

Man On Fire

by

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"Man On Fire"

OPENING TITLE SEQUENCE

EXT. MEXICO CITY - DAY

High over the city on a bright Sunday morning, the sun pounding its way through the orange haze of smog. As we descend toward the clots of traffic blocking the streets: the sounds of a Mass being sung.

A CATHOLIC CHURCH

The big wooden doors open to release the parishioners inside. Feature a tall, lanky 18-YEAR-OLD. Holding his GIRLFRIEND'S hand, anxious for Sunday to really begin. They don't notice the traffic suddenly thin, like a faucet's been cranked down. They move toward a Mercedes 500. As a CHAUFFEUR holds the back door open for them...

A GRAND MARQUIS

Squeals around the corner, lurches to a stop alongside the Mercedes. FOUR MEN get out flashing badges. In a moment they're hustling Eighteen toward the car, stiff-arming the chauffeur. As the girlfriend cries and the gossip among the parishioners begins...

The Grand Marquis pulls away.

INT. GRAND MARQUIS - DAY

They shove eighteen down to the floor of the backseat. These guys are not the police.

A switchblade is flicked open. Practiced hands slit the boy's Sunday suit from the base of his neck to his heels. Eighteen yelps as the blade draws blood across one calf.

Duct tape is wrapped around his hands, eyes, and head.

EXT. WOODED AREA - DAY

The Marquis is parked across from another CAR. FOUR NEW GUYS wait as Eighteen is hauled out of the Marquis. His clothes drop away like a snake shedding its skin. He stands naked, bound and blind. Eighteen is handed over from one group to the other.

INT. TELEPHONE - UPSCALE HOME - MEXICO CITY - DAY

The phone rings. A bomb going off. Eighteen's distraught FATHER (family photos of the boy on the wall) answers.

REVERSE TO REVEAL a battery of POLICE and NEGOTIATORS in the room with him. One of them listens in, waves fingers at him as the negotiations begin.

INT. VIDEO SURVEILLANCE OF AN 8' X 4' CELL - DAY

A wall smeared with God-knows-what. Facing it, Eighteen stands naked blindfolded and shivering. The back of his leg still bleeds. He shifts nervously as a little JACK RUSSELL TERRIER eagerly licks the blood off his calf.

A MAN ('The Dreamer'), we don't see his face, negotiates by cell phone. Voice calm. As he runs numbers, he slaps his thigh. Jack Russell trots over, gets an ear scratched.

At a motion from the man, Eighteen is taken down to the ground. Straddled by two men, his head is mummified in tape leaving one ear exposed.

CUT TO T.V. - Rosanna Garcia Guerrero, editor of REFORMA newspaper, being interviewed, "...organized crime syndicates...growth of kidnapping in Mexico over the last two years."

EXT. UPSCALE HOUSE - DAY

As a hand removes a ziplock baggie from the mailbox. A glimpse of something we don't want to see. An ear partially obscured by sweating plastic and a blood smear.

EXT. CITY SQUARE - MEXICO CITY - NIGHT

A MERCEDES driving around the square, Eighteen's father waving a white shirt out the window like a surrender flag.

EXT. BRIDGE - NIGHT (3 AM)

Footbridge over railway sandwiched between freeway. Empty train blazes through. Dangerous, deserted downtown neighborhood. Looks more like "war torn Beirut", burnt out cars and trash. The 18 year old's father, naked to the waist, walks from the family Mercedes over the footbridge carrying a pillowcase full of cash to a semi-derelict car on the opposite side with a white piece of fabric taped in the rear windshield and trunk open. He slams the pillow case in the trunk and leaves.

EXT. DOWNTOWN MEXICO CITY - TWILIGHT

RUSH HOUR. A red stream of headlights separated from a white stream of taillights by a narrow median.

HORNS blare as a CAR stops. Eighteen, still blindfolded, is dumped on the median. The car pulls away.

He stands there in the whirlwind. Pathetically SCREAMING for help. More horns, shouts, no help.

END MAIN TITLES. Goes to black.

CREASY'S VOICE

Ezekiel 25:17 Blessed is he who in the name of charity and good will shepherds the weak through the valley of darkness for he is truly his brother's keeper and the finder of lost children.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. AGO'S - MEXICO CITY - DAY

Samuel Valencia Ramos and his lawyer Jordan Kalfus in the privacy of an alcove table. Jordan is well heeled, well connected and well oiled. In that order. Samuel, at 40, already has the patrician look that has served the male members of his family for generations. They discuss the kidnapping, a headline on the paper Jordan tosses aside.

JORDAN

The family paid the ransom and he was returned two days later.

(laughs; chews)

His father still hasn't gotten up the nerve to ask him if they fucked him up the ass.

SAMUEL

And now every mother with money in Mexico City wants bigger and better bodyguards. My own wife included.

JORDAN

If she pisses you off, you get another one.

SAMUEL

(laughs grimly)

Do you know what she told me last night?

FLASH TO:

INT. SITTING ROOM - RAMOS VILLA - MEXICO CITY - NIGHT

Samuel sits at his baby grand piano playing a gentle rendering of 'Delibes'. His American wife LISA stands away from him. Just the sight of her back reveals a pitch perfect petulance. She tells him:

LISA

A man's worth can be judged by what he has or what he owes. Only the amount matters.

SAMUEL

And bankruptcy. Where will that put me in the social strata?

LISA

I'm only asking for one thing. And it's not an extravagance. It's not even for me; it's for our daughter.

SAMUEL

Our daughter.

She turns at that: a woman so beautiful it nearly hurts to look at her. She stares, plays him like Chinese Checkers.

LISA

Our child's safety is at stake.

SAMUEL

(stops playing)

These people are professionals. They don't waste their time taking children whose fathers are virtually bankrupt.

LISA

Samuel, it is not something we should skimp on. A bodyguard's presence in the car or outside the school was at least some form of deterrent. Now he's gone, I feel totally exposed.

She just stares at him. He melts.

RETURN TO:

INT. AGO'S - MEXICO CITY - DAY

Jordan smiles at his client, enjoys seeing him squirm.

SAMUEL

Of course I care about Pinta. She'll be as beautiful as her mother one day.

JORDAN

Yeah? And if she was ugly?

Samuel rolls his eyes. Jordan laughs. Beheading two cigars, he passes one to Samuel.

JORDAN

All my clients have kidnap and ransom insurance.

SAMUEL

I have a policy, AIG. It covers me and my family and when it runs out in sixty days, without a bodyguard, I will not be able to renew it.

JORDAN

I know you need to please Lisa. An ass like that is hard to find. Good bodyguards are even harder.

SAMUEL

(interrupts)

I know! I just had to let one go because I couldn't afford him!

Jordan lights his cigar.

JORDAN

You need a bodyguard of some description. It's a dangerous world we live in. But you will get what you pay for. He doesn't need to be Superman, does he? Can you go fifteen grand?

SAMUEL

For a year?

JORDAN

For a few months. Hire someone cheap. You have to have a bodyguard to keep the insurance. Then fire him for incompetence. The important thing is Lisa's daughter will return to school.

Samuel finally follows the logic.

SAMUEL

And Lisa will be able to save face. We won't be the only family without a bodyguard.

JORDAN

Her beauty fucks with your mind.

SAMUEL

For an American she understands this country very well.

JORDAN

She understands men.

As Samuel puffs his cigar in satisfaction...

EXT. CORRIDOR - MEXICO CITY AIRPORT - DAY

As a 747 is towed by in the background, a MAN strides at us. CREASY. Even in movement, he has a stillness, an air of isolation. He's set apart from other living things.

He wears dark sunglasses, carries a well-worn leather bag. Inscrutable. Disconnected. A bit frightening. The discipline of a soldier. The independence of a gunslinger.

Automatic baggage teller (Red Light, Green Light). Creasy feeds the machine with his perforated customs card. Light flashes RED.

CUSTOMS MAN

He flips through Creasy's passport. Even the stamps have stamps. Thailand. Somalia. Cuba. Columbia. Hong Kong. Saudi Arabia. Every country in Europe. Guy's been around.

Customs looks up from the ink blue American Eagle to the deep matte black of Creasy's sunglasses.

NOTE: Italics denotes the lines spoken in Spanish.

CUSTOMS

Where are you coming from?

CREASY

South America.

CUSTOMS

Where are you staying in Mexico?

CREASY

I'm on to Juarez.

CUSTOMS

Why?

CREASY

I have a friend there.

Customs looks at Creasy a moment. He doesn't look like a man who has 'friends'. Finally, customs smiles.

CUSTOMS

I cannot see your eyes, Senor.

Creasy slips off the sunglasses. His eyes are deserted. Inevitable. Customs can only look into them a moment. He indicates for Creasy to put his bags on a conveyor belt leading to an X-ray machine. Creasy lifts his bag onto the conveyor. The official hits the start button. The bag drives forward towards the X-ray machine.

Creasy pauses, then offers up a license from his wallet.

CUSTOMS

Senor?

CREASY

*It's a permit to carry a gun in Columbia.
The gun you're about to find in that
suitcase.*

Polaroid FLASH

Shot of Creasy straight on. Shot of Creasy profile.

FLASH. Fingers being fingerprinted.

JUMPCUTS - suitcase being stripped and ripped (MIDNIGHT EXPRESS), pack of Marlboro, bottle of Jack Daniels, glimpse a weathered Bible (New Testament), intercut with seven pieces of blue steel separated in different parts of the bag, ie. toiletries, underwear, lining of suitcase.

The seven pieces laid together look remarkably like a well travelled Sig Sauer 226. Creasy smiles.

EXT. JUAREZ, MEXICO FOUR BIG BURLY SUV'S - DRIVING ACROSS THE BORDER CHECKPOINT - DAY

INT. SUV - DAY

Six Japanese BUSINESSMEN jabber on cellphones. PAUL RAYBURN sits up front trying not to spill coffee on the mini Uzi cradled in his lap. As his own cell phone rings, he answers.

RAYBURN

Rayburn here.

INT. CUSTOMS HOLDING TANK - MEXICO CITY - DAY

Creasy on payphone.

CREASY

When did Mexican Customs start getting smart?

RAYBURN'S SUV

RAYBURN

Creasy??? Where the fuck are you?

CUSTOMS JAIL

CREASY

I'm here.

RAYBURN'S SUV

RAYBURN

What do you mean, I'm here?

CUSTOMS JAIL

CREASY

I'm in a Customs holding tank in Mexico City International. Bring a bunch of cash... about 5K. I'm going to need it.

INT. CUSTOMS AREA - A BACK OFFICE

Rayburn has 5K U.S. dollars laid out on the desk between him, the Customs official, and Creasy. The remains of the suitcase are spread around the room. The main offender, the gun being front and center next to the cash. Looks like the official is going to fold.

RAYBURN

This is going to cost you big time.

INT. STRIP BAR - Rethink Location

A stripper does a half hearted grind as Rayburn and Creasy sit at the bar sharing a bottle of 'Jack'.

RAYBURN

You got a secondary search and you had a gun.

CREASY

Listen it was a calculated risk. I've done it a million times and never got caught.

RAYBURN

Everything happens once if you live long enough.

CREASY

It doesn't make sense to x-ray your bags coming off the plane.

RAYBURN

This is Mexico, they do everything backwards.

Creasy hits the 'Jack'.

RAYBURN

So what's wrong?

CREASY

Nothing wrong.

RAYBURN

Don't give me that bullshit.

Creasy changes subject.

CREASY

So how's business?

RAYBURN

Japanese are here in a big way. Cheap labor. Factory space. But they feel a lot safer living over the border in El Paso. I ferry 'em back and forth. They think I'm John-fucking-Wayne.

CREASY

But don't you stay in El Paso?

RAYBURN

Fuck, I love Mexico. I live like a king down here.

Creasy takes a look around the Seedy Bar.

CREASY

Yeah, right...

RAYBURN

Oh, like you haven't been in worse places.

CREASY

And a level five shithole is better than a level six. Your logic's inescapable.

Rayburn laughs. Creasy takes the bottle. Creasy's hand is mottled by old burn marks.

RAYBURN

You been working?

CREASY

Not for eight months. I was in Columbia looking around, but, nothing seemed interesting.

RAYBURN

How long you staying, Crease?

CREASY

(shrugs)

Got no plans, Rayburn, Nothing on. Just wanted to see you, how you were. Came by on impulse.

Rayburn studies his friend a beat, just seeing the cracks that weren't there last time they met.

RAYBURN

You did something on impulse?

CREASY

Everything happens once if you live long enough.

Creasy smiles.

INT. PINTA'S BEDROOM - MEXICO CITY - NIGHT

Nine-year-old PINTA MARTIN RAMOS stares out at the garden, a bit like Creasy, but only a ten yard stare. Pinta's eyes brim with life. She folds her hands, closes her eyes, prays. 'Chopin' drifts up from downstairs. Samuel on the baby grand.

PINTA

Dear God. I do not ask for health. Or wealth. People ask you so often that you can't have any left. Give me God what you still have. Give me what no one else asks for. Amen.

Pinta grabs a battered old TEDDY BEAR and climbs into bed. She pulls the covers up, looks over as her door opens.

Lisa enters. Pinta is her daughter.

LISA

You should be sleeping, baby.

PINTA
I'm trying, mom.

Lisa strokes her head, smiles.

LISA
Good news. You're going back to school.

PINTA
(sits up; excited)
When?

LISA
Samuel is going to hire a new bodyguard.
It may take a few days, but you're going
back.

Pinta lets it sink in. Lisa kisses her goodnight.

PINTA
Could he speak English? Emilio couldn't
speak English.

LISA
We'll see. And thank your father in the
morning. A man always needs to be
thanked.

EXT. - JUAREZ DESERT - DAWN

Four SUV's blast along a desert highway on their way to
pick up some Japanese businessmen. Rayburn rides
shotgun, Creasy in the back. Rayburn looks like he slept
in his clothes. Creasy looks crisp and clean.

RAYBURN
That's right, a bodyguard.

Creasy looks at him blankly.

RAYBURN
Your Spanish is good enough. You
certainly look the part.

CREASY
You're crazy. People would hire a has-
been, Ray? A drunk?

RAYBURN
Well, you'd have to keep it under
control.

CREASY

And what if, just say, there was a kidnap attempt?

RAYBURN

You do your best. They won't be paying you enough to perform miracles.

Creasy just shakes his head.

RAYBURN

It's not exactly a scam, Crease. Even at half speed you're pretty damn good.

CREASY

A bodyguard has to be close to someone all the time. Willing to talk. I'm not good at that.

RAYBURN

So you'll be the silent type. People will appreciate that.

Creasy shakes his head, looks out the window.

RAYBURN

What are you doing here?

CREASY

I came to visit you.

RAYBURN

Bullshit. I've known you fifteen years. You don't visit.

CREASY

A bodyguard... Who's the guy?

RAYBURN

Samuel Ramos. Owns one of the plants in Juarez. The Jap car industry is in the toilet. He's trying to persuade Ford to partner with him. I think he's in trouble. He asked me if I knew anyone he could trust.

CREASY

Oh, now you think I can be trusted.

RAYBURN

Take a job, Creasy. Breathe some air. Then decide if you want to... stick around or not.

Rayburn throws him a VHS from the glove box.

RAYBURN
Instructional tape on what I tell my
clients about bodyguarding.

Creasy looks back at Rayburn who's just a little too
perceptive for comfort.

EXT. MERCEDES - MEXICO CITY SUBURBS - DAY

A dark Mercedes maneuvers the turns.

INT. MERCEDES - DAY

Creasy at the wheel. Samuel sits in the back. Studying.

SAMUEL
You drive easily. Smoothly.

Creasy doesn't answer, just drives.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)
Were you provided with a gun?

CREASY
Yes.

SAMUEL
Show me, please.

Creasy takes his right hand off the wheel, reaches under
his jacket and passes back a beat-to-shit looking PISTOL.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)
What is it?

CREASY
Nine millimeter. A Sig Sauer 226.

SAMUEL
Have you used this type before?

Creasy just nods. Doesn't like the show and tell.

SAMUEL
Is it loaded?

CREASY
It's loaded.

Samuel hands back the gun.

SAMUEL

You will meet my wife first. She would like it if you are presentable, polite and respectful. You'll be the fifth candidate she's seen this week.

Samuel flips through a manila folder.

SAMUEL

Your resume is impressive. Nine years in the Army. Extensive counter terrorism work. I shouldn't be able to afford you in my current state. What's the catch?

CREASY

(honest)

I drink.

SAMUEL

How does it affect you?

CREASY

My coordination. Reaction time. If top professionals try to kidnap your daughter, the service will be on par with the pay.

SAMUEL

And what if amateurs try it?

CREASY

I'll probably kill them. Is that likely?

SAMUEL

No. And no one is to know of your drinking problem. That includes my wife.

As they pull up to the Ramos' impressive hacienda.

INT. SITTING ROOM - RAMOS VILLA - MEXICO CITY - NIGHT

Where Lisa is flipping through TV channels; Sky News, CNN, etc... Each one showing some terrorist act - West Bank protest, Madrid car bombing.

Samuel and Creasy, meanwhile, enter behind her. She clicks it off, looks back at them.

LISA

The world of our children. How dare they?

CREASY

(shrugs)

It's war. The weakest suffer the most.

LISA

You're American.

CREASY

So are you.

SAMUEL

(introducing)

My wife, Mr. Creasy.

LISA

Lisa Martin Ramos, Mr. Creasy.

Lisa steps over, shakes Creasy's hand. Gives him a quick once over.

LISA (CONT'D)

Would you like a drink?

Creasy doesn't hesitate, doesn't look at Samuel and has no irony in his answer.

CREASY

Thank you. Scotch and a little water.

She steps to the bar to make it.

CREASY - FROM SOMEONE'S POV

Slightly sinister. Watching from the frame of the door.

LISA

You've done much of this work before?

CREASY

Never.

Samuel sells, covers for Creasy's reticence.

SAMUEL

He has experience in related work. A great deal of it.

LISA

Do you have any family, Mr. Creasy?

Creasy hesitates for an imperceptible beat.

CREASY

No. I do not have family.

And then, somehow, Creasy is aware of being watched. His eyes flicker over, just in time to see...

PINTA

Crouched low. In the doorway. She stares back at him a beat, then disappears around the corner.

SITTING ROOM

Creasy frowns. Lisa steps over with Creasy's drink.

CREASY

Thank you.

