

MURDER CITY

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[Detroit is consistently ranked as the most dangerous city in America, earning it the dubious moniker "MURDER CITY"]

FADE IN:

EXT. DETROIT SLUM - DUSK

Heavens condemn the concrete jungle. Judgement cast in the maelstrom. Rain punishing defiled tenements, once proud and spotless, now stained and wretched.

Saddled at the curb, a pockmarked CROWN VIC endures the elemental beatdown, blurred in the downpour.

Across the way, an awning shelters a ghetto DEALER (17) slinging BROWN to some strung-out JUNKIE aching for a hit.

INT. CROWN VIC - CONTINUOUS

Embers burn to ash, flaking from the cancer stick. The smoker grinds the nub in an old chaw tin, killing the flame...

NEIL BRESLIN (34), a dagger-eyed bloodhound of a man, stubble patched over his jaw, a METRO VICE BADGE dangling between flaps of his Cabretta jacket.

Without the shield, you'd take him for a crook.

But there's a glimmer of warmth beneath his coarse husk.

Passenger seat, his partner, LAZ MODELL (27), a slum survivor turned cop, shivering as a chill creeps inside the idle car.

Neil eyes the Dealer across the street as another JUNKIE totters round the corner.

NEIL

There he goes again. How long we been on him?

LAZ

'Bout three hours now.

NEIL

(impressed)

Slingin' in the rain. Boy's got heart.

LAZ

That, or he's too dumb to know any better.

Laz suckles a cup of stale coffee, fighting the cold.

NEIL
Hopheads gotta get their fix, rain
or shine. Other dealers shut down,
leave this kid reaping the harvest.

LAZ
(impatient)
How much longer we gonna sit?

NEIL
Let him pocket enough cash to be
dizzied when we bust him.

Laz glowers, dubious.

LAZ
That's some twisted shit; get his
hopes up on a big take before you
shake him down.

NEIL
(nods)
Someone's gotta set him straight.
Dose of tough love never did any
harm.

LAZ
True, but while you're preaching
that charity bullshit my damn toes
are gettin' frostbit.

NEIL
If it ain't cold enough to snow
then you got nuthin' to worry
'bout.

Laz shuffles through PAMPHLETS stuffed in the console.

LAZ
You still goin' through with the
transfer?

NEIL
(nods)
Lansing precinct.

LAZ
Outta the slums and into the burbs.

NEIL
That's the plan.

Neil watches as the Dealer slips a hood over his dome and blends into the ALLEY.

NEIL (CONT'D)
Closin' shop. Let's go.

EXT. DETROIT SLUM - CONTINUOUS

Out the Crown Vic, Neil and Laz hotfoot toward the ALLEY, percussive rain enhancing their stealth.

Dealer strolls crooked, swaggering down the chute, Vice on his tail. He senses the heat, bucks forward, full-tilt.

THE CHASE --

Neil freight-trains after the perp, born to hunt, Laz at his side, keeping pace.

Dealer claws up a FENCE, straddling the crest, off-balance, sprawls on the other side, jacket shredding on a link.

He cuts loose, downpour getting Biblical on him, coming harder, stronger. Fight or flight, he pitches headlong toward an offshoot as Neil and Laz hop the rail.

Neil ditches the route, splits sideways, shouting at Laz...

NEIL
Herd him to the pit!

Laz dogs the perp, nipping at his heels, closer, faster.

Dealer splashes a puddle, slipping, sideswiping a dumpster, skinning his knees on the pavement.

Hot-blooded, Laz bears down, shoulders squared, no fear.

Last stand, Dealer scampers, hurdling a gate onto...

GRAVEL-PIT SCHOOLYARD

Vacant. Ratty. Tire-swings and slides peppered with graffiti.

Dealer makes for the adjacent **PRESCHOOL**, fireballing into...

ABANDONED HALLWAY

Head on a swivel, glancing back at Laz...

WHAP! Blind-side, Neil thumps the Dealer, sending him horizontal, shattering a wood cubby.

Shaken, Dealer flops, staggering upward, Neil stomping him against the nook with the sole of his boot.

NEIL (CONT'D)
How old are you?

DEALER
Old enough to fuck you up.

Neil deflects the aggression, studying the kid...

NEIL
'Looks of it, you're pushin'
eighteen... another year and this
doesn't go down as a juvie fuck-up.
(beat)
Empty your pockets.

Contempt boiling in the Dealer's eyes as he stalls. Neil lays into him, ruthless, crushing his lungs.

DEALER
(breathless)
Alright, man...

Dealer wheezes, gasping, surrendering. Neil eases off, just a bit. Laz arriving at the scene, GLOCK trained on the perp.

Dealer flicks HEROIN BAGGIES and a wad of CASH at Neil's feet.

NEIL
That all?

Neil snatches the contraband, thumbing the bills, counting.

DEALER
You gonna rob me or book me?

NEIL
You got any priors?

DEALER
Naw.

NEIL
(pause)
Stay off the corner. I catch you
slingin' again, I'm gonna take it
personally.

Done deal. Neil pads away, Laz following, leaving the Dealer crumpled and broke in the cubby.

LAZ
We ain't gonna book him?

Neil rips the baggies, dumping the heroin down a STORM DRAIN.

NEIL
(shakes his head)
Won't do any good. Ups his street cred, then he's back on the grind next day. Least this way we don't jack his record. Kid can apply for a job without havin' to pen the felon box.

Neil divides the cash in two, offering half to his partner. Laz vets the stack, scowling, apprehensive.

NEIL (CONT'D)
(insisting)
Take it... what's the department gonna do with a couple hundred bucks?

LAZ
(declining)
All yours.

NEIL
You're too clean for your own good.

Neil pockets the drug money.

EXT. BISHOP'S PUB - NIGHT

The Crown Vic sallies up to the entrance, halting. Neil yanks the keys and turns to Laz.

NEIL
You coming?

Laz peeps the speakeasy, his face tense with worry.

LAZ
Go do your thing.

NEIL
Be just a minute. Keep an eye out.

Exiting, Neil slams the Vic's door and strolls into...

INT. BISHOP'S PUB - CONTINUOUS

A Spartan dive, fitted with scuffed decks, stools warped from abuse. Type of place that caters to bare-knuckle brawlers. IRISH FLAGS and MEMORABILIA splayed on the walls.

A few nine-to-five BARFLIES stewing in their own stink.

Tending the bar, Neil's wife, MOLLY BRESLIN (31), a hard-shelled beauty strung through life's meat-grinder, tough beyond her years. She tracks Neil with a dour-faced stare.

MOLLY

You're late.

Neil cranes, looking for someone.

NEIL

Where's Trev?

MOLLY

Tired of waiting. He took a cab home.

Over the counter, Neil pecks Molly's lips, a peace offering.

NEIL

Got caught up with a chase. I'll make it up to him.

Her mood softens with the apology. She pours him a shot of Jameson. He takes it in stride.

MOLLY

Laz outside?

NEIL

(nods)

In the cruiser. Doesn't like mingling with the otherside. Told him he's gotta get used to it.

Neil regards the scattered patrons.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Tips been good?

MOLLY

It'll pick up.

Jameson flows from Molly's tilt. Another shot. Neil downs his medicine, and slips a pad of TWENTIES under the glass.

NEIL
For your troubles.

Uneasy, she thumbs the dirty money, about to question its origin when Neil silences her with a KISS.

MOLLY
You spoil me.
(beat)
Any news 'bout the transfer?

NEIL
(shakes his head)
Gotta sit tight 'til my turn comes
'round. It'll happen when the
time's right.

A flicker of disappointment, subdued beneath Molly's gaze.

Neil flashes a roguish smile, laying on the charm...

NEIL (CONT'D)
How 'bout I put Trev to bed before
you get home -- spark a few
candles, couple glasses of Jameson.

Molly grins, relishing the affection.

MOLLY
So it's gonna be one of those
nights.

NEIL
(smirks)
Don't fight it.

Excused, Neil plods away as a MAN emerges from the BACK PARLOR, loitering forward with a brigand's gait...

TERRENCE "BISHOP" DUNN (48), on the wrong side of ugly, a "fuck you" grimace permanently etched on his face. Irish prince of darkness, grim-reaper of the underworld.

BISHOP
Thought I heard your voice.

Neil faces the bastard.

NEIL
Just leavin'.

Bishop mounts a stool, puffing his Marlboro, tarry breaths wisping at his teeth.

BISHOP
Seen your pa' round lately?

NEIL
Few weeks ago.

Another drag, Bishop devouring the smoke.

BISHOP
If you cross paths, tell him I need
a word.

Dead silence. Neil musters a respectful nod and shoves off.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

Decrepit tenements in a bottom of the barrel slum. Neil parks the Vic and heads inside.

INT. BRESLIN ROOST - MOMENTS LATER

Door wobbles, groaning as Neil steps through.

NEIL
Trev? You here bud?

Cabretta on the hanger, Neil probes the flat, finding...

His son, TREVOR BRESLIN (11), plagued with the same shotgun-temper as his pa', fixated on a shoddy tube box -- flickering grain from a hoops broadcast. Lounging at his side...

Neil's father, GRAHAM BRESLIN (52), a whiskey-faced deadbeat with a knack for tomfuckery. Ruddy complexion offsetting his shock of silver hair. Cigarette dangling from his lips.

Neil boils at the sight of his old man.

NEIL (CONT'D)
(to Graham)
The hell are you doing here?

Graham leans back, chafed from Neil's tone.

GRAHAM
Watching the game with my grandson.
That allowed?

Neil tables his discontent, killing the TV set.

NEIL
(to Trev)
Go do your work.

TREV
Already done.

NEIL
Let me see it.

Trev freezes, his bluff foiled. A long sigh as he sulks toward the KITCHEN, Neil catching his arm...

NEIL (CONT'D)
If you're gonna lie, you gotta make
it convincing... look me in the eye
when you say it.

Fear in the boy's eyes as he meets his father's stare. Neil smirks, easing the tension.

NEIL (CONT'D)
Go ahead.

TREV
(eyes on Neil, bluffing)
I wasn't lying.

NEIL
Atta boy.

Neil tousles Trev's hair, playfully shoving him away.

GRAHAM
What time is it?

Neil studies Graham, gearing for a clash.

NEIL
You got somewhere to be?

GRAHAM
Matter of fact I do. That's why I'm
here.

Neil pads to the cabinet, pours himself a drink.

NEIL
I'll give you 'til I'm finished
with this drink to get out of my
sight.

Neil's anger cuts deep, festering. Whiskey clots the wound. He takes an aggressive swig. Clock's ticking on Graham.

GRAHAM

I wouldn't come to you if it wasn't a last resort.

(beat)

Your brother flaked on me again, skipped town, probably nose-deep in a bender... and I got need for you.

Another gulp. Neil's halfway finished.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)

I'll cut a fair deal.

NEIL

Not interested in whatever scam you got goin'.

GRAHAM

No scam. Just a straight-up trade.

NEIL

Things come to you *straight-up*, turn *sideways* real quick.

GRAHAM

Not this time.

Neil mouths his medicine, down the hatch.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)

Hear me out. I'm offerin' easy money. Two hours tops. We make a drop, pick up our score, and we're back before your liver's dried.

NEIL

If it's so easy then do it yourself.

GRAHAM

It's a two-man job. I stroll in without backup, these guys are gonna take me for a chump.

Neil tightens his pace, sipping, drawing it out.

NEIL

Bishop know 'bout this?

GRAHAM
 (shakes his head)
 Runnin' this one off the grid.
 Strictly outsiders.

NEIL
 Better hope he doesn't catch wind.
 (beat)
 I saw him earlier. Said he needed
 to get with you.

Graham hunches, puffing his cig, nodding meekly.

GRAHAM
 I'm in deep with him. He's lookin'
 to settle.

NEIL
 How much?

GRAHAM
 Hundred K.

NEIL
 Jesus.

GRAHAM
 Points are killin' me. He's gonna
 put me under if I don't start
 payin' back the principle.
 (re: the job)
 I need you for this... please.

Tides turning, Graham senses it, sweetens the deal.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)
 Fifty-fifty split. Put your half
 toward your boy's college fund.
 (pitching)
 This gig is as cut and dried as
 they come.

NEIL
 Not gonna cross that line again.

GRAHAM
 Bullshit. You fuckin' live on that
 line. Cross it once you might as
 well come back for another taste.

NEIL
 It's not in me. Can't stray that
 far.

Graham schemes another approach, playing for sympathy.

GRAHAM

These guys I'm sellin' to, they don't fuck around. I show up to the meet alone and they're gonna rip me or kill me.

NEIL

Then don't show.

GRAHAM

Not an option. I gotta have this. So, either you got my back or you're feeding me to the wolves.
(beat)
What's it gonna be?

Last taste, Neil empties the glass, staunch, unwavering.

NEIL

I'll say a prayer for you.

With that, Graham swallows his plea, making for the door.

GRAHAM

Keep towing the line and you're gonna be squattin' in this shithole 'til you hit my age. Do yourself a favor, make a play while you still got enough years ahead for it to make a difference.

Graham departs, Neil opening the fridge, cracking a beer, his eyes glued to PHOTOGRAPHS on the door -- an image of the Breslin clan -- Graham, Neil and his BROTHER on a fishing trip, years ago, sunburned faces stretched wide with smiles.

Neil mouths the bottle, nostalgia on his mind.

He turns to his son, Trev -- at the table, hacking away at his homework, trapped in this dump of an apartment.

NEIL

What're you studying?

TREV

Math.

SILENCE. Neil's parental ineptitude glaring as he swigs the beer, awkwardly chiming in...

NEIL
(re: homework)
You need some help?

Trev focuses on the page, self-sufficient, like his old man.

TREV
No. I can do it.

Pride welling in Neil as he watches his son study.

NEIL
Got somethin' for you.

Neil fishes the remaining wad of TWENTIES out of his pocket, passing it to Trev.

NEIL (CONT'D)
Put it away in your safe spot.

Trev admires the money, then his father.

A LIGHT BULB flickers overhead, making it difficult for Trev to see his text book.

TREV
(re: light bulb)
We gonna get that fixed soon?

NEIL
(lost in thought)
Yea.

Suddenly, Neil ditches his badge, heading for the exit.

NEIL (CONT'D)
I want your work done by the time I get back.

TREV
Where are you going?... Can I come with you?

NEIL
(ignores the question)
Lock the door behind me.

Neil slips into the hallway, leaving.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - MOMENTS LATER

Neil catches Graham on the street.

NEIL

Hold up.

Graham turns, pleased at the sight of his son. Doesn't want to ruin the moment, just nods thankfully.

EXT. BORDERLINE MOTEL - NIGHT

A seedy boarding den for dopers and tarts. Neon lights pulsing in the witching hour.

Graham's beat-up SEVILLE staggers into the lot, grumbling like a chain-smoker on a spare lung, red haze beaming through the windshield as he parks.

