fridge, or a yogurt. What kind of burglar carries around a peach yogurt?*

Michael shuts the fridge. He does indeed have a yogurt.

MICHAEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*Somebody sees you, you're just a confused guy in the wrong place. You apologize like crazy for taking yogurt, and it makes you seem innocent of anything bigger.*

INT. PYNE'S OFFICE

Michael hurries through a darkened office to the safe behind Pyne's desk.

MICHAEL (V.O.)  
*When it comes time to actually do the deed, you want as little mess as possible. Ideally, no one knows you were there. Tough with an old-school safe, but modern high-tech security makes it much easier.*

Michael examines the fingerprint scanner, then pulls out a #2 pencil and a pad; he scribbles vigorously on the pad, blowing the graphite dust onto the fingerprint scanner.

MICHAEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*Nobody wipes off a fingerprint scanner after they use it. So what's left on the scanner, nine times out of ten...*

He pulls some SILLY PUTTY from his pocket and puts it gently on the scanner, lifting a perfect graphite dust print.

MICHAEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*...is a fingerprint.*

He wipes off the scanner, puts the silly putty back on the scanner and hits the SCAN button.

There is a glow of red light and a THUNK, as the safe opens, revealing a stack of files. Michael takes them out and photographs the contents as we FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT

ACT 3

EXT. CLUB - EARLY MORNING

Michael walks out of the alley behind the club, picking his way through the debris from the previous night. Oleg is out in front, smoking a cigarette as workers guys sweep up the street. He nods at Michael, offers him a Marlboro...

MICHAEL

No thanks.

OLEG

You have problem with Sugar?

MICHAEL

Why?

Oleg grimaces, stubbing out his cigarette.

OLEG

Last night, one of his *zjelob* guys beat up one of my valets - broke his jaw, his arm, put him in hospital... Sugar say he wants you out.

MICHAEL

I see. And you?

Oleg gives Michael a significant look as he lights another cigarette. He takes a long drag, then:

OLEG

I run my club. I don't need headache.

Michael nods, walking to the alley toward his place. He looks tired... one more thing to deal with.

EXT. JAVIER'S NEIGHBORHOOD - MORNING

Michael walks through Javier's neighborhood at sunrise, carrying a folder under his arm. Michael looks up at the palm trees, thinking...

MICHAEL (V.O.)

*Fighting for the little guy is for suckers. The little guy, contrary to myth, hardly ever prevails. Spend much time on sucker work, and you'll end up poor or dead. We all do it once in a while, but the trick to get in and out quickly, without getting involved.*

Michael stands in front of the door of Javier's door. He sighs, considering whether to knock...

MICHAEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*That's one trick I never really  
 mastered.*

INT. JAVIER'S KITCHEN - MORNING

Javier makes lunch for David as he and Michael talk. He takes real care, trimming crusts and cutting up carrot sticks as sips a mug of coffee...

JAVIER  
 You want some cereal? All I got is the one with the little marshmallow guys. It's David's favorite...

MICHAEL  
 Don't worry about it. I wanted to catch you before you went to work.

JAVIER  
 What is it? Is something wrong?

MICHAEL  
 Yeah. Basically, your boss sold you out. He robbed his own place. Probably had Vince do the actual job, but the bottom line is he collects the insurance, and you're the fall guy.

Javier looks at Michael, stunned...

JAVIER  
 Mr. Pyne? No... he wouldn't. He talked to the police for me-

MICHAEL  
 So what? That just makes it easier to collect on the insurance. You were a trusted employee, he had no idea, etc...

Michael hands Javier a file.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
 Take a look at these.

Javier stares at the photographs. Loan documents and deeds are mixed in with photos of weed-covered lots, swamp land...

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Half of his "real estate projects" are just paper - empty lots he paid a loan officer to sign off on. He borrowed money on those for his other projects, but now that real estate's cooling off, he's bleeding money. His art collection's all he's got. He doesn't get his insurance payout, the whole thing comes crashing down.

Javier looks like he's been punched in the throat. Finally he speaks, his throat dry...

JAVIER

What do I do?

MICHAEL

Well, you have a few options. You can go to jail... probably 10 years, give or take. You can run until the statute of limitations runs out - I'd have to check the relevant Florida law, but it's about 20 years. Or you fight back.

JAVIER

Fight back?

MICHAEL

Pyne doesn't want any of this to get out. As long as we've got this information, we've got leverage.

JAVIER

But... what do I do? I don't know-

MICHAEL

I'll handle the details, but this could get dangerous. People do bad things when there's this much money on the line. It's your decision.

JAVIER

The money...

MICHAEL

Don't worry about the money. You want to do this or not?

Javier looks at the file, then at Michael. He nods...

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Okay, then. You're not going to work today, or ever again.

(MORE)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
 I'm going to go talk to Pyne, but  
 be prepared... this could get  
 sketchy.

Michael gets up, walks to the door. Javier calls to him, a  
 little embarrassed...

JAVIER  
 Mr. Weston... My son, David? He  
 drew a picture. He made me promise  
 to give it to you.

Javier hands Michael a picture. It is a careful sketch of  
 Michael - not a bad likeness - carrying a gun. Michael looks  
 at the gun, frowns...

MICHAEL  
 The kid really wants me to shoot  
 somebody, doesn't he?

Michael folds up the picture and sticks it in his pocket.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
 Tell him thanks.

INT. PYNE'S OFFICE - LATER

Michael sits with Pyne and Vince.

PYNE  
 You wanted to see me?

MICHAEL  
 I just wanted to update you on the  
 progress of my investigation...  
 Fortunately, I think we can be  
 pretty sure that Javier had nothing  
 to do with the robbery.

PYNE  
 Great. Have you spoken to the  
 police?

MICHAEL  
 I'm not sure you want me to do  
 that. Take a look at this.

Michael hands a folder to PYNE. PYNE looks at it, alarmed...

PYNE  
 What is this?

MICHAEL  
 We both know what that is.

PYNE  
 (flips through the file)  
 Where did you get this? What-

MICHAEL  
 That's not important. The important thing right now is that this is delicate information. I'm guessing you don't want it going to the police... which is where it would go if, say, Javier was arrested.

Pyne sits there, seething... He glares at Vince.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
 Well, you two have a lot to talk about. I'll let myself out.