She makes a point of looking into his eyes. Creasy looks back into hers with complete indifference, something she has not experienced even from dying men.

She abruptly turns away. Confused for a moment. Finally:

LISA

Pinta!

A few moments and Pinta arrives. 'Cool Hand Pinta'.

PINTA

Yes, mom?

LISA

This is Mr. Creasy.

Pinta walks over and very formally holds out her hand. Creasy shakes it. An odd beat.

LISA

Pinta, show him to his room.

Samuel reacts. Creasy got the job.

PINTA

This way, Mr. Creasy.

What an actress. As he follows her out. Samuel sits at his baby grand and begins to play.

LISA

I think it's nice he's American.

SAMUEL

I think it's fantastic.

LISA
You realize that you've brought a killer
into the house.

Samuel is stopped short by that one. She steps over and
kisses her husband on the cheek.

LISA
Thank you. I feel better now.

EXT./INT. HOUSE - SUNSET

Pinta leads the way. All enthusiasm, away from her
parents. A 150 pound black German Shepherd greets them.
Sniffs Creasy's pant leg, unsure.

PINTA
Do you like dogs, Mr. Creasy?

CREASY
If they like me.

PINTA
Frank doesn't take to most people. Do
you speak German?

CREASY
(in German)
Ein Klines Bisschen. [A tiny bit.]

PINTA
Frank only responds to commands in
German. He was trained in Frankfurt.
My Dad loves the idea of having a dog
around, but hates the fact he lives
inside.

Creasy follows her. Frank pads along after them.

CREASY'S ROOM

Not like downstairs, but comfortable enough.

PINTA
We fixed the room up two weeks ago. Mom
and I. It's nicer than before.

Creasy takes a stroll around it, ignoring her.

PINTA
You've got a CD player if you like music.
I like music a lot.

CAW! Creasy looks over at a CAGE on a stand holding a MACAW. It tilts its head at the big man.

A TV and VHS machine in the corner.

PINTA
That's 'Bird.' Emilio forgot to take him with when he left.

CREASY
Who's Emilio?

PINTA
My last bodyguard. He drove me to school in the morning and picked me up in the afternoon.

Finally Creasy turns, looks at her hard.

CREASY
I'm here for you?

Pinta smiles huge, nods.

PINTA
In between you can take Mom shopping and to lunch. Does that sound alright, Mr. Creasy?

CREASY
Creasy. Just call me Creasy.

PINTA
(big grin)
Creasy...

Frank's tail wags imperceptibly.

PINTA
Looks like he approves of you.

And then, walking on air, she's out the door.

Creasy sets up his room with meticulous precision that comes from years in the military. Front and center he arranges his shrine: an almost empty bottle of scotch and a glass (engraved from an earlier encounter) next to a pack of Marlboros and his weathered Zippo. Then, his beaten up gun and holster. A well-travelled New Testament is placed in the drawer.

CREASY'S BAG

He reaches in between the shirts, pulls out a fresh bottle of scotch. He breaks the seal, unscrews the cap.

He pours a double... triple... wait, what do you call a full glass of scotch?

CAW! The macaw squawks it's disapproval.

He ejects the shell from the breach of the 9mm, tries to catch it on the back of his hand. An old game with himself.

His hand is too shaky. The bullet bounces off, hits the floor. Creasy picks it up. Ejecting the magazine, he starts to oil the weapon.

CAW! As the macaw squawks, Creasy looks up. It doesn't feel like this relationship is going to work.

INT. PINTA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A battered TEDDY BEAR watches as Lisa sits on the foot of the bed, tucks Pinta in.

LISA
School tomorrow, baby.

Pinta smiles, happy at the thought.

PINTA
I like him, Mom.

LISA
You do?

PINTA
He's like a great big bear.
(a secret smile)
'Creasy bear'...

Lisa smiles, kisses her goodnight. As she starts out...

PINTA
There's something about him.

Lisa turns, looks back at her daughter.

PINTA
I think he's been sick. He's alright now, but I think he's been very, very sick.

LISA
Well, think about going to sleep. Good
night, baby.

Lisa exits. Pinta looks over at the battered teddy bear.

PINTA
Just like you, a big old bear.

CUT TO:

CREASY

In his room. Tests his mag spring with his thumb, begins
loading up. The full magazine joins with those already
loaded.

Another glass of scotch is poured.

Creasy's hands oil the holster. The Sig Sauer is slipped
in. The holster is hung over the corner post of the bed.

A map is flattened. Creasy's finger traces various
routes, pencils them in. From the house to Pinta's
school.

The macaw squawks again. Creasy steps over, takes the
cage and carries it to the open window. He opens the
cage door.

CREASY
Now's your chance.

The bird flies, disappears out the window.

INT. LISA & SAMUEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Spent, glistened in sweat, the couple lay side by side.

LISA
She likes him.

SAMUEL
Hmm?

LISA
Creasy. Pinta likes him.

SAMUEL
Pinta loves school. She'd like Count
Dracula is he took her back there.

Lisa just smiles, knows her daughter better.

CUT TO:

CREASY'S ROOM

Creasy's drinking in the dark next to the window, listening to the sounds of Mexico City at night.

The empty scotch glass is set down. Ominously sober.

INT. PINTA'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

Brushing her hair, Pinta wanders to the window at the sound of a car hood closing. Creasy is down below going over the car; a dark BLUE MERCEDES. As he checks underneath...

The "Car Wash Guy", Pedro, trying to engage Creasy. Frank looks on, seems like he disapproves of Pedro.

INT. MERCEDES - DAY

Creasy sits grimly behind the wheel. Pinta exuberant beside him. Traveling route number one from home base to school. Pinta looks at Creasy's hands on the wheel. The back of the right one is swirled with scars.

PINTA

Where are you from, Creasy?

CREASY

The United States.

PINTA

I know. But which state?

Creasy checks the rearview mirror. A banged up white TOYOTA COROLLA pulls out behind him.

CREASY

No state in particular.

Pinta frowns; this is going to take some work.

PINTA

My mom and me are from Houston, Texas. Have you been there?

Creasy has his eyes on the mirror.

CREASY

No.

PINTA

You can drive and talk at the same time,
can't you?

CREASY

(turns left)

No.

PINTA

Why not?

CREASY

I'm looking for potential.

Creasy checks the mirror. The white Corolla continues
the way it was going. False alarm.

PINTA

Potential? I don't understand.

CREASY

Places where the road bends, places away
from buildings, places where the traffic
thins out. But you don't have to
understand. I do. So no talking.

PINTA

Are you going to quit? My last bodyguard
quit.

CREASY

Let me guess, you wouldn't stop talking?

PINTA

Someone gave him more money than we
could.

CREASY

I'm a bargain.

PINTA

Being black, is that a positive or
negative for a bodyguard in Mexico?

CREASY

Time will tell.

PINTA

There were 24 kidnappings in Mexico City
in the last six days. Four a day. What
do you think about that, Mr. Creasy?

CREASY

Pretty impressive. Maybe I need to up my fee or get a larger gun.

She looks at his scared right hand, then him. All curiosity.

EXT. CONVENT SCHOOL GATES - MEXICO CITY - DAY

Creasy pulls the Mercedes up out front. He notes the high walls, the heavy gates.

PINTA

Beep the horn.

Creasy hits it. A beat and then a shutter opens at eye level. Pinta waves from the car. A moment later the gate is being slowly pushed open by an old WATCHMAN. Creasy drives in toward a rambling, ivy-clad building set in spacious grounds.

COURTYARD

Creasy parks, get out of the car. He looks around, appraising the lay of the land.

PINTA

Isn't it beautiful?

Pinta's name is called. An elderly gray-haired NUN walks over from the entrance. Pinta runs over, kiss her warmly on both cheeks, then leads her toward Creasy.

PINTA

Sister Anna, the headmistress.
(to nun; proudly)
This is Creasy, my bodyguard.

Sister Anna shakes his hand.

SISTER ANNA

Mr. Creasy.

PINTA

No, Sister, he told me just to call him Creasy. He's American. From no state in particular.

SISTER ANNA

You must look after our Pinta. We're so happy to have her back in school. Run along now, Pinta.

Pinta waves goodbye, bounds away. They watch her go.

SISTER ANNA

She's late, Mr. Creasy.

CREASY

*Yeah, I've got to get used to the routes.
I -- It won't happen again.*

SISTER ANNA

*No offense, but I'm sorry that your
profession needs to exist.*

CREASY

So am I, Sister.

SISTER ANNA

*Do you ever see the hand of God in what
you do?*

CREASY

Not for a long time, sister.

SISTER ANNA

*The bible says, "Be not overcome of evil,
but overcome evil with good."*

CREASY

Romans, chapter 12, verse 21.

Sister Anna is impressed. She nods her 'props' to Creasy.

CREASY

I'm the sheep that got lost.

INT. MERCEDES - CONVENT SCHOOL GATES - DAY

Creasy pulls out, starts down the street. He's only gone a hundred meters when SIRENS kick up. A police car behind him. Creasy shakes his head.

CREASY

Here we go again.

Creasy pulls over, digs around the front seat as TWO SLOPPY COPS head over.

SLOPPY COP ONE

Do you speak English, Senor?

CREASY

Yeah. And Spanish.

SLOPPY COP ONE

You have an identification?

Creasy hands them his PASSPORT and a printed LETTER. A legitimate firearms license for bodyguard work witnessed by Rayburn.

Creasy deliberately puts one hand on the steering wheel, then the other. Minimizing the confrontation.

CREASY

It's a temporary license for the gun I'm carrying. I just went through all of this at the airport.

INT. BIG BURLY SUV - DRIVING TOWARD THE BORDER - DAY

Six Japanese BUSINESSMEN jabber on cellphones. Rayburn's daily routine. He sits up front an Uzi cradled in his lap. As his own cell phone rings, he answers.

RAYBURN

Rayburn here. Creasy, what's up?
(listens; laughs)
Yeah?

CUT TO:

POLICE LINE-UP WALL - As Creasy's MUG SHOT is flashed.

CREASY'S HAND - As he's fingerprinted.

CREASY

There's still ink on my fingers from last week.

CUT TO:

RAYBURN'S SUV

RAYBURN

You got tossed. Don't trust the cops, especially the Judicials.
(listens; laughs again)
Oh you know that?

INT. BAR - DAY

Creasy slams a Jack and Coke.

EXT. HIGH STREET - MEXICO CITY - DAY

Creasy striding, the frivolous shoppers like another species as he moves through them. Might as well wear a shark fin. He spots something: a MUSIC STORE.

INT. MUSIC STORE - MEXICO CITY - DAY

Creasy finds the section he's looking for, searches a rack. There. As he pulls a particular CD, we are not privy to what it is.

EXT. COURTYARD - PINTA'S SCHOOL - DAY

Creasy waits, smoking a Marlboro light, separate from the other drivers and bodyguards. The bodyguards stand together sharing cigarettes and stories. Give him a share of unfriendly looks. Creasy could care less.

The doors open and the children pour out. PINTA exits, a huge grin as she spots Creasy. Creasy palms the Marlboro. The frown on his might as well be chiseled in marble.

INT. MERCEDES - ROLLING -DAY

Pinta rides shotgun alongside Creasy. She looks out the window, realizes...

PINTA
We're taking a different way home.

CREASY
That's right.

Pinta thinks about it, realizes what he's doing, smiles.

PINTA
I understand. Smart.

No answer from Creasy. It's hard not to feel foolish around this kid.

PINTA
Did you like school, Creasy?

CREASY
No.

PINTA
Not at all?

CREASY
No.

PINTA
But why not?

Creasy's hoping she'll just shut up.

PINTA

Hmmm?

CREASY

It wasn't a school like yours and there was no Sister Anna.

PINTA

So you were unhappy?

CREASY

Being unhappy is a state of mind. I never thought about it.

PINTA

Oh...

Pinta watches Creasy a moment, trying to figure a way in. She looks at his scarred right hand on the wheel.

Then, as she reaches out...

PINTA

What happened to...

And touches it.

PINTA

...your hand?

Creasy gives her a look, devoid of humanity for an instant.

CREASY

No more questions.

When he speaks again he's colder; he's decided something.

CREASY

I'm not paid to be your friend. I'm paid to protect you.

They drive on in silence. Creasy finally glances over. Pinta stares straight ahead, her chin quivering.

CREASY

(exasperated)

And don't start crying.

PINTA

I'm not crying.

But she is. As Creasy stops at a red light...

CREASY

Look, this is the way I am. I don't like questions. I --

And she's out the door.

CREASY

Shit.

Creasy shoulders open his door, bolts out.

INTERSECTION

Creasy has barely straightened himself and Pinta is already getting back in the car. This time in the backseat.

Creasy sighs. The light goes green. Scooters whine away and horns blare.

MERCEDES

Creasy sits back behind the wheel.

PINTA

You can take me home now, Mr. Creasy.

Creasy looks back at her, but she stares straight ahead. As the chorus of horns continues, Creasy continues driving.

INT. KITCHEN - RAMOS VILLA - DAY

Creasy sits at the table with the old gardener GOMEZ (we've seen him trimming hedges and such in earlier exteriors). Gomez's just cleaned his plate and is going after any remnants with a crust of bread. Creasy hasn't touched his.

MARIA, the cook, enters. As she clocks Creasy's plate...

INT. CREASY'S ROOM - SUNSET

'Chopin' drifts across the courtyard. Samuel is a very accomplished player.

Creasy sits in a chair in the twilight by the window, a glass of scotch in his hand. A knock at the door.

CREASY

Come in.

The door opens. It's Lisa.

LISA

Mr. Creasy, I wanted to make sure you have everything you need.

CREASY

I'm fine.

LISA

Is the food alright? Maria tells me that you didn't eat.

CREASY

The food's fine. Sometimes I don't eat.

LISA

(smiles)

It insults Maria. Slip it to the dog if you have to... Do you mind if I talk to you for a moment?

He shakes his head. Lisa glides into the room like a dancer, sits down at the foot of the bed.

LISA

How are you getting along with Pinta?

CREASY

We'll be okay once she realizes I'm not a new toy.

LISA

(smiles)

Yes, she told me. Do you have children, Mr. Creasy?

CREASY

No.

LISA

You should know they're tenacious when they want something. And Pinta wants to be friends.

CREASY

You're paying me to protect her, not amuse her. Right?

A beat and then Lisa nods.

CREASY

Look. Maybe this isn't going to work. Maybe you should ask your husband to hire someone... more sociable.

LISA

No, you're right. You were hired to protect her, that's enough. I'm confident you'll do that.

Lisa stands, is about to start out when she sees his gun and holster hanging from the corner of the bed. It gives her pause. Something sexy about it and Creasy's proximity.

LISA

I didn't realize you had a gun. I know that's silly to say.

Creasy doesn't answer, just watches her.

LISA

It makes it all seem so serious.

CREASY

It is serious, Mrs. Ramos.

LISA

Please, it's Lisa... I'll be coming with you tomorrow. I have lunch with friends.

Finally, Lisa just shrugs and disappears out the door. Creasy slugs down a gulp of scotch.

INT. PINTA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Pinta, blankets up, teddy bear beside her, says her prayer.

PINTA

Give me God what you still have. Give me what no one else asks for.

Then, she listens as Linda Ronstadt's "Blue Bayou" starts to drift through the open window, down from the room above.

RONSTADT

"I'm going back someday, come what may, to Blue Bayou..."

INT. CREASY'S ROOM - NIGHT

He stands in the dark, in front of the glow of the stereo. The empty bag from the record store. This is the CD he bought. As the song ends, Creasy hits the back-up button. "Blue Bayou" begins again. Creasy takes the 9mm from its holster. As he sits back in his chair...

INT. PINTA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Pinta listens to the music, figures a way to dance to it.

INT. CREASY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Creasy sits in the dark with his 'Blue Bayou'. Creasy does not look right. Holding the 9mm, he ejects the round, tries to catch it on the back of his hand. No good.

He chambers another round. Tries again. Nope.

LINDA RONSTADT

Well I'll never be blue, my dreams come true, on Blue Bayou...

INT. PINTA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Pinta still dancing, finding a way to be with Creasy whether he knows it or not. Frank, the dog, watches her every move, perplexed.

INT. CREASY'S ROOM - NIGHT

As the song repeats, Creasy chambers yet another round. Feels like he misses a beat as he loads one shell into the chamber. Pinta sings along oblivious. Suddenly the barrel is at his forehead and the trigger has been pulled. No gun shot. A click. Hammer against shell. Creasy is confused. He ejects the shell and catches it in the palm of his hand. Macro photograph / a small dimple on the back of the shell is the only evidence of his actions. Pinta still dances.

INT. RAYBURN'S BEDROOM - MEXICO CITY - NIGHT 3.A.M.

Rayburn in bed with his beautiful 19-year-old Mexican WIFE and their four-year-old SON.

As she leans down to kiss her son, a cellphone rings. Rayburn looks over at the nightstand. FIVE CELLPHONES there, one of them ringing. Rayburn finds it.

RAYBURN

Rayburn... Creasy! What's wrong?

EXT. RAMOS HOUSE - NIGHT

Creasy stands at the edge of the drive, the house dark behind him. On his cell phone.

CREASY

I said, have you ever had a nine millimeter round that just didn't go off?

INTERCUT THE FOLLOWING:

Rayburn pulling away, sitting on the edge of the bed.

RAYBURN

You mean a misfire?

CREASY

I mean nothing. The hammer came down and nothing happened. Dimple on the primer.

RAYBURN

I've heard of it. Never happened to me though. Maybe the firing pin's off.

CREASY

Maybe...

Creasy is troubled about it all to say the least.

RAYBURN

It's like we always used to say: a bullet always tells the truth. What were you shooting at?

Creasy doesn't answer. He holds the bullet up, looks at it.

RAYBURN

(focusing; concerned)

Creasy?

CREASY

Sorry I woke you, Ray.

Creasy clicks off the phone. He starts back toward the house, but stops short again.

There she is. Pinta. Standing in the window of her room. She's been watching him. It's like Creasy seeing her for the first time. And she's been watching him forever. No easy answer for it. They're connected somehow.

INT. CREASY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Fingers putting the special bullet into an old matchbox. It takes its place of honor front and center on the shrine. Next to the Marlboros and scotch. The New Testament is set down nearby.

CU - Creasy asleep in his bed for the first time.

