

REFUSE TO GO DARK

Written by

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Based on, my dreams

INT. DARK MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT (FUTURE)

UNDERSCORE: Instrumental - "We've Only Just Begun" by The Carpenters.

A ring. Bloody. On the floor.

Faint moans. A figure slumped in the corner - we don't see who. Just shadows. Heat. Breath.

A voice - off-screen. Calm. Familiar.

ANGELO (V.O.)
It always ends like this.
You think you know the ending?
Baby... we've barely begun.

SMASH TO BLACK.

TITLE: REFUSE TO GO DARK

The music warps. Slows. Fades.

BACK TO PRESENT
- OPENING
SEQUENCE

ON SCREEN: DENVER, CO - PRESENT DAY

OPENING SONG: Barry White - "You're the First, the Last, My Everything"

City lights. Skyline shimmer. The Rockies burn gold behind glass and steel.

BARRY WHITE (V.O.)
We got it together, didn't we?

Cue the 35TH FLOOR of a high-rise. Glass and steel. Golden hour light.*

INT. GUNNER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

A well-lived but minimalist space. No awards on the walls. Just art from Frankie-bold, honest, and full of color.

GUNNER (36) stands near the floor-to-ceiling windows. Confident but still. Handsome in the way that makes people feel safe. He dials.

GUNNER
(into phone)
Frankie. One drink with clients –
then I'm yours. You packed yet?
(laughs)
Wheels up at 10. Sydney, baby.
G'day, mate.

He hangs up. A flicker in his eyes. He reaches into his pocket.

CLOSE ON: A small black velvet ring box. He opens it. Simple. Classic. Unbreakable. Inscribed: Refuse to go dark. Always.

No smile. He knows what this moment means.

DOOR SWINGS OPEN – ANGELO (45).

Dark suit. Smooth as oil. Twice as dangerous.

ANGELO
You're really leaving?

GUNNER
Yup.

ANGELO
Francine's using you.

GUNNER
His name's Frankie.
And you use me every day.

Angelo pours two fingers of something top-shelf.

ANGELO
This city deal's gold.
You walk now, they won't wait.

GUNNER
They will.

He's not bluffing. He's just not afraid.

Angelo clocks the ring box.

ANGELO
That what I think it is?

GUNNER
Tonight I propose.

ANGELO
You're serious?

GUNNER
Dead.

ANGELO
Maybe...
you haven't found the right one -
yet.

GUNNER
I have.
And I want you to be my best man.

ANGELO
(scoffs)
Should've been me.
(pause)
But I'm not gay.

GUNNER
You sure?

ANGELO
Fuck you.

GUNNER
Nah, baby. I'm the top.

They laugh - danger tucked just beneath the sound.

GUNNER (CONT'D)
I've got a meeting.
I'll call you on the way to the
airport. The deal can wait.

He walks out.

ANGELO
(muttering)
The deal's changed.

FLASHBACK TO LAST NIGHT INT. FRANKIE'S APARTMENT

INT. FRANKIE'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Frankie paints barefoot, laughing softly to himself. Vinyl crackles. Sydney's skyline comes alive on canvas.

GUNNER enters, still in his work clothes. Loosens his tie.
Just watches.

FRANKIE
You're early.

GUNNER
Couldn't wait.

Frankie steps back from the canvas.

FRANKIE
Well?

GUNNER
Not done yet, right?

FRANKIE
Neither are we.
(beat)
Gunner hesitates. He is a man of
action yet now he feels weak.

GUNNER
I know I've dropped the ball.
I'm not trying to be perfect—just
worthy of you.

Frankie steps closer. Hand to Gunner's chest.

FRANKIE
I'm not asking you to be perfect.
Just honest.

They kiss. It's not hungry—it's *home*.

GUNNER
I .. want to ask you something.
Would you/

Frankie's breath catches.

FRANKIE
Wait... is Mr. Rocky Mountains
getting serious on me?

GUNNER
Dead.

Beat. Frankie takes the box. Opens it. Reads the inscription.

FRANKIE
(reflects, smiles)
Okay then. But only if you promise
me one thing.

GUNNER
Anything.

FRANKIE
Don't go dark when I need you most.

FLASHBACK ENDS.

MUSIC CONTINUES
— INTERCUT
SEQUENCE:

EXT. DENVER BAR - NIGHT

Gunner walks in, greeted by clients. Polished. Cool. In control.

INT. FRANKIE'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Frankie (30) paints, shirtless. Latin. Beautiful. Alive with color. A Sydney skyline. The future.

He hums along to Barry White on vinyl. The world is warm.

INT. DARK VAN - NIGHT

A hand tightens duct tape.

INT. STUDIO - LATER

The door bursts open. Shadows move. Quick cuts:

Frankie's head slams.

Paint splashes the canvas.

Bag over his face.

Dragged. Screamed. Gone.

INT. UNKNOWN ROOM - NIGHT

Frankie is bound. Bloodied. Breathing hard. We only hear a voice—low, dangerous.

ANGELO (O.S.)
I'm the one for Gunner.

BLACK SCREEN.

GUNSHOT.

TITLE CARD:

REFUSE TO GO DARK

ONE MONTH EARLIER — JULY 11, 2025

INT. GUNNER'S OFFICE - 4:00 PM

The afternoon sun ignites the Rockies. The Denver skyline gleams with promise.

FRANKIE perches on Gunner's desk, smiling.

GUNNER leans in and kisses him, deep. A soft growl.

The door SLAMS open.

ANGELO storms in.

Frankie and Gunner separate, fast.

Tension crackles.

ANGELO
(scoffing)
God, Francine, give it a rest.
Don't you have an older man with a
foot in the grave to shank?

GUNNER
Angelo—

Frankie raises a hand, gently covering Gunner's mouth.

He stands, crosses to Angelo. Face to face. One inch apart.

FRANKIE
You don't scare me.
You better watch out for Francine.

ANGELO
You're as dumb as you look.
You should be afraid of me.
Very afraid.

Frankie touches a finger to Angelo's lips.

Then—whispers in his ear.

FRANKIE

Shhh.

All this big talk... confirms
you've got— (glances down) —a
little dick.

He kisses Angelo on the mouth.

Steps back. Smiles.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

Now.

Fuck off.

Silence.

Gunner starts to smile.

A twitch behind Angelo's eye. A breath he holds too long.

Angelo wipes his mouth.

ANGELO

(low)

Like I said...
Be very afraid of me.

GUNNER

You boys done?
Or should I give you the room?

(grins)

Stillness. A stare-down.

ANGELO

Francine, We are far from done.

FRANKIE

(sighs)

Like Mrs. Snee said in 6th grade—
"Food gets done. People finish."
(shrugs)
Guess apes are still evolving.

He gives Angelo a once-over.

Angelo lunges—

Gunner steps between them.

Frankie laughs.

He winks at Gunner.

FADE OUT.

EXT. STREETS OF DENVER - DUSK SAME DAY

Gunner and Angelo are driving in the KIA.

ANGELO

(irritated)

This KIA is insulting. For all the money we make and you drive this cheap brand. You gotta show them what your worth.

GUNNER

(laughs)

And you think the oversized, overloaded, mag-wheeled-truck tells people who you are. Fuck you don't even own a pair of boots.

ANGELO

(defiant)

I own boots.

GUNNER

Yea, Prada.

ANGELO

What?

GUNNER

Oh, God, wait till I tell Frankie that one! (he laughs)

They park and get out.

There is an alley and he pulls GUNNER in and pins Gunner's back against the wall.

ANGELO

I don't like Francine and/

GUNNER

And I don't care. I am the one sleeping with him not you.

ANGELO

Yea, well (pause)

Gunner leans in just a breath away. His eye brow arches

GUNNER

(sly)

Wait a minute. You mean after all these years, you got something for me? (Gunner growls, smirks)

Angelo release his grip and steps back. Claiming space.

ANGELO

I am not gay.

GUNNER

Say it louder, maybe you'll believe it.

Gunner moves back to the street.

GUNNER (CONT'D)

(he speaks easy)

Angelo, I always got your back. Gay or straight or whatever you want to admit to, I got you unconditional. Now come on, let's nail this deal.

Angelo looks defeated. Being accepted unconditionally is not something he is used to.

INT. THE WOLF'S TAILOR - LOUNGE - MOMENTS LATER

The restaurant murmurs with old money and quiet threat.

Waitstaff straighten their ties. A sommelier palms his brow.

Like birds before an earthquake, they *sense her* before she's seen.

A pair of doors open-*just enough*.

Then—

PANDORA WHITELEY (50s) enters in a liquid red coat that whispers floor to ankle. Black gloves. No handbag. No phone. Only eyes that catalog the weak.

She doesn't walk in.

GUNNER (TO ANGELO)

She doesn't enter rooms.
She claims them.

She passes a table of men in suits—without looking, she plucks a cigar from one, raises a brow.

He stammers. Nods. Lights it for her.

****SHE BLOWS SMOKE LIKE A CURSE.****

Only then does she look to Gunner.

He rises.

GUNNER

(grinning)

Pandora. Why have you been avoiding me?

(He growls—like he knows she likes it.)

PANDORA

(tilts her head, slow smile)

Oh... I didn't know you were available.

(Have things changed?)

Angelo nudges in, not wanting to be left out. Pandora barely notices him.

ANGELO

Pandora.

PANDORA

(dryly)

Gunner I see you brought the bull dog with you. Where's Frankie? He suits your taste—and your package. Besides I need help with my party this weekend and want to get his design input.

Angelo quietly smolders at the sound of the insult "Bull dog." Gunner clocks this and pulls Angelo in wrapping his arm around him and a big smile.

GUNNER

(confidently)

Now Pandora you know in business it is always Angelo and me.

PANDORA

You mean: You and Angelo

BEAT.

GUNNER

Yea that's what I said.

PANDORA

No sweetheart. You come first,
then if there are scraps left over
you throw *that dog* a bone. And
Frankie always has a seat at my
table anytime, you both do. You
will be there on Saturday? I've
called the best of Denver in for
this event to show case you.

Gunner nods and pulls Angelo back in.

GUNNER

(easy)

Us. Angelo and I are business
partners.

PANDORA

Are you sure that's all it is?

Beat. Angelo blushes.

GUNNER

No no, Ang and I go back years.
He's always been straight and me

PANDORA

You have taste, style and always
have my eye. That bull dog has
puppy eyes for you.

Awkward.

GUNNER

Let's get a drink, shall we?