EXT. ESTATE - MORNING

Michael walks down the driveway of the Estate. He smirks at a green Acura with a "This Car Insured by Smith and Wesson" bumper sticker - clearly, Vince's car. In the distance, we can hear the faint sound of Pyne YELLING...

MICHAEL (V.O.)  
*Powerful people aren't used to being told what to do - you can never quite predict how they're going to react. Blackmail is a little like owning a pit bull. It might protect you. Or it might bite your hand off. Never can be sure.*

INT. CELL PHONE STORE - AFTERNOON

A hole-in-the-wall cell phone store. A cheerful high school girl smiles at Michael as he peers into the case.

MICHAEL (V.O.)  
*That's why it pays to make sure you know what they're thinking. And that means eavesdropping.*

CELL PHONE GIRL  
 Can I help you?

MICHAEL  
 Your cheapest phone. Two of them. And that one, the Nokia.

Michael points at a \$35 pink phone. She looks up...

CELL PHONE GIRL  
The Hello Kitty? That's the only-

MICHAEL  
Hello Kitty's fine.

The clerk rings up the purchase, a little creeped out.

INT. MICHAEL'S LOFT - DAY

In one corner of the loft, Michael has set up a makeshift office with scavenged electronics equipment. In a series of quick cuts, we see him taking apart the cell phones, gutting them and wiring them together...

MICHAEL (V.O.)  
*To build a listening device, you need a crappy phone with a mike that picks up everything. But you want the battery power and circuitry of a better phone. It's a trick of the trade you learn when the purchasing office won't spring for a decent bug.*

Michael calls the mangled cell phone, now a mass of pink plastic and duct tape. A small LED comes on. He smiles.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
Hello, kitty.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Michael stands in the alley, testing his creation for signal strength when we hear a voice behind him...

FIONA (O.S.)  
I don't suppose you'll be telling the FCC about that little toy?

Michael turns, startled.

FIONA (CONT'D)  
It's good to know I can still sneak up on you.

MICHAEL  
You know, one of these days I'm going to shoot you by accident.

FIONA  
Oh, you might shoot me one of these days, but it won't be by accident. It's good to see you, too, luv. This is home, then?

Fiona looks in the doorway of the loft. She nods, approving.

MICHAEL

For now. It's cheap, thanks to the noise and the drug dealer next door. And it's secure... At least I thought it was.

FIONA

Fourteen years in the IRA, I'm not complete shite. Anyway, you promised me dinner, and I came to collect.

MICHAEL

You're not going away unless I take you to dinner, are you?

FIONA

No.

MICHAEL

Alright, then... it's a date.

He smiles despite himself... she kisses his cheek and goes.

INT. PEARL BISTRO - NIGHT

Michael sits with Fiona in the back of Pearl Bistro. It's a small, elegant place with maybe a dozen tables and a small bar. He's cleaned up, in a thrift-store suit that looks nice, at least by candlelight.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

*When you pick a restaurant for tactical reasons, you want it to be small, so surveillance has to stay close. Open floor plan, no plants or beams, so no one can hide. And get the table in the corner - it's the most defensible.*

Michael eats, warily scanning the restaurant as he talks...

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I'll plant the bug tomorrow with Sam... keep an eye on Pyne, make sure he doesn't get any ideas.

FIONA

You're making me miss the old days... That sounds fun.

MICHAEL

Not really. I haven't worked so hard for so little money since Afghanistan in the 80's. And at least there my mom wasn't calling thirty times a day.

She frowns, incredulous. Michael holds up the phone: **33 Missed Calls**. She raises an eyebrow, impressed.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Yeah. Thanks for giving her my number.

FIONA

You're welcome. So... any thoughts on why you're so unpopular? Why didn't they just kill you?

MICHAEL

Could be they want me as a lesson to others. Could be someone wants me for a job, wants to make sure I'm nice and desperate before they offer. Could be a lot of things. The bitch is not *knowing*.

FIONA

Well, I think it might do you good to be in one place for a while. Resolve some issues.

MICHAEL

You're insane. I went halfway across the world to get away from-

FIONA

Exactly my point. Maybe if you stopped running, you could maintain a normal relationship-

MICHAEL

Listen. There are some things I'm good at. Tactical analysis. Hand-to-hand combat. I'm even a decent cook. But relationships are not my thing. Okay? Never were.

FIONA

So now you're in Miami. Get a 24 year old with some fake tits...

MICHAEL

Well, for one thing I couldn't afford one right now. And for another thing, they bore me.

(MORE)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

If it makes you feel any better,  
you were the closest I ever got.  
It just... wasn't close enough, I  
guess.

FIONA

Things could have worked out with  
us. Maybe if you'd come to church  
with me....

MICHAEL

You were *robbing banks* for the IRA-

FIONA

Oh, and you're so noble? A spy's  
just a nice name for a criminal  
working for a government on foreign  
soil. Besides, you're the one with  
two FBI agents watching him eat.

MICHAEL

Three.

Fiona looks... ANGLE ON a clean cut guy at the bar... a guy  
sitting at a table by himself with a book.

FIONA

I count two.

MICHAEL

Drinking a martini. By the door.

ANGLE ON an attractive woman with a martini; a pistol glints  
under her jacket. Fiona grins, gives a little golf clap.

FIONA

Bravo. Should we shoot them?

MICHAEL

I have enough problems.

FIONA

Ah, well. More wine, then.

She pours, smiling. She looks good. Michael smiles back...

EXT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Late night, and the club is thumping; the line outside is  
long. It's the hard-core crowd, glistening and flushed from  
the early-evening clubs...

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Michael and Fiona are making their way through the dimly lit  
alley to Michael's loft; clearly, they are headed for a make-  
up fuck. Fiona laughs...

FIONA  
 ...and I said 'I can't shag a man  
 who works in a bank.' The end.

MICHAEL  
 He's rich, he's handsome, and you  
 break it off because-

FIONA  
 He had no... tactical awareness.  
 He couldn't shoot. He never knew  
 how many exits were in a building.  
 You spoiled me, Michael...

MICHAEL  
 I thought it was my winning smile.

They look at each other, near kissing in the moonlight  
 outside Michael's door... Then, from behind Fiona, a voice:

VOICE (O.S.)  
 Don't move.

Michael looks up as a muscled young guy in a fishnet shirt  
 steps closer, putting a gun to Fiona's head. Michael  
 watches, alarmed; the kid looks back.