INT. MERCEDES - ROLLING - DAY

Silent Creasy driving. Lisa and Pinta in the back. Creasy steals a look in the mirror. Pinta stares straight ahead. But when Creasy looks away, Pinta steals a look at him.

EXT. STREET - MEXICO CITY - DAY

As the mercedes crosses an intersection, a white TOYOTA COROLLA turns right, pulls in thirty meters behind it.

INT. MERCEDES - ROLLING - DAY

Creasy clocks the Corolla, frowns. He pulls a piece of paper from his pocket. But nothing to write with.

CREASY

Pinta, do you have a pencil?

PINTA

I go to school, don't I?

Sarcasm. He stays calm, doesn't let on what he's thinking.

CREASY

Please?

Her little hand comes over the top of the seat with a pencil. Creasy takes it, slows to let the Corolla catch up. He squints into the mirror to read the plate.

Lisa is oblivious, but as Pinta looks back over her shoulder...

BRAKE LIGHTS up ahead. Creasy lurches to a stop. The Corolla swerves around them disappears ahead.

CREASY

Sorry.

LISA

The traffic takes some getting used to.

As Creasy cranes for a view, another WHITE Corolla comes by headed the opposite way. They're everywhere. This relaxes Creasy's paranoia. As he laughs to himself.

EXT. COURTYARD - CONVENT SCHOOL - DAY

They pull in through the gates. The Mercedes parks; Creasy gets out. Pinta kisses her mother on the cheek.

PINTA

Bye, Mom.

LISA

Don't forget your towel.

Pinta gets out with book bag and her towel. As she starts to walk past Creasy without a word, he holds out her pencil. She holds up, shows him a SECOND PENCIL, continues on her way. Doesn't need him.

MERCEDES

Creasy gets back in, starts away.

LISA

She has swimming practice today. You'll need to pick her up at the pool.

Creasy just nods. He doesn't want anything to do with Lisa either. Thoughtful, Lisa looks out the window.

LISA

I talked to her. She understands. She won't bother you anymore.

As Creasy just drives.

EXT. AGO'S - MEXICO CITY - DAY

Creasy waits in the street, stands by the Mercedes. He checks his watch, looks around. The minutes do not pass quickly. He looks over as the restaurant door opens and Lisa exits with Jordan Kalfus and his Latin wife EVELYN.

LISA

(sees him)

Creasy!

(stepping over)

Meet Jordan and Evelyn.

Creasy nods. They study him with interest.

JORDAN

So you're the bodyguard?

(Creasy nods again)

You used to be, what did they used to call it, a soldier of fortune?

Jordan doesn't quite hide his disdain. Creasy nods a final time, lets his eyes drift to a 1000 yard stare.

EVELYN
(giggles)
Does he talk?

As Lisa gives her a dirty look, Evelyn whispers...

EVELYN
He's sexy...

Jordan looks in the direction Creasy looks.

JORDAN
You see any danger out there?
(laughs)
The fear's worse than the reality.

Just a blankness from Creasy.

JORDAN
I always wanted to ask a bodyguard, would you take a bullet for your employer, for Samuel?

A condescending smile as Jordan awaits his answer.

CREASY
I wasn't hired to guard Mr. Ramos.

JORDAN
For Pinta then?

LISA
Jordan!

CREASY
If something happened, my reaction would be to fight to protect her. I have skills in that respect. Pinta would benefit by the fact that... I'm a soldier.

JORDAN
What kind of an answer is that?

CREASY
The answer is the truth. The question is foolish.

Lisa smiles at the answer, kisses Jordan on the cheek.

LISA

Jordan, thank you for the lovely lunch.
I promise not to let Evelyn spend too
much.

Evelyn doesn't see it, but Creasy does. Jordan just lets
his fingers trace the top of Lisa's ass.

As she and Evelyn head for the car, Creasy is there to
open the door.

MERCEDES

Creasy gets behind the wheel. Pulls into traffic. As he
goes, he checks the rear view mirror. Jordan remains
standing on the curb watching the car pull away.
Something odd about it all.

EXT. PUBLIC POOL - MEXICO CITY - DAY

Loud. Chaotic. Reminiscent of a lunatic asylum. Creasy
arrives at the public pool. A practice. Several
bodyguards gather at one end of the pool. Give Creasy a
less than friendly look. As he looks for Pinta...

A GUN goes off.

Sees: The smoke from the starting pistol as the SWIMMERS
splash into the water.

He sees Pinta in the pool. The fifty yard dash. She's
in fifth. Then fourth. Creasy walks along beside her.
Third. Second and closing. And at the wall, still
second.

She surfaces, frustrated. As she sees Creasy there...

INT. MERCEDES - DAY

Creasy drives. Pinta in back, writing in her notebook.
Not speaking, but a weird sort of harmony. Finally.

CREASY

You're fast.

PINTA

Once I get in the water but not starting
off. By the time I catch up, it's too
late.

She keeps writing. The number "2" over and over.

INT. CREASY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Creasy sits in his chair drinking scotch. All alone needless to say.

Creasy takes the instructional VHS on bodyguards that Rayburn gave him and plugs it into the VCR. It's in Japanese. Shakes his head. He switches off the VCR and surfs the TV channels instead. Sees talk show with the editor of REFORMA newspaper, ROSANNA GUERRERO, talking about organized crime in Mexico.

From out the window, a CAW, then again. Yet again.

Finally, Creasy stands goes to the window. He leans out, sees Pinta's window across the lawn from him.

Pinta standing on the terrace. Another CAW.

Creasy decides to play. He CAWS in return.

Pinta looks around. Creasy does a pretty good impersonation.

Hears Pinta CAW again.

CREASY

Hey... Pinta...

She looks up at him.

CREASY

What are you doing?

PINTA

Calling for Emilio's macaw. I thought I heard him.

CREASY

Do you think he'll come back?

PINTA

Maybe. Did you hear him?

CREASY

No.

PINTA

How do you think he got out?

CREASY

(a beat)

Well, I let him go.

PINTA

It's better to be free, right?

CREASY

Yes. Actually, he was driving me crazy.

Creasy disappears back inside. Pinta smiles big before letting the stick drop to the ground.

PINTA

I got you to talk, Creasy bear.

Blue Bayou plays. Pinta now listens to Creasy's sound.

RONSTADT

"...I'm so lonesome all the time, since I left my baby behind, on Blue Bayou."

EXT. RAMOS VILLA - DAY

A DRIVER gets Samuel's and Lisa's luggage into a car. They're on their way, kissing Pinta goodbye.

LISA

I'll call you from Detroit, baby.

PINTA

You're going to miss Mexican Halloween. The Day of the Dead.

SAMUEL

You enjoy it for us, Pinta.

Lisa gives her a look. Don't make this harder than it has to be. Finally, Pinta nods.

Creasy waits quite a discreet distance away by the Mercedes. She steps over, stops to wave goodbye one last time, then gets in back. As Creasy shuts the door.

INT. MERCEDES - MEXICO CITY ROAD - DAY

Creasy drives, glances in the mirror at Pinta in the back seat. She wipes away a tear just as it forms.

CREASY

They'll be back in a week.

PINTA

They can stay for two weeks. I don't care.

She's got a toughness Creasy likes. As she looks out the window, he looks ahead.

INT. KITCHEN - RAMOS VILLA - DAY

Creasy eats.

CREASY

The food is excellent, Maria. You have a real talent.

Maria beams with pleasure.

MARIA

My pleasure, Creasy.

Pinta enters in a RED SATIN DEVIL'S OUTFIT. She looks a bit forlorn as she sits at opposite ends of the table from Creasy. As she stares at her plate, Creasy starts to laugh at what an odd sight she is. All dressed up and no place to go.

Wrong move. Pinta stands, marches out of the room. As Maria and Creasy exchange a look...

EXT./INT. WINDOW - RAMOS VILLA - DAY

Pinta the devil stares sadly out here window. Then there it is! The macaw. Sitting on the opposite roof.

EXT. ATTIC WINDOW - RAMOS VILLA - DAY

Pinta pushes it open, climbs out onto the slope of the roof. This doesn't look like such a good idea. As she crosses, disappears over the peak.

It's a game of catch me if you can. 'Bird' looks at Pinta right in the eye. She gingerly moves closer. The bird moves away, just out of her reach each time.

CHIMNEY

Pinta coming down the other slope. There's the macaw.

PINTA

Come on. Come on. Bird!

The fourth time Pinta's fingers are centimeters away. She reaches and suddenly slides along the slick tile covering this section of the roof. Frank's in the yard barking loudly.

Near the edge, she manages to stop. Whew!

She scrambles up a few feet. A tile snaps off. She slides again. This time right off the edge.

She catches the rain gutter. Hangs thirty feet above the ground. A concrete landing below. As the gutter creaks:

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

PINTA'S VOICE

CREASY!

Creasy is on his feet, out the door in a heartbeat.

EXT. SIDE YARD - DAY

Creasy dashes around just as the gutter drops on one side. Pinta drops ten feet, jerks to a stop as the gutter stops, then drops the last twenty feet...

...landing in a hedge. Creasy dashes over.

CREASY

Pinta!

She's in a lot of pain, but moving her arms and head. Frank's licking her face.

PINTA

It hurts.

CREASY

Where?

PINTA

(Short)

Everywhere!

She puts her hands to the left side of her ribs. Creasy carefully probes with his fingers. She winces.

CREASY

I don't think they're broken. Anywhere else?

PINTA

My ankle.

As Maria huffs and puffs her way up.

CREASY

I'm going to get you out, okay?

Pinta nods. Creasy eases his arms under, around her, lifts her out as gently as possible. She disappears in his arms.

PINTA

Oh, Creasy...

And she bursts into tears. Maria looks up at the thirty foot fall. Begins to cross herself.

CREASY

It's okay. She's just scared.

Creasy cradles her, pats her back. As Pinta says his name like a mantra...

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DETROIT - NIGHT

Lisa on the phone. Fantastic in a black evening dress. The Ford car industry dinner awaits her entrance.

LISA

You're sure she's alright?

Samuel enters from the bathroom, concern on his face.

LISA

Okay, good, you're sure.

(to Samuel)

He took her for an X-ray, but it's just a bruise and a sprain.

She turns her back so Samuel can zip her dress up.

LISA

Thank you, Creasy. Give her my love.

INT. STAIRCASE - RAMOS VILLA - NIGHT

Creasy makes his way up, enters...

PINTA'S BEDROOM

Pinta in bed propped up by a pillow, teddy bear beside her. Frank at the head of the bed.

PINTA

The night you arrived, Mom asked you if you had a family and you lied, didn't you?

CREASY

White lie. I didn't have a family. But I did have two kids. They're adults now.

It's a sensitive subject so Pinta moves on. She nods. Creasy looks at the bear. An odd beat.

CREASY

Do you always sleep with him?

PINTA

I'm too old for him. Don't tell my friends.

CREASY

I don't talk to them much. Does he have a name?

Pinta thinks just a beat, then shakes her head 'no'. Liar.

CREASY

I spoke to your mother. She sends her love.

Pinta nods. Creasy stands there a beat, then heads for the door. Almost out, he looks back.

CREASY

Some bodyguard I turned out to be. Good night, Pinta.

He's halfway out the door.

PINTA

Creasy? Could you play the song?

Creasy is confused a moment, but when he sees her open window, he realizes.

CREASY

Blue Bayou. You got it.

He goes. As Pinta eases back with a sigh and a smile...

EXT. MERCEDES - RAMOS HOUSE - DAY

Pedro the 'car wash guy' puts the finishing touches to the Mercedes.

Using crutches, Pinta hobbles over. Creasy opens the back door for her. But when she gets there, she hesitates.

PINTA

I think I'll sit in the front. There's more room for my foot.

Creasy makes no big deal of it. He takes her crutches, opens the front. As she scoots inside... Frank waits and watches. Creasy calls to him.

PINTA

He's only allowed to travel in the car on weekends. Dad says the car will smell 'doggie'.

INT. MERCEDES - ROLLING - DAY

Both of them up front. Pinta is happy to be there and Creasy doesn't seem to mind.

CREASY

Did you sleep alright?

PINTA

Yes.

CREASY

How's the ankle? Can you put your weight on it?

PINTA

It's not too bad. Will it take a long time before it's better? Our big swim meet is in three weeks. Interschools. I was going to swim in the one hundred meter freestyle.

CREASY

In a week you should be fine.

They drive on a few silent beats, until...

PINTA

Doesn't matter. I always finish second.

CREASY

You need to practice.

Pinta looks at him hopefully, but Creasy catches himself. He's not going to coach a little girl. Finally...

PINTA

I will.

INT. KITCHEN - RAMOS VILLA - EVENING

Gomez, Maria and Creasy again joined by Pinta. As Creasy places a fork of meat into his mouth...

PINTA

Creasy, what's a concubine?

Creasy opens his mouth, takes the fork of meat back out.

CREASY

Why do you ask?

PINTA

It was in a book at school. Concubine.

Maria and Gomez wait to see how he'll answer.

CREASY

Well, it's a sort of wife.

PINTA

But the Emperor of China had 1000 of them! How can that be?

CREASY

In the West, it's one wife for one husband, but different cultures have different rules.

PINTA

It must be difficult having lots of wives.

CREASY

You feel sorry for the husband?

PINTA

(in Spanish)

Yeah. Can you imagine my mother multiplied by a thousand?

Maria and Gomez burst out laughing. So funny that Creasy smiles. Pinta lights up at the sight. A huge victory.

PINTA

Creasy, you're smiling.

He reverts to a frown. Now Pinta bursts out laughing. And Creasy can't help but smile again.

CREASY

I guess I am.

Pinta changes subject.

PINTA

So how come you know so much about those countries?

CREASY

I had to do my homework on them when I worked there. Also I enjoy history.

PINTA

What did you do in Asia? Is that where you met the man with cigarettes?

CREASY

No, that was in Columbia.

CUT TO:

GOMEZ

Humming to himself as he brushes the leaves out of the empty SWIMMING POOL.

CUT TO:

CU of a water faucet unloads 100 gallons a minute.

A MAN'S HAND. BLACK.

Raises up against the blue sky. Like a kid playing Cowboys and Indians. The finger pulls an imaginary trigger.

RAMOS POOL

In her swimsuit and cap, Pinta crouches in makeshift starting blocks.

CREASY

Bang!

Pinta takes off. Splashes into the water. Not to Creasy's satisfaction.

CREASY

No, no, come back.

Pinta turns in the water, looks back at him.

CREASY

You don't flinch when a gun goes off; you react. You go. Don't listen for the sound; don't anticipate it. Concentrate on the sound itself.

PINTA

I don't understand.

CREASY

Don't worry. You will.

Creasy points at the blocks. Pinta gets out of the water.

Shivering, Creasy throws a towel around her and rubs her down.

INT. MERCEDES - ROLLING

On the way to school. Pinta is stealing looks at Creasy's right hand. She knows the answer must be serious, but she has to ask.

PINTA
Creasy, what happened to your hand?

Creasy looks at her a moment, deciding. Pinta practically holds her breath, watches him, knows the answer may come. Creasy checks the mirror, watches the road.

CREASY
A man asked me questions once. He smoked a lot. There was no ashtray.

That's it. End of explanation. Creasy continues watching the road. Pinta watches him.

CREASY
Remember you asked me what state I was from?

PINTA
Yes.

CREASY
Where you're from isn't so much about geography; it's about events. Where you're from is what happened to you.

PINTA
Good things happen, too, Creasy.
(smiles big)
Like meeting me.

CREASY
(after a beat)
I guess that really does make me a hard case.

As the two of them share a LAUGH...

INT. 3RD FLOOR HALLWAY - RAMOS VILLA - NIGHT

Lisa walking toward Creasy's room. As she moves to knock, she sees the door is ajar, hears voices. She peeks in.

Creasy and Pinta sit on the floor, pencils, papers and a book spread out before them. Doing her history homework.

LISA'S POV - OF CREASY

He's charming and great with Pinta. And sexy... Evelyn was right.

PINTA

Do you have a girlfriend, Creasy?

CREASY

No.

PINTA

Did you used to?

CREASY

Yeah. Two or three.

Lisa continues to watch the little play. She smiles, knocks on the door as she opens it. Pinta and Creasy both look back over their shoulders.

LISA

Creasy, tomorrow, after you drop off Pinta, could you come back to take me to get my hair done?

Creasy nods. They both continue to look at her. She gets the feeling she's interrupting.

LISA

Alright, I'll leave you two to your history.

As she goes...

EXT. HAIRDRESSERS - ZONA ROSA - DAY

Mexico City traffic is heavy. Cars and people. Creasy stands by the car across the street. Cooling his heels. He can just catch a glimpse of Lisa in the shop.

Suddenly the traffic seems to finish, expending itself. The street goes ominously quiet. Creasy's antennae go up.

A police car comes prowling down the empty street. Creasy makes eye contact with the guys up front.

Then, Creasy spots a BUSINESSMAN coming out of a doorway with a BODYGUARD attached. The bodyguard is speaking into a two-way radio.

Creasy's sixth sense tweaks as a Mercedes 500 pulls up to collect the businessman.

And the cop car disappears around the corner even as TWO MEN start toward the businessman.

Lisa exits the hairdresser's. Looks stunning.

Creasy starts across the street toward her.

A second car squeals around the corner behind the Mercedes and everything goes to Hell.

GUNFIRE erupts.

And then Creasy is there.

His arm around Lisa's waist, sweeping her off her feet. The next thing she knows she flattened on the ground in a shop doorway, Creasy on top of her. Shielding her.

The bodyguard beside the businessman is killed. The bodyguard in the Mercedes trades a full magazine before he's shot.

A PEDESTRIAN is killed.

Liza screams as the glass above and behind them shatters.

The businessman is hustled into the back of the second car.

Lisa sees the gun in Creasy's hands.

She hears the slamming of the car door, the screeching of tires. A parked VAN also hauling ass out of there. But then she's aware of something else.

Creasy on top of her. She feels his weight, his heat...

CREASY

Don't move.

She watches as he rises, goes to the curb. One bodyguard is sprawled dead across the ground. Red blood on the sidewalk. As Lisa closes her eyes.

INT. MERCEDES - STREET - DAY

Lisa sits in the backseat. Through the window we can see Creasy wrap up his statement to a member of the JUDICIAL POLICE. Finally he gets in the car, starts to drive.

LISA

Murdering people in the street... You had your gun, why didn't you shoot them?

The shoulders in front of her just shrug.