GRAHAM

(re: dealers)

These guys are just rollin' through, lookin' to make a quick splash. I told 'em this was a one-time deal.

Glove box. Graham nabs a .38 REVOLVER and hands it to Neil.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)

If shit turns haywire, I want you quick to the trigger.

NEIL

I thought you said this was a straight up trade.

(off look)

You did your homework on these guys, right?

GRAHAM

Of course. But you know how these "meets" go... one minute you're talkin' friendly, the next you're eatin' bullets.

NEIL

(pause)

Just keep it simple, alright? We make the deal, then leave -- no bullshit.

Neil stuffs the .38 in his waistband and exits the car.

EXT/INT. ROOM 6 - MOMENTS LATER

Graham pounds on the door, DUFFLE in-hand, Neil at his side. A shadow creeps toward the slit, knob turning, opening...

MANNY HUNT (38), a Mexicali smuggler mining the east coast for product. Delinquent beard shading his greasy face. He greets Graham with a slacked handshake.

MANNY

Good to see you brotha. We got worried you backed out.

GRAHAM

Minor delay. We're all good.

Manny regards Neil warily.

MANNY

What happened to Spence?

GRAHAM

Couldn't make it. This is my other boy.

(off look)

That gonna be a problem?

Manny's eyes lock on Neil like a hawk pegging a meal too big for its belly.

MANNY

(not a problem)

Long as he's not a cowboy.

Manny gives way, stepping aside.

Graham and Neil breach the frame, Manny bolting the door.

Two CARTEL GORILLAS -- CORTEZ and PANCHO -- strapped with MAC-10's, guarding a BLACK BRIEFCASE on the mattress.

Banshee shrieks echo through the ceiling, cries of a woman getting fucked in the room above.

Neil sticks to Graham, unsettled by the shrill howls.

MANNY (CONT'D)

Let's get this under way.

Down to business, Manny flips open the briefcase, flashing stacks of BENJAMINS.

MANNY (CONT'D)

Show us what you got.

Graham unzips the duffel, removing four bricks of COKE wrapped in cellophane.

GRAHAM

Four keys, like we agreed.

MANNY

Mind if I sample?

GRAHAM

Go ahead.

Manny dips into the brick with a pocket knife, tasting the white, his face blank, expressionless. He dumps the remaining sample into a vial of nitric acid on the bed-stand.

Time crawls. The moment laced with tension.

Screams amplify overhead. Ceiling rattling from the fucking.

Gorillas paw their heat, ready to bring the hurt.

Neil pats his hip, fingering the noisemaker, Graham flush and clammy under the pressure.

Coke fizzes in the vial, tinting the nitric berry blue. Manny tilts the sample under a lamp, his eyes puckered.

MANNY

(satisfied)

Looks good.

Manny nods for the Gorillas to claim the bricks, and hands the briefcase to Graham.

MANNY (CONT'D)

Listen, I know you wanted to do a one-off, but there's alotta cash comin' down my pipeline... ready to do bigger business if you wanna take the next step.

Graham opens the case, handling the Benjamins.

MANNY (CONT'D)

Maybe we could arrange a meet with your supplier, see if we can come to terms. No reason for us to sever ties when we could be runnin' the show together.

GRAHAM

(shakes his head)

Can't do it. I don't handle the
traffick in this neck of the woods.
Best not to push our luck.

Graham flipbooks the wad, startled to find DOLLAR BILL
fillers padded under the Benjamins.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)

What the fuck is this...

Close-quarters, Gorillas raise their Mac-10's, Graham hurling
the briefcase and reaching for his chrome...

WHAP! Manny clocks Graham, hammering him to the carpet as...

Neil bulldozes the Gorillas, mauling and swatting their
weapons, knocking them off-balance.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! A chorus of gunshots. Mac-10's erupting.
Bullets peppering the ceiling.

Neil recovers, nimble, spry. He spikes Pancho's face against
the bedpost, blood spurting from the gash...

BOOM! Cortez unloads, Neil swiveling behind Pancho and
stripping his Mac-10, ready to kill...

Blind-side, cold steel jabs Neil's temple, Manny wielding the
piece.

MANNY

(re: Mac-10)

Drop it.

Neil, brick-faced, still frenzied from the battle, unwilling
to surrender.

WHAP! Manny pistol-whips Neil, then hauls him next to...

Graham, delirious and bloodied on the ground.

UMPH! Face to the floor. Manny stomps Neil, pinning him next
to Graham and shoving a BADGE in his eye...

MANNY (CONT'D)

DEA motherfucker.

Cortez and Pancho assist, manhandling and cuffing the perps.

Neil with a mouthful of carpet, immobilized, staring at his old man, scorn fuming in his eyes -- his life fucked in an instant.

CUT TO:

EXT/INT. HARRISON PENITENTIARY - MORNING

TITLE: TWO YEARS LATER

Iron bars clatter apart, Neil emerging through the gap, tagged in an orange jumper, inmate number patched on his chest, CORRECTIONS GUARDS escorting him down the cellblock.

MOMENTS LATER

He autographs the release papers, collecting his personal effects, reclaiming whatever fragments of a life he has left.

EXT. COUNTY PRISON - GATE - MOMENTS LATER

GUARDS flank the exit, regarding Neil with disdain as he strolls out of lockdown -- returning to the concrete jungle.

A TOWN CAR idles down the street. Leaning on the chassis, a beanstalk MAN in a cheap suit flashes a gap-tooth grin...

Neil's brother, SPENCER BRESLIN (28), sleepy-eyed runt of the litter, slave to the needle and bound for the gutter. His relentless enthusiasm bursting as Neil approaches.

SPENCER
(pleased with himself)
Thought I'd forget, didn't you?

A hearty embrace, Neil reluctant, Spencer beaming -- but even on his best days he can't shake his junkie stink.

SPENCER (CONT'D)
You look sharp, man. Prison did you some good. Ex-cop hardened behind by bars; that's a badass combo. Got both sides of the law runnin' scared.

Neil eyes the unblemished town car.

NEIL
What's this?

A proud smile, Spencer strokes the waxed hood.

SPENCER

Fuckin' batmobile. Bishop's got me drivin' his collection route. Lets me take the ride whenever I need it.

Muffled BARKING inside the car. A wet snout peeks through the cracked window.

NEIL

Flynn in there?

Spencer nods, heading for the driver's seat.

SPENCER

Partner in crime. He's good for backup.

INT. CROWN VIC - MOMENTS LATER

Spencer's dog, FLYNN, a gregarious full-bodied mutt, panting between the seats, slobber flapping from his muzzle.

Neil scratches the beast, Spencer at the wheel, motoring.

SPENCER

(re: Flynn)

Don't tell Bishop that I let him in the ride.

NEIL

(adjusting)

Sure you're alright with me crashing at your place?

SPENCER

Of course. It'll be like when we were kids.

The thought stirs memories, anguish, silence.

SPENCER (CONT'D)

Visited pa' upstate the other day.

Neil fixates on the windshield, avoiding conversation.

SPENCER (CONT'D)

He's not holdin' up too well. Cancer's spreadin' from his lungs to his brain. Doc says he's got a few months left.

Eyes cold, Neil checks the dash, finds a pack of smokes, lights one, not giving a fuck about his old man and the cancer.

SPENCER (CONT'D)

Make matters worse, he's talkin'
'bout cooperating with the feds.

Neil's attention rapt.

NEIL

What?

SPENCER

Said he doesn't wanna spend his
last days in a cellblock, so he's
gonna try to cut a deal, give up
some names for an early release.

Anxious puffs, the cigarette dwindling in Neil's grasp.

NEIL

Who else knows about this?

SPENCER

In town? Just me.

NEIL

Has he reached out to the feds yet?

SPENCER

Maybe. I don't know. He got pissed
when I told him to keep his mouth
shut, yelled at me to "fuck off".
(dire)
You gotta go talk to him. Bury
whatever bullshit's unsettled. He
owes you for what you did. He'll
listen to you.

Spencer makes an erratic turn, wheels screeching.

NEIL

This the right way?

SPENCER

Bishop's lookin' to get with you.

NEIL

'Bout what?

SPENCER

Don't know. Told me to bring you
straight from county.

EXT/INT. BISHOP'S PUB - DAY

The usual crowd of menial drunkards and half-witted skanks,
sucking down their afternoon dose.

Neil and Spencer roll through, toward the back, passing...

Bishop's squeeze, BLISS MURPHY (20), a nympho coke-fiend
trading skin for sniffs, tits popping out her tank-top as she
serves patrons at the bar.

THE BACK PARLOR - MOMENTS LATER

Lion's den. Windows barred and boarded. Cigar smoke choking
the lamplight, giving way to shadow.

Neil and Spencer sift through the haze, Bishop sitting on the
throne alongside his enforcer...

ANGUS KILLIAN (41), an austere hitman seething with quiet
menace. Wiry-strong, veins spiderwebbing under his flesh.
Blood vessels ruptured in his eyes, staining the white with
lucid red.

Bishop gnaws on a charred porterhouse, juices spilling down
his chin as he motions to Spencer.

BISHOP

Fetch us something to drink.

SPENCER

(nods agreeably)
What do you want?

BISHOP

Bliss knows what I like.

Spencer hurries away, leaving Neil to fend for himself.

Bishop flips through a pictorial catalogue of doe-eyed
RUSSIAN PROSTITUTES -- pasty skin and tortured smiles. Neil
eyes the book, Bishop catching his gaze.

BISHOP (CONT'D)

(re: girls)
Not bad, huh?
(beat)
Red tide is new in town.
(MORE)

BISHOP (CONT'D)

We're hashing ground-rules for business. Fuckin' territorial pissing contest. They keep sendin' these skinbooks; leg-spreaders ferried from Soviet slums, offerin' me test-drives as a show of good will. But you can't trust a picture, and if you take someone at their word then you're just a sucker waitin' to get owned.

NEIL

You drag me down here to look at smut?

BISHOP

(insulted)

Drag? I *provided* you with a ride home, just like I *provide* your wife and brother with steady work, keep 'em from drownin' in the gutter.

Neil sits without an invitation, earning a cutthroat stare from Angus.

NEIL

I'd say "thank you" if I thought it'd mean anything.

BISHOP

(pause)

Tough for you come back like this, isn't it? Tail between your legs after that hard fall from grace, tryin' to figure out which side of the law to land on.

(beat)

I can tell you one thing, the state won't take you in with open arms. They got nuthin' but hate for your type, so why waste your time fightin' against what you've always been.

NEIL

And what's that?

A sly grin, Bishop wiping his mouth clean, setting the hook in Neil.

BISHOP

I live a comfortable lifestyle. Money's never an issue.

(MORE)

BISHOP (CONT'D)

It's not about making ends-meet,
but figurin' out how'ta cut to the
bone, takin' every scrap along the
way. It all adds up. And I'm
bettin' you'd like to pad your
pockets now that you're back on the
market.

Bishop tilts, getting quiet, whispering devil-breaths.

BISHOP (CONT'D)

You always swayed toward my side,
and now you don't have the badge
holdin' you back.

(forceful)

So, you'll come onboard for a bit,
and if you don't like the scenery
then I'll cut you loose. No bad
blood.

A prickly proposition, Neil choosing his words wisely.

NEIL

Let me chew on the offer, see if I
can set my mind straight.

Finished, Neil rises, halting...

BISHOP

There's another issue to discuss.

Bishop goes back at the porterhouse, sawing gristle off the
bone.

BISHOP (CONT'D)

Hundred grand debt in your old
man's name. I'd put it on your
brother but he can barely keep his
head above water as is. And I don't
think your pa's gonna live out his
sentence. So, that leaves you to
take the burden.

Bishop chews the gristle, refusing to let it go to waste.

BISHOP (CONT'D)

I'm sure we can come to terms on a
payment plan.

NEIL

Whatever debt my father owes you,
that's between you and him.

The sinewy meat slinks down Bishop's gullet.

BISHOP

Don't get me wrong, I respect what he's doing, serving his time in silence; that's a smart move for everyone's sake. But it doesn't mean I can wipe the slate clean. That's bad business. I do it once, then I've got an entire book full of shitheads tryin' to renege on debt.

(off look)

Way I see it, you got two options -- you could bait and switch with Leon and his crew on Prospect, but I'm guessin' they'd charge at least four points, leave you chokin' on the vig. So, best way for you to settle with me is come into the fold, do some work on my behalf and we'll be square.

Bishop vultures another chunk of meat.

BISHOP (CONT'D)

Take a day to think about it.

The wet grind of Bishop's chewing fills the silence. Angus's eyes burning into Neil, never blinking.

Resistance is fatal. Neil departs with an ambiguous stare.

THE PUB - SECONDS LATER

Spencer leans over the bar, spitting half-assed game at Bliss as she muddles cocktails on a tray.

Impatient, Neil grabs his brother and makes for the exit.

EXT/INT. GHETTO SHACK - DAY

Spencer's nest. Dumpster-chic. Trash strewn in the wreckage. Needles and elastics scattered on milk-crates. Flies amassed on the walls, drifting in the putrid musk.

Flynn dodges through the mess, lapping grungy water from his dog bowl.

Spencer swatting junk off the crusty sofa. Neil eyeing his new home, understanding rock-bottom.

SPENCER

(re: sofa)

People say this thing's pretty comfortable to sleep on. Most times they're passed-out wasted, but still, at least it's a place to lay your head. Best I can offer.

NEIL

'preciate it.

SPENCER

You wanna head out, grab drinks?

NEIL

Something I gotta do first. You mind if I take the ride?

SPENCER

What's mine is yours.

Spencer tosses the keys to Neil.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - DUSK

Parked in the town car, Neil stakes his old tenement, fixated on the entryway, waiting until...

He spots Molly and Trev strolling toward the gate.

Hopping onto the street, he stalks them at a desperate pace.

Molly peeps him, stops and turns, her eyes bristling with disdain, Trev sheltered under her wing.

MOLLY

What're you doing here?

NEIL

Came to see you.

(to Trev)

How you doin' boy?

TREV

Fine.

Trev nods flatly, mired in that adolescence phase where moods swing from nonchalance to rage with nothing in between.

Molly pats him toward the gate.

MOLLY

Go inside.

Trev shrugs off, Molly turning her venom on Neil.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

I don't want you coming 'round here. He doesn't need someone like you in his life.

Her words sting. He masks the hurt.

NEIL

Someone like me?

MOLLY

Setting him down the wrong path.
Teaching him to cheat and steal.

Neil eats his comeback, stifling the anger.

NEIL

I wanna make it right. Just tell me what I gotta do.

MOLLY

You've done enough. Stay away.

Molly heads for the door...

NEIL

I'm sorry...

She stops, glancing back at Neil.

The apology freezes on his lips...

NEIL (CONT'D)

Spent two years suffering and now you're gonna shut me out?