CLUB KID  
 Sugar wants you out.

MICHAEL  
 She's got nothing to do with-

CLUB KID  
 Shut up!

FIONA  
 He's right, Michael. Shut up. I  
 can handle myself.

The guy looks at her, surprised... she smiles sweetly, then  
 HEAD-BUTTS him in the nose. He falls back; she grabs the gun  
 and hits him with it; he drops like a brick. Fiona grins,  
 turning to Michael.

FIONA (CONT'D)  
 You need to do something about your  
 neighbors.

MICHAEL  
 I know, I know...

FIONA  
 Well. That was fun. Shall we?

Michael sighs, shakes his head. The moment is gone.

MICHAEL  
Listen... Violence is foreplay for  
you, not for me. I gotta go to  
bed... I'll call you.

She turns to go, disappointed and a little angry.

FIONA  
I won't hold my breath.

Fiona pockets the gun, walking back up the alley to the front of the club. Michael looks over at Sugar's place, and down at the crumpled Club Kid.

INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Sam's place is small, but the view is awesome; you can practically touch the water from the window. It's a mess of clothes, liquor bottles, and military history books. Sam lies asleep, flinching as a bottle cap hits him in the nose.

ANGLE ON Michael, sitting in the corner. Sam groans, waking.

MICHAEL  
So this is the love nest?

SAM  
How did you get in here?

MICHAEL  
Those locks? C'mon. I could pick  
them with a piece of yarn.

Sam winces at the light... Michael hands him some coffee.

SAM  
That's the genius of it. You ever  
see a burglar with a ball of yarn?  
Hmmm... anything good in the cup?

MICHAEL  
Just coffee.

SAM  
Coffee? C'mon, Mike. What am I  
s'posed to tell my liver?

MICHAEL  
We've got some work to do.

SAM  
Work, huh? Is it dangerous?

MICHAEL  
Yeah. We're going to plant a bug  
in Pyne's car. It'll be fun.

SAM

Fun? I was gonna watch the soaps,  
take a swim, pay some attention to  
the little lady who set me up in  
this place...

MICHAEL

Let's go.

Sam hauls himself up reluctantly...

EXT. SAM'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Michael and a now-dressed Sam emerge from the apartment into the open-air hallway. Michael looks out over the balcony at the waves crashing onto the beach...

SAM

I know, I know. It can never  
compare to the simple beauty of a  
Libyan refugee camp, but you get  
used to it.

MICHAEL

No kidding?

SAM

You'd be surprised. After a while  
you find you don't miss eating cold  
MREs in the sand while a drunk  
South African mercenary shoots  
rabbits with his Tec-9.

Michael laughs. Sam hesitates, remembering something...

SAM (CONT'D)

Ahh, crap. I gotta make a call...  
you know, the lady friend...

MICHAEL

Use my cell.

SAM

Naah... Those things'll give you  
brain cancer. I'll be right back.

Sam goes back inside. Michael watches the surf for a moment longer, then heads down the stairs.

EXT. DOWNTOWN MIAMI - DAY

The downtown Miami business district. Glass-and-steel towers gleam in the sun... Pyne's Porsche Cayenne drives through the streets...

A few cars back we pick up Michael, who is driving a Honda. Sam rides shotgun.

INT. HONDA - CONTINUOUS

Michael steers the Honda through traffic. Wires hang from the steering column - it's another "borrowed" vehicle. Sam munches on an Egg McMuffin, pouring vodka from an airline bottle into a small can of V-8.

SAM

...point is, you getting burned wouldn't have happened back then. Rules were rules in the 80's. Not so Goddamn complicated. They had their side, we had ours... You could get your head around it.

Michael changes lanes, keeping the Porsche in sight. He glances at Sam as he throws his trash on the floor.

MICHAEL

Not on the floor. Come on... I'm trying to keep it clean.

SAM

You ripped open the steering column-

MICHAEL

And I'm going to fix it. That's what the crazy glue is for.

SAM

Why didn't we take *my* car?

MICHAEL

You don't tail people in a cherry red mustang. Now pick up the wrapper!

Sam rolls his eyes as he stuffs the food wrapper in the bag. Michael's cell phone rings on the seat... Sam looks at it.

SAM

It's your mom-

MICHAEL

I know who it is. Turn it off.

Sam flips it to vibrate; the phone buzzes on the seat. They sit in silence for a moment, then Sam turns to Michael...

SAM

By the way, how'd it go with Dan? Get anything on the burn notice?

MICHAEL

Not too well... I'm still here.

Up ahead, Pyne's Cayenne pulls up to a building...

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Finish up. It's show time.

EXT. BUILDING - LATER

Vince waits at the car, arms crossed. Pyne is coming out of the building, talking to a man in a suit in agitated, hushed tones...

PYNE

You're the Goddamn lawyer. I don't want excuses. I want to know what I can do about this situation...

LAWYER

I'm looking at it. It's...

A short distance from where Vince is standing, we see SAM arguing with a JAMAICAN CAB DRIVER (20's) in front of a taxi. Vince glances in their direction as snippets of the argument drift over...

SAM

...right there and you ran right into me cut me off!

CAB DRIVER

You got no business in a bike lane, mon! Drive on the street, you don't want someone cut you off-

As they continue arguing, we hear Michael in V.O.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

*To running a good operation you have to be able recruit tactical support. You have to be a good judge of people to figure out who you can hire to hit somebody in the face for fifty bucks.*

Sam and the cab driver continue arguing... Sam SHOVES the guy, who stumbles back toward the Porsche just as Vince opens the door for Pyne. Sam follows... Alarmed, Vince steps forward, trying to get between them.

VINCE

Hey, move it along-

BAM! The guy HITS SAM IN THE FACE. Sam goes sprawling into the open door of the Porsche...

CAB DRIVER

Learn t' *drive*, you son of a bitch!

Vince grabs the Cab driver, shoving him away from the car.

VINCE

I said take it somewhere else!

INSIDE THE PORSCHE... Sam groans, rolling over. He pulls out the DOCTORED CELL PHONE, and sticks it under the seat of the car. He rolls over...

Vince roughly "helps" Sam out of the car. Vince glares at him, deciding what to do. Sam yells at the cab driver, who is now walking back to his car...