CREASY

Nothing to do with me. Or you. Besides, there was another one in the passenger side of the van with a sawed-off shotgun. If I'd started shooting his friends, he would've had me. And you.

Quiet a beat. Lisa pulls a sliver of glass from her hair, looks from it to Creasy.

CREASY

A minimum close protection team consists of four men for high threat targets and environments. Even in a low threat situation, you need two guards plus a security trained driver.

She shakes involuntarily. It's hitting her. As they make eye contact through the mirror...

EXT. HIGHWAY UNDERPASS - MEXICO CITY - DAY

The Mercedes parked. Creasy and Lisa up against it. Fucking. No cultured way to put it. Like animals. A primal release for both of them.

EXT. COURTYARD - PINTA'S SCHOOL - DAY

Pinta waiting alone. Creasy's late. Then the gate swings back; the Mercedes drives through. Smiling, she hurries over, hops in the passenger seat.

MERCEDES - ROLLING

PINTA

(happy to see him)
You're late.

CREASY

I'm sorry.

PINTA

You were never late before, I was worried.

Creasy doesn't answer. He actually looks guilty. Pinta watches him a moment.

PINTA
Where's my mother?

CREASY
I dropped her at home.

PINTA
It's no wonder you're late. Why didn't
she just come with you?

Creasy doesn't answer, just grunts. Pinta keeps looking
at him and it suddenly all makes sense.

He looks over at her, starts to say something, then
thinks better of it. Finally...

PINTA
Do you think my mother likes you?

She's for sure pissed. Definitely aware and definitely
jealous. Creasy's a bit amazed, not sure how to respond.

CREASY
I think she's afraid of me. But not the
same way most people are.

Pinta considers this. Then..

PINTA
I'm not afraid you, Creasy.

CREASY
I know you're not.

PINTA
Are you afraid of me?

Creasy looks at her, almost like he's deciding.

CREASY
I used to be. At first. But not
anymore.

Her smile is huge.

PINTA
Good.

EXT. GARDEN POOL - RAMOS VILLA - DAY

Heated. Steam rising off the water. PINTA stands with
her eyes closed. Creasy, standing beside her, brings TWO
BLOCKS together with a WHACK!

Pinta flinches at the sound. She opens her eyes, shrugs an apology at him. Creasy frowns, shakes his head. Pinta closes her eyes again. He starts walking around her. Frank oversees the whole program.

CREASY

The gunshot holds no fear. Say it.

PINTA

The gunshot holds no fear.

CREASY

You welcome the sound. The sound is what lets you go. The sound is what frees you. You are a prisoner in those blocks until you hear the sound.

Eyes closed, she's drifted off with his voice. And Creasy WHACKS them together right in front of her face.

Pinta smiles at the sound. Creasy smiles at the sight.

EXT. RAMOS POOL - DAY

WHACK! Pinta bolts from the blocks. SPLASHES.

WHACK! WHACK! WHACK! Pinta surges. Pinta arcs. Pinta knifes into the water.

Pinta touches the far wall of the pool, the finish line. Creasy checks his watch, claps.

PINTA

I'm tough, Creasy. I'm tough as you.

CREASY

There's no such thing as tough. You're either trained or untrained.

Pinta raises her arms overhead, makes like Rocky across the shallow end. Creasy shakes his head in amusement.

INT. LISA'S BEDROOM - DAWN

First light is just tracing outlines against the window. Lisa alone in bed, staring at the ceiling. Frightened at what she's feeling.

CUT TO:

CREASY

Sleeping, looking sexy.

EXT. COURTYARD - RAMOS HOUSE - DAY

As the Mercedes pulls in, another car is ahead of it. Samuel is home, a DRIVER pulls his LUGGAGE from the trunk.

Pinta gets out of the Mercedes.

PINTA

Hi, Dad.

He gives her a pat on the head. Simultaneously, Samuel fixes Creasy with a look, strides purposefully over. He thrusts out his hand, shakes Creasy's.

SAMUEL

I want to thank you, Creasy. For what you did for my wife.

Creasy wants to choke, but he just nods, looks past Samuel to Pinta who looks bemused. He doesn't even want to know exactly what she knows.

The Car Wash Guy, - Pedro, ingratiates himself with Samuel.

INT. CREASY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Creasy's finger presses play. "Blue Bayou" begins. Plaintive, haunting. As he moves to sit in his chair, he passes the scotch bottle. It has gone unopened.

He ejects the shell from the breach of the 9mm, smoothly catches it on the back of his hand. Rock steady. Frank's tail wags.

INT. PINTA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Where the song drifts down. Pinta smiles, closes her eyes. Now she can go to sleep.

INT. LISA & SAMUEL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Samuel makes love to his wife. But Lisa looks past him, through the walls and floors to where that song plays.

LINDA RONSTADT

I'm going back someday, come what may, to Blue Bayou.

INT. CREASY'S ROOM -NIGHT

CU of Creasy.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT - MUNICIPAL POOL - DAY

The big swim meet. Race day. A lot of security, men speaking into their wrists. For a public gathering the mood almost seems ominous. Creasy and Pinta exit the Mercedes. Pinta watches wistfully as her fellow STUDENTS stream toward the water with their PARENTS.

PINTA

What's so important in Los Angeles?

CREASY

Your father has business.

PINTA

Why today? And why'd she have to go with him?

Creasy shrugs. No comforting answer for her. He looks around at some of the other bodyguards.

CREASY

Good luck. I'll be waiting here when you're done.

But she's shaking her head adamantly. Determined.

PINTA

You're coming with me.

EXT. SWIMMING MEET - MUNICIPAL POOL - DAY

A big MARQUEE has been set up alongside the pool. Coltish girls in swimsuits. Parents socialize, drink cocktails. Richly dressed. Bodyguards and security are outside of it, on the perimeter.

Creasy looks completely out of place.

PINTA

Stand near the finish line.

Pinta starts away.

CREASY

Pinta.

She turns, looks back at him.

CREASY

The blocks.

PINTA

(smiles; knows)

I'm a prisoner in them. Until the
gunshot sets me free.

Creasy nods. He smiles. He's serious now. As he
watches her head off for the track, Sister Anna steps up.

SISTER ANNA

Mr. Creasy, nice to see you.

And now Creasy is completely out of place.

CREASY

(apologetic)

*Pinta's parents are in Los Angeles. I
was going to wait in the courtyard,
but...*

She takes his arm, pats his hand.

SISTER ANNA

Today you are her father.

As Creasy lets this sink in, looks out where Pinta is
warming up. Sister Anna smiles, heads off to a group of
parents. We're left with Creasy. Confused Creasy. But
clarity is creeping in. As the sky opens up around
him...

CUT TO:

STARTER'S PISTOL

Pointed up at precisely 45 degrees. BAAAANGG!

STARTING BLOCKS

Eyes closed serenely, Pinta surges forward, leaving
everyone behind.

CREASY

Sees it. She hasn't even hit the water and he already
knows she's won.

PINTA

SPLASH! Ten meters in before she breaks the surface.
Her head sweeping left and then right.

Wherever her competitors are, it's somewhere behind her.
And the future, everything ahead, is wide open.

TURN WALL - UNDERWATER

Pinta somersaults, kicks off and is gone.

SURFACE

And the finish line seems to come to her.

THE CROWD

Cheers enthusiastically as she reaches the finish wall.

CREASY

Watches her, satisfied with what he's done.

Pinta hauls herself out of the water and runs.

A beeline for Creasy. And the poor fucker doesn't even understand, until she's leaping the last few feet...

Into his arms.

PINTA

I won, Creasy! I won!

She loves him... Creasy hugs her. He loves her back.

INT. TRADITIONAL RESTAURANT - MEXICO CITY - NIGHT

A MARIACHI BAND roams. We see Creasy but not who he's with. A date? As we come around it's Pinta. Sitting with them, Rayburn and his wife. And a sleeping four-year-old.

NOTE: Rethink following dialogue with reference to Creasy / Rayburn background.

PINTA

My Dad said all your friends were dead.

RAYBURN

All but one. The most important one.
When we were eighteen, we made an agreement to "take the world" together.

CREASY

Then one day, he calls and says, 'I'm in love and I'm moving to Mexico.' I said what happened to the plan?

RAYBURN

I said the plan was right here.

Rayburn looks at beautiful 19-year-old Alicia and their four-year-old son sleeping.

CREASY

I hung up on him. When I met Alicia, I got it.

Alicia blows Creasy a kiss.

CREASY

Can I kiss her now, or after you've gone to bed?

Laughter.

PINTA

Okay, I think now is as good as time as any.

She takes out a velvet pouch from her pocket. She holds it out to Creasy. He looks at her, takes it from her hand. His thick fingers fumble with a delicate drawstring.

Pinta waits for his reaction as Creasy pours a simple, but fine MEDALLION and chain into the palm of his hand.

PINTA

I bought it with my own money. I saved it.

Creasy is really affected, tries to hide it. She takes it, slips it over his head.

PINTA

It's St. Jude, the patron saint of lost causes.

RAYBURN

And hard cases. Creasy's the reason St. Jude became a Saint in the first place.

PINTA

Yeah, that's right.

Creasy looks at it, considers.

CREASY

Thank you, Pinta, it's beautiful.

Pinta kisses him. As the Mariachi band drifts over, Rayburn grabs his wife by the hand.

RAYBURN

Come on, baby. I feel like a third wheel. Watch the kid.

They dance. A waiter steps over, refills Creasy's water glass. As he drinks...

PINTA

Could I ask you a question?

CREASY

Could I stop you?

PINTA

You don't drink like you used to.

CREASY

That's not a question.

PINTA

I know because I go in your room and check the bottles.

CREASY

Still not a question.

PINTA

My mom drinks, too... Why do people drink, Creasy?

CREASY

Now that's a question. I don't know about your Mom. For me, the problem isn't in the glass. The problem's in between my ears.

PINTA

You think too much?

CREASY

Yeah. Because at one time, I didn't think enough.

Pinta nods, thinks she understands.

INT. AIRPORT - MEXICO CITY - DAY

Samuel and Lisa on the moving escalator. Home from Los Angeles. They look down through the glass, see Creasy waiting for them below. And finally, Lisa frowns.

LISA
He has to go, Samuel.

SAMUEL
What? Who?

LISA
Creasy.

SAMUEL
Why? You were so pleased with him.

LISA
Pinta likes him too much.
(a beat)
She thinks of him as a father.

SAMUEL
That's ridiculous.

LISA
It's not.

Samuel thinks about it, is almost apologetic.

SAMUEL
I've just been so busy, Lisa.

LISA
He has to go.

Samuel looks at her, wonders at her adamancy.

SAMUEL
The three month trial ends in a week. I
just won't confirm the position. That
possibility was understood when I hired
him.

Lisa gives him a look. She wants it done today. But for
once, Samuel is stronger than his wife.

SAMUEL
I won't create bad feelings. And another
week won't make a difference.

Off the escalator, they turn toward Creasy waiting
unaware.

SAMUEL
It will be a hard break.

LISA
She's young. She'll get over it.

SAMUEL
I wasn't thinking of Pinta.

As Lisa looks over at Samuel, he's reaching out his hand, smiling big.

SAMUEL
Creasy, how are you?

As they shake hands...

INT. SITTING ROOM - RAMOS VILLA - DAY

PINTA
I don't want to play piano! I want to swim!

SAMUEL
No discussion, Pinta. Mr. Lozzi is a famous teacher. If he accepts you, you will play.

As Pinta marches out of the room...

EXT. RAMOS VILLA- DAY

The sounds of Samuel's baby grand resonates throughout the villa. An impassioned rendering of a Mozart symphony.

Pinta is looking for Frank. Today is Saturday and on weekends Frank is allowed to travel with them. And today she is claiming all her rights.

PINTA
Frank. Frankie.

Pinta whistles.

CREASY
Pinta, we've got to go. Travel sucks at this time.

PINTA
Frank. Frankie.

INT. MERCEDES - ROLLING - DAY

Creasy driving. Pinta looking noble and brave.

CREASY
That's strange. Frank was a no-show. Not like him to miss a ride.

PINTA

(distant)

You should break all my fingers, Creasy, then tape them back together. I won't be able to play the piano, but I could still swim.

CREASY

Don't be a baby. You're tougher than that.

PINTA

There's no such thing as tough, Creasy. Just trained and untrained.

CREASY

(smiles)

Then be trained.

PINTA

I'm going to keep people safe someday. Just like you.

CREASY

Be a swimmer.

PINTA

I could do it. Remember the day you wanted the pencil? I know why. And I saw that car again. I wrote the license number in my notebook. Except I missed the last number.

Creasy checks his mirror, nothing back there now. He then looks at Pinta. A bit amazed.

CREASY

You'll have to show me that number when we get home.

EXT. VIA BUENOS AIRES - MEXICO CITY - DAY

A wide avenue. The Mercedes pulls up parks in the only open spot. Creasy and Pinta get out. We walks her across the street, along the lawn to the apartment building. They look up at the sound of piano keys tinkling above. Then:

Creasy looks at her, smiles to himself. Pinta looks back.

CREASY

Continue to play in the wrong key, like you're dyslexic.

PINTA

Dyslexic?

CREASY

Like St. Jude. A hopeless case that has a complete block about 'C' Minor. But remember, "Whoever resists authority will bring judgement upon themselves." New Testament, Romans 13.

PINTA

You got that right.

CREASY

You'll be back in the water in twenty-four hours.

Creasy presses the buzzer. As they wait, Pinta sees something, reaches down to pull a DANDELION from a crack where the sidewalk meets the wall. She smiles at Creasy.

PINTA

For you, Creasy.

Creasy takes it from her. He's saved by the bell as a second buzzer answers the first. Creasy pulls the door open. Pinta heaves a resigned sigh.

CREASY

Remember 'dyslexic.'

As Pinta nods, disappears inside...

DISSOLVE TO:

2ND FLOOR WINDOW

The curtains rustle in the breeze. The sound of badly played scales. And then sounds of frustration.

Then, the sound of the teacher playing. Pinta appears in the window for just a moment.

CREASY

Looking up from the window of the Mercedes. As Pinta is called back inside, Creasy checks out, twirls the dandelion Pinta gave him. HUMS to himself. "Blue Bayou."

CUT TO:

THE STREET

Creasy leaning against the Mercedes. Traffic pounding by. The dandelion is stuck in a button hole of his shirt.

And then suddenly traffic thins out. Reminiscent of the previous two kidnappings. It's a process. Creasy straightens up.

A Judicial POLICE CAR cruises by, slowly. Creasy makes eye contact with the two cops up front. The same guys who were at Zona Rosa.

Creasy starts across the street toward the apartment building. At the same time as...

The door bangs open. Pinta exiting. She spots Creasy, a huge grin on her face. She was not accepted.

And a white TOYOTA COROLLA coming the other way.

The police car reverses back, cutting Creasy off from Pinta. The COPS getting out, big smiles on their faces.

THE COROLLA

Slides to a stop in front of Pinta, blocking her path to Creasy. And as TWO MEN leap out from the backseat...

CREASY
(drawing his 9mm)
Run, Pinta, run!

But she's rooted with fear.

And the men are almost on her.

Creasy raises the 9mm overhead. BANG!

And the sound frees her. Pinta runs!

Ducking under a flailing arm. Quick and lithe. Trying to reach her bodyguard.

The cops drawing Uzi's..

Creasy plants himself, the Sig Sauer now level. He fires twice into COP ONE, dead center in the chest.

Pinta runs. Chased by the TWO MEN.

COP TWO returns fire wildly: the Mercedes hit in a ten bullet line.

Creasy fires two more rounds into COP TWO who's hit high in the chest and throat. Precise.

Creasy pivots, strides calmly forward, firing at the men chasing Pinta. BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

MAN ONE goes down, hit in the ribs.

A bullet slams Creasy in the back, fired from inside the Corolla.

Creasy fires back. BOOM! BOOM!

MAN THREE falls dead, hit just below his nose, just above his teeth. The FAT DRIVER fires, now, and Creasy is hit in the shoulder.

And Pinta disappears into the traffic. Gone.

MAN TWO, who has abandoned chasing Pinta, fires again.

Creasy drops the 9mm as he is hit in the stomach. He falls to his knees.

The dandelion starts to come apart. Drifting away, piece by piece.

Slack-jawed, Creasy looks about. Sees the FAT DRIVER heaving himself out of the Corolla while MAN TWO scans for Pinta who's nowhere in sight.

She got away! Creasy smiles even as he crumples over on his side.

PINTA'S VOICE

CREASY!

And Pinta is back. Running toward Creasy. She can't leave him like this. She was safe and now she's back.

CREASY

NOOO...

She runs to him, wraps her arms around him.

PINTA

Creasy...

MAN TWO catches up, tears Pinta away, starts back for the sedan. Creasy can only blink after them.

PINTA

Creasy!

It's not a cry for help. It's anguish for him.

CREASY

Pinta...

MAN TWO crams her in the back seat, follows. The fat driver gets back in behind the wheel. As the door slams shut, wheels spin, grip and the Corolla accelerates away.

We just see Pinta look back through the rear windshield. An anguished image before she's pulled back down.

Creasy makes a wish. Not for himself, but for her.

CREASY

Don't die, Creasy, don't die.

And everything goes very, very,

BLACK

Sound breaks through first. The whir and beep of medical equipment. And we fade back into:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MEXICO CITY - DAY

Creasy hooked up. Tubes running in and out of the unconscious man. And he's suddenly surrounded.

The CHIEF of the Judicial Police and several uniformed OFFICERS. At the foot of the bed several NEWSPAPER REPORTERS and PHOTOGRAPHERS.

CHIEF

This man, Senor Robert Creasy, an American citizen, is under arrest for the murder of two police officers, Hector Gonzalez and Pablo Lunara. He is also the prime suspect in the kidnapping of Pinta Martin Ramos.

One of the officers props up Creasy's head. The chief puffs his chest out and flashes flash.

INT. RAMOS VILLA - BASEMENT - DAY

Sounds of a DOG BARKING

Bruno opens the door to a very distraught Frank. Someone had locked him in there.

CUT TO:

LISA

Sitting catatonic. In the dark. Halfway to mourning already. A HUBBUB drifts up from the rooms below.

INT. SITTING ROOM - RAMOS VILLA - MEXICO CITY - DAY

A bedraggled-looking Samuel sits with Jordan by the phone. An INSURANCE COMPANY LAWYER is here as well. Maria cries softly in a doorway.