MOLLY

(indignant)

Suffering? Don't even start with that shit. We've been livin' off scraps since you bailed on us -- pullin' double-shifts just to make rent.

NEIL

No matter what you think, everything I've done is for us.

Molly takes a breath, solemn and spiteful.

MOLLY

There is no us... and you don't get to write-off the fucked-up shit you've done with good intention.

The truth stings. Neil takes the hit, vowing...

NEIL

I promise, I'm gonna get you and Trev outta this dump.

MOLLY

We never needed your money or your promises.

(beat)

We needed you.

But not anymore. She leaves him in the cold.

EXT. PORT - NIGHT

Massive cranes and crates stacked on concrete slabs. A few longshoremen toiling as the darkness overwhelms.

Soaked in a brine of amber light, Bishop and Angus stand alongside SAUL DUGAN (62), a potbellied union honcho, scheming rackets for Bishop at the docks.

Shielded by a vast wall of crates, they monitor three GULAG HENCHMEN smashing the lock on a shipping container, their progress overseen by...

PAVEL REPNIN (43), Baltic butcher with a scarecrow face and rabid temperament, Cyrillian letters inked on his knuckles.

CLANK! Chains break on the container door. Henchmen drag a BARREL DRUM from inside, its shell marked with a warning: HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS.

Unfazed, they pop the lid with a crowbar, reaching inside the drum, fishing through the oily muck and retrieving a BRICK sheathed in plastic, then handing it to their boss, Pavel.

With a switchblade, Pavel guts the package, sampling the contraband; Turkish taffy, pure HEROIN. Bishop, Angus and Saul hovering at Pavel's side.

An icy nod, Pavel signals to his underlings, satisfied.

PAVEL
Load it in the truck.

Henchmen comply, hauling the barrels into an EIGHTEEN-WHEELER parked nearby.

Pavel flings a BLACK SATCHEL to Bishop, payoff. Angus opening the zip, checking the count.

PAVEL (CONT'D)
I've got another shipment on Sunday.

SAUL
We'll clear the docks.

PAVEL
Same rate?

BISHOP
Cut goes up on short notice.

Pavel scowls, displeased with the haggling.

PAVEL
How much?

BISHOP
Tack on an extra twenty thou', and we'll make sure you got no problems coming in and out.

PAVEL
That's a pricey escort.

BISHOP
Better than gettin' jacked by the feds. Your entire operation relies on me. I give you safe harbor, all I'm askin' is for a fair share in return.
(off look)
It's worth the coin, trust me.

A pact among thieves, Pavel at the mercy of Bishop, rasped as he extends his hand and shakes with his accomplice.

BISHOP (CONT'D)
We'll see you on Sunday.

Bishop flashes a duplicitous grin as Pavel retreats toward the truck.

Sifting the green, Bishop passes a cut to Saul, few thousand. Saul pockets the take, anxious as he faces Bishop.

SAUL
We got a problem.

BISHOP
With Sunday?

SAUL
No. Sunday's good.
(beat)
But collection from Wick's been short the last few weeks. Think he might be fixin' the books.

BISHOP
You sure?

SAUL
Heard about some high-rollers comin' into his parlor, losin' big on a game. Wick offers to slash their debt in half if they settle with cash. Then he rips the ticket and pockets the take like nuthin' happened.

Bishop volcanos in silence, Angus carrying the same hate.

BISHOP
We'll take care of it.

EXT. DESOLATE HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The eighteen-wheeler chugs along the winding blacktop, rock slopes and weed thickets encroaching. A TAURUS leads the way, guiding the truck ahead.

INT. TAURUS - CONTINUOUS

Henchman at the wheel, Pavel riding shotgun, checking the mirror, hawk-eyed on the eighteen-wheeler.

Out of the blackness, an UNMARKED CRUISER skids onto the road, tailing the truck, lights flashing, siren blaring.

The big rig slows, relenting to the cruiser's pursuit, pulling over onto the shoulder.

Henchman glances in the rearview, then looks to Pavel.

HENCHMAN
Should I stop?

Pavel, glued to the mirror, a strobe of red and blue igniting his face.

PAVEL
Drive 'til they're out of sight.

EXT. DESOLATE HIGHWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Dust churning as TWO AGENTS exit the cruiser, their FBI WINDBREAKERS billowing in the gale.

They march toward the eighteen-wheeler, SAWED-OFF SHOTGUNS choked in their palms.

Inside the truck, HENCHMEN gather paperwork, stashing HANDGUNS beneath the seats.

The Agents arrive on both sides, their demeanor steely.

AGENT #1
Need you to step out of the truck.

HENCHMAN
We break a law?

Agent #1 raises his noisemaker, Agent #2 following the trend.

AGENT #1
Get out.

Henchmen submit, exiting the truck, Agents herding them toward the rear.

AGENT #1 (CONT'D)
Open it.

They stall, resisting. Agent #2 clocks the Henchman with a shotgun butt, then shoves the barrel in his face.

AGENT #2
Do what he says.

Cold winds gusting as the Henchmen open the hatch, revealing the barrel drums filled with heroin.

AGENT #1
Get inside.

Knees raised, the Henchmen crawl into the cargo bay.

BOOM! BOOM! Shotgun blasts erupt. Punctures gushing blood from the Henchmen's chests, their bodies slumping onto barrels.

Slamming the hatch shut and commandeering the eighteen-wheeler, Agent #1...

RUBEN BOYD (45), a second-rate lawman with a taste for greed.

Farther back, Agent #2...

CALE GALLO (31), a wild-eyed bigot. His unruly hair tangled in the wind as he slips inside the cruiser and stomps the gas pedal, turning one-eighty, following Ruben in the truck.

EXT/INT. ABANDONED RAIL-STATION - NIGHT

Scourged walls. Shattered windows. Grime clogged in archaic generators and industrial debris.

Gloom sheds from a makeshift fire-pit, flames lapping at the dead-leafed basin.

Bishop and Angus loom by the heat, watching as HEADLIGHTS appear in the distance, drawing closer.

The eighteen-wheeler cuts through the murk, breaching the rubble entrance, with the cruiser in tow.

Ruben and Cale emerge from the vehicles, joining the party.

BISHOP
Any problems?

RUBEN
Easy pickins', like you promised.

The hatch rattles open from Ruben's push, Angus dragging the dead Henchmen from the bay and onto a plastic tarp.

Bishop divvies two stacks of CASH for the rogue agents.

BISHOP
Might have some work for you on Sunday.

RUBEN
More of the same?

BISHOP
Not sure. Gotta scope the cargo first. Can you be on call?

Ruben and Cale take their split of the money -- measly compared to what Bishop's earning.

CALE
Whatever you need.

BISHOP
(to Ruben)
How 'bout you?

Ruben scrooges his haul, enamored with the green.

RUBEN
Yea, we're straight.

The ROAR of engines in the distance, swelling like a petrol riptide -- a pack of HEADLIGHTS motoring over the hill.

RUBEN (CONT'D)
Good doing business.

Time to leave. Ruben and Cale pad to their cruiser, accelerating away from the incoming traffic, stealth mode.

Bishop and Angus await their new guests; a caravan of tricked-out LOWRIDERS, rumbling up to the fire-pit.

First out, LEON TIPTON (37), ghetto legend, a hardscrabble slumlord bred from violence, born to grind. Black-framed eyeglasses correcting his skewed vision.

Chrome-strapped THUGS flank him, filtering out the caravan. Among them, the DEALER that Neil busted two years back, OTIS (19).

Bishop eyes the ghetto cadre, amused.

BISHOP
You bring the entire the hood?

LEON
Just a few of my finest. Out in the boonies an' I'm gon' ride with some muscle, no matter who sends the invite.

Leon peeps the bloody henchmen on the tarp.

LEON (CONT'D)
Rackin' up the killcount.

BISHOP
Wrong place, wrong time.

Angus wielding an AXE, hacking the Henchmen into pieces, severing their limbs and tossing them into waterproofed bags.

LEON

You boys are some Jeffrey-Dahmer-motherfuckers, choppin' bodies like they nuthin' but cattle.

BISHOP

Makes it easier to bury 'em deep.
K9's can't catch the smell.

LEON

Whatever works.
(down to business)
So, you got some brown to sell me?

Bishop hop-steps into the cargo bay and fishes a brick of heroin from a barrel, tossing it to Leon.

Taste-testing, Leon dabs the brown on his tongue, then switchblades grains against the hood of his ride, checking for smear, dilutants.

LEON (CONT'D)

(pleased)
Shit's righteous. Cut to scrambled eggs and it'll still give them hopheads the rush.

Leon nods to Otis, prompting him to hand a FAT DUFFLE to Bishop -- heaping mounds of BENJAMINS inside.

LEON (CONT'D)

(admiring Bishop)
Helluva game you're playin.
Gangsters eatin' out your palm,
cops thinkin' you're a saint.
Rippin' off the suckers, and never
breakin' a sweat.

Bishop counts the dough.

BISHOP

No one gets too high or too low.
Everyone plays by the rules.

LEON

(correcting)
Your rules.

BISHOP
 (smirks)
 I'm just a middle-man.

LEON
 That's bullshit. But hey, I don't
 give a fuck, long as you keep
 sellin' to me.

Leon signals to his Thugs.

LEON (CONT'D)
 Take it.

They pile into the truck, retrieving the brown bounty.

LEON (CONT'D)
 What about the truck?

BISHOP
 Burn it.

Nearby, Angus still butchering the Henchmen, mutilating with
 heartless tact, blood streaked on his face.

EXT/INT. BELLAMY CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - MORNING

Concrete ramparts. Fences. Watchtowers. Maximum security.

Neil waits in the sterile VISITATION ROOM, plexi-glass
 separating him from "the otherside".

BUZZ! Door opening, Neil's father, Graham, hobbling toward
 the cubicle and sitting across from Neil. Harsh fluorescents
 glare from above, casting skeletal shadows on Graham's face.

Callous, Neil regards his father's gaunt appearance -- hollow
 eyes ravaged by the cancer, sunken with regret.

GRAHAM
 Long-time comin'. Wasn't sure if
 I'd see you again.

Words escape Neil, muted under the weight of the moment.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)
 They let you out early.

NEIL
 Good behavior.

GRAHAM

Yea, well, your sentence was pennies compared to mine.

(pause)

How're Molly and Trev?

NEIL

Doesn't matter.

Silence bristles with accusations unsaid.

GRAHAM

You gonna talk to me, or you just come down here to stare?

Neil recomposes, dropping the past, getting down to business.

NEIL

Spence told me he came to see you.

GRAHAM

(nods)

Couple days ago. Boy gets on my nerves. Doesn't know his place.

NEIL

Are you talkin' to the feds?

Graham lurches forward, hushed.

GRAHAM

Jesus, keep your fuckin' voice down.

(beat)

And no. I haven't talked to 'em yet. But I reached out. Same DEA spic who busted us.

NEIL

You do this and you put all of our lives at risk.

GRAHAM

My name. My decision.

NEIL

That's not how Bishop sees it.

GRAHAM

Fuck 'im. Irish prick hasn't done shit for me behind bars. Whatever ties we had in the past, shit's broken today.

NEIL

You can't keep this a secret. If you start cooperating with the law, he's gonna hear about it.

GRAHAM

I don't give a damn. I've got a few months tops, not wastin' my last breaths inside this fuckin' dungeon.

NEIL

Bishop has eyes in here; guards on his payroll. He finds out you're a rat, he's gonna set the dogs on you; die by the cancer or die by the shank; you won't make it out of here either way.

(reasoning)

So, if you got any love left for your family outside, then you'll keep quiet, die with your name intact.

Graham leans back, cocking his head like a stubborn youth.

GRAHAM

I'm done laying down. Been grinding under Bishop's thumb all these years, now it's my turn.

Graham flings the talk-phone at the plexi, waddling back toward the door, a nearby GUARD studying his every move.

Neil bottles his anger, helpless as his father drifts out of sight.

EXT. POLICE PRECINCT - DAY

An American flag thrashing, gnarled in the winter gale. SQUAD CRUISERS huddled in the lot, a minefield of black and white.

Exiled from the brotherhood, Neil waits outside, deflecting hostile stares from OFFICERS passing by.

Down the ramp, LAZ, Neil's ex-partner, strolls ahead. Neil perks at the sight of him, quelling his unease.

LAZ

(half-kidding)

Come to ask for your job back?

NEIL
(shaking his head)
I'm not that reckless.

Neil offers his hand, an awkward pause before Laz shakes it.

LAZ
So, this is just a social call?

NEIL
Mostly.

Laz wears a patrol uniform, stripped of his vice badge. Guilt suddenly bearing down on Neil.

NEIL (CONT'D)
They got you workin' rotations?

LAZ
"Strategic demotion" is what they called it. Said my skills would be put to better use as a bricklayer. Didn't have the right mindset for vice.

NEIL
You okay with it?

LAZ
(half-hearted)
I'm still in one piece.
(damning)
Tough to rise up the ranks when your partner gets busted dirty. They won't say it, but I know they think I was on the take with you; shakin' down dealers, playin' kingpin with a shield. Doesn't make me a top candidate for promotion.

Reality bites, Neil reeling from the disgrace.

NEIL
Listen, you don't owe me anything, and I bet you got some hate for me...

LAZ
(interrupting)
No *hate*. Just pity.

Neil takes his lumps.

NEIL
I gotta ask a favor.

LAZ
(pause)
Spit it out.

NEIL
DEA agent who busted me, I need you
to get in touch with him, set up a
meet.

Laz glowers, dubious of Neil's intentions, fearing payback.

NEIL (CONT'D)
Relax, it's nuthin' like that. Just
a sit-down. My old man's lookin' to
cut a deal with him. We need to
iron some things out.

LAZ
(sympathetic)
Damn. I'll see what I can do.

NEIL
Thanks... Here's my cell.

A slip of paper, Neil passing it to Laz.

LAZ
(dwelling)
If he goes through with it, you
should skip town. Hit the Seventy-
Five, and take it 'til you run out
of road... 'cause they'll be
gunnin' for you. Law won't do shit
about it 'til there's chalk and
tape.

Neil considers the advice, backing away, separating from Laz.

NEIL
'preciate the help.

EXT/INT. BISHOP'S PUB - NIGHT

Midnight hour lures the deadbeats. TOWNIES getting lit on the
sip and the snort. Chain-smokers burning through packs,
hotboxing the clusterfuck in a swampy haze.

Molly tends the bar, a madcap of luses howling for her pour. She takes the abuse, stuffing tips in her pouch, losing years from the stress and smoke.

Neil bowls through the crowd, pushing to the counter. Molly eyeing him, too busy to argue.

MOLLY
What do you want?

NEIL
Whiskey's fine.

She tilts the bottle, her face puckered as the cup floods. Neil wiping the spillage, leaning close to her.

NEIL (CONT'D)
I want you to quit workin' here.

MOLLY
Why's that?