SAM

Come back here! You want some more-

Vince gives Sam the bum's rush up the street. ANGLE ON Sam's grin... he's enjoying this. Behind him, Vince hustles Pyne into the Porsche as we DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SAM'S PLACE - LATER

Sam sits at the kitchen table in his apartment, the cell phone-tape recorder sits in front of him. Michael adjusts it... there's a little static, and Pyne's voice comes from the speaker; he's on the phone.

PYNE (O.S.)

*...we're doing damage control now... uh huh... I don't know! That's the problem! Bastard just came out of nowhere, broke into my office somehow-*

SAM

See, Mike? Less than a week in Miami, and you're already making friends.

MICHAEL

Sounds like he's not going to roll over easy.

SAM

Yeah, well... These rich guys bite when you've got 'em by the tail.

MICHAEL

Call me if he makes any moves. We'll probably get about 24 hours out of the battery... it's voice-activated, so you'll get a beep when they're-

SAM  
I know the drill, Mike. You go do  
your thing. I'm on it.

INT. TOURIST BEACH PAY PHONE - DAY

Michael dials a pay phone from a bank of them in between a  
couple of bars.

RECEPTIONIST (O.S.)  
*Consulado General de Bolivia...*

MICHAEL  
*Senor Alvarez, por favor...*  
Enrique? It's your friend, from  
the Paloma Bar, in Madrid? With  
the... you remember. I have some  
business I want to discuss...

We move back, losing Michael in the crowd as we DISSOLVE TO:

INT. EL CAPITAN CLUB - AFTERNOON

A high-end cigars-and-liquor place for well-to-do Latin  
businessmen. Michael sits alone in a booth, drinking a cup  
of coffee. A voice speaks up behind him...

ALVAREZ (O.S.)  
Eating alone? I hear you're doing  
that a lot these days.

ENRIQUE ALAVAREZ (50's) slides into the booth. He's a big  
guy, with the cheerful cynicism of the third world politico.

MICHAEL  
Thanks for coming.

ALVAREZ  
So. You have business to discuss?

MICHAEL  
I need my burn notice. Original  
copy, as it went out. Name of the  
issuing party on the document.

ALVAREZ  
Oh? And how would I get that?

MICHAEL  
I've got a lot of faith in your  
country's intelligence services.  
And in your resourcefulness.

Alvarez starts to shake his head; Michael stops him, angry:

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Enrique, if it wasn't for me, you'd be buried in the desert, a horror story diplomats tell each other around the campfire. But you're not. Because I *helped* you. Getting my hands on the notice is my one shot at sorting this mess out. I need to know who's going after me... I need your *help*.

ALVAREZ

Fine... but it could be expensive.

Michael slides an envelope across the table...

MICHAEL

There's more later.

Alvarez looks inside and nods, satisfied.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

When you get the burn notice, make a reservation for 9:30 at Azul Cafe under your name. The number of people in your party is the *time* we meet *here*.

ALVAREZ

I'll be in touch.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Michael gets off the bus in a business district. He walks up the street looking for an address as he talks on the phone with Sam...

MICHAEL

Yeah, well, some yelling is to be expected. They making any plans?

SAM (O.S.)

*Not yet. Pyne's still riding his attorney. He's got Vince is trying to figure out who the hell **you** are.*

MICHAEL

(laughs)  
Good luck with that.

SAM (O.S.)

*They're trying the conventional moves today. My guess is if they're gonna go nuclear, it'll happen tomorrow.*

Michael finds what he's looking for... a sign reads CHANDLEE HARDWARE.

MICHAEL

Well, stay on it... I have a little home improvement project to do.

INT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Michael walks down the aisles of the hardware store, grabbing items and tossing them in the basket. A STUD SENSOR, a DRYWALL SAWY, a couple of rolls of DUCT TAPE, an ACE BANDAGE.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

*For a job like getting rid of the drug dealer next door, I'll take a hardware store over a gun any day.*

As Michael takes his items to the checkout counter we DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ALLEY - MORNING

Michael stands in the alley next to Sugar's front door. He pulls a section of corrugated steel off the wall, revealing a few panels of drywall. Carefully moving the stud sensor over the wall, he finds the wall studs. He pulls out some duct tape and marks them...

MICHAEL

*Start pulling triggers, there's a good chance you'll end up on the ground, dying of acute lead poisoning.*

Michael walks around the corner to the side of the building, pulls off another sheet of corrugated steel and marks a couple more studs.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

*Guns make you stupid. Better to fight your wars with duct tape. Duct tape makes you smart.*

Michael returns to Sugar's door and knocks. The door clinks; it's steel-reinforced.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

*Of course, duct tape and a gun is even better.*

Michael pulls out a pistol, as we hear footsteps from inside. The peephole darkens... inside, a pistol cocks.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Hi. It's your neighbor.

SUGAR (O.S.)  
 You got a problem?

Michael steps to the side of the door.

MICHAEL (V.O.)  
*Every decent punk has a bulletproof  
 door. But people forget walls are  
 just gypsum and paper.*

Michael takes aim at the drywall between the duct tape at knee level. BANG! BANG! BANG! He FIRES in a tight pattern, fanning inward... There's a THUD inside, SCREAMING...

SUGAR (O.S.)  
 My knee! Jesus CHRIST-

EXT. ALLEY - CONT.

Michael walks around the corner, where he's marked the other studs. The sound of Sugar's screaming drifts down the alley.

He pulls out his drywall saw and cuts a neat hole in the wall between the marked studs. He pushes through the wall, climbing into...

INT. SUGAR'S BEDROOM - CONT.

Michael emerges from the hole, his hair white from the drywall dust; the screaming is audible in the next room...

The room is cluttered with clothes; a large bed with satin sheets sits under a Plasma TV. Michael picks his way quietly through the room...

INT. SUGAR'S LIVING ROOM - CONT.

Michael emerges into the cluttered living room. Sugar lies on the floor. His arm is in a sling, and he is bleeding from his leg. His gun is trained on the door, waiting for Michael to burst through.

SUGAR  
 Come on! Come on, motherf-

Michael walks up behind Sugar and puts the gun to his head.

MICHAEL  
 Shut up and drop the gun.

Sugar looks up at Michael, startled, and drops his gun.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
 You know, sometimes you come to a  
 place in your life where it's time  
 to move on.

(MORE)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
 For you, that time is *right now*.  
 You have 20 minutes to clear out.  
 Understand?