MONTAGE - of chaos and panic. Judicial police are trying to set up shop. Tape recorders. Listening devices. Video cameras.

JUMPCUTS:

LAWYER

When did he say he would call back?

Cut to

Do not tell them you have a kidnap policy.

Cut to

They usually ask for three times the amount they expect...

They react as two vehicles pull up outside. Chaos as the front door opens. MEN IN SUITS, several POLICEMEN. Their very well-groomed leader is COLONEL TAZINARI.

TAZINARI

Senor Ramos. I am Ernesto Tazinari, commandante of the Judicial anti-kidnapping division.

JORDAN

We do not need or want police involvement. I am the negotiator. We feel a better guarantee of getting Pinta back without your involvement.

TAZINARI

I have a written order from the Public Ministry. Two police officers were killed.

(he holds up the phone)

This is the Attorney General Navarro Bernal Diaz.

Jordan accepts reality. They're taking control.

TAZINARI

The law requires an intervention by the authorities "de officio."

A ringing phone sounds like an bomb exploding in the room. A technician answers. Jordan takes the receiver. We hear the conversation. The kidnapper only wants to talk to the father. Everybody is on headsets, monitoring. Samuel listens carefully. Jordan prompts him with hand-written replies on a notepad. Samuel negotiates the amount via notes from his lawyer.

QUICK CUTS:

SAMUEL

It's impossible. I cannot afford thirty million. I will need to borrow the money.

Samuel proposes five million. Kidnapper gets angry. Demands 20 million.

CUT TO:

SAMUEL

The realities are I do not have access to this type of money.

They settle at ten million. The kidnapper gives a list of instructions.

CUT TO:

KIDNAPPER

Two and a half million in two different bags. The bags you can get from Save-On. Fifteen gallon, black canvas, divide the money equally.

Samuel is on another phone talking to family friends asking if they will front a hundred thousand dollars each. Which will be paid back by the K & R insurance in 45 days.

CUT TO:

SAMUEL

Yes, I will give you interest.

KIDNAPPER

I will instruct you on the exchange over the next 24 hours.

Lisa is nowhere to be found. Locked in her bedroom in darkness with Frank.

END MONTAGE

CUT TO:

INT. ENTRY LOBBY - HOSPITAL - DAY

Another showcase press conference. More REPORTERS and now TV NEWS CREWS.

CHIEF

The girl is a Mexican citizen. Her father is Samuel Valencia Ramos.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - WINDOW OVERLOOKING PRESS CONFERENCE

Rosanna, the woman we saw on T.V. earlier, stands watching and listening. Incredulous and angry.

MIGUEL MANZANO the Director of AFI (also seen earlier on TV), approaches with his two assistants and kisses Rosanna on the cheek.

ROSANNA

A bodyguard was shot trying to protect a 9 year old. The bodyguard's American. Not only that he's black.

MANZANO

Is that good or bad?

ROSANNA

That's good. Really good. He shot and killed two judicial cops and a kidnapper died in the attack. They're saying he's responsible.

Manzano looks bemused, as he eats a sugary pastry. Rosanna heads into the press conference.

INT. ENTRY LOBBY - HOSPITAL - DAY

REPORTER ONE

Beside the American in custody, are any other Americans involved in the kidnapping?

CHIEF

We're looking into it.

Rosanna can't believe what she's hearing.

ROSANNA

*The two officers who were killed.
Records show they were off duty at the
time.*

The Chief frowns at the sight of Rosanna, knows what a royal pain in the ass she is. Manzano awaits his answer.

CHIEF

*I'm not sure. All I know is they died
bravely.*

He turns, points out another reporter.

ROSANNA

*If they were off duty, why were they in a
patrol car? What exactly were they doing
at the scene of a kidnapping?*

He stares back over at her, furious. Rosanna smiles.

ROSANNA

*Were they known for their exceptional
good luck?*

CHIEF

*They were known for their professionalism
and integrity!*

INT. STAIRWELL DOOR - HOSPITAL - DAY

It opens and out slides Rayburn. He looks down the hallway. Press conference is still going down that way. Rayburn heads the other way.

But as he tries to enter Creasy's room, he's met in the door by TWO THUG COPS, in uniform.

COP ONE

No visitors.

Cop two pokes a finger into Rayburn's chest.

COP TWO

Who are you?

RAYBURN

I'm here to see my friend.

Cop two pokes him again. Goads him.

COP TWO

Identification.

Rayburn swallows his anger, starts fishing for his wallet. Suddenly, the thugs snap to attention. Manzano is on the way down followed by ADJUTANT and TWO PLAINCLOTHES.

Ignoring the proffered salutes, Manzano finishes his pastry, licks his fingertips as he regards Rayburn.

MANZANO

When I heard it was this hospital I was so pleased. There's a pastry shop nearby. Delgado's. Do you know it?

Rayburn shakes his head.

MANZANO

The best pastries in Mexico.

Manzano holds out his right hand.

MANZANO (CONT'D)

Miguel Manzano.

INT. CREASY'S ROOM - HOSPITAL - DAY

Creasy out of it still. Rayburn and Manzano at the foot of the bed.

RAYBURN

He's not a cop killer.

MANZANO

I'm sure he isn't. Though he's certainly adept at killing.

RAYBURN

He was doing his job, protecting the girl. If police were involved, you figure it out. I'm here for him.

MANZANO

So am I.

And Creasy stirs. Rayburn leans into his friend, Manzano just behind him.

RAYBURN

You hear me, Crease?

Creasy's eyes slit open.

RAYBURN (CONT'D)

(whispers)

You got three of the fuckers. All dead.

CREASY

Pinta...

RAYBURN

Two days gone. They're negotiating a ransom.

MANZANO

These things take time, Mr. Creasy.

Creasy closes his eyes.

INT. RAMOS HOUSE (SIMULTANEOUS)

Technicians, police, Tazinari, Jordan, and Samuel all listen intently to the call.

VOICE

You have the money.

JORDAN

Yes.

VOICE

OK, repeat the drop instructions.

JORDAN

The money, 10 million U.S. will be divided into two 15 gallon black canvas bags each containing five million which will be checked at the bank by the K&R agent. Then driven to the house in an armored car where it will be transferred to the delivery car.

VOICE

The car will not be powerful and have no trunk.

Intercut the above with real time visuals illustrating the process:

1. INT. BANK Teller counting the money witnessed by K&R agent.
2. EXT. BANK Two bags being loaded into the armored car. K&R agent watching.
3. EXT. RAMOS HOUSE - DRIVEWAY Two bags being transferred to the family Mercedes.

The K&R agent notices the Mercedes has a flat tire. A second Mercedes is exchanged for the first.

The two bags are transferred inside the garage. Jordan supervises the transfer while the K&R agent takes an incoming call.

INT. RAMOS HOUSE

The call between The Voice and Jordan continues.

JORDAN

I need a driver to drive Samuel, the father.

VOICE

No. Why?

JORDAN

He has a heart condition. Angina. He responds badly to stress.

VOICE

OK. You will arrive at Columbus Circle and Reforma Avenue at 3AM. You will drive around the square two times. Samuel will remove his shirt and hold it out the window to I.D. the car.

EXT. COLUMBUS CIRCLE - 3 AM

The delivery car with a white shirt held out of the window.

VOICE (V.O.)

There is a payphone on the Southeast corner. The phone will ring. You will answer and wait for instruction.

Samuel exits the car and goes to the payphone. The phone is ringing. Samuel picks it up and listens.

INT. RAMOS HOUSE - NIGHT

JORDAN

We need proof of life.

PAUSE.

VOICE

Is the father, there?

Jordan hands the phone to Samuel.

SAMUEL

Hello.

VOICE

If this girl's life is as important to you as it is to me, do not play with the process. Family is everything. I am a professional. You keep your word and I will keep mine.

INT. DARKENED HALLWAY - HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Creasy being wheeled down the hall by a tough plain-clothed Federal Policeman. Followed by Rayburn, Manzano, and Rosanna. The uniformed JUDICIAL POLICE are powerless to stop them.

RAYBURN

What's the deal here?

ROSANNA

I wouldn't gamble leaving him here. These guys will kill him in a heartbeat 'while trying to stop him from escaping.'

EXT. TRUNKLESS CAR - MEXICO CITY - NIGHT

Samuel driving. Tazinari dialing his cellphone.

SAMUEL

He said no phones!

TAZINARI

You do your job. I'll do mine.

EXT. BRIDGE OF THE AZTECS - NIGHT

Samuel's car is parked on the south side of the bridge. A shirtless Samuel carries two large duffle bags containing ten million dollars across the bridge. We see Tazinari again dialing up his cell phone.

VOICE (V.O.)

Leave the money in the trunk of the car with white paper taped to the windshield, then return to your car and go home. Do not look back.

Samuel finds the car, leaves the bag in the trunk, he turns and heads back over the bridge.

VOICE (V.O.)

Remember, I am a professional. If you keep your word, I will keep mine. If you do not, then God be with your child.

As Samuel is walking back across the bridge. Suddenly gunfire from where he came, along with shouting and yelling. Samuel crouches and runs in the dark back to his car with Tazinari.

INT. VETERINARIAN'S CLINIC - MEXICO CITY - DAY

Cages of mangy looking mutts. Pull back to reveal Creasy on his hospital bed, IVs and all.

Rayburn sits nearby. He looks up as Creasy stirs, wakes again. Creasy's eyes flicker to his friend, ask the first question on his mind. Pinta...

Rayburn looks away, can't face his friend. And suddenly, Creasy knows.

CREASY

She's dead. Isn't she?

Rayburn finally nods. And with that gesture, God takes everything away. It might as well be the Old Testament. And we are about to get Biblical.

Creasy turns his head, looks up at the ceiling.

RAYBURN

It was a fuck up. Someone hijacked the drop. The kidnapper, his nephew got killed.

CU of Creasy's face with his back to the room. A thousand yard stare. His eyes glaze over.

FLASHBACK

INT. CAR - MEXICO CITY

CU of Pinta looking up at Creasy. The camera ramps into Pinta's smile. A small, but a significant moment in terms of their connection.

INT. LISA & SAMUEL'S BEDROOM - DAY

The curtains are drawn tight. Slivers of light illuminate the darkened room. Lisa sits on the end of the bed humming a nursery rhyme. She rocks gently.

VOICE (V.O.)

*You betrayed me. You killed my nephew
and took the money.*

K&R AGENT

No, not us...No we did not.

VOICE (V.O.)
*Remember my words. Family is everything
and do not play with the process.*

The phone line goes dead.

INT. VETERINARY CLINIC - DAY

Creasy still staring into space.

RAYBURN
She's dead Creasy.

Creasy blinks away a solitary tear.

INT. VETERINARIANS CLINIC HALLWAY - DAY

Dogs barking constantly. Manzano walks the hall flanked by a DOCTOR and a NURSE. A second policeman, Manzano's adjutant, brings up the rear carrying two heavy binders.

MANZANO
*She's dead. They fucked with 'the
process' and his nephew died.*

DOCTOR
*He suffered gunshot wounds to the upper
extremity, chest and abdomen. He has a
collapsed lung which is stabilized,
injured his spleen, which we may have to
remove and ruptured his intestine. He's
on strict bedrest or there's a good
chance we could lose him.*

NURSE
*A strange man. He has much experience of
hospitals.*

MANZANO
Did he say so?

NURSE
No. But a nurse knows.

CUT TO:

MUGSHOT

Manzano and the adjutant have pulled chairs up alongside the bed. The adjutant flips through one of the binders. Each page holds a single MUGSHOT. Each time Creasy shakes his head, the adjutant flips to the next photo.

MANZANO

Nothing?

Creasy shakes his head.

MANZANO

Excellent work by the way. Three men dead. Only ten rounds fired.

Creasy shakes his head at the next shot.

MANZANO

If two of the men in my division could shoot like that, I could get rid of the other thirty-six.

One of the dogs starts to bark. Another. Soon ten of them. The VET ASSISTANT enters, shouts at them to quiet. Manzano ignores it, motions the adjutant to flip pages.

CREASY

What am I doing here?

MANZANO

Believe it or not, you're safe here. The Judicial police will kill you. If they can.

(re: book)

This page?

CREASY

No.

The adjutant reaches the last page. Creasy shakes his head.

MANZANO

You have a rather checkered past. Mr. Creasy. Your Interpol file is six pages long.

CREASY

Am I a suspect?

MANZANO

No. It would be convenient, but no.

As Manzano packs up his mugshot books...

CREASY

Show me mugshots of Mexican policemen. Maybe then we'll get somewhere.

MANZANO

All these photos you just saw were of policemen. Sadly they're protected. La Hermanidad. The brotherhood.

Manzano heads off. As Creasy watches after him...

INT. DOG PENS - NIGHT

Creasy sitting on the gurney, Rayburn buttons his shirt.

RAYBURN

(whispers)

Okay?

Creasy nods. Rayburn gets Creasy's arm over his shoulder, eases him off the gurney till his feet hit the floor.

Creasy winces, but the two of them start to walk out.

EXT. BACK SIDE - VETERINARIAN CLINIC - NIGHT

An SUV rolling away. Lights out, engine off. It coasts a hundred yards before the engine turns over. Rayburn behind the wheel. As it sweeps past camera...

INT. SUV - ROLLING - NIGHT

Rayburn constantly checking the rear view. No pursuit in sight. He looks over at Creasy.

RAYBURN

How do you feel?

Creasy looks over at him, finally shrugs.

CREASY

Stomach's gone. But... okay.

RAYBURN

I'll get you up to the border. Friend of mine'll take you in to San Diego. Drop you right at the hospital.

Creasy's not really listening. He's been looking in the passenger side view mirror. Nothing back there. Creasy sits up. A bit of an effort.

CREASY

Got a thing I gotta do first.

EXT. VIA BUENOS AIRES - MEXICO CITY - DAY

Scene of the crime. Typical Mexican 'roadside shrines' where the policemen fell. A pyre of flowers where Pinta was scooped up, Creasy's blood still staining the sidewalk alongside. A car pulls up...

Rosanna Guerrero gets out with a REPORTER and PHOTOGRAPHER. She directs them in Spanish. The reporter starts making notes; the photographer snaps photos of the shrine.

Rosanna stands by the flower pyre. Something catches her eye. A balled-up piece of paper and a half-burned candle beside it. As she picks it up, she spots something else.

Across the street, Creasy walks. An awkward hitch in his stride. Outside the apartment of the piano teacher, surveying the scene with experienced eyes. Unaware of Rosanna

CREASY (FLASHBACK)

Corolla. Muzzle flashes. Pinta screaming...

FEMALE VOICE

Creasy...

Creasy wheels. There's Rosanna.

ROSANNA

A lot of people are looking for you.

CREASY

I guess that makes you the smart one.

ROSANNA

We're interested in the same thing. I'm writing a story.

Creasy walks away from her. Rosanna catches up and holds out a plastic ziploc.

ROSANNA

This might interest you. I found it across the street.

Creasy empties the contents of the ziplock into his hand. A small ball of paper and the remains of a black candle. Creasy unballs the paper. It's a photo.

FLASH: Creasy at the police station. His photo taken.

ROSANNA

It's Santa Muerte. Death worship. The religion of La Hermanidad. There's a curse on you.

CREASY

It's a little late.

He hands it back to her, not interested. As he turns to go.

ROSANNA

What are you going to do?

Creasy doesn't answer.

ROSANNA

I can help. I have a situation Mr. Creasy. There is a brotherhood called Le Hermanidad which protects both high ranking Government officials, corrupt police, and organized crime at a level that is very difficult for me to touch. I believe you were a victim of this organization. You and this story may help to unmask them.

Creasy looks carefully at Rosanna. Right now he trusts no one.

CREASY

Thank you.

He walks away towards Rayburn.

EXT. RAMOS HOUSE - DAWN

The SUV parked a discreet distance away. Rayburn grinds out another cigarette, mutters to himself.

INT. CREASY'S ROOM - DAWN

Bruno lets him in. Nothings been touched. Creasy retrieves his bullet from his shrine along with the 'Jack', Marlboros, and New Testament. Puts his few possessions in a bag. MOVE WITH him as he silently crosses out into the hall, heads toward...

PINTA'S ROOM

He stands there a moment. His pain entirely his own. And then he goes to Pinta's little desk, finds her school notebook buried in a pile. He flips through it until he finds...

The LICENSE PLATE NUMBER Pinta jotted for him. Then he notices the notebook is really a diary. Every page references her day to day relationship with Creasy. "I love you Creasy Bear." He hears soft footsteps. Creasy turns.

Lisa stands in the doorway in her nightgown, her eyes drilling through Creasy.

LISA
(softly)
You let them take her. She loved you and
you let them take her.

Creasy just blinks at her as the words blast through him.

LISA
Why are you here? Why didn't you die?

CREASY
Because...
(shrugs)
I was already dead.

Eyes brimming, Lisa has no more words. But Creasy comes bearing cold comfort.

CREASY
I want you to know something.
(a beat)
I'm going to kill them. Anyone who opens
their eyes at me.

Lisa doesn't answer, but the connection between them is suddenly monumental. Finally, Creasy looks away. He picks up Pinta's battered, old TEDDY BEAR.

LISA
Creasy...

He turns, but she doesn't look back at him.

LISA
Kill them, Creasy.

Creasy nods. He will. As he continues away...

LISA (CONT'D)
Kill them all.

EXT. GARDEN / POOL - RAMOS HOUSE

Creasy exits the house and stands by the pool. Frank appears tail wagging and attempts to comfort Creasy.

Leaves blow across the surface of the water. Underwater slow motion, a wall turn. It looks remarkably like Pinta.

"Blue Bayou" drifts through the air. Soft, in the ether somewhere. Creasy hears it, half raises his head.

PINTA'S VOICE

Why Blue Bayou, Creasy? Is that where you're from?

She's standing behind him. Wearing the all too familiar one piece swimsuit, she towels her wet hair.

CREASY

Blue Bayou is a dream, Pinta. Like you.

PINTA GHOST

Dreams are beautiful, Creasy-Bear, but life is better.

CREASY

(smiles)

Why are you here?

PINTA GHOST

I have to watch you now.

CLOSE ON CREASY

The words are a salve, a balm. He turns, looks back over his shoulder. He's all alone.