PANDORA

No, I'll pass.
I'm suddenly, utterly bored with
the view.
Don't bring the bulldog.
Is he even house-trained?

She locks eyes with Angelo. Smiles.

Angelo's eyes sharpen.

PANDORA (CONT'D)

Send Frankie. He knows what I like.
(smile. drag. gone.)

Pandora wafts into the restaurant. People adore her.

A beat.

Gunner exhales.

Takes the ring out.

Looks at it.

Angelo shifts beside him, starts to speak—

Gunner raises a hand. Cuts him off.

GUNNER

You know/

ANGELO

I hate that bitch. Bull dog. Fuck her.

GUNNER

My boy, she brings us clients.

ANGELO

I am NOT your boy.

Gunner sips his drink. Calm.

GUNNER

(laughs)

Touchy.

Say it ten times—maybe we'll both believe it.

Drink?

ANGELO

(seething)

Fuck you. I need air.

GUNNER

Nah. You need to get laid.

ANGELO

You need to stop looking at my ass.
And remember—I'm not your boy.

He turns. Storms off.

****CRASH.****

He slams into a passing WAITER with a tray of four martinis.

Glass shatters. Liquid everywhere. The waiter hits the floor.

****Silence.****

The entire restaurant freezes. Heads turn.

A slow tilt down to:

****Glass shards.****

****Martini pooling.****

****Angelo's reflection--distorted, furious.****

ANGELO (CONT'D)
(to the waiter)
You fucking faggot.

Jesus. Watch where you're going.

Gunner steps in to smooth it all out.

GUNNER
(easy, comforting)
Ang, relax my friend. GO easy.
Head home and I'll come by in an
hour, we'll go get dinner at
Culinary Dropout.

ANGELO
What about Francine.

GUNNER
I'll let him know that you and I
need some time to go over a few
things. I'll have him hook up with
Pandora. They will talk for hours.

ANGELO
That cunt.

GUNNER
(smirk)
Which one?

ANGELO
(low)
Both.

Angelo heads out.

The camera pulls back. Gunner pays for the spilled drinks
and consoles the waiter. Picks up a conversation with a few
folks around the bar.

Scene ends.

EXT. CAPITOL HILL - SAME NIGHT AN HOUR LATER

Angelo on the street corner with FINCH and CROSBY

FINCH, (25) Cuban thug came to Denver to clean up. Runs illegal gambling and drug trade. He is an Angelo-wanna-be. Tattoo of Heart with a dagger on his impressive right bicep.

CROSBY (45) Irish thug from Boston. Played the game there now taking the game here. Connect to Angelo 24/7.

The three are in conversation as the camera pulls in.

Tone: sharp, coded, dangerous. The kind of talk that gets people dead or rich.

FINCH

(half in Cuban)

Ese cabrón no sabe con quién está jugando.

(then English)

I can take care of him, boss.
Clean. You say when.

ANGELO

(soft, dangerous - in
Cuban and English)

No seas tan caliente, Finch. Esto no es Cuba.

(pause)

We're not killing anybody. Not yet.

CROSBY

(in French, sly)

Pas encore, hein?

(then in English)

But a little chaos... gets people looking the other way.

ANGELO

(grins, switching to
French)

Exactement.

(then English)

Saturday night. Pandora's place.

Fancy crowd, big diamonds.

Just a little disruption.

I fire a shot.

Finch bleeds.

Crosby moves the body.

They scream.

We collect.

FINCH
So it's theatre.

ANGELO
(with a smile like a
loaded gun)
It's leverage.

He steps into the shadows.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
Make sure the blood looks real.
And if Frankie asks questions...
Smile when you lie to him.

Crosby calls Angelo back.

CROSBY
(soft, in French)
Et Gunner? Qu'est-ce qu'on fait de
lui?
(And Gunner? What do we do
about him?)

FINCH
(grinning, in Cuban)
Ay, Papi... dejame encargarme de
él.
(Oh Papi, let me take him
out.)

ANGELO
(cold, calm—in Cuban)
Déjenme a Gunner.
(Leave Gunner to me.)
(then in French, laced
with venom and silk)

ANGELO (CONT'D)
Je vais en faire mon garçon.
(I will make him my boy.)

INT. GUNNER'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Sleek. Lean. Denver's lights stretch wide like a sleeping
serpent.

EXT. BALCONY - NIGHT

Vodka. Lime. Cigar. GUNNER stands at the railing, the city
sprawling below. He doesn't turn when the penthouse door
opens.

Keys hit a table. Ice cracks. A pour. Footsteps.

ANGELO joins him. Silence. They clink. Smoke.

ANGELO
You deal with it?

GUNNER
Handled.

Pandora got her blood.

ANGELO
Bitch.

GUNNER
(nods)
Aren't we all.
(beat)
You've gotta stop losing control.
This reflects on both of us.

ANGELO
I know.
(soft)
I'm sorry.

GUNNER pulls him into a firm bear hug. A second of softness.
Then gone.

They separate. Smoke again. Another clink.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
(quiet)
When did you know?

GUNNER
(quietly)
About you... or me?

ANGELO flinches. His face flushes. Then—

ANGELO
Bullshit.
(exploding—)

He swings.

A clean right hook.

Gunner takes it.

Drops—hard.

Angelo blinks—like waking up in a nightmare.

A beat. Time catches up.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

Jesus. I—
(steps forward)
Gunner, I'm sorry—

Gunner wipes the blood.

Smiles — not angry. Not forgiving. Just... knowing.

Then he stands.

Takes the drink from Angelo.

Sips.

Holds his gaze.

Hands it back.

A nod.

Angelo drinks.

GUNNER

(low, like a knife)
You've been side-stepping my
cologne for fifteen years.

ANGELO falters.

ANGELO

What? I didn't—
(side-stepping?)

GUNNER

Guess you like it rough.
I'm taking a shower.
You've got fifteen minutes to stop
lying.
After that—I want everything.

GUNNER steps inside. Offscreen:

GUNNER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Alexa, play Barry White. "You're
the First, the Last, My
Everything."

ANGELO stares out into the dark.

ANGELO

Fuck.
What did I just do?
(beat)
What did I just wake up?

A jet glides overhead—quiet, unreachable.

Angelo watches it vanish into the dark.

BARRY WHITE (O.S.)

"We got it together, didn't we?"

Angelo exhales. Shaken. Turned on. Torn open.

END SCENE.

INT. GUNNER'S PENTHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The faint sound of running water. Steam curls out of the bathroom. ANGELO stands alone. Still shaken. Still high on something he won't name.

He glances toward the open bathroom door. A silhouette behind the fogged glass. Muscle. Movement. The sound of skin and water. ANGELO inhales—slow, sharp. Holds it. Can't help himself. Takes a step closer—*

Then—buzz.

Gunner's phone lights up, vibrating like a secret.

ANGELO startles. Turns.

CLOSE ON SCREEN: FRANKIE CALLING.

He stares at it. Lets it ring. Then—he picks up. Cool, like silk on steel.

ANGELO

(slick, slow)
Francine.

FRANKIE (V.O.)

(confused, panicked)
Angelo? Where's Gunner? Is he okay?

ANGELO

(relaxed, cruel)
Calm down, boy. He's fine.
(MORE)

ANGELO (CONT'D)
I got him. We're going to dinner.
He won't be needing you tonight.

Ends the call. Deletes the log.

Wipes the screen with his sleeve.

Places it back—exact position.

The SHOWER STOPS.

Footsteps. A door opens.

GUNNER ENTERS in a towel—damp, cut, jaw-dropping. Water beads down his chest. He's half-lit in gold and shadow.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
(audible gasp, turns
away—flustered)

GUNNER
(dry, without turning)
You good?
Or was that little gasp for me?

Then:

(beat)
Was that the phone?

ANGELO
(too smooth)
No call.
(beat)
Your phone's got a nice weight.
Feels powerful.

GUNNER
(eyes narrow—dangerous)
Ang...
You want a phone, get a phone. The
company pays for it.

ANGELO
(nods, almost dreamy)
Yeah.

The company pays...

GUNNER
(snaps fingers)
Hey.
You with me?

BEAT.

ANGELO looks up. Smile tight.

He's already somewhere else.

Somewhere Gunner might not like.

The mirror catches him — split in two.

One side wants Gunner.

The other knows he already lost.

INT. PANDORA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Lights are warm, cluttered with party catalogs, half-eaten pizza, and Pandora's mood board. FRANKIE paces, phone to ear. PANDORA's on the couch, painting tiny handcuffs on plastic straws.

INTERCUT WITH ANGELO answering the phone (already scripted).

FRANKIE

(confused, worried)

Angelo? Where's Gunner? Is he okay?

ANGELO (V.O.)

(relaxed, cruel)

Calm down, boy. He's fine.

I got him. We're going to dinner.

He won't be needing you tonight.

CLICK. Frankie just stands there, holding the phone like it might start bleeding.

PANDORA

That didn't sound like "he'll be right over."

(smirking)

Lemme guess. Cuban Psycho picked up?

FRANKIE

(deadpan)

So let's plan the party.

PANDORA

We're already locked for Saturday—
Cops & Mobsters, darling. Full Dick Tracy.

FRANKIE

(flat)

What could go wrong?

PANDORA

(smiles)

We're hosting a costume party in a
city full of criminals.
Everything.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Upscale but low-lit. Leather booths. Jazz from another room.

A whiskey bottle between them. Two glasses. Neither relaxed.

ANGELO and GUNNER sit across from each other. The candle
between them flickers like a fuse.

"Back to Black" - Beyoncé's cover from The Great Gatsby
soundtrack

Sultry, tragic, twisted ownership.

Lyrics that feel like someone losing what they never had.

And her voice? All smoke and bruises.

"I died a hundred times..."

GUNNER

I don't care what you are—
Straight. Gay. Bi. Undecided.
That's not the question.
(leans in)
I want the truth.

ANGELO

(chiseled)
So ask the question.

GUNNER

(quietly)

Were any of those looks real?
The late-night jokes?
The way you used to say my name
like it had teeth?
The drunk nights—
You'd bro-hug me just a little too
long. Then pass out on my lap while
I was the one driving.

ANGELO
And if I say yes?

GUNNER
Then I'll ask—why now?

Beat.

ANGELO
If you knew—why didn't you act on it?

GUNNER
It's a two-way street.
You were always coming at me sideways.
With the sly remarks.
The near-misses.
I'm not putting our friendship—our business— up on the fucking stage to see what happens.

ANGELO
Well let's make it happen now.
Right fucking now.

Beat.