Sugar nods, stunned... Michael hands him the ace bandage and one of Sam's small airplane bottles of Vodka.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
 The wound's not bad. Disinfect it and get to a hospital and you won't walk with a limp. If you're still here in 20 minutes, a limp will be the least of your problems.

Off Sugar's nod we FADE TO BLACK.

INT. MICHAEL'S LOFT - NIGHT

The thumping of Latin-accented Electronica booms through the wall as Michael lies in bed, asleep. The phone next to him rings... he rolls over and picks it up. He checks the caller I.D. - "Madeline Weston." He answers...

MICHAEL  
 It's two in the morning, Mom. What do you want?

We hear Madeline's voice on the other end of the line, muffled and barely audible over the noise of the club.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
 No, I don't have people over. It's just... never mind. Uh huh... I got it from the pharmacy earlier... Yeah, well I think it can wait until morning... I'll take my chances. Goodnight, mom... Uh huh... goodnight... I'm hanging up now. Goodnight.

Michael hangs up.

EXT. MADELINE WESTON'S HOME - MORNING

A little bungalow on a quiet street. Michael walks up the front walk with a small drugstore bag.

INT. MADELINE'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A modest living room, with a cheap suite of 80's furniture. The mantel photos are of an unhappy family of five presided over by a grim, square-jawed father. Unpleasant memories.

Madeline sits smoking and examining a photo of a worm-like creature in a medical almanac. Michael sets a bottle of pills on the table in front of her.

MADELINE

I think I've got a parasite.

MICHAEL

That's what the pills are for, mom.

MADELINE

Pills don't work. Once they find your liver...

MICHAEL

The pills are so you don't think you're sick all the time.

MADELINE

The doctor says I'm crazy. I think he's letting me die of a parasite because I can't pay his bill.

MICHAEL

Well, for now, let's try the pills.

MADELINE

Did you go see your brother yet?

MICHAEL

Mom, it's been 20 years. The last time I saw him he hit me with a telephone book. What makes you think *I* can help him?

Madeline lights yet another cigarette as she stands...

MADELINE

Remember when you were six and Bob locked you in your room and said you couldn't see that Star Wars movie? You pulled up the floor and snuck out through the heating duct?

(Michael nods...)

Since when was there *anything* you wanted to do that you couldn't do? Please, Michael. For me...

She begins to cry, resting her head on his shirt.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

*Thirty years of karate, combat experience on five continents, a rating with every weapon that shoots a bullet or holds an edge. Still haven't found any defense against mom crying into my shirt.*

Michael frowns. He's being manipulated but he can't resist...

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
 I've got to take care of some  
 things... maybe after this job-

Michael looks relieved when his phone rings. Madeline frowns  
 and starts to speak, but Michael shushes her as he answers.

SAM (O.S.)  
*We got trouble.*

MICHAEL  
 What?

SAM (O.S.)  
*Pyne is looking to get some  
 leverage of his own. Listen to  
 this:*

INT. MICHAEL'S LOFT - DAY

Sam is all business as he rewinds the tape recorder, playing.  
 It's static-y, hard to hear, but the voice comes through:

PYNE (O.S.)  
*...go over and pick up his kid, and  
 then we'll have a conversation. I  
 don't know what the hell else to do-*

MICHAEL (O.S.)  
 The kid? Jesus...

SAM  
 Pyne got Javier out of the house  
 with some legal bullshit. The  
 kid's home alone... Your boy Vince  
 is on his way.

INT. MADELINE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Michael listens, alarmed.

MICHAEL  
 How long ago?

SAM (O.S.)  
*I called as soon as I heard.*

Michael hangs up, his mind racing...

MICHAEL  
 Mom - where's your tool drawer?

MADELINE  
 What? Your father had some things  
 in the garage, but why-

Michael races out of the living room...

INT. GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

A broken-down Oldsmobile gathers dust next to a workbench. Michael JERKS open a tool drawer. Its filled with old tools and equipment; he grabs a screwdriver and some cable ties.

EXT. STREET CORNER - DAY

Michael runs to a street corner, watching traffic as it pulls up to a stop light. He is searching for something... ANGLE ON an a classic 70's Camaro - restored, cherry red. A worked-out kid in a tank top sits behind the wheel.

As it pulls up to the stoplight, Michael dashes into traffic and yanks open the door.

INT. CAMARO - DAY

Michael slides behind the wheel of the Camaro, pushing the furious driver into the passenger seat.

CAMARO OWNER

What the hell you doing, man! Get out of my car-

Michael removes his pistol from his pocket as he pulls into traffic, roaring up the street. Camaro guy stares...

CAMARO OWNER (CONT'D)

Oh, man... Don't jack me. Please-

MICHAEL

This isn't a carjacking. I won't hurt you. I just need a ride.

CAMARO OWNER

Why me? Why-

MICHAEL

Big car, no airbags. You don't want to know.

CAMARO OWNER

What? What the hell are you-

MICHAEL

Listen, I've got to concentrate, and it'll take too long to explain. You want to get out, get out. You want to come along, that's fine too, but keep quiet...

The guy just stares at him, then settles back into the seat.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
Put on your seat belt.

The guy puts on his lap belt, and Michael floors it.

EXT. STREET - DAY

FROM OVERHEAD, we see Michael speeding along a busy residential street. Up ahead is Vince's green Acura, with the Smith and Wesson bumper sticker...

ANGLE ON the Acura, with Vince at the wheel. He's calm, unaware Michael is following him; a pistol sits on the seat next to him. He turns onto a residential street...

INT. CAMARO - CONTINUOUS

Michael cranks the wheel onto a side street. It's a tough turn over a curb that tosses them both around the car.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

FROM OVERHEAD, we see Michael ROAR around a corner and into an alley perpendicular to Javier's street. He guns it, sending a few trash cans flying...

CAMARO OWNER  
Slow down, man... *please*...

Michael ignores him, speeding toward the end of the alley...

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Vince stops at a stop sign. THROUGH HIS WINDSHIELD, we see THE CAMARO, coming down the otherwise empty street toward the Acura.

INT. CAMARO - CONTINUOUS

The Camaro owner is terrified, near tears.

CAMARO OWNER  
Just stop! Come on, man-

MICHAEL  
We're almost done, okay?

CAMARO OWNER  
Done? What does that mean-

Michael points out the window at something.