INT. SUV - NEAR RAMOS - MEXICO CITY - DAWN

Rayburn looks over his shoulder, sees Creasy walking down the street. Clutching a teddy bear.

Creasy gets in the car. Rayburn drives.

RAYBURN

You'll be Stateside by suppertime.

No answer. Finally, as Rayburn lights a cigarette...

CREASY

I'm going to need help, Ray.

Rayburn grinds out the cigarette he just lit, knows what just was asked. Creasy needs help unleashing a plague.

RAYBURN

Fuck. Look at you; you won't last a day the shape you're in. Unless you stop bleeding you should have your spleen removed.

CREASY

Yes or no?

RAYBURN

(after a beat)

I won't kill again. Hunt people. I gave that up. Anything else? It's yours.

Creasy reaches into a pocket, hands Rayburn a hand written list. Rayburn reads, his eyes widening.

RAYBURN

Jesus, Creasy. You're talking war.

INT. PUBLIC SWIMMING POOL - MEXICO CITY

The surface breaks as Creasy enters the water wearing a red T-shirt to hide the bandages. He begins a slow laborious stroke. A pale attempt at getting back into shape. A ribbon of maroon trails him through the water.

INT. GARAGE - SUBURBS MEXICO CITY - NIGHT *RETHINK LOCATION*

Fluorescents flicker on. A Fiat up on the hydraulic lift. A section of the garage is portioned off by heavy steel sheeting with a padlocked door.

One of the two men unlocks it. Creasy and Rayburn enter.

PARTITION

Three long steel tables. Covered with weapons.

RAYBURN

Candy store. Every town in Mexico has one if you know what door to bang on.

Creasy stops by the pistols.

CREASY

I'll take the .45 and the Webley .32.

RAYBURN

I know it's old fashioned, but it's reliable. Like us.

Next he's looking at grenades. He hefts two different choices.

CREASY

I need less than standard packing. Can you knock up a case for fifteen of each?

He picks up a double barrel shotgun, checks the line of it. He flicks open the breach, snaps it shut.

CREASY

(indicating)

Cut the stock here. The barrel here. Make sure you file it smooth.

(looks around)

Rocket launchers?

RAYBURN

Different door. Not far from here.

JUMP CUTS of the following being loaded into a bag: .45 Colt, ammo, clips, bodyarmor (the kind you wear under your clothing), nightvision scope, a couple of flash-bang grenades, flex-cuffs, a silent 9mm Beretta, a small shotgun, pepper spray, and four cellphones.

CUT TO:

OVER TELEPHONE RINGING

EXT. REFORMA PRESS BUILDING

Rosanna picks up phone.

EXT. PHONEBOOTH - REFORMA AVENUE

Creasy holding the card Rosanna gave him.

CREASY

Maybe I can help your situation and you mine.

ROSANNA

So where do we begin?

CREASY

I need the name and address of the owner of a Toyota Corolla, license number ME31704...We didn't get the last digit so I need the ten possible matches.

ROSANNA

So what do I get in return?

CREASY

Let's see how the relationship develops.
I'll call you in the AM. Thanks.

Creasy hangs up.

INT. AFI OPERATION CENTER - MEXICO CITY - DAY

Manzano, Rosanna, and technicians are listening to voice analysis tapes of various kidnappers. They're struggling. Rosanna hands the piece of paper with the license plate number to Manzano.

MANZANO

*He'll die of his wounds; bleed to death
before he can do anything.*

ROSANNA

*He sounded strong to me. Stronger than
we are.*

Rosanna pauses.

ROSANNA

*Because he's outside. Because he's not
tied to the same system we are.*

MANZANO

*We did voice analysis of the last five
high profile kidnappings, including the
little girl. The same man 'The Dreamer'.
Listen to this.*

Manzano plays back a recording of the Kidnapper.

VOICE

*"I used to run through the streets of
Neza because I was scared of being fucked
with. I swore one day I would cross the
street walking. Now I walk."*

ROSANNA

He's protected by La Hermanidad.

MANZANO

I know this. Your point?

ROSANNA

*Creasy is not a policeman. My sense is
he could be very valuable to us.*

Rosanna waits for a response. None.

ROSANNA

Then what do you have to lose?

MANZANO

It's a moral issue. On one hand you're cleaning up the bad guys, but in another way we are feeding the problem that produces bad guys.

Finally deciding, Manzano turns, holds out his hand. As Rosanna hands him the paper with the partial license written on it.,

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - MEXICO CITY - DAY

JORGE RAMIREZ, the 350 lb. driver who shot Creasy in the shoulder exits. Whistling to himself, gets behind the wheel of a Fiat 500.

Unaware he's being shadowed by a man on a scooter. Creasy.

EXT. FIAT 500 - DAY

As it comes to a stop. Jorge gets out. We hear the scooter whine as Jorge crosses the street and enters a PUBLIC BUILDING.

EXT. PUBLIC BUILDING - DAY

Creasy watches and waits. Time lapse of the building

Jorge exits the building still trying to get the last button of his police uniform closed. He's a cop. He struggles to get behind the wheel of the Fiat. The car is tiny.

Someone's getting in on the passenger side.

As Jorge starts to protest, Creasy rams a Sig into his gut. At the same time, he takes Jorge's gun from its holster.

CREASY

Drive.

JORGE

(incredulous)

Do you know who I am?

CREASY

You are Jorge Ramirez.

Creasy jams him in the gut again.

CREASY

Drive.

Jorge starts the engine. As he eases out into traffic.

EXT. CLIFFSIDE - MEXICAN CITY - DAY

A car graveyard sitting on top of a 300 foot cliff overlooking a real tough barrio. Gravel crunches under the Fiat's tires as it drives to the edge of a cliff.

CREASY'S VOICE

Stop here. Turn off the ignition.

INT. FIAT 500 - DAY

Jorge does as he's told. Suddenly the Sig comes down hard. WHACK! As Jorge's vision explodes...

INT. FIAT 500 - DAY

Still in the driver's seat, Jorge wakes. The first thing he sees is that his hands are taped to the steering wheel with his pudgy white fingers exposed. He is naked, reminiscent of the 18 year old in the opening sequence.

CREASY

Can you hear me?

Jorge nods, the pain in his head blinding.

CREASY

I am going to ask questions. If you don't answer, fully and truthfully, you will suffer much more than you have to.

Creasy opens Pinta's notebook to a blank page near the end. He clicks open a pen.

Creasy presses in the car's cigarette lighter.

Then he opens a buck knife. Jorge winces at the sound of the blade locking.

CREASY (CONT'D)

I'm going to cut your fingers off. One by one. If I have to.

The cigarette lighter pops back out.

CREASY

That's to cauterize the stubs.

Holy sweet Jesus... Sweat drips down Jorge's forehead. He tries to master his fear. Swallows dry.

JORGE

Do you know who I am?

CREASY

Who are you?

JORGE

I am the President of La Hermandad.

Without warning Creasy reaches up with the buck knife, a flash of steel.

The big man howls, his left ear suddenly missing, starts an epic struggle, practically breaking the wheel off the steering column. He is like a bucking Rhinoceros.

He howls as Creasy sprays his face with pepper spray.

EXT. FIAT 500 - DAY

The passenger side door opens and Creasy stumbles out. Some of the pepper spray has gotten in his face as well.

Creasy wipes his tearing eyes. And then he turns. Hefting the knife in his hand, he marches back toward the car.

JORGE'S VOICE

No! No!

And then a terrible SCREAM. BLOOD squirts against the inside of the windshield. The car rocks on its shocks. And then another terrible SCREAM.

CUT TO:

JORGE

Stares at the stump of his right forefinger, smoke rising up off it. Creasy sticks the lighter back in its hole.

And Creasy looking at him, devoid of emotion.

JORGE

Wh- wh- what do you want to know?

It takes a moment for Creasy to come back. He picks up the pen and notebook.

CREASY

The Ramos kidnapping. How did it work?

JORGE

I don't know. We were just given instructions to take her.

CREASY

Ordered by who?

Jorge hesitates. As Creasy sets the pen down...

JORGE

I don't know.

Creasy jerks back Jorge's middle finger, raises the knife.

JORGE

(a mile a minute)
I don't know! We work in parts. A voice calls in a kidnapping. We deliver the target to the guardians. We don't even know them. They might transfer to other guardians. The negotiators and the bosses don't even see the target. They just make the deal!

CREASY

Who ordered it?

JORGE

The cops call him 'The Dreamer'.

CREASY

Where do I find him?

JORGE

(shrugs; terrified)
I don't know. No one knows.

CLOSE ON CREASY

Scream, as the knife comes down. Creasy tosses the finger out the window, wipes some of Jorge's blood off his cheek.

JORGE

I don't know, I swear.

CREASY

(after a beat)
I believe you.

JORGE

(crying)
I'm professional. I just do my job.

CREASY

Me, too. Tell me about the guardians.

JORGE

He called me on the cell phone to set a time and location for the switch.

CREASY

Who's he?

JORGE

The one who transferred Pinta to their car.

FLASHBACKS: See Pinta being manhandled from the white Fiat to the trunk of Grand Marquis. She has been bound and taped around the mouth and eyes.

Creasy looks like he'll kill him on the spot. Muzzles his Sig into the palm of Jorge's right hand.

CREASY

Who's he?

JORGE

I don't know, but I know his face.

Creasy cocks the trigger.

JORGE

I see him sometimes at the handball court in Chapultepec on a Saturday afternoon.

CREASY

How do I recognize him.

JORGE

He has a tattoo covering two-thirds of his back. He is part of the Brotherhood.

CREASY

In the next hour, where do I find your partner?

JORGE

One-one-three Arco Iris. Third floor.

Creasy closes the notebook, caps the pen. It's over.

EXT. CLIFFSIDE - MEXICAN CITY - DAY

A gunshot echoes over the barrio. Creasy gets out of the car, reaches back to release the emergency brake.

The Fiat 500 goes over the cliff.

EXT. VIA ARCO IRIS - MEXICO CITY - DAY

Kids playing SOCCER. One of them kicks an errant pass. It skips down the street toward an approaching Creasy.

The kids shout for him to kick the ball back, but he ignores them. As the kids curse him out, Creasy enters 1-1-3...

BOOM UP alongside the building. A man steps to a third floor window... man two who stuffed Pinta into the car. His name is Sandri. And we're inside.

SANDRI (Italian Immigrant)

Putting his cufflinks through his shirt sleeves. Wearing a shoulder holster. A satisfied smile as he looks back into the room. At the bed. A 17-year-old GIRL under the sheet.

GIRL

(nods)

When will I see you again?

Pulling on his suit coat, Sandri steps to the door. He mimes a pistol action with his forefinger and thumb. He opens it to find himself staring square into the eyes of Creasy. He rests the twin barrels of the sawed-off shotgun square against Sandri's chest.

CREASY

Her name was Pinta.

Sandri registers the name. Creasy swings the shotgun down to Sandri's groin.

EXT. VIA ARCO IRIS - MEXICO CITY

BA-BOOM. A flock of pigeons explode out of the Jacaranda trees.

CUT TO:

BLACKNESS SCREEN

CREASY'S VOICE

Roman's Chapter 13:21. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. There is no authority except from God.

EXT. PUBLIC POOL - MEXICO CITY

Creasy swimming toward the far wall. As he rolls, kicks off, it's Pinta who emerges from the bubbles swimming back the over way.

Pinta swims through the a maroon cloud filtering through the water.

CUT TO:

CU of Pinta's diary. Creasy opens it up. The bullet sits in the center crease. He thumbs through the pages stopping on different days. Pinta's V.O. Illustrating those pages.

EXT. CHAPULTEPEC PARK - DAY

Handball court. Intense game with big money stakes. A sea of criminal faces cheer on the gladiators from the bleachers. It's a close match.

A 200 pound Guardian removes his T-shirt before serving. Turns to reveal a huge tattoo across two-thirds of his back. Creasy registers his prey.

EXT. BARRIO SUNSET

A small Russian Taurus crests a hill and descends into Hell. A frightening looking Barrio. Burnt out cars and dead dogs line the sidewalks. Creasy tails the Guardian on his moped into the center of a trash dump. The focal point being a semi-derelect church within a gated compound. Our 'tattooed handball genius' exits the Taurus. Reaches in back for the groceries.

INT. GUARDIA DE SEGUIDAD - SUNSET

A knock. GUARDIAN TWO steps over, carries a pistol. He slides back a speakeasy slot to reveal our tattooed Guardian.

GUARDIAN TWO

Hola!

EXT. DOOR - SUNSET

Guardian One stands at the slot. Creasy is pressed up against the wall out of sight. He holds the shotgun wrapped in a ragged beach towel.

As the door unlocks and opens and Guardian One steps in, Creasy slides in right behind him.

INT. GUARDIA DE SEGURIDAD - SUNSET

As the butt of the shotgun makes contact with Guardian Two's mouth. Blood spouts as his front teeth are smashed in.

As he raises his hands to his face, the pistol he holds discharges into the ceiling. Guardian One watches as Creasy clubs him again in the head.

Frightened footsteps running on the other side of a plywood wall. A female voice yelling from the other room. Creasy gauges their whereabouts.

BOOM! Creasy fires into the wall. Wall explodes.

Guardian Three freezes mid stride. It's a tough looking woman in her 40's.

INT. GRUBBY KITCHEN ROOM - DAY

The three guardians stand facing the wall. Hands bound with tape or cuffed. Naked (like our 18 year old) other than their dirty skivvies.

Creasy holds up a picture of Pinta. An I.D. picture taken from her schoolbook.

CREASY

Tell me about the girl.

All three look...and with a strange defiant arrogance.

GUARDIAN ONE

Who the fuck's that?

BOOM! BOOM! Creasy kills Guardian One.

INTERCUT THE FOLLOWING:

The two Guardians each bound in two different rooms. Both have their eyes taped shut. Creasy interrogates Guardian Two.

CREASY

How does it work?

GUARDIAN TWO

Everything on the cellphone. We wait for calls. We have no number to call.

Creasy picks a cell phone up off the table, hits redial. It's a blocked line.

CREASY

Who pays you?

GUARDIAN TWO

We have an ATM bank card. We draw out 300 dollars every two weeks.

Creasy takes the ATM card from Guardian Two's shirt pocket as he lies on the floor.

CREASY

What's the PIN number?

GUARDIAN TWO

The what?

CREASY

The number you use at the bank machine.

GUARDIAN TWO

Four-seven-four-seven.

CREASY

Who killed her? You?

GUARDIAN TWO

No!

CREASY

Don't lie to me.

GUARDIAN TWO

The boss did or his brother.

CREASY

Who's the boss?

GUARDIAN TWO

We don't know! We never see his face! We have to wait in the other room. He was screaming to the girl that...

FLASHBACK: Guardians POV. Hearing the above.

GUARDIAN TWO

...his nephew was killed in the exchange. And the money was stolen.

CREASY

What money?

GUARDIAN TWO

The ransom money. At the drop. He said Tazinari, one of the policemen had taken it. He was crazy.

CREASY

Who's Tazinari?

GUARDIAN TWO

Head of the antikidnapping division.

FLASHBACK: Guardians POV. See the wall shake from a bodily impact..

BOOM! Creasy shoots Guardian Two.

GUARDIAN THREE (Female)

Becomes a panicked whirling dervish at the sound. A moment later Creasy is there. Tearing the tape off her eyes.

CREASY

Show me.

INT. 12' X 6' CELL - GUARDIA DE SEGURIDAD - NIGHT

The white tiled room we saw Pinta held in. The door opens and Guardian Three leads Creasy in.

FEMALE GUARDIAN

He was screaming about the money and his dead nephew. He threw the little girl against the wall.

The Female Guardian points. Creasy steps over. There's a smear of BLOOD against the wall.

FEMALE GUARDIAN

She fell. She wasn't moving. They threw her body in the trunk of the car and drove away.

FLASHBACK: Guardian's POV through window. We glimpse through a dirty window, Pinta's body being put into a car trunk.

CREASY

Who? Who's they?

FEMALE GUARDIAN

The boss's brother, I recognize his voice. It's high pitched. We call him Woody Woodpecker.

CREASY

*Now listen to me. If you tell me where
to find the boss. I will let you live.*

FEMALE GUARDIAN

Please. I don't know.

And Creasy stands there a moment. Realizes she is telling the truth. Lost. And the sound that snaps him out of it... A GIRL CRYING. And Creasy is suddenly moving down...

THE HALLWAY

After the sound. He kicks open a door. There!

In a 8' X 4' room. A 12-year-old GIRL. Bound and blindfolded.

FLASHCUT: We think it's Pinta for a heartbeat, but it's not.

CUT TO:

EXT. GUARDIA DE SEGUIDAD - NIGHT

A window to the left explodes as the room is enveloped in flames. The front door opens, a weird sight. Creasy exits holding both the 12-year-old's hand and the Female Guardian who's bound and blindfolded in her underwear.

They walk straight at camera as flames shoot out of the roof. Creasy has set the place on fire. Creasy is on fire. And as they continue to walk towards us...

CUT TO:

BLACK SCREEN

CREASY'S VOICE

Roman chapter 13:7. Therefore whoever resists authority will bring judgement on themselves. Now it is time to awake out of sleep for our salvation is nearer than we first believed.

INT. ROSANNA'S OFFICE - NEWSPAPER BUILDING - NIGHT

A telephone ringing. Rosanna at her desk. She picks up the phone.

ROSANNA

Rosanna Guerrero.

CREASY'S VOICE

It's Creasy.

ROSANNA

Where are you?

CREASY'S VOICE

Los Arcos. Was a little girl kidnapped recently? About twelve maybe?

ROSANNA

Last night. Do you know something?

CREASY'S VOICE

What was her name?

ROSANNA

Camila. Camila Valencias.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - ACROSS FROM NEWSPAPER - NIGHT

Creasy on the cellphone, the small Russian Taurus in the background. He stands outside the building still holding the little girl's hand. She has the same lost look he does. Female Guardian in the back of car.

CREASY

Camila.

The girl looks up at the name.

CREASY

(into phone)

I've got her.

EXT. ICE CREAM STAND - BUSY MEXICAN CITY STREET - NIGHT

Creasy hands the girl an ice cream cone. He looks over as Rosanna hurries over from across the street.

Creasy puts the little girl's hand into Rosanna's.

CREASY

I need something. Do you have banking connections?

ROSANNA

(hesitates, then...)

I have connections.

Creasy hands her the ATM card.