Opposite side, Angus glaring at Neil, his bloodshot eyes swollen from the smoke. Neil holds his gaze, then turns back to Molly.

NEIL
Things are 'bout to go sour and you're gonna be in the crossfire. I can't protect you anymore.

MOLLY
(resentful)
You never did.

With that, Molly brushes-off, down the counter, serving a toothless panhandler dishing quarters for booze.

FINGERS paw at Neil's shoulder, Angus guiding him away from the bar, baiting him into...

THE BACK PARLOR - CONTINUOUS

On the couch, Bishop sprawls, reveling in the deviance of the previous night's plunder, his body slicked with a carnal sweat.

Next him, Bliss Murphy, naked, dope and liquor dimming her sex-crazed eyes.

Neil and Angus intrude, Bishop and Bliss unfazed by their presence, remaining stationary.

Bishop mouths a bottle of Jameson, regarding Neil...

BISHOP
You had some time to think about my
offer?

NEIL
(noncommittal)
I did.

Bishop stretches, shadows slanting on his crooked face.

BISHOP
(disingenuous)
Good of you to come back on your
own. Situation would've been
unpleasant if I had to track you
down. This should be something you
want. No one's forcing your hand,
ya know?

Neil, monk-like, burying his thoughts.

BISHOP (CONT'D)
I got a job for you. Hitch a ride
with Angus tomorrow afternoon. I'll
wipe off a quarter your old man's
debt.
(clarifying)
That's twenty-five thousand for a
few hours work. Where else are you
gonna earn like that?

A COMMOTION outside, VOICES clamoring.

Quick to the trigger, Angus retrieves his .45 SEMI-AUTO,
blending into the shadows as...

Pavel barges into the parlor, boiling with discontent. He
doesn't even notice the .45 aimed at his head.

PAVEL
(to Bishop)
I need a word with you, in private.

Bishop nods assuredly, Angus lowering the hardware.

BISHOP
(to Bliss)
Pack up.

Bliss wobbles into the bathroom, Neil and Angus retreating
into the main bar.

A smug expression as Bishop swigs the bottle, barricading himself in a wall of indifference.

BISHOP (CONT'D)
Have a seat.

PAVEL
This'll be quick.

BISHOP
Somethin' wrong?

PAVEL
My truck disappeared last night.

Bishop plays dumb, sparking a cigarette.

BISHOP
Disappeared?

PAVEL
Last I saw, there was cruiser
chasin' it down the highway.
Shipment must've been seized.

BISHOP
That's too bad. Pitfalls of the
business we work in.

PAVEL
Hasn't been reported yet. You read
anything into that?

Bishop, in his element -- orchestrating from the shadows, hedging his bets and scamming the suckers.

BISHOP
Dark alliances between lawmen and
pushers. You gotta be careful who
you trust. Put too much faith in a
man and he's bound to turn against
you.

(beat)
I've got sources everywhere. If
somethin' unholy went down, I'll
hear about it, and you'll be the
first to know.

THE MAIN BAR - MOMENTS LATER

Neil watches Molly from afar, a throng of drunkards obscuring his view. She commands the bar with grace, strength fostered in his absence.

Neil weakens with a nauseating sense of dread. His worried eyes shifting to Pavel as he huffs out of the pub.

INT. GHETTO SHACK - MORNING

RING! Neil's cellphone. He rests awkwardly on Spencer's couch, immersed in a bed of trash -- hard to distinguish him from the junk.

He answers the call, groggy, shaking cobwebs.

NEIL
(into phone)
Yea.

LAZ (V.O.)
(over phone)
Got you a meeting. Set it out of town. You know Milton's BBQ?

NEIL
(into phone)
Sure.

LAZ (V.O.)
(over phone)
Be there in an hour.

EXT/INT. MILTON'S BBQ PIT - MORNING

A sleazy dump. Smoke billowing from the coal-pit. A grease-battered PIGMASTER searing raw cuts on the fire.

Neil wades through the fumes, finding Manny Hunt, the DEA agent who busted him two years ago, waiting in a tight-quartered booth. Neil sits on the opposite side.

MANNY
I ordered some grub for us.

NEIL
You paying?

MANNY
(smirks)
That depends.

NEIL
On what?

MANNY

On what you're bringing to the table.

Innuendo cuts like a knife.

NEIL

(redirecting)

You talk to my father yet?

MANNY

Supposed to meet with him tomorrow.

NEIL

Cancel it.

MANNY

Why would I do that?

NEIL

You're gonna get him killed.

MANNY

(undeterred)

Then he must know somethin' worth hearing.

Negotiations begin, Neil raising his guard.

A WAITRESS shepherds a plate of ribs and slaw to the table. Manny wastes no time, digging in, getting his hands dirty.

NEIL

What do you want?

MANNY

Make an offer. I'll tell you if I'm interested.

Neil's words lump in his throat. He hesitates, then blurts it out.

NEIL

I'll give you Bishop Dunn... but we gotta do it on my terms.

Manny balks at the tender.

MANNY

That's a tough catch to hook. Been after him for the better part of a decade. Every time I get close, he sniffs it out.

(MORE)

MANNY (CONT'D)

Guy's got a sixth sense when comes to heat, buck you off if he gets a whiff of your stink.

NEIL

I'm on-point with him later today.

MANNY

That's a start.

(waiting for more)

What's the gig? Guns? Drugs?

Neil parries, setting his terms.

NEIL

I need you to stay away from my father.

MANNY

You gotta throw me some nuggets before we deal. I'm not gonna drop a source at your word.

(chewing)

Come back to me with something real, then we can talk.

Manny devouring the ribs, no regard for manners or courtesy. It's all part of a system that feeds his agenda.

MANNY (CONT'D)

(warning, re: Bishop)

Don't take this guy for granted. He's shakin' hands with the city's finest; feeding green to the otherside while they cover his ass; eyes wide shut, burying paperwork to save face. I'd put money that he's got the feds in his pocket. You don't skate prison all these years without someone watchin' your back.

Neil rises, putting his stamp on the union.

NEIL

Just hold off on cuttin' a deal with my old man.

Meat sticking to Manny's gums as he grits and swallows.

MANNY

No guarantees.

(off look)

I'll give you two days.

(MORE)

MANNY (CONT'D)
Meet me at the Olympus Garage
'round noon.
(beat)
Clock's tickin'.

EXT. BISHOP'S PUB - DAY

A TAXI puttering up to the curb, Neil exiting, paying the driver, spotting Angus and Bishop waiting for him by a TOWN CAR in the alley.

BISHOP
Get in.

EXT/INT. TOWN CAR - LATER

Spencer chauffeurs, Angus riding shotgun, Neil and Bishop in the backseat.

Wind hisses through a cracked window, undercutting the hush. Neil's eyes meet Spencer's in the rearview mirror, queasy and restless.

MOMENTS LATER

ROW HOUSES sprout from the blacktop. Arthritic trees, leafless in the smog and filth.

Spencer parks at the curb, Bishop leaning toward him.

BISHOP
Stay here.

The trunk pops, Angus fetching a WATERPROOFED DUFFLE, following Bishop and Neil to a tar-papered row house.

Bishop hits the BUZZER, glancing at a TINY CAMERA mounted above them, breathing impatiently until the DOOR OPENS...

INT. ROW HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A security GOON checks them at the entrance, recognizing Bishop and clearing their entry.

Down the steps, Bishop, Neil and Angus funnel into...

THE GAMBLING PARLOR - MOMENTS LATER

A makeshift saloon. Plasma screens and wager tables crowded on a pad of ash-smearred carpet.

Saul, union honcho from the docks, straddles a stool, sipping on an old fashioned. Next to him...

WICK SHELTON (36), a hyperactive bookie, sweating bullets and muttering curses under his breath. He stiffens at the sight of Bishop, blowing off his steam...

WICK

What the fuck's going on?

(re: Saul)

Fatass waddles in here barkin' orders, tellin' me I gotta shut down for the day.

(beat)

Costing me a fuckload of money. And when I don't earn, you don't earn. This is a partnership between me and you. I can't have butterball breathing down my neck every fuckin' week.

BISHOP

Anything else?

WICK

What's the problem? And please don't tell me you're coming down to renegotiate the split. I work my fuckin' ass off every day, and your cronies swoop in here once a week to pick up a fuckin' envelope.

BISHOP

That's gonna come to an end.

Wick recoils, startled by the severity of Bishop's tone.

WHAP! Lightning fast, Saul hammers Wick to the floor, his hand clasped on Wick's throat, dragging him into...

THE BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Tiles shatter, Wick crashing into the wall, blood streaming down his face, Saul looming over him.

Angus unzips the duffel, removing a pair of shackles, cuffing Wick to the shower bar.

Tongue-tied, Neil hovers in the background.

Bishop steps to Wick, savoring the moment.

BISHOP (CONT'D)

You've been careless. Sweeping profits under the rug.

WICK

(breathless)

What? What're you talkin' about?

BISHOP

When you mess with my money, it makes me look weak, like you're fuckin' me in broad daylight.

WICK

I didn't...

WHAP! Saul's knuckles pancake Wick's nose. Protests drowned in blood.

BISHOP

If I let a schmuck like you steal from me, then where does it end.

WICK

It never happened. I swear.

BISHOP

(amused)

That's one thing you've always been good at; lying to get what you wanted. Makes you unreliable. So, I'm gonna do you a favor.

Bishop nods, Angus wielding PLIERS and SWITCHBLADE.

WICK

Please. Don't do this.

(shouting)

Help! Somebody, get me tha' fuck outta here!

WHAP! Saul's fist stuns Wick. Pliers rattling against Wick's teeth as Angus yanks his tongue and lops it with the blade. Blood spurts from the nub over Wick's lips.

Neil losing his nerve, about to cut and run when...

BISHOP

Get over here.

Bishop pulls Neil front and center, Angus handing him the switchblade.

BISHOP (CONT'D)
Finish the job.

Blood on Neil's hands as he grips the hilt, his eyes pitying Wick. He can't bring himself to do it.

Angus brandishes his .45, aiming the barrel at Neil, urging obedience.

Wick gargles his own blood, euphoric from the shock. Neil holding strong, unbending.

CLICK. Angus jacks the slide, fingering the trigger, Bishop losing his patience.

BISHOP (CONT'D)
This is the only way you get my trust. Rite of passage. Bury that knife in his fuckin' throat, or I'll put it in yours.

Veins throbbing on Neil's temple.

BISHOP (CONT'D)
Just imagine what I'll do to your wife and your boy.

Enough. Neil bulls forward, gashing Wick's throat, blade lodging in the cartilage, blood drenching Neil's body.

It's done. Life draining from Wick's eyes. Neil lingering, his face washed in guilt and relief.

Angus lowers the .45, speaking to Neil for the first time...

ANGUS
Now you're one of us.

EXT. ROW HOUSE - LATER

In the town car, Spencer waits, snorting bumps of white to pass the time, riling himself into a narcotic frenzy.

Through the window, he watches his comrades exit the row house...

Angus carrying the duffle, encumbered by the weight of Wick's mutilated body. Neil doused in blood, accompanied by Bishop.

They pile into the ride. Spencer lock-jawed, shaken at the sight of his brother.

EXT. LANDFILL - DUSK

Red sun bleeds onto the synthetic wasteland. An ocean of plastic suffocating the bitter soil. Gulls circling the flotsam. Dormant backhoes stationed on the outskirts...

A fresh grave. Neil shoveling the edges, several feet deep already. His body caked in a sludge of mud and sweat.

Angus oversees the digging, towering above Neil, three duffles on the precipice, waiting to fill the hole.

Spent, Neil looks to Angus for relief.

ANGUS

Deeper.

Exhaustion takes its toll, Neil slaving away, gouging the earth, burrowing into the muddy blackness.

EXT/INT. BELLAMY CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - MORNING

Private visitation room. Air whispering through a ventilation shaft. DEA agent, Manny Hunt, sitting at a metal desk.

BUZZ! Door opening, Graham entering, escorted by a GUARD. Shackles clattering on Graham's wrists and ankles as he sits.

The Guard lingers, standing nosily by the wall.

MANNY

You can leave us.

Displeased, the Guard nods out of the room, closing the door.

MANNY (CONT'D)

Met your boy yesterday. Didn't have much to offer, but he was tryin' his best to keep me away from you.

GRAHAM

Looks like you weren't convinced.

Manny lights a smoke, dictating the pace of conversation.

MANNY

Before we get into this, let me explain how I operate.

(beat)

I'm not your amigo, your partner or your priest.

(MORE)

MANNY (CONT'D)

Nuthin' you say to me is gonna
pardon the shit you've done. Far as
I'm concerned you're a fuckin'
pariah, and the only reason you've
got my ear is 'cause you can lead
me up the food chain.

(beat)

So, if we do this, you gotta go all-
in, no holding back. Either you're
on my side or you're against me.
There's no room for in-between.

Silence. Graham's withered eyes bore into Manny.

GRAHAM

You got an extra smoke?

Manny passes a cigarette to Graham, sparking it. The smoke
agitates Graham's lungs, hacking phlegm, a demented grin on
his face as he embraces the pain, dying on his own terms.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)

I can give you Bishop Dunn on a
platter; his suppliers, stash
houses, kickbacks at the docks.

(setting terms)

I want out of here by Monday. Draft
up the paperwork and I'll tell you
everything I know.

INT. STASH HOUSE - SIMULTANEOUS

Bishop's Fort Knox. Brick walls. Reinforced steel door. No
windows. Tables cluttered with GUNS, DRUGS, MONEY, PASSPORTS.

Bishop stacks his plunder on a shelf.

RING! Cell phone. He answers the call.

BISHOP

(into phone)

What is it?

INTERCUT - STASH HOUSE AND PRISON HALLWAY

The Guard uses a PAYPHONE, staring menacingly at the
VISITATION ROOM where Graham is meeting with the DEA.

GUARD

(into phone)

You've got a leak.

BISHOP

Who?

GUARD

Graham's in a room with the DEA.

Accusation knocks the wind out of Bishop, his eyes on fire.

BISHOP

Keep me posted.

END INTERCUT

INT. GHETTO SHACK - LATER

Cold water spurts from a showerhead. Neil scrubbing fiercely, trying to wash the blood and grime from his skin.

MOMENTS LATER

The mutt, Flynn, curled up next to Spencer, sleeping.

Neil pushes into the lair, finding Spencer unconscious. A belt cinched on his arm above blackened TRACK MARKS.

Instinct kicking in, Neil smacks life into Spencer's face.

NEIL

Wake up!

A few hits and Spencer's glassy eyes roll open.

SPENCER

(annoyed)

Jesus, calm down. I'm fine.

Spencer fights the nausea, twisting and puking onto his cot.

MOMENTS LATER

Sunlight pierces a window. Bent aviators shield Spencer from the rays. He quivers, pouring kibble for Flynn and a cup of OJ for himself, mold bobbing in the spoiled drink.