GUNNER
Sure. That'd be easy.
I mean—I've thought about this for fucking ever.

ANGELO
(slow)
Then what's the hold up?

Angelo reaches across the table.

Takes Gunner's hand—sure, steady.

Their fingers lock.

The waitress approaches, eyes the heat.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
(low, primal)
Take a walk.

She scoffs, stunned—but walks away.

They hold the gaze.

It crackles.

GUNNER
(soft, firm)
No.
You don't get me that easy.

Beat.

GUNNER (CONT'D)
I'm not your obsession.
Come back in a week.
Ask me out.
Like a real person
Then we'll see.

He gets up.

GUNNER (CONT'D)
I've got messages to check. Then we
leave.
Long day.

He rubs his jaw.

GUNNER (CONT'D)
I bet this leaves a bruise.

He winks.

ANGELO watches him go.

Lit from the table—firelight, fury.

His hand stays on Gunner's glass.

He doesn't sip.

He holds it like a memory.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - MORNING

A hip neighborhood spot. Sunlight. A dog bowl outside.

FRANKIE sips an iced latte. GUNNER's got a black coffee. They
sit near the window.

FRANKIE
So... I called you last night.

GUNNER
Yeah?

FRANKIE

Yeah.
The bulldog answered.
Your pit bull. Your... Angelo.

GUNNER

(freezes, plays dumb)
What?

FRANKIE

Had Drag Race on loop.
Texted myself memes I'd normally
send you.
Felt like I was dating a ghost.

GUNNER

He shouldn't have answered my
phone.

FRANKIE

No, he shouldn't have.

Beat.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

Are you two...?

GUNNER

No.
He's... complicated.

FRANKIE

(sips, watching him)
And you?
Are you complicated?

GUNNER

I might be figuring that out.

Long beat.

FRANKIE

Just don't make me watch you burn
the house down—
and call it love

Gunner exhales.

Wants to say something. Doesn't.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

Alright, lover boy.
Cops and Mobsters this Saturday.
Costumes mandatory.

(MORE)

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
If he shows up with a fake Tommy
gun, I'm calling SWAT.

GUNNER chuckles. Barely.

Gunner looks out the window.

A police cruiser drives by.

The reflection warps across the glass—like a ghost.

Frankie reaches over and takes Gunner's hand in his. He
squeezes tight. They lock eyes.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
Gunner. (BEAT) I refuse to go dark.

GUNNER
What.

FRANKIE
(plain and honest)
I refuse to go dark. TO have my
lamp put out. To not be 1000% who I
am and who I am with you. I love
you, Gunner.

Silence. Eyes locked

GUNNER
I know.

BEAT

FRANKIE
(questioning)
And?

GUNNER
And I love you, too.

Gunner leans across and kisses Frankie on the lips. Gentle.

FRANKIE
Don't say it to shut me up.
Believe it — for both of us.

INT. GHOSTHOUSE OFFICES - WAR ROOM - MORNING

ANGELO, FINCH, and CROSBY are gathered around the sleek black
conference table. Tablet screens glow. Espresso steams. Maps.
Blueprints. A single yellow fedora sits in the center like a
trophy.

ANGELO
 (in French-laced Cuban,
 smooth like sin)
 La fête est samedi.
 Costume party. Cops and Mobsters.
 Juego empezado. (Game on.)

FINCH
 (grinning, in Cuban)
 Ay, Papi... déjame encargarme de los
 federales.
 (Oh Papi... let me handle
 the feds.)

CROSBY
 (deadpan)
 I call Tommy gun.

They laugh—until the door opens.

GUNNER enters, in control without trying. Loosened tie. Day-old bruise on his jaw. He freezes for a second—was this a meeting?

GUNNER
 Crosby—
 Can you run a background on two
 guests showing up Saturday at
 Pandora's? Michael Goldberg and
 Janice Stankoski. They're throwing
 around money like it's confetti—
 Let's make sure it's not
 counterfeit.

CROSBY
 On it.

Gunner turns to Finch. Raises an eyebrow.

GUNNER
 (in Cuban)
 ¿Dónde has estado?
 Si no estás cerca, eso significa
 que hay problemas. (Where you been?
 If you're not around, that means
 trouble.)

Finch smirks, but says nothing.

GUNNER (CONT'D)
 What? Like I don't know Spaglish?
 Fuck me. You clowns got a lot to
 learn.

A flicker of a grin. Then Gunner looks at Angelo.

GUNNER (CONT'D)
Ang—we got that meeting in five.
(looks at his phone)

GUNNER (CONT'D)
Wise-ass couple from Chicago—
Jack and Deuce. They run some club
up there called... Wild Horse? Wild
Cat?
(beat, smirks)
Ah—The Wild Card.

Wicked pause.

GUNNER (CONT'D)
They want to open a new location
here.
Let's see if they can play in our
sandbox.

Gunner heads to the door.

GUNNER (CONT'D)
Bring the charm.
And maybe don't threaten anyone
just yet.

He exits.

Finch looks at Angelo.

FINCH
That Wild Card?
They don't bluff.

ANGELO
(smooth, eyes dark)
Neither do I.

He picks up the yellow fedora. Stares at it.

Then sets it back down—just so.

INT. GHOSTHOUSE OFFICES - GLASS BOARDROOM - LATER

GUNNER and ANGELO sit side-by-side at the long obsidian
table. Sunlight slices through the vertical blinds—cutting
the room into stripes like a prison of truth.

Across from them: DEUCE — lean, wired, calculating. JACK — still, unreadable, dressed like he knows the end of the movie.

A beat. No one speaks.

GUNNER
Denver's not Chicago.
You get that?

DEUCE
That's why we're here.

JACK
You've built something we respect.
We're not here to take. We're here
to expand.

ANGELO
(leans forward)
And you think we're just going to
give you the keys?
Like you're the first pretty boys
with ambition to walk in here?

Jack stares at him. Not intimidated. Maybe amused.

JACK
No.
We came because we know you won't.

Beat.

DEUCE
Look—The Wild Card works because it
isn't a brand.
It's a code. You're either in, or
you don't belong. We're offering
you a seat at the next table.
Miami. L.A. Even New York's
sniffing around.

GUNNER
You think we don't have reach?

JACK
We know you have reach.
What you don't have— Is us.

Silence.

Angelo eyes them both. Something unreadable flickers behind his stare.

ANGELO
Tell me something.
(beat)
Between the two of you—
Who's really in charge?

Deuce smirks. Jack doesn't move.

JACK
That depends who's asking.

GUNNER
(sits back, measuring)
Alright.
We'll consider it. You're on the
list for Saturday. Costume party.
Theme's "Cops and Mobsters."

DEUCE
You sure you want two Chicago
hustlers at your costume party?

ANGELO
Just bring your best disguise.
Or your worst truth.

JACK
That's all we've ever worn.

They rise. Jack nods to Gunner. Deuce gives a low whistle as he walks out.

DEUCE
Nice place.
Bet it looks even better after
midnight.

Deuce starts for the door. Jack follows. Then—

JACK
(stopping, turning
back—calm, cold)
Gunner—
Tell your boy, Angelo, to quit
making eyes at me. We're not in bed
together. Yet.

ANGELO
(cutting)
You wish.

JACK
(smiles)
Don't flatter yourself.
(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)
I know the difference between
hunger and fantasy.

DEUCE
(offscreen, laughing)
Shit. I told you this was gonna be
fun.

They exit.

GUNNER
(low, to Angelo)
That one doesn't blink.

ANGELO
Neither do I.
(beat)
But he just made the list.

Gunner watches them go.

GUNNER
Chicago's got teeth.

ANGELO
So do we.

SMASH CUT TO—

INT. ANGELO'S LOFT - NIGHT

Muted light. Walls plastered in photos—Frankie laughing,
Gunner smoking, moments stolen with a long lens. Some framed.
Some circled in red. Some... just torn halfway.

A single votive candle flickers beneath an old photo booth
strip of Frankie and Gunner, laughing. Happy. It hurts him to
look.

ANGELO enters. Silent. Shirtless. Eyes hollow.

He drops to the floor. Thirty push-ups. Slow. Controlled. He
rises. Sweat dripping.

He hits his phone. John Duff's "Total Eclipse of the Heart"
starts — the slow, haunting build.

ANGELO walks to the wall. Grabs a photo of Frankie.

RIPS IT DOWN.

Then another. And another. SLICE – box cutter blade flicks. He carves Frankie out of every frame. Leaves only GUNNER. Always Gunner.

ANGELO
(low, to himself)
It should be me.
Frankie's just the stand-in. I'm
the one. Gunner and Angelo—
Forever.
Or not at all.

He rubs his chest, breathing ragged. The song swells—

"There's nothing I can do... a total eclipse of the heart..."

The door creaks open. CROSBY appears—eyes wide, taking in the shrine.

CROSBY
Boss?

ANGELO turns—slow. Wild-eyed. Possessed.

ANGELO
(deadly calm)
Not.
A.
Word.

Then, in French

ANGELO (CONT'D)
Pas un mot... ou tu es un homme
mort. (Not a word... or you're a
dead man.)

The music swells.

ANGELO turns back to the photos. One left: Gunner.

He kisses it. Tender. Obsessive.

Then presses it to his chest.

Crosby looks on—like he's seen a ghost praying to a god that never loved him back.

Scene ends.

INT. PANDORA'S PENTHOUSE COPS AND MOBSTERS MASQUERADE PARTY

INT. PANDORA'S ESTATE - NIGHT

LOVE IS IN THE AIR by John Paul Young plays by a live jazz band, slowed just a tick, dreamlike and haunting. It drifts through the air like cigarette smoke.

The party is already in motion. 60 + people.

Gold light. Crystal glasses. Men in suits with plastic badges. Women in heels and fedoras. Drag queens in pinstripes. Velvet and silk everywhere. It's elegant, chaotic, dangerous.

Pandora's estate is a maze of decadence. Rooms become stages. The crowd moves like gossip—always spreading.

ANGLE ON: A CUSTOM NEON SIGN — "COPS & MOBSTERS" — flickering red and blue.

INT. FOYER - SAME

FRANKIE enters first. He's dressed like a 1940s private eye—impeccable, sexy, ironic. Think Jimmy Stewart meets Miami Vice.

Behind him, GUNNER follows in a midnight-black three-piece with gold trim. Understated. Dangerous.

PANDORA descends the staircase in full femme fatale drag. Silk gloves, cigarette holder, boa of peacock feathers. She OWNS the room.

PANDORA
(arms wide)
My angels of death and virtue!
Welcome!