CREASY

The PIN number is 4-7-4-7. I need to know whose account it is.

Rosanna notices the blood on Creasy's shirt. Near his stomach.

ROSANNA

Where do I find you?

CREASY

I'll call you tomorrow.

Creasy looks at the girl and starts off, then looks back.

CREASY

What do you know about the cop? Tazinari. The one who made the ransom drop with Samuel Ramos?

ROSANNA

He's an old fashioned patrone with the worst reputation. He's high on my hit list.

CREASY

Where does he live?

ROSANNA

He lives in a Judicial Compound. He travels by motorcade. He has better protection than George Bush. Even more importantly he is part of La Hermandad. His reach is far and wide.

CREASY

Give me the address.

NOTE: THE FOLLOWING SCENE SHOULD PLAY AT THE BURNED OUT SAFEHOUSE WITH ROSANNA.

INT. MANZANO'S OFFICE - AFI HQ - NIGHT

A beehive. Cops. Photos of dead kidnappers on the wall: Jorge and Sandri. Sandri emasculated, one hand missing. Jorge behind the wheel, fingers stubs and a missing ear.

ADJUTANT

Two in one day. And they died very badly. Sandri and Jorge were prime suspects in twelve kidnappings in the last six months.

Manzano studies the photo of Jorge.

MANZANO

Whoever did this was methodical, unafraid. Was Jorge's mugshot in the photos we showed Creasy?

ADJUTANT

No, I checked. But right after Sandri was shot, a girlfriend of his was found naked, hysterical in the street. She said it was a man fitting Creasy's description who shot him.

MANZANO

Mr. Creasy was, and maybe is again, a very lethal human being.

ADJUTANT

You don't seem very surprised?

Manzano looks at his Adjutant, pleased with his perception. But he isn't sharing.

MANZANO

What's surprising these days?

An AFI agent brings over a plate of red shredded chicken. Manzano takes a bite, moans in pleasure.

MANZANO

Your sister? Only a virgin cooks like this.

AGENT

(laughs)

Your man's here. Interrogation room two.

CUT TO:

SURVEILLANCE ROOM

Seen through a two-way mirror. Manzano watches as...

Rayburn sits at a steel chair, bolted to the floor. Rayburn's eyes are closed. In meditation. Then, slowly, his arms extend out to the sides. Manzano is curious as, slower still, Rayburn extends both hands out in front of him, palms up. Must be a Zen thing.

Then, both MIDDLE FINGERS are extended. With eyes still closed, Rayburn mouths 'fuck you'. Manzano bursts a laugh.

CUT TO:

INTERROGATION ROOM TWO

Rayburn opens his eyes, looks over as Manzano enters. Still eating, he hands Rayburn a second plate of chicken.

MANZANO
Pollo Pibil. Chicken and chorizo sausage. Hmmh. They marinate it in lemon and orange juice. It's a stew really.

RAYBURN
(sets it down)
I already ate.

Manzano enjoys another bite, then...

MANZANO
Tell me about your friend Creasy.

RAYBURN
You just said it. He's my friend. Nothing else to say.

MANZANO
I read the file. You and Creasy have seen quite a bit together.

RAYBURN
Two tourists who never went home.

MANZANO
You helped him get this job.

RAYBURN
That's what friends do.

MANZANO
Yes. But if I traced Creasy to you, others will do it as well. Their facilities are as good as my own, if not better.

RAYBURN
I can take care of myself.

MANZANO
You and Creasy both. A two man army according to Interpol. Panama. Lebanon with the Druze. Desert Storm. Where you were contracted by the U.S. Army to hunt down elite Iraqi military commanders.
(laughs)
You two were a married couple.

RAYBURN

The kind that gets divorced, but still stay friends.

MANZANO

What happened to him? What happened to Creasy?

Rayburn flinches at some bitter memory.

RAYBURN

None of your business. Or mine for that matter. I got nothing more to say.

MANZANO

This is my jurisdiction. I want these men as much as Creasy does.

RAYBURN

He'll deliver more justice in a weekend, than ten years of your courts and tribunals. So stay out of his way.

MANZANO

I plan to. I'll even help him if I can. He's going to lead me to the 'The Dreamer'. Someone I want very badly. But I'd like to understand him. Give me that.

RAYBURN

Pinta Martin Ramos is just a number to you. Tragic, a public outcry, but a number. One more dead.

MANZANO

What was she to Creasy then?

RAYBURN

Light. At the end of a long, dark tunnel. Somehow, she showed him it was alright to live again.

MANZANO

And they took that away.

RAYBURN

A man can be an artist in anything. Stone, paint, words. Food. Anything if his soul is true to it. Creasy's art is death. And he's about to paint his masterpiece.

The words sink in. Manzano understands their magnitude.

RAYBURN

Me? I got Jap businessmen to drive across the border. So, if you'll do me a favor and let me the fuck out of here...

EXT. MANZANO'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Framed commendations fall to the carpet as Rosanna slams up against the wall of Manzano's office. Skirt up around her waist, Manzano moves inside of her. Between breaths:

MANZANO

Is it true? Creasy saved the little girl that was kidnapped yesterday.

ROSANNA

And left three more dead men.

She bites the heel of his palm to keep from crying out.

MANZANO

When you talked to him, did he look sane?

ROSANNA

No. Not by the rules of polite society at least.

MANZANO

I think he's... magnificent.

As they both climax, pressed up hard against each other...

MANZANO

(smiles)

You only fuck me to get information.

ROSANNA

(smiles back)

You only give information so you can fuck me.

MANZANO

A beautiful circle.

He kisses her, turned on again already.

ROSANNA

Let's put Creasy to press. There's a vigilante cleaning up Mexico. An unstoppable hero.

As Manzano considers this, likes it, Rosanna takes the ATM card out from her bra.

ROSANNA

*And as long as we're talking information,
there's something else as well.*

MANZANO

*(as he takes card)
I should start going for your tits first.*

EXT. SWIMMING POOL - MEXICO CITY - DAY

Underwater as Pinta swims. As she spins, kicks off the wall, it's Creasy who comes out the other side. A plume of red blossoming off his side.

This is done over and over, faster and faster, closer and closer. The blood becomes darker, bigger. And we push into that blood until it's finally obscuring everything.

EXT. NEWSSTAND - MEXICO CITY - EARLY MORNING

A row of newspapers being set out. Creasy's face on the front page of every one of them.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - MORNING

A quaint old Mexico neighborhood. We follow a long canvas bag being carried through the streets. Carried by Creasy. Toward the end of the street and a ground floor apartment. Walks past a canary yellow Coup deVille, which has seen better days.

INT. GROUND FLOOR APARTMENT - MORNING

An elderly couple eating lunch. The HUSBAND looks over at a knock on the door. He stands, answers it. Creasy slides in, eases the door shut behind him. Gun in hand.

CREASY

*I'm not here to hurt you. I need to
borrow your house and your car. Are you
the proud owners of the Coupe deVille?*

EXT. JUDICIAL COMPOUND - MORNING

A military operation as Tazinari is led out to his car. Two heavy gray sedans wait. Tazinari gets in the back of the second car with his AIDE-DE-CAMP. The door is shut behind them.

MERCEDES

The door closes with an hermetic whump. The two cars pull away toward the opening FRONT GATES.

INT. GROUND FLOOR APARTMENT - DAY

Creasy has just finished taping the old couple to two chairs.

CREASY

If you promise to speak softly and not to shout, I won't have to tape your mouths.

The old man looks to his wife, then back to Creasy. Nods.

The old man watches as Creasy opens he canvas bag, pulls out two metal tubes that he screws together. It's a ROCKET LAUNCHER. Next he pulls out a cone-shaped missile. The old man is starting to look curious.

CREASY

Did you know you have a dishonest policeman living in your neighborhood?

Creasy depresses the fins on the missile and slides it back into the tube.

OLD MAN

I know of you. You're the American. The bodyguard who's killing the kidnapper.

Creasy doesn't answer, steps into the center of the room.

OLD MAN

In the church, they say to forgive.

CREASY

Forgiveness is between them and God. It's my job to arrange the meeting.

Creasy looks back and forth between two shuttered windows and in a line to the wall with a household Catholic alter. Christ on the cross sits front and center.

CREASY

Do you have an old blanket you don't care about? I don't want to burn that wall.

INT. GROUND FLOOR APARTMENT - DAY

A figure rises, framed in the window.

And Pinta stands beside him. As she puts her fingers in her ears...

Creasy looks back over his shoulder, but of course she's not there.

Creasy fires the rocket launcher. A gout of flame erupts from the back. But Creasy has hung a blanket on the wall.

INT. LEAD CAR - DAY

Eyes widening as the first rocket streaks toward them. The driver stands on the brakes. The car explodes, is obliterated really, from the inside out.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Tazinari's car slams into the debris of the lead car and slides sideways against a wall wedging it in. Real tight.

CUT TO:

CREASY

A 'Man On Fire' strides through the smoke and dust. A shotgun at his side and a Molotov cocktail in his left hand.

Without missing a stride he unloads both barrels into the drivers window. A scary prospect even though it's bullet-proof. The lit Molotov explodes beneath the car. Silence. Then a dull impact explosion. 30 feet of flames envelope the car. The driver and Tazinari both prisoners inside their own car.

The driver exits releasing a full clip from his Uzi. Creasy nails him with a single shot to the head.

Tazinari exits through the flames hands high in the air.

CUT TO:

EXT. BRIDGE OF THE AZTECS UNDERPASS- MEXICO CITY - NIGHT

There sits the canary yellow Coupe deVille. Eyes and mouth taped shut, hands and ankles bound by flex-cuffs. Tazinari stands there.

Creasy steps up, pulls the tape off Tazinari's eyes. He looks about, relatively calm considering.

CREASY

You know where you are?

As Tazinari tries to process...

CREASY

Under the bridge. Where the deal went south. Now why don't you tell me what went down?

Creasy tears the tape off his mouth.

TAZINARI

Do you know who I am? I am the commandante of the Judicial anti-kidnapping division.

CREASY

And one of the founding members of La Hermandad.

TAZINARI

Correct!

Creasy pulls the buck knife from his pocket, flips it open. As Tazinari reacts, Creasy spins him round, slits his clothes up from ankle to neck. The cloth drops away, some hanging at Tazinari's wrists. Tazinari has a sudden loss of attitude.

CUT TO:

Close up: Tazinari hands being cuff flexed and tied to side view mirrors of the Coupe deVille.

Cut back to see Tazinari, naked other than his Calvin Klein skivvies, spread-eagled across the grill of the car, butt forward (Reminiscent of 'the woods scene' in DELIVERANCE)

Creasy rips down his Calvins. CU of Tazinari's face winces with either pain or extreme discomfort.

CREASY

That's not my dick. That's the barrel of your own gun. Shoved up your own ass.

As Tazinari reacts...

CREASY (CONT'D)

.44 Magnum. Now, how's your hearing?

We hear the CLICK of the trigger being cocked back.

TAZINARI

Please, don't...

CREASY

It's all up to you, commandante. Tell me about you and 'The Dreamer'.

Creasy puts a tape recorder on the hood and presses the record button.

TAZINARI

I don't know him. I saw the opportunity and got lucky.

CREASY

Lucky how?

TAZINARI

That he used policemen. That you killed them, it made it a police matter. The Ramos family couldn't refuse our involvement.

CREASY

And?

TAZINARI

And I had my men ready.

CREASY

You stole the drop.

MORE FLASHES: As we see this happen. POV from opposite side of the bridge. POV from the drop car. See the money drop get ambushed by unknown faces. 'The nephew' gets shot. The kidnapper running the show sounds like Woody Woodpecker, high pitched squeaky voice.

CREASY (CONT'D)

You done it before?

Tazinari doesn't answer. Creasy gives the Magnum a tweak.

TAZINARI

Yes. Many times.

CREASY

O.K. So tell me more.

TAZINARI

There was no ten million dollars.

CREASY

The ransom was ten.

TAZINARI

Two and a half. That's how much there was.

CREASY

Don't lie to me!

TAZINARI

Two and a half! The rest was paper! Strips of paper!

FLASHBACK: Tazinari, in his office, sifting through the paper.

CREASY

Maybe your men stole from you.

TAZINARI

No. Whoever took the rest took it before the exchange.

CREASY

Who gave the bags to Ramos?

TAZINARI

His lawyer. Jordan Kalfus.

FLASHBACK: Ramos House. Bags of cash being switched from the Mercedes with the flat tire to the 2nd Mercedes in the garage. See that Jordan does the switch, four bags on the floor.

CUT TO:

As Creasy thinks. Tazinari has been stretched to his limit.

TAZINARI

That's all I know! Please. I'm sorry for the girl. But it was business! I'm a professional.

CREASY

That's what everybody keeps saying.

Creasy switches off the tape recorder and pockets it.

Relief for Tazinari as the .44 Is withdrawn. Creasy walks around the car Tazinari now looking like a naked hood ornament. Butt first.

EXT. FREEWAY EMERGENCY OFF RAMP - DAY

Average speed 80 m.p.h. This is Mexico. Creasy slips the clutch, jumps out, and the Coup deVille kangaroos forward down the ramp. Gathering momentum into the oncoming traffic. Tazinari screams right on impact.

INT. FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT 'KNOCK OFF' - MEXICO CITY

Flambouyant, beautiful 16-year-old boy with a black eye and bloody nose. Jordan's boyfriend. Terrified and in tears runs down the hallway. Creasy following.

CUT TO:

INT. SWIMMING POOL - DAY

A huge maroon cloud covers the center of the pool. In the middle of the cloud is Jordan face down floating on the surface dressed in his beige linen suit.

UNDERWATER

CLOSE UP of Jordan face down. We glimpse what we don't want to see. Black holes where his eyes and mouth were. His ears missing.

Creasy not terribly impressed. Just pissed that he's late.

Creasy on a cell phone talking to Rosanna

CREASY

Another favor... get me banking info on Jordan Kalfus. U.S. deposits or withdrawals. Thanks. Oh, get me the same on Samuel Ramos.

ROSANNA

How do I contact you? We still don't have the ATM info.

CREASY

You don't, I'll call you. Oh! I have a tape recording that I am sure will interest you.

EXT. MUNICIPAL POOL - MEXICO CITY - DAY

Creasy doing laps. He swims the last few meters underwater. As he surfaces, Pinta waits by the edge. She nods in grim satisfaction.

He isn't doing well. The cloud of deep red emanating from his stomach envelopes his whole body.

INT. DINING ROOM - EVENING

Samuel eats dinner silently. Lisa just stares into space, nursing a vodka. Even great marriages cannot survive the trauma of kidnapping and subsequent death.

The door opens and they expect to see Maria with the deserts. Creasy enters and sits at the table like a dinner guest.

CREASY

(to Samuel)

I'm going to talk to your wife. If you move or say one word, I'll kill you.

He takes a Colt Officer model .45 semi-automatic pistol out of his waistband and lays it on the table in preparation for something, we don't know what. He turns to Lisa.

CREASY

I'm going to tell you a story. Your lawyer is dead. Someone didn't want him talking. Last week he wired \$2.5 million into his U.S. bank account. Colonel Ernesto Tazinari is also dead. He hijacked the ransom drop, another \$2.5 million. If my arithmetic is correct it means \$5 million remains.

Creasy looks to Samuel.

CREASY

Your husband magically had five million deposited in a U.S. bank account last Friday.

Lisa's eyes never leave Creasy's...trying to discern whether this is true or not.

CREASY

They planned it, Samuel and Kalfus.

LISA

Planned what?

CREASY

An autosequestra. Kalfus arranged for Pinta to be taken to a safehouse. I'm sure he thought she'd sit there for three days eating pizza and watching TV. It didn't work out that way. Everything got fucked up when I killed the cops and Tazinari saw an opportunity.

Lisa screams. Creasy gestures with a finger to his lips.

CREASY

On the surface it was low risk and high return. This was the third autosequestra Jordan had organized for clients. The other two succeeded.

Samuel looks to Lisa.

SAMUEL

Our lifestyle was in jeopardy. My pain and weakness only fueled your anger and determination. I wasn't sure about whether to go through with it or not. Then I woke up one day and it was done.
(beat)

Jordan was supposed to take care of it.

Through all of the above, Creasy removes the special bullet held in the seam of his wallet. The misfire. He empties the other cartridges from his gun.

Lisa suddenly attacks Samuel in a violent, emotional outburst of tears, screaming, and rage. Drawing blood from his nose and upper lip. Samuel smothers Lisa's arms beneath his. He appears strong and decisive for the first time.

Creasy very carefully takes the bullet, puts it into the magazine and chambers the round. He looks into Samuel's eyes.

CREASY

A bullet does not lie. A bullet tells the truth. And the truth will set you free.

Creasy hands Samuel the gun.

CREASY

In many ways I think this bullet should be shared between you and Lisa.

Creasy exits the room. Samuel kisses Lisa on the forehead and exits onto the terrace.

A GUNSHOT.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Lisa just sits. Where will she find air to breathe?

EXT. MEXICO CITY - NIGHT

Life moves on with its brutal inevitability. This is a river whose course cannot be altered.

PINTA'S VOICE

From the backseat I can see Creasy's eyes in the mirror. He watches and thinks. He never smiles. I wish I was back in the front seat with him. I wish he would smile.

Creasy looks up from the notebook and out at the city. And a smile comes. But it's bitter and hopeless.

It's half grief, half not knowing where to go next, what to do. And he's dying. He knows that too. Creasy dials a number on a cell phone.

CREASY

Hola...

ROSANNA'S VOICE

Creasy.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON ROSANNA

Inside somewhere.

ROSANNA

I traced the PIN. I have an address for you. But I need to see you.

CREASY

I show, you give me the information?

ROSANNA

Deal.

CREASY

Where?

INT. AFI OPERATIONS CENTER - NIGHT

Back on Rosanna. We see she's sitting in the AFI Operations Center amongst Technicians, surveillance and listening devices, and Manzano.

We can hear the interior of a family house, kids, a frustrated mother, a Mexican soap playing in the B.G., over speakers.

TECHNICIAN

(to Manzano)

We got the whole place wiretapped. But no males that sound anything like 'The Dreamer'.

MANZANO

He'll show.

Manzano is carrying a 8" X 10" digital blow up of a handsome Mexican John Gotti type in some nightclub environment.

ROSANNA

Who's that?