Neil regarding his brother with concern.

SPENCER (CONT'D)

I gotta run pickups for Bishop today. You mind driving?

EXT/INT. TOWN CAR - DAY

Cruising through the projects, Neil at the wheel, Spencer riding shotgun, Flynn slobbering on the console.

Spencer shivers from the come down, Neil eyeing him.

NEIL

You gotta quit with that shit.

Deep breaths, Spencer taming his nerves.

SPENCER

Plenty of worse ways to die. I'd rather fade into a dream and never wake up than get butchered on the street.

(navigating)

Turn here and park at the corner.

Neil swerves, halting at a spiked sidewalk.

EXT/INT. CUT-RATE AUTO REPAIR - MOMENTS LATER

A nickel and dime chop shop in a crime-addled ghetto.

Sparks and beats jolt from the pit. Tatted GANGSTERS juicing their rides with stolen parts.

Neil and Spencer stroll ahead, catching glares from every eye in the pit -- one false move and bullets are sure to fly.

Through the hatchway, Spencer leads Neil to a rusted door, pounding until a slot opens, eyes peeping through gap.

SPENCER

Here to see Leon.

Black "POPEYE", a barrel-chested thug, opens the door.

POPEYE

Sup, man. How you been?

SPENCER

Same ol' shit.

POPEYE

(re: Neil)

Who's this?

SPENCER
My brother. He's cool.

Popeye lays a stare on Neil, not fucking around.

POPEYE
You know the routine.

Spencer and Neil raise their arms, allowing Popeye to pat them down, checking for weapons and wires.

POPEYE (CONT'D)
Leon's in the basement.

CUT ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Bare-assed SKANKS cut and package heroin into baggies, Leon and Otis directing the operation.

Neil and Spencer enter the sanctuary, drawing attention.

SPENCER
(impressed, re: heroin)
Damn, you guys are flush.

LEON
Just keepin' afloat.
(re: collection)
That time of the month already?

SPENCER
'Fraid so.

LEON
Your boss is lucky I still got respect for that old-school shit. No way I'd be payin' his ass otherwise.

Leon grabs two stacks of CASH, tossing them to Spencer.

SPENCER
Small price for peace of mind.

Otis scowling, fixated on Neil.

OTIS
I know this motherfucker.
(remembering)
Dude's a cop. Ripped me on the corner a few years back.

Otis unleashes his chrome, aiming at Neil.

NEIL

Whoa, easy.

WHAP! No hesitation, Otis pistol-whips Neil, drawing blood, payback.

SPENCE

Hold up. Chill. He got axed from the force, spent the last two years at county.

LEON

(to Neil)

That right?

Neil, on his knees, shielding his face with an open palm.

NEIL

Been a citizen since I got out, flipped sides. I work for Bishop now.

Leon ponders the confession, judging Neil.

LEON

If I hear different, I'm gon' come find both of you.

(beat)

Now, get out my shop.

INT. TOWN CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Neil drives, warding off Flynn from licking his bloody nose. Spencer offers a crumpled fast food wrapper to plug the cut.

SPENCER

You alright?

Neil stuffs his nostril and stares at his reflection -- the mistakes of his past coming back to haunt him.

NEIL

(beat)

Where to next?

EXT. BACK HARBOR - DAY

Nameless brick warehouses corroded in the briny mist. Mangled parking meters on the potholed street.

Neil and Spencer pace toward a set of copper double-doors, tapping the buzzer and glancing at the security cam.

A hollow thud as the entrance sways open, Neil and Spencer stepping inside, two GULAG HENCHMEN patting them down.

INT. SOVIET SEX DUNGEON - MOMENTS LATER

A perverse haunt. Red lights emitting a sinister gloom. A choral mash of sex cries muffled through curtains and mortar.

Neil and Spencer weave through a melange of underaged SEX SLAVES -- doped-up and strewn on grungy furniture.

Pavel holds court in a BACK ROOM, anorexic tramps groveling for his attention. He strips their hard-earned cash, pocketing the bulk and tossing them the scraps.

His eyes shift to Neil and Spencer as they approach.

PAVEL

There something I can do for you?

SPENCER

Here to collect for Bishop.

PAVEL

(annoyed)

Didn't I pay you a few weeks ago?

SPENCER

That was last month's dues.

Pavel grins bullishly, groping a matchstick harlot onto his lap.

PAVEL

Tell your boss that I'll pay him at the docks on Sunday.

Spencer eyes the money in Pavel's hand.

SPENCER

(feisty)

Looks like you have enough to pay right now.

PAVEL

He's gonna have to wait. If that's a problem, he can come down here and see me himself.

Neil regards the harem with mixture of repulsion and sorrow.

PAVEL (CONT'D)
 (re: sex slaves)
 Take your pick. I'll give you a
 first-time discount.

NEIL
 (disconcerted)
 I'll pass.
 (to Spencer)
 Let's go.

Neil retreats, dragging his brother with him.

EXT. GATED CEMETERY - NIGHT

A gnarled forest insulates the sprawling graveyard. Vines strangling headstones under the dull moonlight.

Bishop and Angus wait in a trough, sequestered from the entrance as a SEDAN meanders toward them.

Their FBI conspirators exit the vehicle, Ruben and Cale.

RUBEN
 What's the emergency?

BISHOP
 (beat)
 One of our guys inside is talkin'
 to the DEA.

RUBEN
 How much does he know?

BISHOP
 Enough to hurt us.
 (beat)
 I need you to go upstate. Make him
 think you're there to cut a deal,
 and find out how much he's spilled.

RUBEN
 Then what?

BISHOP
 I'll take care of the rest.

CALE
 (beat)
 We still on for Sunday?

BISHOP
 (nods)
 Same routine.

INT. TOWN CAR - NIGHT

Alone, Neil rummages through the glove box, swiping a chunk of CASH from the day's extortion pickups.

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - LATER

THUD! Neil pounds on the door to his old pad, Molly answering, irritated by Neil's presence.

MOLLY
 I'm not in the mood for this.
 There's nuthin' for us to talk
 about.

Neil wedges his foot in the door.

NEIL
 Gimme five minutes, then I'll
 leave... I promise.

Molly hesitates, straddling the frame.

NEIL (CONT'D)
 Can I come inside?

MOLLY
 No. Say your peace right here.

Trev creeps behind Molly, peeking through the half-shut door.

NEIL
 I won't apologize, 'cause I know
 you don't wanna hear it.
 (beat)
 Hate me, blame me; I can take the
 hits, probably deserve 'em. If you
 wanna cut me out of your life,
 fine; but don't expect me to roll
 over when harm's coming your way.

MOLLY
 If we're in danger it's just more
 of the same. Coped for two years
 without you, haven't missed a beat.

NEIL
 (conceding)
 I'm not arguing. You're right. I don't deserve your trust... but that's not gonna stop me from tryin' to earn it back.

Neil hands the wad of stolen CASH to Molly.

NEIL (CONT'D)
 Are you workin' this weekend?

MOLLY
 I'm off 'til Monday.

NEIL
 It'll be over by then.

MOLLY
 What're you talking about?
 (re: cash)
 Where'd you get this?

NEIL
Just stay away from Bishop. Shack up in a motel outside town. I'll come for you when it's safe.

MOLLY
 Why can't we stay here?

NEIL
 (beat)
 You're gonna have to trust me.

INT. BELLAMY CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - MORNING

Private visitation room. A Guard escorts Graham into the sterile cube, Ruben and Cale waiting by the desk. They warm to Graham with wolfish smiles.

RUBEN
 Mr. Breslin, my name's Ruben Boyd, and this is my partner Cale Gallo. We're from the FBI.

Ruben and Cale flash their FBI BADGES.

RUBEN (CONT'D)
 I understand you've been talking to the DEA about an upcoming case...

GRAHAM
(stunned)
How'd you know that?

CALE
DEA's a leaky ship.

RUBEN
We have reason to believe there's a corrupt faction within the DEA. Good chance someone in their midst is in league with Bishop Dunn.

CALE
You gotta be careful who you talk to.

RUBEN
We'd like for you to deal with us exclusively from now on. Otherwise, we can't ensure your safety.

Graham shakes his head skeptically.

GRAHAM
Guy I'm dealin' with busted me two years back... no way he's dirty.

CALE
May not be him, but it could be someone he's workin' with.

RUBEN
We're in a better position to get you out of here. So, we need to know exactly what you told him. Did you sign any paperwork?

GRAHAM
No.
(reflective)
You're sure about the leak?

RUBEN
Unfortunately, yes.

GRAHAM
Then you gotta get a message to my boy. Tell him to steer clear of the DEA.

An alarming revelation, Ruben and Cale share a worried glance.

RUBEN

Your son is working with the DEA?

GRAHAM

I don't know, but he's met with 'em. Figure it's best he cuts ties before they tip off Bishop.

(beat)

Can you get in touch with him?

Graham stirs in his chair, unaware that he's just authorized his son's death warrant.

RUBEN

(pause)

Yea, we'll find him right away.

INT. BISHOP'S PUB - MORNING

A runny egg yolk leaks across a plate, Bishop shredding the yellow bulb, slopping it into his mouth. Coffee and cigarettes accompany the meal, along with the morning paper.

At the bar, Angus cleans glasses under a jet of hot water.

Neil enters, carrying an envelope with the extortion payoffs.

BISHOP

Where's your brother?

Neil slides the envelope across the counter.

NEIL

Sleepin' in.

Bishop scans the newspaper.

BISHOP

You read the paper?

NEIL

Not much.

BISHOP

Hard to tell which of these stories you can trust. Buncha reporters stamping bullshit in ink, hoping it sticks. For all I know, every single word could be a lie.

(pause)

See your pa' recently?

NEIL

I haven't.

A disingenuous frown on Bishop's face.

BISHOP

I hear he's not doing so well. Wish him my best next time you visit.

NEIL

I will.

(beat)

Listen, if you got any extra work, I'm lookin' to earn. I can't be treadin' water with you for the next year. Put me on somethin' big enough so I can payback my father's debt and start makin' on my own.

BISHOP

Why the sudden change of heart?

NEIL

What else am I gonna do? Like you said, this is where I'm supposed to be.

RING! Bishop's phone chimes. He answers the call.

BISHOP

(into phone)

Yea.

He listens... nodding until suddenly his eyes widen, trained on Neil, a subtle menace in his voice...

BISHOP (CONT'D)

(into phone)

That's disappointing to hear. I was hoping things would turn out differently.

His grip tightens on the phone.

BISHOP (CONT'D)

(into phone)

I'm in the middle of something. I'll call you back.

Bishop ends the call, his eyes still zeroed on Neil.

BISHOP (CONT'D)

Don't have any work for you right now, but there might be somethin' comin' up. I'll get to you when the time's right.

NEIL

Sure.

Neil exits, Bishop and Angus eyeing him to the door.

BISHOP

(to Angus)

Follow him.

EXT. OLYMPUS GARAGE - DAY

Abandoned. Desolate. Satanic graffiti emblazoned on the ramps. Squatting nests and refuse littered throughout.

Neil steers up the spiral, turning the car in knots until he arrives at the TOP PLATFORM, finding...

Manny Hunt, basking in the wintry gloom, a STORM on the horizon.

Neil strolls to Manny, leaning against the rail.

MANNY

When I was a kid, I used to sit on the porch, watching storms roll through, tryin' to figure which way they were gonna turn.

(beat)

After a while I stopped guessing. I'd run straight into 'em, rain and snow belting me 'til I was numb... my mother acted like I'd lost my mind... I told her, I'd rather get hit on my own terms than wait for beatdown.

(turns to Neil)

So, what's it gonna be for you?

NEIL

I need you to get my family into witness protection.

MANNY

You're jumping the gun. I can't just snap my fingers and make it rain.

(MORE)

MANNY (CONT'D)

There's a shitload of red tape cloggin' up WitPro, and I gotta make sure you're the real deal before I even bring this to my bosses. So, please, tell me you've got somethin' to trade.

NEIL

Not today. I'm gonna pull through for you, but I need a show of good faith. Help my wife and my kid, and I'll do whatever you ask.

Manny balks at Neil's demand, marching toward his Pontiac.

MANNY

Don't come to me with that guilt-trip bullshit. You wanna keep your family safe?... then buy a gun and sit by the door.

(beat)

I'm not in the babysitting business, and I've already got your old man on the hook, so I'm gonna squeeze him for everything he's got, which is a helluva lot more than you can offer.

VROOM! An engine flares from the ramp below, intensifying as a gunmetal MUSTANG revs onto the top platform.

Standoff. The Mustang idles at the ramp mouth, bullying Neil and Manny, blocking their exit.

MANNY (CONT'D)

The hell is this?

Distant thunder booms over the Mustang's rickety growl. Windows gliding open, Neil backing toward the rail, Manny drawing his PISTOL.

VROOOOM! Burning rubber, the Mustang lurches forward, **ANGUS** at the wheel, muscling his TEC-9 out the window.

Neil and Manny scatter, ducking for cover behind their cars.

BOOM! A swarm of bullets. Glass shattering. Metal imploding.

WHOMP! The Mustang plows into the Pontiac, squashing Manny against the rail, his scream swallowed in the impact.

Tires squeal, reversing, the Mustang revving onto its haunches, Angus unleashing hell from his Tec-9.

Neil dives into the fray, dragging Manny from under the sandwiched Pontiac. Sparks slashing, copper haymakers pelting the cement as he dodges and grabs Manny's pistol.

WHOMP! Battering ram, the Mustang smashes the two cars like candlepins, knocking them apart.

Manny flops into the open, hobbled, crawling for his life -- the stairwell within reach...

The Mustang skids around a curve, bulldozing Manny, smearing him onto the asphalt.

A pulp of shredded flesh and bone, Manny hanging by a thread, his body twisted into pieces.

VROOM! The Mustang spins one-eighty, Angus hanging out the window, ventilating Manny's body with the TEC-9.

BOOM! Neil retaliates, popping rounds from Manny's pistol.

Angus races toward him, gunning with his streetsweeper.

Slugs pockmark the town car, Neil shielded by the fender, chugging air as sparks nip at his face.

The Mustang veers around the edge, whirling, gearing for another bull-rush.

Neil bolts inside the town car, stomping the gas...

Down the ramp, on a collision course, hellbent on inflicting pain. Neil jerks the wheel sideways, then rips it back, nose-diving into the Mustang.

WHOMP! An eruption of metal and smoke. Hoods crumpling. Glass everywhere. Neil and Angus bloodied from the crash.

Fleeting silence, then...

Angus punches the accelerator, pounding Neil's car into a pillar. Neil teeters from the whiplash. Angus snatching his TEC-9, spraying the town car with bullets.

Shattering chaos. Neil turtles under the window, wrenching the wheel and hitting the gas.

SCREECH! The town car bustles from the Mustang's pinch, slithering down the strip.