She kisses Gunner, long and slow. Eyes flick to Frankie. Then to Angelo across the room. She kisses Frankie, the same. Crowds murmur.

INT. BAR - CONTINUOUS

ANGELO stands alone. Fedora. Red carnation. A glass of scotch sweating in his hand. His eyes are fixed on Gunner.

Pandora walks over with a dog collar. It says "Killer" on it. She slips on to his thick neck. She pats his shoulder.

PANDORA

There, there. Now you're dressed.
Every killer needs a collar."
(smile. pat. dismiss.)

The music swells.

LOVE IS IN THE AIR —

♪ Every sight and every sound...

INT. PARTY FLOOR — MOMENTS LATER

JACK and DEUCE enter. Suave. Dangerous. Dressed like killers from a forgotten era. Jack wears white. Deuce wears blood red. Together, they part the room.

JACK

(to Deuce)

Let's find out what Denver tastes like.

DEUCE

I hope it bites.

They vanish into the crowd. Everyone wants a piece of the "New Meat" in town, Jack & Deuce.

Crosby approaches Angelo. His eyebrow raises

CROSBY

Boss what the fuck? Killer?

ANGELO

(short)

Hold this.

He hands is whiskey to Crosby.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

She wants a killer I'll give a God damned, fucking killer.

Angelo, in full view of the crowd, people start watching, Gunner clocks it. Jack and Deuce separated across the room see this and nod like Redford and Newman from "The Sting" as

Angelo shrugs off the jacket. Unbuttons the shirt slow. Drops it.

Now he's in a white A-shirt — arms cut, veins sharp.

His holster gleams. His body's a loaded threat

He walks up to Jack.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
(low, in charge)
Got a cigar, Chicago.

Without hesitation Jack pulls out a cigar, Angelo leans in and whispers. This is not heard. Jack nods. Jack lights the cigar for Angelo.

The room is very aware.

Angelo walks over to Pandora.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
(low and dangerous)
Ma dame, votre tueur est arrivé."
(My lady, your killer has arrived.)

PANDORA
Espérons qu'il tue mieux qu'il
n'aime. L'amour est dans l'air,
non?"
(Let's hope he kills better than he
loves. Love is in the air, right?)

ANGELO
(in Spanish low and
loaded)
"Este perro musculoso tiene
ladrido... y mordida. Más vale que
esta sala tenga cuidado."
(This muscle dog has bark... and
bite. The room better be careful.)

PANDORA
(in Spanish with a sting)
Quieto, chico. Recuerda que yo te
di ese collar. También sostengo la
correa."
(Heel, boy. Remember I gave you
that collar. I also hold the
leash.)

Angelo stares her down. No words. Just a long drag of his cigar— He leans in and blows the smoke directly into her face.

PANDORA

Doesn't blink.

Doesn't move.

She smiles.

A queen who's already won.

INT. NEAR BAR - LATER

DEUCE walks up to Angelo and Pandora, cocky AF.

DEUCE

(in Spanish)

¿Ustedes chicas se disfrazan todos los sábados por la noche?

(Do you girls play dress-up every Saturday night?)

(in French)

Il y a vraiment du pouvoir dans cette pièce? Je suis venu pour le deal, pas pour une routine de cirque.

Quand vous aurez fini, je veux rencontrer celui qui détient les clés ici, pas les femmes de ménage.

(Are there really power in the room? I came here for the deal, not some sideshow routine. When you two are finished, I want to meet the one who holds the keys around here—not the housekeepers.)

In a flash, ANGELO flips. He CLOCKS DEUCE with a vicious right.

Deuce SLAMS into a passing waiter — they both go down. Glass shatters. Silence falls.

SFX: A GUN COCKS.

Heads turn. CAMERA TRACK: Gun — arm — face. It's JACK. Dead calm.

JACK

(low, lethal)

That's the one and only time you ever touch my man.

You better calm the fuck down.

(presses gun harder)

Now... help my man up. And you apologize.

BEAT.

ANGELO
Fuccccccck you.

GUNNER rushes in. Calm, trying to gain peace. Holds out a hand to Deuce. Helps him up.

GUNNER
Deuce, you okay? I'm sorry—

JACK
(to Gunner)
Don't you apologize. I want it from
the dog.

Gunner looks at Angelo. A beat. Then—nods.

ANGELO
(half-hearted)
I'm sorry.

BEAT.

GUNNER
Great.

He nods to Pandora.

PANDORA
(grinning, loud)
Ladies and gentlemen—WELCOME to
COPS AND MOBSTERS!
That was your live entertainment.
(turns to band)
Reggie—PLAY ON!

The crowd looks around. Laughter. Uncertainty. No one is sure if they just witnessed a stunt or a real threat.

If looks could kill, Angelo would already be dead— at the hands of Gunner, Jack, and Deuce.

The room breathes again.

GUNNER leans in to Angelo.

GUNNER
(low)
You're gonna get us killed.

ANGELO

(low)

So...

Still want that date? I'm ready.

(grin twisted)

The party swirls on.

INT. PARTY FLOOR AN HOUR LATER

The jazz band play on with a jazzy instrumental of "You're So Vain."

Jack and Deuce working the room. Deuce with a full-on black eye.

The room is lively but the anticipation of what-is-happening-next is very real and top of mind.

Frankie and Gunner are laughing with investors.

Pandora mingling. Gives a nod and a waiter steps in to refresh someone's drink.

Angelo gives Crosby a nod. Crosby touches his ear, turns, and moves into position.

The jazz bends into a warped hum. Time slows. Glasses freeze mid-clink. Eyes dart-then

BAM. FRONT DOOR SLAMS OPEN

ROBBER #1 (FINCH)

(mean and low)

This is a robbery. Everyone

He fires two shots in the air.

ROBBER #1 (CONT'D)

Get the fuck down.

ROBBER #2

Wallets, rings, cell phones now.

Angelo goes for his gun.

BANG. BANG.

ROBBER #1 and ROBBER #2 go down.

SLOW MOTION. THE BODIES FALL. BLOOD OOZES.

REAL TIME

Panic. Gunner looking. Frankie looks to Pandora like is this show?

ANGLE on ANGELO. With a WTF he didn't fire.

FLASH CUT to JACK AND DEUCE. GUNS IN THE FIRING POSITION.

INSTANT REPLAY THE ROOM

ROBBER #1 (FINCH)
(mean and low)
This is a robbery. Everyone

He fires two shots in the air.

ROBBER #1 (CONT'D)
Get the fuck down.

ROBBER #2
Wallets, rings, cell phones now.

Angelo goes for his gun.

ANGLE ON JACK AND DEUCE who instinctively pull out their guns, look at each other, nod and then fire.

BANG. Jack hit #1.

BANK. DEUCE hits #2

BACK TO REAL TIME.

PANDORA
Ladies and Gentlemen! Our 2nd
theatrical event brought to you
courtesy of our Chicago Guests:
Jack and Deuce.

She applauds. She is the only one. Then people join in out of fear.

Pandora nods to Jack, Deuce, Gunner and Angelo. "Kitchen, now"

GUNNER
(to Jack & Deuce, under
his breath)
You two just painted a target on
our backs.
(BEAT)
Nice fuckin' shot though.

PANDORA
(to a waiter, quietly)
Let's get those actors out of the
room and into the garage.

The scene swirls.

PANDORA (CONT'D)
Reggie, music please!

The band starts. "JOY TO THE WORLD" by Three Dog Night.

INT. KITCHEN — MOMENTS LATER

Pandora, Jack, Deuce, Gunner, Frankie, Angelo, and Crosby.
The air is thick. Velvet rage. Steel tension.

PANDORA
(direct)
I want answers.
(beat)
Who planned this?

No one moves. Every eye like a blade. KNIVES OUT around the
room.

PANDORA (CONT'D)
So was that a performance or—

JACK
(cutting)
We shoot truth. With good aim.

GUNNER
You think this is truth?

JACK
No. This is foreplay.

DEUCE
(cold, cocky)
In my town, we shoot first.
Then, maybe, we ask questions
later.

GUNNER
(low)
Just like that?

JACK
Dead.
(beat)

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)
Yeah. Jesus... we're gonna fit right
in.

The room simmers. Pandora glares at Angelo, then at Jack and Deuce. Nobody's flinching. Frankie takes a sip of champagne like it's popcorn.

INT. PANDORA'S ESTATE - MAIN ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Pandora strides in, composed and radiant. The men follow—Jack, Deuce, Gunner, Frankie, Angelo, Crosby—like shadows with teeth.

She clinks her crystal glass. The music halts. Eyes turn. The room freezes.

PANDORA
(bold, dramatic)
To blood...
(to Jack and Deuce)
...betrayal...
(to Angelo)
...and boys who play with fire.

A few nervous chuckles. But mostly silence. Then slowly—glasses raise. A fractured toast.

CROWD
(murmuring)
To blood... betrayal...

PANDORA
(smiling)
Dinner is served.

Guests drift toward the patio—dazzled, uncertain, hungry for danger.

Beyond the glass doors, candlelight flickers.

Waiters glide through with silver trays.

Lavish. Uneasy. Like a feast before execution.

PANDORA (CONT'D)
(calling out)
Reggie—something French. Café-
style, s'il vous plaît.

A smooth Parisian jazz waltz begins. The tension dissolves—at least on the surface.

The camera glides back. The party rolls on. But now it's theater with a loaded gun behind every curtain.

EXT. PANDORA'S ESTATE - PATIO - NIGHT

Elegant dinner service under string lights and palm trees. The jazz band plays soft French café music. The scent of roasted lamb and danger hangs in the air.

The CROWD has shifted—tense but enchanted. They can't take their eyes off JACK and DEUCE, seated near the center, guns holstered, fully visible. They eat like kings. Like wolves.

WOMAN IN SILK DRESS
(whispering to her date)
Are they actors... or real?

MAN IN SUSPENDERS
(grinning)
Who cares? I want to know what side
I should be on.

A silent glance between two guests—unsure if this is still "the show."

ANGLE ON: JACK & DEUCE

Jack slices his filet clean, casually scanning the room.

DEUCE
(smirking)
Think they like us?

JACK
They should.
(takes a bite)
We're the only reason they're still
breathing.

A few guests clink glasses awkwardly near them—stars truck, terrified, aroused.

ANGLE ON: GUNNER & FRANKIE

FRANKIE
(low, to Gunner)
So they were really gonna rob us?

GUNNER
 Or test the room.
 Either way—two bodies later, we
 passed.