MANZANO

He's the man, 'the Boss?' My guys got into the house on the pretext of giving cholera shots. We had to inject the whole Barrio. We bugged the house and stole the picture of him. Manzano looks at Rosanna. Now's the time to really pressure him. Lets publish his picture in tomorrow's edition.

Rosanna understands the consequences makes light of them.

ROSANNA

So how are going to recipricate?

Manzano discreetly slides his hands up her crotch.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROSANNA APARTMENT - NIGHT

Her car draws up. Her driver exits and opens her door. She steps out. But waiting inside is a welcoming committee. A HOODED FIGURE wielding a shotgun who shoots the driver in both knees.

HOODED FIGURE waves the shotgun under Rosanna's nose. A warning. Then disappears into the darkness.

CUT TO

INT. ROSANNA'S APARTMENT

Rosanna in her apartment in the dark. A tear trails her cheek.

CU of the proofsheets of the next day's newspaper. The Boss' picture, full frame.

EXT. RESTAURANT - MEXICO CITY - NIGHT

Creasy moves in the shadows looking remarkably strong considering his wounds.

CREASY - SURVEILLANCE POV

Cameras whirring. Video being shot. He hasn't arrived alone. As he disappears inside...

INT. CLOSED RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The OWNER watches nervously as Creasy approaches wearing a wool CAP. A pale attempt at disguising his identity. There's a newspaper folded on his dais, more photos of Creasy, his dead targets, the story of his vendetta.

CREASY

I'm looking for Rosanna Guerrero.

OWNER

This way.

Empty restaurant, chairs on tables. An exterior streetlight illuminates the darkness. The owner leads him down a row of empty booths. Creasy slows, stops as he sees the only person waiting for him is Manzano. As Manzano smiles.

MANZANO

(holds up paper)

Hombre en fuego. Man On Fire. That's what the papers have named you.

CREASY

It's what you and Rosanna named me.
Right?

MANZANO

Sit, Creasy. Everything that happens from now on does so with my permission.

(smiles)

Really. You won't find a better carne asada in all of Mexico.

The table is covered in an arrangement of the best food you will ever find in Mexico. Creasy sits.

MANZANO

(laughs at himself)

The last few days may represent the best police work of my life.

CREASY

What do you want?

MANZANO

The same thing as you. Except, my reach isn't as long as yours. My father was a policeman, did you know that?

CREASY

I don't know shit about you.

MANZANO

He was one of the original founders of 'Le Hermandad' in the days when it represented good not evil.

Manzano smiles; he likes Creasy.

MANZANO

He was murdered. And now here I am. Trying to honor his memory. Hamstrung by bureaucracy and corruption. The organization that he began now protects criminals at the highest level where I would need a Presidential finding in order to expose it...or you.

The WAITER steps over; Manzano waves him off.

MANZANO

My family lives in Miami. Because of the death threats.

CREASY

It's not worth it. Be with them instead.

MANZANO

It galls me to watch you. You can do as much in days as I can in years. Men like the 'The Dreamer' are protected. Out of everyone's grasp it seems, but yours.

CREASY

Are you going to arrest me or talk me to death?

Manzano laughs again. Genuine. Creasy cracks him up.

MANZANO

My country needs justice. Proper justice. Gunning men down in the street only feeds the violence. They need to be brought to trial. Dealt with properly. Then people will respect the law. When they see it works.

CREASY

So you are going to talk me to death.

MANZANO

You walk out and deal justice. You're what I wish I could be.

(another laugh, then a beat)

The policemen who kills you, his family will have all they want.

CREASY

Then I hope the one who gets me has got lots of kids. What do you want?

MANZANO

I want to arrest you for murder! I want to shake your hand and reload your gun! I want to kill my pride and give you my blessing.

CREASY

My deal is with Rosanna. I knew you guys were up to something. Are you two fucking?

MANZANO

No, but I have to admit I thought about it.

CREASY

Liar. Just tell me who the bank card belongs to. Name and address.

MANZANO

You have no interest in making things
easy, do you?

CREASY

I'm not... easy.

Manzano reaches into his pocket. He pulls out a folded
PIECE OF PAPER and a PRESCRIPTION BOTTLE. He hands the
bottle out first.

MANZANO

Percodan. I imagine you need handfuls by
now.

Creasy makes no move to take it. Manzano sighs, sets it
down in front of him. Regarding the paper...

MANZANO

Account belongs to a woman we think is
The Dreamer's girlfriend. Reina Rosas,
who is 8 months pregnant.

Creasy holds his hand out. Manzano hesitates.

MANZANO

The plan is the girlfriend will lead you
to the Boss. You'll lead me, and I'll
arrest him. Agreed?

Creasy doesn't respond. Finally Manzano gives him the
paper, a mimeographed mugshot, and address scrawled on it.
Creasy stands. As he scoops up the pills. Creasy starts
out.

MANZANO

Creasy...
(Creasy turns)
I'd have liked to have known you under
different circumstances.

CREASY

Off the top of my head, I don't know what
they could've been.

As Creasy departs...

FADE TO BLACK.

BLACK SCREEN

CREASY'S VOICE

Romans chapter 13:4 - therefore whoever resists authority will bring judgment on themselves. Now it is time to awake out of sleep for our salvation is nearer than we first believed.

EXT. NEWSSTAND - DAY

Full page photo of 'the boss' on the front page of REFORMA.

EXT. ROCK WALL HOUSE - MEXICO CITY - DAY

A tiered house built into the rock face that runs through Mexico City. A scooter is parked. A man sits on it waiting, wearing a crash helmet to hide his now well known features. Creasy.

CREASY - VIDEO FEED

It's difficult to say where they are coming from. The view passes from one screen to another. As Creasy's passes, we hear the whispered crackle of radio communications.

GROUND LEVEL

CREASY sits up as a car pulls up, and a MAN gets out. Creasy checks the digital "8x10" even though this face is indelibly imprinted on his brain.

It's not "The Dreamer." Not as handsome, but there's a resemblance.

The MAN unlocks the front door, checks the street first and then enters.

Creasy regroups mentally and physically. Checks the magazine in his SIG SAUER. Chambers rounds into his shotgun. Looks up and sees a six-year-old on a bicycle approach the front door. A ten-year-old opens the door from inside. The six-year-old struggles to get his bicycle through the doorway.

Creasy moves. He holds the shotgun against his leg as he strides across the street. "Man on Fire."

The bicycle makes it in. And the door is closing...

Creasy gets a foot in, forces his way inside.

CUT TO:

MANZANO'S OFFICE - AFI HQ

Manzano listens to a radio over a desk speaker.

VOICE

He's inside. What should we do?

MANZANO

(keys mic)

Do nothing.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

The pregnant woman, Reina Rosas, SCREAMING BLOODY MURDER as Creasy fills the space behind her. Creasy follows as she runs.

LIVING ROOM

Creasy faces Reina, heavily pregnant. Silence. Two other kids hide behind her. Suddenly the wall next to Creasy explodes in a hail of bullets.

We realize Creasy caught one round in the chest. He's down on one knee... uses the shotgun as a crutch. Reina is screaming.

Hear a door torn open. Creasy moves to the sound. A MAN has run out the back...

EXT. HOUSE - BACK COURTYARD

Creasy steps into courtyard, turns, a VW Bug coming right at him...

Aims his weapon.

THE MAN

Ducks down... windshield shatters from the blast of Creasy's shotgun... Bug slams into wall. The Man rolls out... using the door as a shield.

BARRIO

The Man flees into a labyrinth of packing-crate houses on car-tire foundations out into street. Running hard, too hard for Creasy in his condition. He is losing a lot of blood. He stops.

CREASY

Behind the wheel of the Volkswagon, roars out chasing.

Now through the maze of poverty... Creasy drives hard... no sign of the Man... empty eyes of poverty looking back... mostly women and children... They clearly see Creasy... fully exposed... driving a car with no windshield... He slams the car into reverse.

Someone says "Creasy" aloud... now more faces to turn... children looking directly through his absent windshield.

One skinny kid runs ahead of Creasy. The boy points at one cardboard house propped up against a brick and stucco wall.

INT. VOLKSWAGON

Creasy pops the clutch... straight into a small house... taking whole walls of cardboard... to the back brick wall... The 'Man' is pinned violently between the car and the wall.

CUT TO:

BARRIO

Creasy, shotgun in one hand, the injured Man in the other... walks through the barrio... a small crowd is yelling, "Creasy, MAN ON FIRE" (in Spanish: Hombre en Fuego).

INT. LIVING ROOM - REINA ROSAS HOUSE - DAY

The Man badly broken and bleeding lies on the floor, flex-cuffed. Reina screams at Creasy. Creasy's popping Percodan's. The hysteria is peaking. Creasy chambers a round and shoots man through left knee. Screams then silence.

CREASY

Reina Rosas.

REINA

Si.

CREASY

How do you contact 'the Boss'?

Reina hesitates.

Creasy chambers another round and holds the gun to man's right knee.

REINA

We page him and he calls back on this cell phone.

CREASY

What is his name?

REINA

Daniel.

CREASY

Daniel what?

He pulls the hammer back.

REINA

Daniel Rosas Sanchez.

CREASY

So you're married to him? And this looks remarkably like his brother.

Creasy looks to man semiconscious on the floor. She nods

CREASY

What is his name?

REINA

Aurillio Rosas Sanchez.

INT. AFI SURVEILLANCE TRAILER

Technician listens into the living room conversation and speaks to Manzano over the radio.

TECHNICIAN

What do we do?

MANZANO (V.O.)

Do nothing. Prepare yourself for an incoming call.

AFI GROUP

congregating around maps, and a "Triggerfish," a means of tracing the location of a cell phone.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Cell phone ringing. Creasy pauses -- picks up the cell.

CREASY

Hello Daniel. I've got your family and I want to negotiate.

DANIEL

Mr. Creasy. What do you want?

CREASY

I want you.

Several beats of silence. We can hear Daniel's breathing.

DANIEL

How much do you want?

CREASY

It's non-negotiable.

DANIEL

Two million U.S.... Three million U.S.?

CREASY

I told you, non-negotiable.

Daniel hangs up.

CUT TO:

AFI TRAILER

MANZANO listening.

MANZANO

Damn.

CUT TO:

LIVING ROOM

Cell phone ringing.

CREASY

Yeah.

Daniel has a different attitude, a lot more amenable. He tries to speak to Creasy very logically about a very illogical subject.

DANIEL

The most important thing in life is family. And there you are. You have my family. What do you want?

CREASY

I want you.

DANIEL

This is not possible. But in that house I have money. If I tell you where --

CREASY
(interrupts)
Your brother wants to talk to you.

Holding the shotgun with his right hand, Creasy holds the phone to Aurillio's ear.

AURILLIO
Daniel?

BOOM! Creasy shoots Aurillio in his right kneecap. As Aurillio HOWLS in agony...

CREASY
Listen to me. Listen! I'm going to take your family apart piece by piece.

The line goes dead. Hang up. Creasy's ready to explode.

REINA
Under the sink. We have money under the sink. Six million dollars. It's wet but good.

The phone begins to ring again. Creasy answers.

CREASY
Yeah.
(silence)
Yes.

DANIEL
Listen! I will give you a life for a life.

CREASY
What do you mean?

DANIEL
Her life for your life.

Creasy's confused.

CREASY
Whose life?

Creasy's confused.

DANIEL
The girl's. Pinta's.

CREASY
You're a liar. Pinta's dead.

DANIEL

I'm a businessman. A dead girl is worth nothing. She is alive.

A long beat.

CREASY

I want proof of life. What did she call her bear?

DANIEL hangs up.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Aurillio moans on the floor. Reina says the rosary. The kids cry. The phone rings. Creasy listens, not capable of speaking.

DANIEL

Creasy. She calls the bear 'Creasy Bear.'

Time stands still for Creasy. Words evaporate. Liquid film in Creasy's eyes.

CLOSE UP of Creasy's shocked face. He pulls down his shirt collar. Bubbles of blood form and reform over his chest wound as the maroon spreads across his chest and stomach.

CREASY

Okay. Where?

AFI SURVEILLANCE VAN

Vans on the move. Team Leader, radios.

TEAM LEADER

We received enough of a signal to at least put him in the Zona Colonia. Shit not enough time. He hung up.

INT. VW BUS

Creasy driving. Great AC without the front windshield. Keeps him awake. Daniel Sanchez V.O. detailing the drop. Creasy trying desperately to drive and write down the address.

CREASY

Lisa, don't hang up on me. Pinta is alive.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. LISA'S BEDROOM

Blinds are drawn. Slivers of light illuminate her emotionally drained face.

LISA
(silence)
I don't believe you.

CREASY
I want you to get into your car now and meet me on the south end of the footbridge between Reforma and the freeway junction. In 45 minutes.

LISA
You're lying. I don't believe you.

CREASY
Then don't come.

He disconnects. He cannot waste his ebbing strength.

EXT. BRIDGE OF THE AZTECS - SUNSET

Darkness has fallen. Few people are on the street as Creasy pulls to the south end of the bridge. He parks... looks around... it's deserted. She's not coming. Checks his watch, turns and walks toward the bridge. The Ramos Mercedes drives up the bridge. Headlights off. Lisa is driving. She exits the car.

She runs to catch Creasy.

LISA
Creasy... Wait.

CREASY
Stay here. If you do something stupid, we won't get her back.

He climbs the steps of the bridge trying to maintain his dignity through the pain. He can see cars parked on the other side.

OTHER SIDE OF THE BRIDGE - Creasy's POV

Creasy's dreamlike POV (Is it real or a dream) A driver exits a shadowed car and opens the passenger door. A SMALL FIGURE in a hooded sweat shirt and sweat pants exits the car. Confused. Disoriented.

CREST OF THE BRIDGE

Creasy waits. Breathing labored breaths. He sees it all.

OTHER SIDE OF THE BRIDGE

The driver unties little hands. Removes a blindfold from under the hood. He steps away. Offering no help.

The small figure is confused.

CREST OF THE BRIDGE

Creasy calls out:

CREASY

Pinta. Pinta.

She turns and looks. It looks remarkably like her even under the hooded sweatshirt. She begins to run. Across the street, up the steps toward Creasy. A screaming train flashes beneath. Car headlights illuminate the bridge.

Time stands still and the 'city sounds' fade out to nothing.

She runs up the remaining stairs and sprints across the bridge. Her hood blows off revealing her full face. It's definitely Pinta. Camera ramps as he jumps into Creasy's arms. This is not the little girl we experienced in the beginning of the movie. The experience she just endured has been life changing. All of a sudden we have a 40 year old head on an 8 year old body.

She wraps herself around him. He picks her up. We glimpse a simple tear on his cheek. They talk. But we do not hear the words.

She notices her mom on the far side of the bridge. Creasy maneuvers her toward Lisa.

Before she goes to her mother we hear:

PINTA

I love you, Creasy... And you love me, right?

Creasy nods. The inference is that he will see her in a few minutes.

We start to hear Linda Ronstadt painfully, quietly on the wind singing "Blue Bayou." He continues to walk across to the opposite side of the bridge and gets into the kidnappers' car.

There's a certain sort of calm of him. He closes the door, he lays his head against the back window. He looks out at PINTA at the other side of the bridge, where she's screams for Creasy. "Blue Bayou" gets LOUDER. Pinta now knows it was a lie. Creasy is not coming back. We're shooting through the glass of the back window. We see Mexico City reflected in the glass. As the car pulls out, time slows, and we see Creasy lay his head back and close his eyes as the car descends down into a dark tunnel.

Pinta can see Creasy's face, eyes slowly closing. He can hear her screams before being enveloped by the night. As "Blue Bayou" continues...

EXT. MEXICO CITY STREETS - DAY

Dark spot in the road. Suddenly Police lights, on the roofs of four cars, flash simultaneously in front, in blocking position. The driver turns and looks back wanting to escape. He has a blacked out AFI armored van right on his rear bumper. Nowhere to go.

SWAT at his door. He's pulled and proned out onto the road.

Manzano enters the driver's seat. Reaching back to Creasy. Grabs his hand.

MANZANO

I'm your chauffeur now, Creasy.

Manzano does a U-turn. Heading away. On his portable radio.

MANZANO

*All units. Commence the operation.
Repeat. Commence.*

He reaches back again.

MANZANO

Creasy? Creasy?

CLOSE UP - Two hands clasp.

Creasy's left with Manzano's right. A strong grip. Then no response. Manzano pulls to the curb.

Manzano reaches Creasy's wrist. Takes his pulse. Creasy's gone.

Beat.

Manzano kneels. Still holding Creasy. Unfolds Creasy's fingers.

CLOSE UP - Pinta's medallion of St. Jude clutched in his hand.

Manzano punches the seat again and again and again.

MANZANO

Goddamn you.

EXT. GUARDIAN'S CAR - HIGH ANGLE U-TURN

Manzano looks at Creasy and makes a decision.

MANZANO

(keys mic)

Hold at the perimeter. Until I enter.

EXT. DANIEL'S COMPOUND

Dark, suburban Cuernavaca street. Creasy's car rounds the corner. Security outside the compound motions to open the garage doors. The driver of the car is faceless. Street light reflections across the windshield.

The car enters the gates. A collection of armed bodies appear in the courtyard curious to see this national hero. "Hombre en Fuego."

The car stops. Nothing. This beat seems interminable. A hand opens the rear door: His forehead explodes. The driver door opens barely two shots, two more bodies drop.

Panic and confusion. Everybody runs for cover. An overhead helicopter illuminates the mayhem in the courtyard. An armored vehicle rams through the gates.

Manzano explodes out of the driver's door in slow motion. He is clearly on a mission. He strides through the mayhem, Creasy's Sig Sauer in one hand, and a .45 auto in the other.

Manzano's guide to his destination is the 'The Dreamer's' little Jack Russell running back to his master on instinct.

Manzano moves purposefully. His surrounding environment is Chaplinesque in its chaos. He enters a long walkway to a patio, following the dog. Daniel Sanchez appears at the end of the hall. We ramp him into slow motion. The Mexican version of Gotti. He raises his arms, prepared for the inevitable. The outcome is a given.

Manzano unloads a magazine into him and we -

FREEZE FRAME

SUPER TITLE: "HOMBRE EN FUEGO"

BLACKNESS.

CREASY'S VOICE

Ezekiel 25:17. Blessed is he who in the name of charity and good will shepherds the weak through the valley of darkness for he is truly his brother's keeper and the finder of lost children.