Rubber melting as the Mustang pursues, careening around sharp corners, descending at a breakneck pace.

Neil works the handbrake, fishtailing at the switchbacks and thrashing along the straightaways.

THWACK! The Mustang bucks Neil's fender, jittering along the guardrail, sideswiping cinder blocks until...

Angus pulls alongside, hammering Neil toward the ledge...

WHOMP! Neil yanks the handbrake, clipping the Mustang's tail and sending Angus headfirst into the switchback wall.

SILENCE.

Breathless, Neil glares at the demolished Mustang, startled as Angus spills from the door, stumbling to his feet, firing the TEC-9.

BOOM! Wayward shots pummel Neil's car. He dips below the dashboard, speeding down the ramp and out the exit.

INT. BELLAMY CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - DAY

MAIN VISITATION ROOM. Cubicles with plexi-glass separating visitors from the inmates.

Bishop simmers on a chair as Graham waddles toward him. They stare in silence, a lifetime's distrust boiling over.

GRAHAM

(surly)

Nice of you to come and visit.

BISHOP

Strange how things work out, isn't it?

GRAHAM

How so?

BISHOP

You and I cut our teeth together. Same neighborhood. Same upbringing. Two kids scrapin' the bottom of the barrel, tryin' to climb out of the muck. But you never made it.

GRAHAM

That's 'cause you closed the lid on me.

BISHOP

I did everything I could for you.

(beat)

You just never had the stomach for this life. Always makin' the easy choice, settlin' for a quick fix.

GRAHAM

You come down here to lecture a dying man?

BISHOP

(menacing)

No, you're already dead. And I wanted you to hear it from me.

(beat)

I know about your deal with the feds; runnin' your mouth like a faggot. A man like that doesn't deserve to breathe; he needs to be silenced.

GRAHAM

Then why don't you climb over the glass and we can settle this right now.

BISHOP

I don't think you're hearing me. It's already done. I'm just holdin' off so I can tell you this...

(beat)

I'm gonna bury your entire fuckin' bloodline; your boys, grandson, his cunt mother... they're gonna feel the same pain that was meant for you. Then I'm gonna burn their bodies until there's no trace of you left.

Bishop lowers the talk-phone, letting his threat sink in, then walking away as Graham thrashes the plexi, screaming, hacking phlegm, belligerent as the GUARDS subdue him.

EXT/INT. GHETTO SHACK - LATER

Spencer's place. Neil launches the mangled town car onto the curb, hustling inside...

NEIL

Spence!

SPENCER (O.S.)
Yea, I'm in here.

Lounging, Spencer chomps on a bowl of cereal, watching TV, Neil entering, bloodied from mayhem in the garage.

SPENCER (CONT'D)
Holy shit... what happened to you?

NEIL
Get up. We gotta go.

Urgency in Neil's tone stuns Spencer.

NEIL (CONT'D)
Now!

Spencer stumbles upright.

SPENCER
Where are we going?

NEIL
I'll explain on the way.

Spencer's voice quivering as he shouts into the bedroom...

SPENCER
Flynn!... come on boy.

The mutt veers toward a window, growling at SHADOWS arcing through the blinds, INTRUDERS casing the exterior.

Teeth bared, Flynn snarls, tracking the shadows until they disappear...

Neil shoves Spencer, flush against a wall, signaling for him to be quiet.

FOOTFALLS patter outside, circling the perimeter.

Neil creeps toward the blinds, pulling them shut, listening.

DEAD SILENCE.

WHOMP! The door caves, **CALE** bursting inside, wearing an FBI windbreaker, AR-15 propped against his shoulder.

Spencer hurdles the couch, ducking for cover.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! Bullets erupt, a flurry of stuffing and feathers. Spencer cowering, fetal, trapped.

Neil slinks behind the wall, out of sight, Cale strafing ahead, bullets spitting from his rifle...

WHAP! Blind-side, Neil mauls Cale, snapping his arm and burying his head in the plaster.

A crater of blood spurting from Cale's skull. He pile-drives Neil into the floorboards, beating the hell out of his face.

Spencer rallies, tearing Cale off his brother, Flynn gnawing Cale's broken arm.

BOOM! Glass shattering, **RUBEN** breaching the window, unloading his GLOCK 22.

Bullets tattoo Spencer's back. He crumples as Neil swipes the AR-15, hammering the trigger.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! Slugs aerate the walls, Ruben lunging into the bedroom, hunkered by the frame, plaster splintering.

Cale boots the rifle from Neil's grasp, reaching for it...

THWACK! Rage fuming in Neil. He stomps Cale, ripping and fracturing his neck, bones gutting the flesh, paralyzing Cale -- bleeding-out on the floor.

Neil gropes the AR-15, laying fire on the bedroom while Ruben pops shots through the door-frame.

Clothes slicked with blood, Spencer gasps, Neil swooping him away from the gunfire and slinging him upright.

BOOM! Cover shots blasting from the rifle as Neil staggers with Spencer out the door...

EXT. GHETTO SHACK - CONTINUOUS

Scampering across the gravel and into the town car, Flynn chasing behind them, leaping into the backseat.

Neil peels off the curb, smearing the asphalt, smoke billowing under the hood as he races down the strip.

MOMENTS LATER

Spencer, soaked in blood, anemic, choking on his own breaths.

NEIL

Hold on, Spence. C'mon!

Neil muscles the car ahead, cranking the wheel, enamel grinding from his clenched teeth.

SMOKE erupts from the engine, thicker, blacker, pouring over the windshield. The demolished car limping to halt. Dead.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Fuck!

EXT. GHETTO - CONTINUOUS

Neil hops over the hood, yanking Spencer onto his shoulders, hauling him down the vacant ghetto strip, Flynn devotedly at his side.

NEIL

Somebody help!

Neil barrels ahead, grunting, relentless, denial breaking his grip on reality, Spencer dying in his arms.

The blood keeps coming, drenching Neil, streaming down his legs.

Spencer's already dead but it doesn't matter... Neil surges forward, manic, carrying his brother, refusing to let go.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Somebody fuckin' help me!

His voice cracks, blood and snot frothing at his nostrils. He trembles, reality crashing down on him.

His knees buckle as he eases Spencer onto the cold cement, crouching beside him.

A meek, lifeless stare frozen on Spencer's face. Neil can't hold back anymore, the tears come hard, bawling curses in his brother's name, pounding the blacktop 'til his knuckles split.

Flynn wags alongside, licking Spencer's face, whining softly. A sullen pout as he paws his master, urging him to wake from an endless sleep.

MOMENTS LATER

Neil places his brother's corpse in the car-trunk, locking it and heading down the ghetto strip on foot, with Flynn trailing close behind.

INT. BELLAMY CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - NIGHT

Cellblock. Graham stews on a cot, shaken over his dustup with Bishop, staring at a creased PHOTOGRAPH of his boys, wondering if things could've been different, better.

The Guard opens his door, leaning inside.

GUARD
FBI is here to see you again.

EMPTY HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

From behind, the Guard ushers Graham ahead, no one in sight. A SHANK slips from the Guard's sleeve, clutched in his gloved palm.

Graham dawdles ahead, oblivious...

WHAP! The Guard mutilates Graham's neck, gashing the vein, blood spraying onto the sterile floor.

Graham's body in a heap, convulsing as the Guard hurries away.

INT. BORDERLINE MOTEL - NIGHT

Night brings the chill. Neon lights blooming in the wintry gust. Mist wafting from Neil's breaths, Flynn tagging along at his heels.

ROOM 202 - MOMENTS LATER

THUD. Neil pounds the door, waiting until Molly opens -- distraught at the sight of Neil's bloody appearance.

MOLLY
What the hell happened?... Come inside.

Flynn scurries through leg wickets, warming to Trev by the bed. Molly shoulders Neil inside and closes the door.

MOLLY (CONT'D)
Are you hurt?

NEIL
The blood's not mine.

MOLLY
Whose is it?

Trev regards his father with a petrified stare.

NEIL
Spence... He's gone.

MOLLY
What are you talking about? What happened? Did you call the police?

NEIL
(pause)
They're the ones who did it.

Delirious, Neil wobbles, crestfallen, gazing at his son.

MOLLY
Let's get you cleaned up.

NEIL
No, I just need to close my eyes.

Neil eases onto the bed, Molly propping a pillow under his neck. He breathes softly, motioning for Trev to lay beside him. The boy hesitates...

MOLLY
It's okay.

She nods assuredly, compassion renewed in her eyes.

Trev crawls under his father's wing, sheltered, safe. Molly nestles beside them, clinging to their warm bodies.

The three of them huddle in the custard glow of a lamplight. Neil wearing his brother's blood, succumbing to the lure of sleep...

DAWN

Neil REAWAKENS. His phone RINGING. He answers the call...

NEIL
Yea.

Brow knit as he listens to the caller...

NEIL (CONT'D)
I'll be right there.
(beat)
Do me a favor; bring an extra shirt.

He hangs up. Molly rolls over, sleepy eyed.

MOLLY
Where are you going?

Neil lingers beside her, not wanting to leave.

MOLLY (CONT'D)
Let's just get in the car and
drive... put as many miles between
us and this city as we can.

Neil ponders her solution, fleeting mirth dissolving into the bleak reality.

NEIL
It won't matter... wherever we go,
they'll come for us.

MOLLY
Why? What do they want?

Neil glances at Trev -- dreaming restfully.

NEIL
Peace of mind.

Neil sways to Molly with a deep, aching kiss, blood still caked on his face. Hope in his eyes as he cups her cheeks.

NEIL (CONT'D)
Don't leave this room.

He drifts away, holding her worried stare, then exiting with haste.

EXT. BORDERLINE MOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

Molly's rusted STATION WAGON. Neil fires the engine, shifting into gear, then glancing at...

Trev, making his way down the steps, into the lot.

Neil leaves the engine running, stepping out and bracing against the hood as Trev approaches.

NEIL
Didn't mean to wake you up.

TREV
(worried)
Where are you going?

NEIL

A few errands I gotta take care of.

The boy longing for his father's approval.

TREV

Can I help?

NEIL

(beat)

Maybe next time.

Peril in the hours ahead burdens Neil.

NEIL (CONT'D)

There's alotta things you and I
never got to do together.

(somber)

Wish I'd had more time to give you.
Do me a favor... don't ever take
anyone's word as gospel, no matter
how many times they swear it's the
truth... trust your instinct, it's
better than mine.

The boy nods, sensing the moment's frailty.

TREV

Are you coming back?

NEIL

Of course...

False promise lingers, unresolved...

Neil cuts the bullshit, preparing his son for the worst...

NEIL (CONT'D)

But if I don't, then I need you to
look after your mother.

(pause)

Can you do that for me?

Fierceness in the boy's eyes, meeting his father's stare with
conviction.

TREV

Yea... I'll be there for her.

The pledge claims Trev's innocence, no longer a spectator.

NEIL

Good man.

Neil pats Trev's shoulder and nudges him back toward the motel, a grim smile as he watches his son disappear inside.

EXT/INT. FORTUNE CHINESE RESTAURANT - DAY

Neil glides into the oriental eatery, finding his old partner, Laz, at a booth, PLASTIC BAG on the table.

A disconcerting scowl as Laz eyes Neil's grubby appearance.

NEIL
(re: plastic bag)
These for me?

LAZ
Yea.

Neil strips off his bloody shirt, rummaging through the bag of clothes.

LAZ (CONT'D)
You gonna tell me what happened?

NEIL
Won't do any good.

Neil finds an old T-SHIRT -- stained yellow with sweat, a police academy logo faded from wear and tear. Neil smirks...

NEIL (CONT'D)
Gave one of these to my old man
after I graduated from the academy.

LAZ
(bluntly)
It's his.
(confessing)
I was scanning the reports this
morning, noticed a murder at
Bellamy; name matched your father,
so I checked it out...

Laz doesn't need to say the rest. Neil nods regrettably.

LAZ (CONT'D)
(re: plastic bag)
These are his things.

NEIL
How'd they get him?

LAZ

Shank to the neck. He bled out on the floor.

Laz gives Neil a moment to settle.

LAZ (CONT'D)

I don't know what you got yourself into, but I can help. There's some good people in the Major Case Squad. Let me reach out to 'em...

NEIL

No, this'll snag on someone dirty, guaranteed; meat-eaters pullin' the wool over your eyes, waitin' to chew you up and spit you out.

LAZ

You got somethin' better, I'm all ears, but I don't see any other doors openin' for you. This is the only way you get out in one piece. You need the law on your side.

NEIL

I watched the law gun down my brother yesterday.

(beat)

There are no sides. That badge on your chest is just scrap metal. You're no different from me or the guys you put in cuffs. And all that bullshit they feed you about cleanin' up the streets, serving justice; it's just white noise fuckin' with your head, keepin' you blind while your bosses fleece the nobodies.

(beat)

In the end, it's you against everyone else, and that's the only thing that matters. 'Cause no one gives a shit if your guts are spilled on the street, long as they don't have to clean up the mess.

LAZ

(annoyed)

So, that's it? You're gonna roam the ghetto with your own brand of justice, crackin' skulls whenever you see fit?

NEIL

If I'm not, someone else will.

LAZ

Be honest... you can't take these guys on your own.

NEIL

They all got enemies, even Bishop.

LAZ

So, you pit 'em against each other, big fuckin' massacre, then what?

NEIL

Then I leave. Clean slate.

LAZ

Or you split now, save yourself the trouble.

NEIL

(shakes his head)

I'm not sleepin' with one eye open for the rest of my life.

Laz sighs, giving in, submitting to Neil's will.

LAZ

What about Molly and Trev?

NEIL

Got 'em stashed in a motel.

LAZ

You left 'em alone? The hell's wrong with you?

NEIL

They're fine.

LAZ

Where they at?

NEIL

Borderline motel, you know it?

LAZ

Let me stake it out while you're gone... just in case.

(off look)

I'll do it solo. No one else'll know I'm there.

Several booths away, OTIS, Leon's ghetto lieutenant, the same kid Neil busted years ago, watches Neil and Laz, hawk-eyed, his suspicions of Neil's duplicity confirmed.

Neil and Laz pad toward the exit, Otis keeping his head down, avoiding eye contact, then following them outside...

EXT. CHINATOWN - MOMENTS LATER

The bustle and grime of Chinatown. Streets teeming with vendors and lackeys.

Otis weaves through the chaos, shoving tourists aside, struggling to keep pace with Neil and Laz.

Bodies crosscutting in front of him, and suddenly, Neil's gone. Otis spins wildly, searching for his mark, can't find him. He sticks to Laz, following him toward an intersection.

Laz hops in a CRUISER, Otis rushing to his LOWRIDER and tailing Laz through the traffic-clogged roads.

EXT. BORDERLINE MOTEL - LATER

From afar, Otis watches Laz -- exiting his cruiser, hiking up to ROOM 202, knocking and entering.