FRANKIE
 Jack didn't even blink.
 (beat)
 Is it bad I think that's hot?

GUNNER
 Only if you think about it twice.

ANGLE ON: ANGELO & CROSBY

They sit farther from the crowd. A single candle flickers
 between them. ANGLE TIGHTENS.

ANGELO
 How's Finch?

CROSBY
 (in French, quiet)
 Mort. Patron. Faut changer de
 plan."

ANGELO:
 Non. Pas de changement.
 La guerre a ses morts.
 (War has its dead.)
 You stay on track. No deviations.
 You understand me?

CROSBY
 (nods)
 Oui. Compris.

Angelo lifts his wine. Drinks like it's blood.

ANGLE ON: PANDORA

She drifts between tables, smiling. Watching. Always
 watching.

PANDORA
 (to a guest, softly)
 Isn't it divine when men dress for
 dinner and die for dessert?

Pandora stands.

PANDORA (CONT'D)
(shouting, delighted)
Ladies and gentlemen - Thank you
for joining us tonight for COPS &
MOBSTERS.

Pandora raises her glass. One guest claps. Another stares,
unsure if it's part of the show.

FRANKIE and GUNNER argue in hushed tones.

FRANKIE
You didn't come home. You let him
answer your phone. Again.
You say you love me—
but you still let your past keep a
key.

Gunner silent.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
Are you sleeping with him—
or just letting him crawl into bed
with us one ghost at a time?

Frankie walks away. Gunner doesn't stop him.

The music swells.

EXT. PANDORA'S ESTATE - BACK TERRACE - NIGHT

The party has thinned. Music floats in like the last sigh of
a dream. Smoke curls from the last cigars. Guests disperse in
drunken elegance.

GUNNER leans against a marble column, tie loosened, eyes
scanning the darkness.

JACK and DEUCE approach—tailored, dangerous, electric in the
moonlight.

JACK
You throw a nice party.

GUNNER
Didn't throw it.

JACK
No. But you're definitely the
reason we came.

GUNNER
(half-smile)
Well boys... glad you came.

JACK
Deuce and I've been talking.

DEUCE
We like you. And Frankie. A lot.

JACK
I just gotta say one thing before
the night goes black.

GUNNER
(arching a brow)
You want in?

DEUCE
That's a given.
(beat)
We're in. We've got your back.

GUNNER
So what's the burning topic?

Jack glances at Deuce, then back at Gunner. A beat of
silence. Something shifts.

JACK
Angelo.

Gunner's smile tightens—just enough to register.

JACK (CONT'D)
I don't trust him.

It's the way he looks at you.

No—studies you. Like he's memorizing the best place to make
the cut.

GUNNER
(soft laugh)
Ang's a pussycat.

DEUCE
I know obsession when I see it.
What he's got isn't loyalty—it's
hunger.

(MORE)

DEUCE (CONT'D)
And hunger like that doesn't stop
'til it eats you alive.
(leans in)
Let us take his place.
Buy him out.
Then get him the fuck out of
Denver.

A long pause. Gunner lets that hang in the night air. A wind brushes the trees. Somewhere, a glass breaks in the distance.

GUNNER
But he's my business partner.

JACK
And Judas was family.

Jack and Deuce rise.

JACK (CONT'D)
Come back to the hotel. Bring
Frankie.

DEUCE
A four-way?

JACK
(dry)
This isn't about fucking.
(beat)
Not yet.

Jack slides a card into Gunner's jacket.

JACK (CONT'D)
When you're done playing house...
come find us.

Jack and Deuce head for the gate. Gunner calls after:

GUNNER
Give us an hour.

Jack throws a glance back—eyes glinting.

JACK
We'll be waiting.

They disappear into the night. Gunner lights a cigarette, exhales slowly. The smoke trails upward like a warning.

He turns to find FRANKIE in the shadows, watching.

FRANKIE
What just happened?

GUNNER
The floor just moved.
(beat)
Toward blood. Or better.

He takes Frankie's hand.

INT. BALCONY - SAME

ANGELO watches from above. The city glittering behind him.

Pandora joins him.

PANDORA
It was supposed to be smoke and
mirrors.
But someone lit the match.

She looks out. Sips her martini. Angelo smokes his cigar.

PANDORA (CONT'D)
Gunner is slipping.

ANGELO
He's not strong enough.

PANDORA
Finch?

ANGELO
Dead.

PANDORA
We didn't count on Chicago.

ANGELO
That won't happen again.

PANDORA
In rehearsal it seemed so easy
(beat)
In rehearsal it seemed so easy—
A little blood. A little glitter.
Clean exit. Curtain call.

ANGELO
But the players went off script.

PANDORA
Or maybe they rewrote it without
telling the director.
(She sips her drink. Eyes
Angelo.) PANDORA (CONT'D)
Tell me, mon cœur –
are you staying on point.

ANGELO
You think I called Chicago?

PANDORA
I think you are obsessed with
Gunner. People are talking.

Angelo breathes in deep on his cigar, then releases the smoke
slow and even.

ANGELO
People always talk.

Silence. Pandora turns to leave.

PANDORA
I'll send flowers to Finch's
mother. Cuban boys and their
mothers are so connected.

Angelo looks out, no response.

Pandora turns back to him.

PANDORA (CONT'D)
I've changed my mind. Leave Frankie
out of this. That plan we talked
about. Not happening. I want
Frankie around after Gunner is
gone.

Angelo smokes again. Cool. No response.

PANDORA (CONT'D)
Did you hear me? Gunner's downfall
is the headline. Period. Frankie's
not even a footnote.

ANGELO
I heard you. You want...You want.
You want...time I get what I want.

Angelo turn. Then he stops.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
(low and gravitas)
I'm keeping the collar. I like the
name "KILLER."

Pandora watches him leave. Crosby comes up to her.

PANDORA
You want your place in history? You
better decide which side you're on.
You chose the wrong side, Crosby,
you will end up like Finch.
Understood?

PAUSE.

CROSBY
Oui. Oui.

PANDORA
He was never the lead.
He just didn't know it.

INT. PANDORA'S ESTATE - BALLROOM - SAME TIME

ANGELO (O.S.)
(grisly, low - think IAGO)
Act Two begins.

INT. BALLROOM - CONTINUOUS

The band strikes up "LOVE IS IN THE AIR."

The music floats upward. Velvet. Ironic.

The band plays on.

The curtain hasn't fallen—

It's just been yanked open.

ANGLE ON: CROSBY - EDGE OF THE ROOM

He slips out his phone, glancing side to side.

CROSBY
(quietly, typing)
Plans are changing fast.

He hesitates. Then types again:

CROSBY (CONT'D)
 (en français)
 *La Reine de Cœur n'est pas ton
 amie.*
 *(The Queen of Hearts is not your
 friend.)*

INT. UNKNOWN LOCATION - SAME TIME

A phone buzzes. Screen lights up.

TEXT MESSAGE:
 > Plans are changing fast.
 > *La Reine de Cœur n'est pas ton
 amie.*

We don't see the face—only a hand.

A silver ring catches the light.

A breath. A choice being made.

BACK TO:
 BALLROOM - WIDE
 ANGLE

FROM ACROSS THE ROOM - PANDORA CLOCKS CROSBY.

Her eyes follow his every move like a hawk sighting prey.

She turns toward a TUXEDOED THUG by the bandstand.

PANDORA
 (low, wicked - like the
 Evil Queen)
 Follow Crosby. I smell a
 Ratatouille.

The music swells — the band plays "LOVE IS IN THE AIR."

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. FRANKIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Dark. Quiet. Frankie moves with purpose.

He opens his laptop. Eyes sharp. Hands steady — almost.

He clicks open a secure folder labeled:

"PANDORA PARTY - SURVEILLANCE CAM 2."

ON SCREEN:

INT. KITCHEN - EARLIER THAT EVENING

ANGELO, CROSBY, and FINCH huddle in a pre-party meeting.

ANGELO
(to Gunner)
So this is all set?

CROSBY
The blood packs are loaded on
Finch.

Finch slaps his chest proudly - like a dog that did a trick.

Crosby rubs the back of Finch's head like a *good boy*.

CROSBY (CONT'D)
Your gun, Angelo - blanks only.

ANGELO pulls a backup from his boot.

ANGELO
Got a real one. Just in case.

CROSBY
Not needed. We've got this stage
covered.

Angelo leans in. Voice low. Threat real.

ANGELO
(sinister)
If this gets fucked up - Don't run.
You'll die in Denver. That's a
fact.

Crosby nods. Finch nods.

CROSBY
Boss, we got this. Fake stick-up.
Blood packs pop. Angelo rides in on
a white horse. Hero of the night.

BACK TO:

INT. FRANKIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Frankie stops the footage.

He opens a new email.

****TO: ANGELO.G@VEGASCOUNCIL.NET****

****SUBJECT: WE NEED TO TALK.****

He attaches the footage.

FRANKIE
(typing onscreen)
Mr. Guerrilla –
You want to explain this to me
before I
take it to Gunner, Pandora,
and everyone else?
You get one shot.
The light of day won't hide your
secrets.
You'll be saying "Frankie, I'm
sorry" before we're through.

He HITS SEND.

Closes the laptop.

His hands shake.

He kills the lights.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. GUNNER'S OFFICE - DAY

Sunlight cuts through vertical blinds like prison bars.

ANGELO stands at the edge of Gunner's desk, examining a skyscraper blueprint. He speaks low into his phone – not for drama, just habit.

ANGELO
(into phone, clipped)
West elevation has load issues.
Rework the span to seventy-two
feet. Add notes to column B-flag
for seismic–

The office door opens.

ANGELO doesn't turn. But he smells who it is.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

(low)

Francine. You need lunch money?

FRANKIE (O.S.)

Oh, I am hungry.

But I don't feel like greasy
Italian today.

ANGELO

(murmurs)

Cute.

FRANKIE

I'm sure your mother packed your
lunch anyway.

How is Maria? Still ironing your
shirts for you, Ang?

CUT TO:

ANGELO'S EYES – tighten. Frankie just hit the nerve. He
exhales. Controlled. Still doesn't turn.

FRANKIE steps in, smooth. Calm. Not provoking – claiming
space.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

By the way—

did you get my email last night?

ANGELO

(dismissive, cool)

I don't waste my time on junk mail.
Or threats.

FRANKIE

(lets it sit – half a
smirk)

Wasn't a threat.

It was a flashlight. Thought maybe
you'd like to see what kind of man
you are in daylight.