MICHAEL  
Hey, that girl looks like J-Lo...

The kid turns to look, and Michael puts out an arm, holding him back in his seat as he SWERVES. He braces himself against the wheel as the kid SCREAMS-

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

WHAM! The Camaro SLAMS INTO VINCE'S CAR. The cars crunch together... ANGLE ON the Acura, as the AIRBAG DEPLOYS, pinning Vince against his seat.

Instantly, Michael jumps out of the Camaro and races over to the Acura, LEAPING on the hood of the car and KICKING IN THE WINDSHIELD. He clears the glass, drops to one knee, and punctures the driver's side airbag with the screwdriver.

The airbag deflates, revealing Vince, groaning, with a bloody nose. Michael pulls out two cable ties and secures Vince's hands to the steering wheel...

CAMARO OWNER  
My car! Jesus...

He examines the mangled front end of his car...

Michael walks over with Vince's gun and wallet. He tosses the wallet to the Camaro owner, along with a card...

MICHAEL  
There's his insurance card.  
There's about six hundred bucks in  
the wallet, should handle the  
deductible. The cops'll be here  
soon. Find someplace else to be.

Michael glances at the Acura, where Vince sits still stunned, then runs up the street toward Javier's house...

EXT. JAVIER'S HOUSE - DAY

Gasping for breath, Michael staggers up to Javier's front door. Behind him, we can see the wreck; sirens scream in the distance as Michael bangs on the door...

MICHAEL  
David! Open the door!

The door opens. David looks up at Michael. Michael looks terrible - holding his ribs, sweat pouring off his face...

DAVID  
What's wrong?

MICHAEL  
It's, uh... long story. I need you  
to come with me.

David smiles, pleased...

INT. MICHAEL'S LOFT - DAY

Michael sits on his bed, on the phone with Javier. David sits in the loft's lone chair, across from him.

MICHAEL (ON PHONE)

Uh huh... he's fine... You two have a place you can stay? Yeah... that's fine.

(hangs up, turns to David)  
Your dad will be here soon. You two are gonna go stay with your aunt for a little while.

David nods. They sit there in silence for a moment.

DAVID

You live here? Behind a club?

MICHAEL

Yeah. For now.

David looks around... sees the VCR, the security tapes.

DAVID

You got any movies?

MICHAEL

No, I... I usually live in hotels. I don't really have any... stuff.

(a beat)

If you're hungry, there's a peach yogurt in the fridge.

David shakes his head. A beat. Michael looks at David, noticing something... ANGLE ON a bruise on David's eye.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

That's a black eye. How'd you get that?

DAVID

Kids, at school...

MICHAEL

Yeah? Why?

DAVID

I don't know. They don't need a reason, mostly. Last time they took my new shoes. Time before, it was just... 'cause.

MICHAEL

Huh. How many are there?

David shrugs, ashamed, not wanting to look at Michael...

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

It matters, tactically. Is it a group? Or one kid?

DAVID

Its a group. They get up in my face, and they start pounding me...

Michael picks David up and sets him on the bed so they are eye to eye...

MICHAEL

Stop crying. Listen, David: You have to lose some fights so you can learn to win. You want to see a *pounding*?

Michael lifts his shirt, displaying his bruised ribs.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I got the *crap* beat out of me. I have two blackbelts, and I got my ass kicked. So you've got nothing to be ashamed of with me, okay? I'm a champion at getting beat up. But I'm also good at winning. Now, you want this to stop?

DAVID

Yeah.

MICHAEL

Okay. The key is to fight them as a group. Take the leader, and they'll leave you alone. It's bully psychology. Works with third world military units, too.

(off David's look)

Never mind. So who's the leader?

DAVID

His name's Jake.

MICHAEL

Jake. Okay, so here's what I want you to do. I'll be Jake. When I push you, I want you to go down in a ball. Like you're scared.

Michael gets up, clearing a space so they can fight. He shoves David gently. David drops, getting into a ball...

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

He'll come closer, to make fun of you. Might kick you, so ball up tight and it won't hurt too much. When he's close, you jump up. Get your head under his chin, hard. He falls, you hit him in the nose.

David butts Michael on the chin at half-speed. Michael falls. David raises his fist and punches; Michael catches his fist.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Good. Now do it again.

David grins, excited. He takes another swing. FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT

ACT 4

EXT. STREET - MORNING

Michael is on the street, walking. At first it seems he's walking off the encounter with Sugar, but as he crosses the street we see that he is FOLLOWING SOMEONE.

ANGLE ON the target of the surveillance. IT'S SAM, who walks up the block and slips into a diner.

INT. DINER - MORNING

Sam sits, drinking coffee with two FEDS. He doesn't look too happy about it.

SAM  
...like I told you, there's nothing else. We did this job, that's it.

FED #1  
How about the threatening package? You may not take that seriously, but the terror task force-

SAM  
Ahh, he was just making a point.

FED #1  
We're not here for our health, Sam.

Michael slips into the booth. Sam looks at him, shocked and very unhappy... The Feds look even worse.

MICHAEL  
Hey, guys... talking about me?  
(to Sam)  
Sam. You gonna introduce your FBI buddies?

FED #1  
FBI? You've got the wrong idea-

MICHAEL  
Ford outside has G-series plates. You guys both have fast-draw holsters, off the rack suits, cheap loafers... no, you guys are Feds.

Michael looks at Sam significantly. Sam splutters, embarrassed...

SAM

Michael, I... they came to me. I was trying to help you.

MICHAEL

It's not like I didn't *know*, Sam. I've got two known associates in Miami, you and Minh, and amazingly, you're *both* willing to help me. I know how the game is played, Sam. I've been on the other side, remember?

Sam stares at his coffee, miserable. Michael smiles at the Feds, puts out a hand.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

So. I'm Michael Weston. You are?

One of the Feds, AGENT HARRIS (35), a tall, clean-cut guy with salt-and-pepper hair, reluctantly puts out his hand.

AGENT HARRIS

Agent Harris.

MICHAEL

Do you even know *why* you're watching me? This whole thing is-

Agent Harris looks at his partner, then turns to Michael.

AGENT HARRIS

Don't know, don't care. Higher up the food chain.

MICHAEL

Great. Let's call your boss, and maybe he can tell me-

AGENT HARRIS

Those aren't my orders. My orders are to keep tabs on you.