ROOM 202 - MOMENTS LATER

Blinds cracked, Otis peeks through a window, eyeing Molly and Trev conversing with Laz. He ducks out, back to his Lowrider.

INT. BISHOP'S PUB - BACK PARLOR - LATER

Ruben paces anxiously, a bluster of hotheaded ramblings, Bishop and Angus weathering the storm.

RUBEN

(re: Neil)

He saw my face... We gotta hunt this motherfucker, put him in the ground tonight.

BISHOP

(belittling)

What're you gonna do? Send out an APB and chance him gettin' picked up before you put him to bed?

RUBEN

I'm not gonna just sit and wait for him to make the first move.

BISHOP

(rationalizing)

He's an ex-cop with a shit reputation. He's only got two plays to make, and neither of 'em involve testifying against you. So, calm tha' fuck down.

(beat)

Personally, I hope he's dumb enough to stick around and come after us.

The CHIME of a door opening in the MAIN BAR. Bishop checks the security monitor...

BISHOP (CONT'D)

(to Ruben)

Stay here.

MAIN BAR - CONTINUOUS

Leon and Otis hang by the bar, Bliss serving them a drink. Bishop steps to them...

BISHOP (CONT'D)

Unexpected visit.

LEON

Got a tip for you.

BISHOP

Could've called me.

LEON

Naw, this is a face-to-face thing.

Bishop waits for Leon to continue...

BISHOP

You gonna make me beg?

LEON

Shit ain't free... But if you don't buy it from me now, it'll bite you in the ass.

BISHOP

(sighs)

What do you want?

LEON

Lay somethin' on the table, then we can negotiate.

An unfriendly stare as Bishop devises an offer.

BISHOP

There's a shipment comin' off the docks tonight. I'll give you the truck route... you and your boys can take it down, keep the loot for yourselves.

LEON

What're they carryin'?

BISHOP

Last time it was brown, this time who knows. These guys don't fuck around with small-time bootleggin', so whatever's in the truck, it'll be worth the score.

Leon nods agreeably.

LEON

You got an informant in your crew. Otis saw him talkin' friendly with five-oh in Chinatown, followed the cruiser to a motel where they're hidin' his wife and kid.

BISHOP

What's his name?

LEON

No idea. He's new. Came by for a pickup the other day. Used to be a cop.

Bishop's eyes light up.

BISHOP

Where's the motel?

INT. SOVIET SEX DUNGEON - DAY

Red haze. Sex cries. Mortar and curtains.

Neil snakes through the den of narcotic-laced prostitutes, encountering Pavel in the BACK ROOM.

PAVEL
(recognizing Neil)
I don't like to be pestered.

NEIL
I'm not here about your dues.

PAVEL
Then you're a customer.

NEIL
Not interested in that either.
(beat)
Last time we met, I got the
impression you were unhappy about
your arrangement with Bishop.

PAVEL
What makes you say that?

NEIL
Refusing payment; not something he
takes lightly. So far, he's been
too distracted to notice...

PAVEL
Your boss profits from doing
nothing... he's a fuckin' leech.
I've got no patience for his kind.

NEIL
I'm here to tell you he's not my
boss anymore.

PAVEL
Then who do you work for?

NEIL
No one. But I was hoping maybe you
and I could find some common
ground.

PAVEL
And where exactly is that?

NEIL
Bring him to me. And I'll make sure
you never have to pay him again.

Pavel considers the proposal, studying Neil.

PAVEL

(re: Bishop)

'Much as I'd like him gone, he serves a purpose. I need his connection at the port.

NEIL

You seem like a smart guy. Bet you can figure out a way to bypass the docks. Everyone in this city can be bought for a price.

PAVEL

(beat)

What's yours?

NEIL

I already told you. Give me Bishop and we're square.

PAVEL

If I wanted him dead, I'd do it myself.

NEIL

Tougher than he looks. Got the feds in his pocket. If you swing and miss, he'll stick the law on you, cripple your business before you see it comin'.

(off look)

Keep him around, and sooner or later he's gonna bleed you dry. I'm offerin' my help at no cost to you.

EXT/INT. BORDERLINE MOTEL - NIGHT

Howling winds rustle the weeds. Not a soul in sight.

ROOM 202

On MUTE, a retro TV flickers with the evening news, chronicling the death of FBI AGENT, CALE GALLO.

Anxiety weighs on Molly's face, Trev staring at the tube, Laz peeking through the blinds, scanning for danger.

MOLLY

(re: Neil)

He didn't say where he was going?

LAZ
 He's tying-up a few loose ends.
 (beat)
 There's nuthin' to worry 'bout.

MOLLY
 Then why are you here?

LAZ
 Just a precaution.

Flynn whines by the door, scratching.

TREV
 He needs to go out. Let me take him
 for a walk.

MOLLY
 I don't think that's a good idea...

LAZ
 I'll go with him. It'll be fine.

OUTSIDE - CONTINUOUS

Flynn waggles down the steps, Trev and Laz following him to
 an expanse of marshland buffering the motel.

Flynn totters ahead, peeing on shrubs, then suddenly bolting,
 chasing a critter through the weeds.

TREV
 Flynn!... Come back!

Trev pursues, darting after the mutt.

LAZ
 Wait. Trev... Hold up!

Laz has no choice but to follow, drifting farther away from
 the motel.

MOMENTS LATER

A SEDAN chugs into the lot -- Bishop, Angus and Ruben exiting
 and marching up the steps to...

ROOM 202

Unlocked. The intruders breach the frame, confronting Molly --
 fear gleaming her eyes... she hides it well.

MOLLY
Get tha' fuck out of my room. I
swear I'll scream.

BISHOP
No one's gonna care sweetheart.

Angus checks the bathroom -- no sign of Neil.

BISHOP (CONT'D)
(soothing)
We just wanna know where your
lesser half is, then we'll leave.

MOLLY
Haven't seen him.

BISHOP
(beat)
Is he comin' back?

Molly, disinterested, aloof...

MOLLY
Don't know. Don't care.

BISHOP
You'd be doin' yourself a favor if
you helped us. I promise no harm
will come to you.

MOLLY
I got nuthin' to say. Now get out
of my room before I call the cops.

Bishop smirks, unfazed by Molly's threat.

BISHOP
You've always been a little rough
around the edges... how 'bout we
soften you up a bit?

WHAP! Bishop knuckles Molly's face, splitting her lip.

BISHOP (CONT'D)
This'll get outta' hand real quick
unless you start talkin'.

Lips sealed, Molly swallows her own blood, bound to silence.

Suddenly, Bishop drags her into the BATHROOM. She kicks and
SCREAMS...

WHAP! Bishop thumps her face, crushing bones, drawing blood.

BISHOP (CONT'D)
Scream again and I'll rip out your
tongue.

Dazed from the hit, Molly slumps, limp, feeble.

Angus takes over, bending Molly over the bathtub and clamping her neck against the rim.

She chokes, veins throbbing, Angus wielding a SWITCHBLADE, slicing clothes off her quivering body.

Ruben grimaces, unsure he can condone the killing of a woman.

RUBEN
How far are you gonna take this?

BISHOP
(ruthless)
Shut your fuckin' mouth and watch
the door.

Ruben backs away, averting his eyes.

Bishop kneels beside Molly, wiping hair from her face.

BISHOP (CONT'D)
(re: Neil)
Where is he?

Tears streaming down her cheeks.

MOLLY
I don't know.

UMPH! Angus stabs the blade in her side, twisting and thrusting his knee into her crotch.

She rasps, wailing meekly.

BISHOP
Tell us before it's too late.

Drool flapping from her mouth as she struggles to breath. Her face washed in blood and misery.

MOLLY
I can't...

Angus drags the knife up her armpit, unzipping her flesh. She yelps, about to give up...

RUBEN (O.C.)
Someone's coming.

Head on a swivel, Bishop rushes to the window, beside Ruben, spying through the blinds...

OUTSIDE

Laz, Trev and Flynn tread up the staircase, toward ROOM 202. The mutt, wet and bedraggled from his jaunt.

Laz twists the doorknob. LOCKED. He glances through the window. BLINDS DRAWN.

LAZ
Molly.

The door wobbles from his KNOCK.

ROOM 202

Bishop and Ruben brandish their HEAT, aiming at the door.

BISHOP
(to Ruben, hushed)
Let him in.

Ruben pads to the frame, twisting the knob, opening slowly.

Bathroom, Molly wriggles from Angus's grasp, screaming...

MOLLY
Stay away!

WHAP! Angus buries the dagger in Molly's heart and smothers her last breaths.

Panicked, Bishop and Ruben unload...

OUTSIDE

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! A fusillade of bullets, ventilating the door, Laz diving evasively, shielding Trev.

BOOM! Shards exploding as Bishop fires out the window.

Laz and Trev flee, out of range, breaking into ANOTHER ROOM.

LAZ
(to Trev)
Don't move.

Trev clutches Flynn, motionless as Laz slinks back toward Room 202, against the wall, drawing his GLOCK.

Glass BREAKING inside the room, voices drifting FARTHER AWAY.

WHAP! Laz barrels through the door, tumbling inside...

ROOM 202

BOOM! Ruben fires from the opposite wall as Bishop and Angus jump out the BACK WINDOW.

Laz sprawls next to the bed, bullets eviscerating the mattress, coils bursting.

Squatting, Laz bucks upward, flipping the bed-frame and ramming it into the opposite wall.

Ruben wilts from the impact, doubling over, Bishop and Angus already through the window and out of sight.

Laz stings Ruben with a vicious punch, beating him against the floor.

BOOM! Ruben fires wayward shots, losing the gun and gashing Laz's shoulder with a broken shard.

Laz fights through the pain, belting Ruben's face and unloading a BULLET into his gut.

Ruben squeals, writhing on the floor, Laz hovering, Glock in hand.

Desperate, Ruben pulls out his FBI BADGE, imploring Laz...

RUBEN

I'm FBI... You need to call this in. We can work things out.

LAZ

Where's Molly?

Laz catches Ruben glancing at the bathroom. He backtracks, keeping the gun on Ruben, viewing...

Molly, pale, lifeless, her blood pooling on the tiles.

Guilt wrecks Laz. He trembles, despair written on his face, melting into a hideous glare as he returns to Ruben.

RUBEN

I didn't touch her... I swear.

Laz twitches the trigger, his conscience holding him back.

RUBEN (CONT'D)
Be reasonable... Don't do anything
you're gonna regret.

BOOM! A cold glaze on Laz's face as he executes Ruben.
Killshot through the skull -- bone and brain splattering.

Laz stands silently in the aftermath of his decision.

EXT. BORDERLINE MOTEL - LATER

A swarm of red and blue lights. POLICE CRUISERS and
AMBULANCES quarantining the crime scene.

Neil drives Molly's STATION WAGON toward the ruckus. Dread
lumping in his throat as he exits and spots Laz nearby.

Head hanging, Laz shuffles to Neil, his eyes dim and rueful.
His expression tells the tale.

Neil, wrought with emotion, anger corroding his sanity, his
greatest fear confirmed, in disbelief...

NEIL
No... Please... No.
(re: family)
Both of 'em?

Guilt eats at Laz.

LAZ
Molly.
(explaining)
I slipped out for a minute, and
when I came back...

Neil paces, furious, unraveling.

PARAMEDICS roll a gurney into the Ambulance, Molly's corpse.
Neil can't bear the sight of her, it'll break him.

NEIL
(re: Bishop and Angus)
You let 'em get away?

LAZ
I didn't have a shot at Bishop or
Angus. But I can ID 'em...
(beat)
(MORE)

LAZ (CONT'D)

We can get these guys the *right* way... but if you gotta do this on your own, I'm not gonna hold you back anymore.

Neil, huffing, inconsolable, looking over at...

Trev, shaken but unbroken, huddled next to an ambulance, Flynn nestled at his side, comforting the boy.

Tears welling in Neil's eyes. He stifles his sorrow, clinging to the anger -- it's the only thing keeping him going.

NEIL

(to Laz, curt)

Keep my boy safe.

LAZ

I won't leave his side.

Neil storms away, into the station wagon, screeching out of the lot.

EXT. PORT - MIDNIGHT

Mist. Amber lights. A labyrinth of crates. Pavel's HENCHMEN unload a SHIPMENT -- cargo boxes filled with AR-15 RIFLES and AMMUNITION BOXES.

Bishop, Angus and Saul watch as Pavel inspects one of the weapons. Satisfied, he turns to the Henchmen...

PAVEL

Load 'em up.

Henchmen pack the boxes into a nearby TRUCK.

BISHOP

Everything's in order?

PAVEL

Appears so.

BISHOP

And our payment?

Pavel saunters to Bishop, propositioning...

PAVEL

I could give you the money, but I I've got something else you might be more interested in.

BISHOP
This isn't a negotiation.

Angus preemptively retrieves his .45, primed for violence.

PAVEL
I've got one of your men. He came to me with a proposition, trying to buy my allegiance, spitting on your name. But I told him that you and I have a partnership; a bond not easily broken...

BISHOP
Where is he?

PAVEL
(countering)
Do we have a deal?

BISHOP
(conceding)
Bring me to him and I'll forget about your debt.

Across the way, passenger's seat of the TRUCK, Neil glares at Bishop in the side mirror, hidden from view.

EXT. DESOLATE HIGHWAY - NIGHT

A lonely stretch of asphalt. Weed thickets and rock slopes at the edges -- wilderness abound, blanketed in darkness.

A caravan blazes along the blacktop -- TRUCK leading the way with Bishop's SEDAN trailing behind.

TRUCK

In the cargo bay, Neil loads bullets into an AR-15, readying to assault Bishop and Angus.

TWO Henchmen sit up front, manning the wheel and navigating.

SEDAN

Angus drives, Pavel riding shotgun, Bishop in the backseat alongside one of Pavel's Henchman.

PAVEL
Generous of you to offer the front.

BISHOP
 I don't let anyone sit behind me.
 (re: Neil)
 How far away is he?

PAVEL
 Not far.

BISHOP
 (anxious)
 Are we staying with the truck?

PAVEL
 (nods)
 Make sure there are no mishaps this
 time. That a problem?

BISHOP
 No.

Bishop reaches for his CELL PHONE, sending a TEXT MESSAGE.

HIGHWAY

Around the bend, Leon, Otis and two THUGS lurk in the shadows, spotting the caravan barreling toward them.

LEON
 Strap up.

They check their MAC-10's, boarding a Caddy LOWRIDER and a custom IMPALA -- equipped to hijack the incoming truck.

Leon's phone BUZZES -- a text message from Bishop -- ABORT.

OTIS
 What is it?

LEON
 (ignoring the warning)
 Nuthin'. Let's do this.

TRUCK

Neil leans into the cab, directing the two Henchmen.

NEIL
 Turn left here.

Henchman eases onto the brake, turning the wheel.