ANGELO

(beat – doesn't take the
bait)

Save your poetry for someone who
bleeds.

FRANKIE

Here's what I don't get.

You hate me. But you study me.

(MORE)

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
You call me names... but you track my
every move. Gunner's heart? You
don't even know what it sounds like
when it's calm. I do.

Beat. Angelo closes the blueprint gently. Turns – finally.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
This thing, this obsession of
yours.
Aladdin and the magic lamp don't
exist. You want Gunner? You want to
come out of the dark, man-up, be
his man? Do it. You can't make
someone love you.

A long stare. No expression.

ANGELO
(quiet, loaded)
I refuse to go dark.

Frankie stills. That line doesn't belong in Angelo's mouth.
It's like watching someone else wear your skin.

FRANKIE
(beat – eyes narrow)
What?

SILENCE.

Frankie's fingers clench – just barely. His face doesn't
move. But we know: Angelo hit something deep. The air shifts.

That line... that wasn't for Angelo to say. Frankie looks like
he just saw a ghost steal his reflection.

ANGELO turns back to the plans. Slides the paper perfectly
square again.

ANGELO
Show yourself out, Francine.
And see Ivette if you need bus
fare. (beat – slow burn) Don't
think you're safe. Or that your
life is private. Ever. KILLER sees
everything.

Frankie stiffens – only for a second.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
I'll see you... soon.

Angelo taps his phone. Back to dictating notes – like Frankie never existed.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
(into the phone. Robotic)
West elevation has load issues.
Rework the span to seventy-two
feet.

ANGLE ON
FRANKIE:

Shoulders still. Eyes flicker. Threat registered. He turns.
Exits. The door clicks shut.

CUT BACK TO:
ANGELO

Still speaking into his phone. Calm. Precise. Like nothing
just happened.

Like everything already has.

EXT. DENVER COFFEE STAND - EARLY MORNING

The song "Tin Man" by AMERICA is played on a guitar by a
street person. White guy 20's with a PEACE SHIRT on and has
dreadlocks

A crisp blue sky. The Rockies rise like stone gods in the
distance.

JACK and DEUCE sit at a patio table outside a quiet coffee
joint – no crowds, just morning light and the scent of
espresso. Their coats are open, eyes shaded, power casual.

GUNNER stands with his coffee. Still bruised, still
skeptical. But calmer now.

DEUCE
(chuckling)
You always look like you just woke
up from a perfect nightmare.

STREET SINGER
(singing)
*Sometimes late when things are real
and people share the gift of gab
between themselves.*

GUNNER
Maybe I did.

JACK
 You know the thing about
 nightmares?
 They usually start beautiful.

STREET SINGER
 (singing)
*Oz never did give nothin; to the
 Tin Man*

Beat.

DEUCE
 Fuck I love this song.

STREET SINGER & DEUCE SINGS ALONG
 (Deuce harmonizes)
*That he didn't, didn't already
 have.*

JACK
 (smiles)
 You need anything, you call.
 No strings. Just... aim true.

GUNNER
 Appreciate it.
 But I think I got this.

STREET SINGER
 (sings)
So please, believe in me

Jack takes a slow sip. Looks over the mountains.

JACK
 That's the problem with looking up
 all the time.
 You forget what's already crawling
 at your feet.
 (beat) You still don't see it, do
 you?

STREET SINGER
 (sings)
Smoke glass stain bright colors

GUNNER
 See what?

JACK
 Angelo.

STREET SINGER

(sings)

Soapsuds green like bubbles

GUNNER

He's not the threat you think he
is. We go way back.

DEUCE

Then let's hope you're right.
Because if you're wrong? It won't
just be your life that cracks.

Jack finishes his coffee. Stands.

JACK

You've got style, Gunner.
Just make sure you've got spine
too.

DEUCE

And if it all goes to hell –
we'll keep the engine running.

JACK

(low)

Act Three's a bitch. Hope you're
ready.

They walk off. No handshake. No goodbyes.

Just shadows stretching long behind them as they disappear
into the morning sun.

ANGLE ON GUNNER

Alone now.

Mountains ahead.

But he never once looks behind him.

STREET SINGER

(sings)

No Oz never did give nothing...
(He looks at Gunner. A
wink. A beat.)
To the Tin Man.

GUNNER

No one gave the Tin Man anything.

He tosses the coffee. Walks into the sunrise.

Scene ends.

INT. CROSBY'S LOFT - NIGHT

CROSBY stares at his laptop. Incoming video call: PANDORA.

He answers. She looks radiant. Poised. Hair curled. A martini glass in hand. The background? Unclear. Just domestic shadows.

PANDORA

Crosby.
I've been thinking about you.

CROSBY

(nervous smile)
Yes, boss. What can I do for you?

PANDORA

Loyalty.
Honor.
Trust.

CROSBY

(chuckling, weak)
What, you go see Hamilton last night?

PANDORA

(smiling, but it doesn't reach her eyes)
No, darling.
I don't pay for theater. I produce it. The more you talk, the deeper the hole you are digging.
(beat)
And darling, I'm not the one holding the shovel.

SPLIT SCREEN - Reveals: CROSBY'S MOTHER, sitting in a modest kitchen. Pale. Frozen. PANDORA is seated next to her, perfectly still. A gloved hand on the kitchen table. A small silver pistol beside her martini.

CROSBY

- I didn't know you two... knew each other.

+ You and Ma? Since when?

MOTHER

(terrified)
Son, I-

PANDORA

Oh, yes. Your mother and I were just having a little chat. I have a son, you know. Gave him up. Long story. But let me tell you something universal: Mothers hate liars.

CROSBY

(fumbling)

Wait—

Let me come over. Let's go out. The three of us. Ma, you'd like that, right?

MOTHER

(tearful)

Please, sweetheart—

CROSBY

(to Pandora)

We can step back. Just... talk.

PANDORA

(cutting)

No, Crosby.

Too late. You warned someone.

(calm, in French) La Reine de Cœur n'est pas ton amie. (The Queen of Hearts is not your friend.)

PANDORA (CONT'D)

I told you to choose your side.

(beat)

You chose wrong.

She lifts the pistol.

No shake. No emotion.

CLICK.

SPLIT SCREEN VANISHES.

POV ON CROSBY — Alone with the screen. A hollow sound:

BANG.

THUMP.

Something heavy – a body – hits tile.

Crosby screams. A guttural, broken sound. Hands in his hair. Rocking. Howling.

Then—

PANDORA (O.S., THROUGH THE LAPTOP)
Come get the body.
(beat)
I'll send flowers to the funeral.
And Crosby?
You have no place to hide.
Irish or not.

NT. GUNNER'S PENTHOUSE – NIGHT

Low light. Rain slicks the windows like tears too proud to fall.

ANNIE LENNOX (OS)
*How many times do I have to try to
tell you
That I'm sorry for the things I've
done...*

ANGELO and GUNNER – shirtless, close. Heat between them. Cigars smolder. A bottle half gone.

Angelo traces a slow line across Gunner's chest. Not possessive – hungry.

Gunner growls. Deep. Low. Instinctual.

He leans in.

ANGELO
This our first date.

A smile. Loaded. Dangerous. Hopeful.

ANNIE LENNOX (OS)
But when I start to try to tell you
That's when you have to tell me...

Gunner sighs – deep. He pulls back... just an inch.

Angelo sees it. Tries not to crack.

ANGLE ON:

A cigar smoldering in the ashtray.

Sweat sliding down the glass.

Sweat on their foreheads.

Angelo pulls Gunner closer.

Gunner grabs his hand — firm. He doesn't push it away. He just stills it.

GUNNER

No.

A long breath.

Tension folds inward.

GUNNER (CONT'D)

Not like this.

ANNIE LENNOX (OS)

Hey... this kind of trouble's only
just begun...

Gunner steps back. Shirt in hand. Skin flushed — but not from lust. From want curdled into shame.

Silence.

Angelo's breath turns jagged. His jaw flexes. He's not used to being left wanting.

SFX - DOOR
OPENS:

A sharp click. A long creak. Like a verdict being delivered. Like God cracking a safe.

FRANKIE enters. No coat. Just presence.

He clocks the scene in one glance. No surprise.

No fear.

No raised voice.

Frankie cuts the music. The air is thick with Heat and Tension.

FRANKIE

Alex stop.

ALEXA

OK.

Music cuts

FRANKIE

Angelo.

(beat)

Out.

Now.

Angelo doesn't move.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

You just unleashed the Genie.

Your wishes? Fucked.

(beat) Now out.

ANGELO

(stares, seething)

You don't tell me—

FRANKIE

(interrupts — soft,
deadly)

Gunner.

Take a walk. Long walk.

GUNNER

Frankie—

FRANKIE

No.

If you want me — then you want me.

Not just a warm body in our bed. We
both get to choose.

(beat) And right now? I'm not sure
you work for me.

He breaks. Just enough to be real.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

So give us space.

I can't look at you right now.

Gunner exits, shirt in hand. A ghost of himself.

FRANKIE (TO ANGELO) (CONT'D)

KILLER —

If you want Gunner? Make your
fucking move.

(beat) Have at it.

He stares Angelo down.

No drama. No tears.

Just line in the sand.

Frankie turns away. Line drawn.

And if Angelo crosses it?

He better be ready to die trying

INT. GUNNER'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

FRANKIE stands alone now. Gunner gone. Angelo's energy still hanging in the air like smoke.

He stares at the whiskey glass. Doesn't drink. His breath shakes. But no tears. Not this time.

FRANKIE
 Alexa, play Constant Craving by
 k.d. lang.

MUSIC BEGINS - GUITAR ONLY

Soft. Plaintive. That first familiar pulse of longing.

K.D. LANG (V.O.)
Even through the darkest phase...

FRANKIE turns away from the city.

MASH CUT TO:

INT. PANDORA'S ESTATE - PRIVATE LOUNGE - LATER THAT NIGHT

SFX. CHAMPAGNE CORK POPS

The song continues seamlessly.

Frankie is now sitting across from Pandora. Same song. New setting. He's changed clothes, but the emotion is still there, carried across space and time by the music.

K.D. LANG (V.O.)
*Always someone marches brave
 Here beneath my skin*

Pandora pours champagne into two crystal flutes. She watches him. Carefully. Silently.

Frankie doesn't speak yet. Just stares at the glass like it holds the answer.

K.D. LANG (V.O.)
*Constant craving... has always
 been...*

Pandora lifts her glass. Taps his gently.

PANDORA
 To the things we crave.

And the price we pay to pretend we don't.