MICHAEL

Give him a message, then. Tell him-

Agent Harris gets up from the table, followed by his partner.

AGENT HARRIS

Sorry. I do have a message for you, though: Don't go thinking you have nothing to lose. You've got friends, you've got family.

MICHAEL

Is that a threat?

AGENT HARRIS

It's the truth. Coffee's on me.

Harris tosses \$10 on the table and two agents clear out. Sam turns to Michael, miserable.

SAM

Mike... They've got my pension tied up, they said it would be better for you. You can make a living, anything you want as long as you stay where they can see you and don't make trouble-

MICHAEL

Don't sprinkle sugar on this bullshit and tell me it's candy.

SAM

I'm sorry, Mike. I don't know what to say.

MICHAEL

If I couldn't handle my friends informing on me, I wouldn't be in the business. The way I see it, better a friend than someone I don't know... Way I see it, a friend would tell them enough to make them happy, but keep them out of my business. Right?

Sam grins, relieved.

SAM

Hell, yeah, Mike. Absolutely.

MICHAEL

Good. Now then... I gotta go take care of this Pyne business.

Michael gets up from the table. Sam looks at him...

SAM

Want me to come? Least I can do...

MICHAEL

Naah. I can handle it.

SAM

Good luck, Mike.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JAVIER'S HOUSE - DAY

Michael closes the blinds in Javier's living room. He looks around, assessing the place, and begins rearranging the furniture...

MICHAEL (V.O.)  
*When you're working solo, it's all about prepping the ground. You might be outnumbered, you might be out-gunned, but home court advantage counts for a lot.*

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Javier's bedroom is nondescript, with a large unmade bed, a few photos of David and various extended family.

MICHAEL (V.O.)  
*Fact is, most bad guys expect you to just sit there and wait for them. Like those are the rules or something.*

Michael opens the shades wide; bright sunlight streams in. He goes over to the closet, carefully removing the mirrored closet doors...

INT. LIVING ROOM

Michael looks out the window, gun ready... The phone in the house rings once. Michael checks the digital display; it reads "Call Forwarding."

MICHAEL (V.O.)  
*Ideally, you don't have to fight at all. Even when they go your way, fights aren't fun. But if you do have to, it's good to have an edge.*

INT. PYNE'S PORSCHE - CONTINUOUS

Vince and Pyne drive up Javier's street in the Porsche. Vince is banged up, a bandage on his broken nose; he listens to his cell phone... we hear Javier's voice.

JAVIER (O.S.)  
*Hello? Hello...?*

Vince hangs up, nods grimly at Pyne.

VINCE  
*He's there.*

EXT. JAVIER'S HOUSE

The Porsche pulls up in front of the house, and Vince gets out. He strides up the front walk, out for blood; Pyne follows behind him. Vince gets to the door and KICKS it hard... The lock splinters. Vince pulls a pistol from a shoulder holster...

INT. JAVIER'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Vince bursts into the living room. Pyne follows him in. Michael is standing there... He smiles.

MICHAEL

Hi there.

Vince glares at Michael...

VINCE

Where is he?

MICHAEL

Javier? He's not here. Listen, we need to talk.

Vince comes over and puts his pistol to Michael's head.

VINCE

I'M NOT SCREWING AROUND! WHERE THE HELL IS HE?

MICHAEL

*He's. Not. Here.* I didn't think you'd want to talk to me again, so I forwarded your call to him. I was hoping we could resolve this nicely, with a conversation. I don't want anyone to get hurt...

PYNE

The time for that is over. I don't know who you are, or how the hell you got into my safe, but let me be clear, Mr. Weston. I will not be intimidated.

MICHAEL

Well, neither will I.  
(to Vince)

By the way, you're going to have a hard time blowing my brains out with the safety on.

Vince hesitates, looks at the gun - instantly, Michael grabs the pistol, jamming his finger in the trigger guard.

Vince tries to fire, but it's impossible... Michael wrenches the gun away... it FIRES, skittering across the floor.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
 What do you know. It wasn't on.  
 My mistake.

BAM! Vince hits Michael hard across the face. Michael goes flying, hitting the wall hard. He grabs his jaw...

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
 Ow...

Bracing himself on the wall, Michael KICKS, hitting Vince in the knee; he follows up with a punch to the midsection. As Vince doubles over, Michael staggers into the hall.

Vince recovers, and hurries after Michael. Offscreen, there is a CRASH, a couple of grunts...

Pyne looks around, not sure what to do... AND THEN SUDDENLY, THE PLACE ERUPTS IN GUNFIRE.

It's deafening, rapid fire, like someone squeezing off multiple rounds from a semi-automatic. It's coming from everywhere. Pyne dives for the floor, crawling toward the hall away from the sound...

PYNE  
 Jesus Christ!

Head down, Pyne GRABS VINCE'S GUN and crawls into the hallway.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Pyne rolls into the hallway, the gunfire still coming in short, intermittent BURSTS from behind him...

PYNE  
 VINCE! Where the hell-

He is startled by a noise from behind him. He looks up and sees a FIGURE EMERGE FROM THE BEDROOM DOOR, silhouetted in the glare coming off of the mirrors...

Terrified, and still flinching at the sounds of the gunfire, Pyne raises the pistol...

PYNE (CONT'D)  
 Don't move! Stay there-

The figure lunges forward... Pyne FIRES. The figure lurches forward, coming out of the glare and into view. It's Vince. Michael is behind him, pinning the larger man's arms behind his back.

Vince looks down, surprised, at a spot of blood spreading across the front of his shirt. Michael gives him a hard SHOVE. He collapses on top of Pyne as we CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Pyne lies on the floor of the living room, unconscious; Vince lies next to him, groaning and bleeding. Michael stands over Pyne, disassembling Vince's gun. With the gun in pieces, Michael reaches into his pockets and tears the cloth of the pockets out, making makeshift mittens. With the mittens over his hands, Michael kneels and carefully places Pyne's fingerprints on the individual pieces of the gun.

MICHAEL (V.O.)  
*If you're going to put fingerprints  
 on a gun, just sticking it in  
 somebody's hand isn't going to do  
 it. Any decent lawyer can explain  
 prints on a gun.*

Michael reassembles the gun and puts it into a plastic bag.

MICHAEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*But try explaining prints on the  
 inside of the trigger assembly.*

VINCE  
 I need a hospital...

MICHAEL  
 In a sec. We have some business  
 first.

Michael wakes Pyne, who is just beginning to stir.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
 Graham. Wake up. Graham...

Pyne wakes up. He looks around the room, searching for Michael's accomplices...

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
 Just me.

Michael pulls out a CD. The word "Gunshots" is written on it with a sharpie. He tosses it to Graham...

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
 That's a recording of a hundred  
 rounds shot from a .45 semi-  
 automatic. Javier's stereo has  
 pretty good bass for an off-the-  
 shelf unit, don't you think?

Michael holds up Pyne's pistol in a freezer bag.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

And this... this is the pistol you shot Vince with. It's a crime lab's wet dream, believe me.

PYNE

What do you want?

MICHAEL

I'll get to that. I'm not done with show and tell.

Michael holds up a tape recorder and presses PLAY. We hear Pyne's voice, scratchy but recognizable...

PYNE (ON TAPE)

*...go over and pick up his kid, and then we'll have a conversation. I don't know what the hell else to do-*

MICHAEL

That's you, plotting a kidnapping. And, of course, there's the gun... We're not talking about bankruptcy, here. We're talking about hard time. Federal time. At your age, it's the rest of your life.

PYNE

Fine. Just tell me what you want.

MICHAEL

Well, for starters, Vince here confesses to the robbery. Javier gets two years severance pay, and never sees your face again.

Pyne sighs, nods.

PYNE

And the documents? The financial information?

MICHAEL

I don't know yet. We'll see how good a boy you are. I'll be watching.

Pyne stares at Michael for a long moment... he's beaten, and he knows it. Michael holds up the gun:

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

You should go. This'll be a murder weapon in 20 minutes if Vince here doesn't get to a hospital.

Pyne hauls himself up as we FADE TO BLACK.

INT. DINER - DAY

Michael sits at a diner with Javier.

MICHAEL

I cleaned up as well as I could.  
You're going to want to replace the  
carpet, but nobody's going to  
bother you or your family... You  
can go home.

JAVIER

Thank you. I don't know how to say  
more.

MICHAEL

Don't worry about it.

Michael throws down a few dollars on the check and gets up.  
Javier watches Michael walk away, then turns back.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Hey, uh... one thing. What school  
does David go to?

FADE TO BLACK:

IN MONTAGE, Michael and Sam stick Pyne's pistol in a safe  
deposit box... Michael sits at dinner with Fiona...

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

*When you work in intelligence, you  
get comfortable with big picture  
stuff. Politics. Money. Wars.  
You get rusty with... people.*

...Michael drops some medication off at his mother's place,  
grimacing as she lays into him about seeing his brother...

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

Michael stands across the street from a schoolyard, sipping  
coffee. He squints, trying to see something... it's too far.  
He walks over to a nearby car and knocks on the window; it's  
the FBI surveillance team.

AGENT HARRIS

Yeah?

MICHAEL

Can I borrow your binoculars?

AGENT HARRIS

Uh... I don't think-

MICHAEL

I know you've got some in there.  
You don't need them to see *me*. I'm  
standing right here. Now come on.

Finally Agent Harris shrugs and hands over some binoculars.  
THROUGH THE BINOCULARS, we see DAVID, sitting on top of a big  
kid, hitting him in the nose. Michael hands the binoculars  
back to the Feds and grins, walking up the street...

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

*I gotta admit, though... there's  
nothing like watching the little  
guy kick some bully's ass.*

END OF ACT

BUTTON

INT. EL CAPITAN CLUB - NIGHT

Michael sits with Alvarez in a booth at the back of the club.

MICHAEL  
So? What have you got for me?

ALVAREZ  
What you want. First, though, some  
business. Things were a little  
more difficult... more expensive.

MICHAEL  
How much more?

ALVAREZ  
Eighteen hundred.

Michael blanches... He looks at Alvarez, stunned.

MICHAEL  
That's just about exactly as much  
money as I have, Enrique. You want  
to tell me how you got that number?

Alvarez looks at him significantly, his smile tight.

ALVAREZ  
No. You want it or not?

Michael looks at Alvarez for a long moment... then sighs. He  
slides an envelope full of cash across the table. Alvarez  
hands him an envelope and gets up.

ALVAREZ (CONT'D)  
I have enjoyed our friendship, but-

MICHAEL  
I won't call you again.

Alvarez nods, satisfied. Michael opens the envelope.

ANGLE ON the Burn Notice. It's a short letter, perhaps 3-4  
lines long. "...no longer an intelligence asset..."  
"...entities associated with the U.S. Government are to have  
no contact..." Michael calls after Enrique, alarmed...

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
This doesn't tell me anything. Who  
the hell put it out?

Alvarez looks back, shrugs. Michael looks down in disbelief.

MICHAEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*I spend every penny I have and  
 nearly get myself killed for an  
 alphanumeric tracking number and a  
 Special Access Program Code name.*

ANGLE ON a routing number at the top of the document next to a CODE NAME: "SILENT ECLIPSE." Michael sighs, putting the document back in the envelope.

MICHAEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*Well, it's a start.*

EXT. MIAMI BEACH - NIGHT

Michael gets off the bus, walking up the street toward the nightclub that is now his home. He walks along the row of club-goers, all excited to get inside...

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Michael gets to his place. As he takes his key out he sees something; ANGLE ON the door lock, which has been pried open. Alarmed, Michael pulls out his pistol...

INT. MICHAEL'S LOFT - CONTINUOUS

The loft is filled with smoke... Coughing, Michael runs to the kitchen area, where some bread is burning in the toaster oven. He tosses the blackened slices in the sink, coughing.

Next to the oven is a stack of surveillance photos. He flips through them. Michael in Kazakhstan... in the hospital... sitting with Fiona... kicking in the windshield of Vince's car... talking to his mom. At the bottom of the stack is a tourist brochure. Someone has scrawled on the cover the words: "**WELCOME TO MIAMI.**"

Michael looks at the brochure for a long moment, then pulls out his phone and dials. It rings...

MICHAEL  
 Hey, mom? It's Michael. Give me  
 Nate's address. Thought I'd go see  
 him... uh huh. Yeah, well... it  
 looks like I'm going to be in town  
 for a while.

Michael stares at the brochure as we FADE TO BLACK.