HIGHWAY

Prepping for the ambush, Leon and his Thugs watch as the truck makes an unexpected turn -- veering onto a DIRT ROAD.

LEON

Tha' hell are they going?

(pause)

Follow 'em. Lights off.

Stealth mode, Impala and Lowrider spin one-eighty, racing toward the truck, Leon and Otis leaning out the windows with MAC-10's.

DIRT ROAD

Truck headlights cut through the night. Wheels kicking muck off the potholed trail.

TRUCK

FREEZING RAIN pelts the windshield, drizzling, then intensifying, coming harder, faster -- slicking the road.

DIRT ROAD

The caravan rumbles ahead, enveloped in the downpour.

Lowrider and Impala creeping from behind, gaining ground, barely visible in the encompassing darkness.

Up ahead, the ABANDONED RAIL STATION.

TRUCK

Neil anchors in the cargo bay, struggling to stay upright as the truck wobbles. Deep breaths. He grips the AR-15, staring at the back hatch, impatient to slaughter Bishop and Angus.

DIRT ROAD

Attack mode, Leon's crew swerves off the track, motors growling, highbeams FLASHING ON.

SEDAN

Lights flare in the mirrors, Angus stomping the gas, Pavel and Bishop spinning around, viewing the ambush...

DIRT ROAD

Lowrider and Impala slingshot forward, motoring alongside the caravan, seesawing on the uneven terrain. Leon and Otis leaning out the windows, unleashing their MAC-10's...

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! Muzzle flashes bursting, an implosion of metal and glass, clattering nonstop.

The truck shudders and fishtails, churning the sludge.

The sedan swerves behind the truck, using it as a shield.

Hijackers scream ahead, bullets spewing from the MAC-10's.

TRUCK

BOOM! Slugs pierce the cab, killing the Henchmen, bodies shredded by the gunfire, releasing the wheel.

In the cargo bay, Neil hunkers, bracing for impact...

DIRT ROAD

WHOMP! The truck swerves, out of control, SMASHING into a ditch, LAUNCHING, AIRBORNE...

FLIPPING over the sedan and CRASHING onto its side. Fumes swirling in its wake.

The sedan whips through the wreckage, trying to outrun the Impala.

SEDAN

Getaway speed, Angus motors, rain hammering the windshield, blades working overtime.

BOOM! Bishop caps the Henchman, then aims at Pavel.

BISHOP
(to Pavel, re: Neil)
Where is he?

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! From behind, a firestorm of bullets, the Impala in pursuit. Bishop, Angus and Pavel ducking for cover.

DIRT ROAD

Farther back, the Lowrider parks next to the toppled truck. Otis and his Partner case the wreck, peeping the gutted Henchmen inside the cab.

Bloodied from the crash, Neil stumbles out the back hatch, clutching the AR-15, sneaking around the edge...

BOOM! He slaughters the Thug, training the rifle on Otis, hesitating...

NEIL
 (re: Otis's gun)
 Drop it.

Otis clutches the chrome, not in his nature to surrender.

NEIL (CONT'D)
 (disappointed)
 Don't do this.

OTIS
 Can't have it both ways.

Suddenly, Otis flinches, raising his gun...

BOOM! Neil caps Otis, putting him down.

A momentary pause, Neil gathering his composure, then surging ahead, on a dead-sprint toward the other cars...

ABANDONED RAIL-STATION

The sedan jets through a rubble entrance, Impala hot on its tail, pumping slugs into the sedan's fender.

Sparks flying as the sedan slaloms through the industrial debris. Rain gushing through shattered skylights.

Impala gaining momentum, rocketing toward the...

Sedan...

WHOMP! Wheels rut in a CEMENT TRENCH, crippling as the sedan tilts, lopsided, RAMMING into a cluster of RUSTED GENERATORS.

Smoke explodes from the hood, deformed, scrapped.

Impala skids to a halt, Leon lighting up the sedan as...

Bishop, Angus and Pavel scatter, hiding behind machinery.

A blur of gunfire. Muzzle flashes blinding the combatants. Slugs pockmarking the urban decay. Battlefield chaos.

DIRT ROAD

Neil stampedes toward the rail station, his face ridden with madness, no longer a man but a savage, muddy and numb in the freezing rain.

ABANDONED RAIL-STATION

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! Bullets slashing, crosscutting.

Behind the generators -- Bishop, Angus and Pavel drift apart, flanking Leon on either side.

At the entrance...

BOOM! AR-15, Neil bolts into the scrum, massacring Leon and his Thug -- bullet-riddled, dropping to the ground.

Separated, Bishop and Angus target...

Neil, squinting in the dim light, ziz-zagging and dodging gunfire as he slides into...

CEMENT TRENCH

Knee deep water. Footfalls echo from all sides. Faceless bodies scurrying through the darkness.

Neil whirls, disoriented, shooting at anything that moves.

PING! Neil ducks, bullets whizzing past him...

THWACK! Blind-side, Angus wallops Neil, dunking his head in the trench.

Limbs tangled, flailing in mucky water, bodies pinballing against the narrow walls.

WHAP! Neil bucks Angus, spearing him into muck, rain pouring from the skylights above.

BEHIND THEM

BOOM! Gunfire erupts, Bishop and Pavel firing at each other from opposite sides.

CEMENT TRENCH

Angus gargles, Neil fighting to keep him submerged...

PING! A stray bullet ricochets next to Neil's face. He sprawls, losing grip on Angus, falling backward.

Angus thrashes, drubbing Neil and vaulting out of the trench, their bodies crashing through the debris.

THWACK! Angus slams Neil against generator, whiplash, Neil's body keeling from the blow.

BEHIND THEM

Bishop outmaneuvers Pavel, stalking in the shadows...

BOOM! He fires a killshot into Pavel's chest, then several more for good measure.

GENERATORS

Body hits, Angus pummeling Neil, dismantling him, ribs cracking, jaw shattering. Neil's a bloody mess, wilting, heaped on the floor.

Angus whips out his SWITCHBLADE and thrusts downward...

A blur. Neil dodges, rolling to his feet, bare-knuckling Angus's face and gutting him on the metal framework.

A broken rod impaling Angus's bowels. He wheezes, gasping as Neil slashes his throat with the switchblade...

BOOM! BOOM! Bishop returns with a vengeance, targeting Neil.

Muck splashing as Neil plunges into the trench, groping for his AR-15 -- lost in the water.

WHAM! Bullets like locusts, raining down on Neil.

He scrambles, finding the AR-15 and lurching upward...

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! Neil unloads, tattooing the Impala as Bishop twists behind it...

Glass and metal exploding, AR-15 jackhammering against Neil's shoulder.

Bishop, pinned down, weathering the assault. He winces, glancing down at...

BLOOD, soaking his shirt from a flesh-wound. Then suddenly...

SILENCE.

Neil bounds out of the trench, strafing sideways, trying to get an angle on...

Bishop, slinking into the battered Impala, popping the clutch and yanking the wheel.

VROOM! The car whips around, bouncing off a generator, drag-racing toward the rubble entrance, away from...

Neil, in pursuit, muzzle flashes igniting his face...

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! Shots glance off the Impala -- plowing through the storm, drifting farther away from...

Neil, chasing, losing ground, Bishop slipping away.

DIRT ROAD

Sheets of rain, falling like there's no tomorrow, lashing at...

Neil, sucking wind, fighting the numbness as he mounts the abandoned Lowrider near the truck.

LOWRIDER

Flicking the ignition and stomping the accelerator...

The cruiser wobbles and swerves, a hellfire mud-wreck, hauling-ass, engine roaring with menace.

Shocks absorbing the choppy terrain as Neil blazes toward...

HIGHWAY

Bishop skids onto the blacktop, rubbernecking back at...

Neil, in the distance, hundreds of yards away.

DIRT ROAD

Far behind, Neil drives on pure adrenaline, his eyes static, locked on...

HIGHWAY

Bishop pushes the Impala to its limit, speedometer maxing-out as he glances in the MIRROR...

Neil smear-turns onto the asphalt, still far away, but gaining ground.

LOWRIDER

Tires sputtering on the slick road, Neil tames the whip, cutting corners, veering into the oncoming lanes.

HIGHWAY

Bishop and Neil careen toward the city lights -- miles away.

SHARP TURN

Bishop hits the brakes, tail-lights pulsing as he skids around the bend.

LOWRIDER

Full throttle, Neil accelerating to a suicide-speed, banking at the CORNER, rubber gyrating against the asphalt, gripping for traction, about to smash into a rock slope...

Neil wrenches the wheel, muscling the Lowrider onto an even keel, sideswiping the gradient and spurting onto the flat.

FARTHER AHEAD

Bishop, sweating bricks, clamping his wound, skin wan and eyes frantic. He checks the mirror...

Neil's closing the gap, less than a hundred yards away.

CITY OUTSKIRTS

Scattered traffic, VEHICLES coasting, oblivious as...

WHOMP! Neil thumps Bishop's fender, swerving around traffic.

Bishop jams the brakes and pitches onto an EXIT RAMP, Neil following, a bit behind.

BACK ROADS

Slums. Condemned buildings. Fleabag shanties.

Bishop drives with purpose, a destination in mind. Neil keeps pace, riding Bishop's tail.

INTERSECTION

STOP LIGHT. RED. Bishop speeds through it, cross-traffic pounding their HORNS, maneuvering to avoid collisions.

Neil swerves, ricocheting off another car and onto the sidewalk.

He harnesses the momentum, redirecting the wheel and jolting forward, back onto the road...

Bishop's tail-lights in the distance...

STASH HOUSE

Cinder bulwark camouflaged amongst the urban decay, secluded on the city's outskirts.

Bishop screeches up to the entrance, staggering out of the car and into...

INT. STASH HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Blood draining down his side as he limps through the hallway.

EXT. STASH HOUSE - SIMULTANEOUS

Neil rips the handbrake, grinding to a stop, hotfooting into...

INT. STASH HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Following the trail of blood to an OPEN DOOR, he peeks around the edge...

MONEY and GUNS stockpiled in the fortress.

Bishop hunkers behind a table, brandishing a sawed-off SHOTGUN.

BOOM! He fires at the door, mortar erupting, Neil twisting out of sight, weaponless.

Anxious breaths. Neil inches toward the opening...

BOOM! Another blast. Neil spills sideways, drooping against the wall, his mind racing.

INTERCUT - NEIL IN THE HALLWAY AND BISHOP IN THE DEN

BISHOP

I got enough guns and ammo in here
to last all night.

Neil's hands are empty.

BISHOP (CONT'D)

You armed?

NEIL

(lies)
Yea.

BISHOP

Bullshit. You would've taken a shot
already.

NEIL

Why don't you come out here and see
for yourself.

BISHOP
Not happening. Step inside and
let's put an end to this.

Neil jitters, weighing his options, scheming...

NEIL
Toss me some cash.

Bishop frowns, surprised by the offer.

BISHOP
What?

NEIL
(persuading)
Both of us can walk away.

Neil catches Bishop's reflection in the steel door, watching him intently.

NEIL (CONT'D)
I'm not leavin' empty-handed.

Stacks of CASH are out of Bishop's reach. He'll have to move to grab them.

BISHOP
How much do you want?

NEIL
Hundred thousand.

BISHOP
(considering)
I'll give you fifty.

NEIL
(unwavering)
Fuck that. Hundred grand or else
I'm stayin' here 'til you rot.

Fixated on Bishop's reflection, Neil slips off his shoes, waiting as...

Bishop pads to the shelf, grabbing money, taking his eyes off the door.

Lightning fast, Neil funnels into the den, bull-rushing Bishop.

BOOM! Shotgun blast, Neil slamming Bishop into the shelf, grappling, bills scattering from the impact.

A melee of fists and elbows. Bishop straddles Neil, clocking his face, reaching for the shotgun...

UMPH! Neil snaps upward, mauling Bishop, booting him against the table.

Bishop recovers, scrambling for a HANDGUN.

BOOM! On his back, Neil unloads the shotgun. The blast rips a chunk out of Bishop's gut.

Bishop slumps, blood spilling from the wound, drenching the bed of money littered beneath him.

Neil RISES, stepping to Bishop, looming over his body.

Bishop raises a hand, pleading for mercy, choking on his words.

BOOM!! The shot echoes, fading into an eerie quiet. Bishop's neck mangled from the twelve-gauge bullet.

Neil lingers, his eyes boring into Bishop's corpse, then turning to...

The MONEY, enough to last a lifetime. Neil grabs a clump of blood-stained bills -- the FUTURE in his hands.

CUT TO BLACK:

EXT. GATED CEMETERY - DAWN

HEADSTONES for Molly, Spencer and Graham.

Neil puts his wife, brother and father to rest. GRAVEKEEPERS lowering the caskets into the ground.

Trev stands with Neil, sullen as he observes the burial, Flynn panting and nuzzling the boy's palm.

Neil turns to his son, sentiments of comfort escaping him. He nods assuredly, patting Trev's back, instilling confidence in the boy.

Across the graveyard, Laz sulks toward Neil, guilt-ridden over Molly's death.

Neil leans to Trev...

NEIL

Wait by the car. I'll be there in a minute.

Trev nods obediently, shooing Flynn toward the decrepit STATION WAGON that Molly left behind.

Neil shuffles to Laz, meeting him halfway...

LAZ

I don't know what to say.

Tension mounting as they stand face to face.

Neil reaches into his pocket, handing Laz a set of KEYS and a NOTE.

Laz checks the ADDRESS on the note, baffled.

LAZ (CONT'D)

What's this?

NEIL

Parting gift.

Laz frowns, still confused.

NEIL (CONT'D)

(assuring)

You'll understand when you see it.

Neil offers his hand. Laz takes it, shaking.

LAZ

What about you?

NEIL

I'll find my own way.

Neil releases Laz and departs, heading toward the station wagon.

Curious, Laz checks the address on the note again...

INT. STASH HOUSE - LATER

KEYS jangle, Laz using them to open the reinforced steel door, his eyes wide with shock as he views...

The DEN. Untouched. Everything where Neil left it. Nothing taken. Bishop's corpse sprawled on the floor, engulfed in blood-money.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Neil drives the station wagon, Trev sitting beside him, Flynn drooling on the handbrake.

The city dwindles, a tangle of smokestacks belching over the crooked skyline, fading into the background.

INT. STASH HOUSE - DAY

POLICE and FORENSICS OFFICERS investigate the crime scene, bagging evidence -- MONEY, GUNS, DRUGS, PASSPORTS.

A veteran COP with STARS on his uniform shakes Laz's hand, commending him. Laz smiles, thinking about his friend, Neil.

EXT. INTERSTATE - DAY

The city is gone. Pastures flank the road. Endless blankets of green under the warmth of the southern sun.

Neil cruises in the slow lane, content in this moment.

He rolls down the windows. Fresh breeze funneling into the car. He breathes it in, scratching the mutt and glancing at his son.

The three of them, dirt poor, but together and running free.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END