Frankie looks up. Eyes wet. He clinks the glass. No words.

K.D. LANG (V.O.)
...has always been.

PANDORA
 Alexa, stop.

ALEXA

OK.

(The music dies.)

PANDORA
 Don't let anyone ever take away
 your sparkle.
 (She pours.)

FRANKIE
 (quiet, raw)
 You think I still have any left?

PANDORA
 Honey.

You're made of it.

FRANKIE
 How do you know?

PANDORA
 Alexa, play "Walking on Sunshine."

The track kicks in – poppy, ironic, bold.

PANDORA O.S.
A mother always knows.

The scene blurs. Frankie's face breaks into the tiniest smile.

Just before the world takes it away.

INT. ANGELO'S OBSESSION ROOM

Muted light. Walls plastered in photos—Frankie laughing, Gunner smoking, moments stolen with a long lens. Some framed. Some circled in red. Some... just torn halfway.

Crosby and Angelo are in conversation as the camera comes into view.

"Total Eclipse of the Heart" plays low.

ANGELO
...she did *that* to your mother.
Your own God Damned Mother. I
would/

CROSBY
(Robotic. Deadly.)
Kill her.

ANGELO
Damn right. You a man, or just some
pansy who drinks his pain?

Angelo is feeding the frenzy.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
You just gonna *take it*? Fuck, if
that were me I would/

CROSBY
Kill her.

ANGELO
(getting into his head)
If it were me?
I wouldn't hesitate.
And brother — I got your back.

CROSBY
You always have my back. She said
I had to choose. I did. I chose
you.

ANGELO (EN FRANÇAIS)
 Je ferais en sorte que Pandora
 ressente chaque once de douleur
 pendant que tu lui enfonces le
 couteau dans le cœur.
 Regarde-la dans les yeux, et dis-
 lui : "C'est pour ma mère, salope."

CROSBY
 (en français - cold,
 breath shallow)
 Elle m'appelait son petit roi.

(She used to call me her little
 king.)
 (beat)
 Et maintenant tu veux que je la
 venge... en devenant le monstre
 qu'elle priait que je ne sois
 jamais.

(And now you want me to avenge
 her... by becoming the monster she
 prayed I'd never become.)
 (beat - darker, with
 resolve)
 D'accord. Je le ferai. Pour elle.
 (Alright. I'll do it. For her.)
 (beat - leans in, eyes
 sharp)
 Et ensuite... toi et moi, on fait
 tomber Gunner et Frankie.

(Then you and I take down Gunner
 and Frankie.)
 (beat - needle drops)
 Oh... et tu savais que c'était sa
 mère ?

(Oh... and did you know she was his
 mother?)

ANGELO
 (tense)
 Quoi ? La mère de qui ?

(What? Whose mother?)

CROSBY
 (smirking)
 Frankie.

ANGELO
(low smile, deadly)
Fuccccccck me. Francine's got
secrets.

CROSBY
And he doesn't know.

ANGELO
Perfect.

Angelo throws a knife at the wall. It lands direct-hit on
Frankie.

"Total Eclipse of the heart" builds.

Angelo laughs – not because it's funny. But because it's
already happening.

ANGELO OS
Laughs...

EXT. GAYBORHOOD - CAPITOL HILL - CHARLIE'S BAR NIGHT

The bar is busy. Man playing pool. Conversations. Gunner and
Frankie are sitting at a side table. Gunner has his eyes
locked on Frankie. Frankie is calm.

GUNNER
(apologetic)
Frankie I wanted to be sure.

FRANKIE
About?

GUNNER
Come on, don't make this hard.

FRANKIE
I won't make it easy. Too much at
stake. If you don't like this, us.
Then change it. We will be ok.

GUNNER
You don't want to be with me?

FRANKIE
I want it all. But I want it all
together, not just when you want
it.

GUNNER
(struggling)
You are so strong.

FRANKIE
Refuse to go dark. Refuse to let
them win. Refuse to stand down.
Say "I want a FUCK YES" and I don't
want a "FUCK NO LIFE." You choose
it. I choose it. We choose it.

Silence. It hangs. Beat.

GUNNER
(like a wolf)
Frankie

FRANKIE
Don't give me that look and that
voice.

GUNNER
(growls with playful
sexiness)
Fuck yes.

He pulls Frankie across the table and gives him a deep, kiss.
Long over due.

He release Frankie. Gunner has a big smile.

FRANKIE
(trying to be cool, not
working)
Don't think that gets you off the
hook

Gunner gives Frankie playful eyes.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
(low)
Fuck yes.

GUNNER
(Teasing leaning in)
I'm sorry? What did you say?

FRANKIE
(confident)
FUCK YES.

GUNNER
Make-up sex?

FRANKIE
FUCK YES. Always the best.

They head out.

EXT. CHARLIE'S BAR CONTINUOUS

GUNNER
Frankie I am/

SFX. BOOM

Frankie and Gunner are hit from behind and fall to the ground.

Two men run off.

GUY ON THE STREET
Call 911.

WOMAN
I'm a doctor. (She checks)
I got a pulse.

GUNNER
(hazy)
What happened? (beat Frankie)

GUY ON THE STREET
I got a pulse on the other one.

WOMAN
Hey, pal, stay with me. What's
your name?

GUNNER
Dead man.

WOMAN
What? Can you hear me?

GUNNER
(fading)
Tell him... when I find him?
He's already gone

Sirens blaze the scene pulls back.

"TOTAL ECLIPSE OF THE HEART PLAYS"

Time lapses. Frankie and Gunner get treated by paramedics.

Scene ends.

INT. GUNNER'S PENTHOUSE - LATER

Everyone is seated, relaxed but worn down. Gunner, Frankie, Pandora, Angelo, Crosby.

PANDORA
Alright, everyone — clear out.
Mother's orders. These boys need
rest.

People move to go. CROSBY and ANGELO linger.

GUNNER
Thank you—

PANDORA
Shh. Rest.

PANDORA (TO FRANKIE) (CONT'D)
And you too, my boy.

Angelo and Crosby head to the door. Pandora calls out—

PANDORA (CONT'D)
Crosby.

If you're going to come after me — do it. Or don't. But know
this: actions have consequences.

CROSBY
(bland)
The flowers were perfect at the
funeral.

PANDORA
So we're good then.

CROSBY
Oh, we're fan-fucking-tastically
good.

They exit. Silence.

Pandora takes out a nail file and begins to touch up her
nails, calmly — like sharpening a blade.

GUNNER
What was that about?

PANDORA
(sweetly)
It'll come out soon enough.

She exits, leaving the question hanging.

EXT. GAYBORHOOD - CAPITOL HILL CHARLIE'S BAR - THAT NIGHT

Angelo out side the bar. Pacing.

ANGELO

Fuck it.

He heads inside.

INT. CHARLIE'S BAR CONTINUOUS

Angelo scans the room. He spies a rough looking, Cuban Man at the corn of the bar. Thick, everywhere.

Angelo walks up.

CUBAN MAN

You new here.

ANGELO

(to the bartender)

Two shots, Johnnie Walker Blue.

Silence. The Cuban Man is intrigued. He puts his hand on Angelo's ass.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

(In Cuban, dangerous - cool)

Suave, vaquero... yo te digo cuándo montamos.

Easy, cowboy... I'll tell you when we ride.

The drink come. Angelo pushes one to the Cuban Man.

They drink.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

(In Cuban, low confident, with heat)

Sígueme... ahora montamos.

Follow me... now we ride.

They head to the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM

The go in and Angelo locks the door.

POV Boots on the floor.

SFX. Zipper open. Shirts come off.

Shirts drop to the floor. Jeans drop to boot heels.

SFX. Angel pushing the Cuban Man against the wall.

Fast motions. Moan then release.

Silence.

SFX. Zippers up. Shirts back on. Door unlocks.

INT. CORNER OF THE BAR AT CHARLIE'S CONTINUOUS

Angelo and the Cuban Man stand there.

Angelo signals two shots.

Shots arrive they drink.

CUBAN MAN
Can I see you again?

ANGELO
Like a date?

The Cuban Man puts his hand on Angelo's ass. Angelo pushes it back.

CUBAN MAN
Yea, like a date.

ANGELO
(direct)
No. I'm taken. Got a boyfriend.

CUBAN MAN
So what the fuck was this.

ANGELO
Insurance. I had to be sure.

CUBAN MAN
Damn. Who's the lucky guy?

ANGELO
Gunner.

Beat. The silence says everything

CUBAN MAN
THE Gunner?

Angelo flashes his holster.

ANGELO

(Cuban)

Dices una palabra... y estás muerto
Say one word... and you're dead.

CUBAN MAN

Tranquilo, papi... nadie va a saber
nada.

I'm cool, Papi... no one's gonna
know anything.

ANGELO

(Cuban)

Si tengo que encontrarte otra vez –
y puedo – vas a rezarle a Jesús
para que te mate rápido. Jesús no
contesta.

If I have to find you again – and I
can – you'll pray to Jesus that I
kill you quickly. Jesus doesn't
answer.

Angelo walks out.

Cuban Man takes out his phone and starts texting.

POV CUBAN MAN PHONE

CUBAN MAN

(texting)

At Charlie's Bar. You won't believe
who I just fucked in the
bathroom... and what he told me.
Gunner. Yeah. That Gunner.

He smirks. Hits send.

Beat. A shadow falls over him.

He looks up.

ANGELO stands there. Cold. Still. Already back.

ANGELO

You stupid man. Was I not fucking
clear?

He steps closer. Hand already in his coat.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

Door. Now.

They head toward the alley door.

SFX from outside two gunshots then a body falling to the ground. A woman screams. BANG another shot. A body falls to the ground.

EXT. CHARLIE'S BAR - CONTINUOUS

SFX: GUNSHOT. A body drops.

SFX: SCREAM. Another GUNSHOT. Silence.

CAMERA TRACKS:

Angelo - already half a block away. Cigar smoke drifting behind him like a ghost trail. No one follows.

FADE OUT.

SONG: "Total Eclipse of the Heart" begins to swell - softly, eerily.

ANGELO
(V.O., authoritative,
smooth)
Crosby... we move the plan up.
Tomorrow - the Francine. Then
later... the queen.

CROSBY
(V.O., low, precise)
Copy that, boss.

The song swells.

☞ There's nothing I can do...

☞ A total eclipse of the heart...

ANGELO OS
You fuck a killer, you better
finish your drink.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. FRANKIE'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Low light. Paintings unfinished. Brushes untouched.

PANDORA stands in the doorway. FRANKIE on the couch, arm still in a sling. He doesn't look up.

FRANKIE
If this is more food and music and
mothering...

PANDORA
It's not.

She steps inside. No gloves. No purse. Just her. She sits
beside him — uninvited, unafraid.

PANDORA (CONT'D)
Let's open the box, shall we?

FRANKIE
Box?

PANDORA
Pandora's. The one I've kept sealed
since the day you were born.

Beat. Frankie looks at her now.

PANDORA (CONT'D)
I'm your mother, Frankie.

Silence.

FRANKIE
Bullshit.

PANDORA
I know. Sounds like a stunt.
But I promise — this is the only
time I've ever told the truth
without an audience.

FRANKIE
Why now?

PANDORA
Because it's already unraveling.
Crosby warned you about me. I saw
the message. So I killed his
mother.

FRANKIE
You did what?

PANDORA
(quietly)
I did what mothers do. I protect my
own.

FRANKIE
With a bullet?

PANDORA
With certainty.

Beat.

PANDORA (CONT'D)
You'll have questions.
Ask them in time. For now – just
know: I gave you up so you could
live free. I came back to make sure
you'd survive this. Whether you
want me or not... I'm here.

She rises. Adjusts her coat.

PANDORA (CONT'D)
I'm not a hands-on mom.
Tough love's more my style. You
have my number. I'll see you soon.

She exits. Leaves the door open behind her.

Frankie sits in stunned silence.

🎸 The opening guitar of "Constant Craving" begins...

Frankie picks up his phone.

FRANKIE
(measured)
Gunner. We need to talk. I think we
need the Chicago team on board.
Now.

GUNNER (V.O.)
What happened?

FRANKIE
Everything.
Pandora's my mother.

GUNNER (V.O.)
No seriously, what happened? And
why do we need the Chicago Bulls in
our ring?

FRANKIE
Let's take that flight tomorrow.
I'm ready.

(MORE)

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
 Sydney... hear we come. A break
 might be the only safe move.

GUNNER (V.O.)
 Really? You'll go?

FRANKIE
 Yes.

🎬 K.D. LANG swells under the silence...

"Constant craving... has always been..."

FADE OUT.

SPLIT SCREEN SEQUENCE - MIDDAY - SET TO "GOOD AGAIN" by Anne
 Murray 🎬 So this is life, sometimes it doesn't seem like
 much...

RIGHT SIDE - EXT. JEWELER'S - DAY - GUNNER

- Gunner browses rings inside a small, sunlit shop. - He
 studies a diamond solitaire, snaps a photo, sends it. - He
 smiles faintly at the reply. - Picks the ring. It's clean,
 classic, forever.

LEFT SIDE - EXT. FRANKIE'S STUDIO - DAY - FRANKIE

- Frankie steps out, shoulder still in a sling. - He smiles.
 Breathes in the day.

- VAN SCREECHES TO A STOP.

- Crosby grabs him. Angelo punches. - Bag drops. Phone
 skitters. - Frankie struggles-too late. - They throw him in.

🎬 But it is life nonetheless, and there is warmth to the
 touch...

RIGHT SIDE - GUNNER

- The jeweler boxes the ring. - Gunner slides it into his
 coat pocket, tenderly. - His smile grows. This means
 something.

LEFT SIDE - KID'S POV

- A 10-year-old BOY (TOMMY) watches from the alley. - A card flutters from Frankie's coat. - Tommy picks it up: "Jack Wild - WILD CARD INC. Private & Personal Security."

✂ SMASH CUT - INT. JACK & DEUCE'S HQ - LATER

SPLIT SCREEN
CONTINUES:

☞ Oh, you'll cry when some leave before their time...

LEFT - INT. KID'S BEDROOM

- Tommy dials. Nervous. Card in hand. - Phone rings.

RIGHT - JACK'S OFFICE

- Jack picks up, cocky grin. - DEUCE lounges with his boots up.

JACK
Wild Card. This is your jackpot.
(beat, confused)
Hello?

KID
Um... hi.

JACK (LEANS IN)
You in Denver, kid?

KID
Y-yeah...

JACK (NOTCHES DOWN)
How'd you get this number?

KID
It was in my friend's coat...
Frankie.

☞ But you'll keep a little something that they left behind...

JACK
Frankie is your friend from school?
What's your name?

KID

My dad says not to talk to strangers.

JACK

Hey — you called me.

(sees caller ID)

Tommy Pritchard, huh?

(snaps fingers — Deuce

looks over, alert.) JACK

(on speaker)

Tommy, we're friends now. Friends cover each other. Why'd you call?

KID

Two guys took Frankie. I don't think they were good guys.

JACK

You sure? Now who's Frankie?

KID

My friend Frankie the painter. He teaches art at my school sometimes. And his friend Mr. Gunner came in to talk about building safety. Yeah. One guy wore something around his neck... it said "KILLER."

DEUCE (MUTTERS)

Mother of God.

JACK (EYES SHARP)

Tommy. You're a hero. Go home now. Ten minutes. Text me when you're safe.

☞ And you will feel good again...

KID

Okay. I will.

JACK (FIRM)

If I don't hear from you in 11 minutes, I call the cops.

DEUCE (TO JACK)

Gunner?

JACK (NODS)

Call him. Now.

✱ SPLIT SCREEN ENDS

FULL FRAME - JACK & DEUCE

- Deuce's phone is already ringing. - Jack holsters a weapon.
- The light is gone from his face.

JACK (LOW, TO HIMSELF)
Let's go find our boy.

Each and every moment floats away in the wind...

INT. GUNNER'S PENTHOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Soft jazz plays from a speaker - something dreamy, vintage Chet Baker. The light is warm. Almost too perfect.

GUNNER stands in front of the mirror. Still bruised. Still battered. But he's in a tailored blazer. Crisp shirt. He adjusts the collar, takes a breath.

GUNNER
(quiet, rehearsing)
Frankie...
(wobbles, restarts)
Frankie.
(pause)
Will you marry me?

Beat. He winces. Not at the words. At how much they cost him to say out loud.

GUNNER (CONT'D)
(low, raw)
Will you marry me, Frankie?

He tries to smile. Fails. Tries again. This one's real.

INTERCUT - INT. JACK & DEUCE'S OFFICE - SAME TIME
DEUCE is on the phone, pacing hard.

JACK is at his laptop, booking a flight fast.

DEUCE
(frantic)
Pick up, Gunner. Pick up.
(pause)
Come on, man...

SFX: VOICEMAIL BEEP.

Deuce hangs up. Swears under his breath.

DEUCE
(texting)
"CALL ME NOW. It's Frankie."

INT. GUNNER'S PENTHOUSE - MIRROR - CONTINUOUS
His phone lights up behind him.

He doesn't see it. He's practicing again.

GUNNER
(soft)
Will you marry me?
(smiles, almost to tears)
I swear to God, I'd do anything
right this time.

He reaches into his coat, takes out the ring box. Opens it.
Looks at the ring. It glints – a promise he can't wait to
make.

His phone buzzes again.

He still doesn't hear it.

INT. JACK & DEUCE'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER


JACK slams the laptop shut.

JACK
Flight's booked.
We leave in 90 minutes.

DEUCE
He's not answering.

JACK
Then we get to Denver
before he finds out the hard way.

They grab their gear – weapons, jackets, go-bags.

 OVER THIS:

"Good Again" by Anne Murray plays softly in the background –
a stark, aching contrast to the panic beneath the surface.

FINAL BEAT:

GUNNER, still at the mirror. Practicing one more time. Ring in hand.

GUNNER
(whispers)
Frankie... I love you.
Forever.

INT. VACANT WAREHOUSE MOMENTS LATER

Frankie tied up in a bare room. No windows.

Angelo and Crosby come in. Lights go on.

Frankie winces.

No masks.

ANGELO
Francine. So good to see you.

CROSBY
He's got a lot of spirit. He bite me.

FRANKIE
You are so tough when you have an audience. Why are you doing this?

ANGELO
Because, Francine. Isn't ironic that everything you have, *I have more of*. How Gunner could not see past your cheap veneer is beyond me.

FRANKIE
How was that Cuban at the bar?

Angel looks and his eyes go to steel.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
The Cuban you fucked in the bar bathroom. You said (mocking), "I have a boyfriend, Gunner."

Frankie laughs.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
(grins, defiant)
You'll always be sloppy seconds,
Ang.

ANGELO
Shut up.

Frankie laughs harder.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
(starting to unravel
quickly)
I said shut the FUCK UP.

CROSBY
Boss ok, Ok, He is just trying to
get you upset.

FRANKIE
(talking in a poor me
voice)
Oh poor Angie not getting what she
wants. Not getting the prince.
Not getting the white picket fence.
(now deadly) Not EVER getting
Gunner.

ANGELO pulls the trigger.

BANG.

Frankie jerks.

Then again. And again. And again.

Until all that's left is silence... and red glass.

CROSBY
Jesus, Boss. What are you going
through.

ANGELO
(whispers)
I told him to shut the fuck up.
(beat)
And now he has.

SILENCE. Crosby is stunned. Frankie's dead, blood pooling
out. The floor looks like Red Glass.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
 (sarcastic)
 Remember your email you fuck?
 "Frankie I'm sorry" guess you were
 right. I did say it and now we're
 through.
 (quiet, almost to himself)
 Next time, send a postcard instead.

Angelo looks at his reflection in the blood. He nods.

CROSBY
 Angelo, stop!

ANGELO
 (in French)
 Ce qui est fait est fait. Je ne
 peux pas revenir en arrière.

What's done is done. I can't go
 back.

Angelo turns to leave.

CROSBY
 Where are you going? What do we
 do?

ANGELO
 I got to get to the office. My
 Gunner and I have a meeting and
 then we are going to Sydney.

CROSBY
 What?

Angelo reaches to the door and stops. He turns.

Without hesitation he fires two bullets into Crosby. He
 falls on top of Frankie.

Their blood begins to comingle.

ANGELO
 (plan and simple)
 Never trust a liar. Lying is what
 they will always do. Fucking Irish.
 Everyone wants. I take.

TOTAL ECLIPSE OF THE HEART

*Once a upon a time I was falling in love, but now I'm only
 falling apart, nothing I can do..total eclipse of the heart.*

Frankie's blood slowly soaking a handkerchief from his pocket, it drips onto the floor drop by drop.

Scene ends.

Barry White - "You're the First, the Last, My Everything"

(Plays over city visuals and into Gunner's opening call)

As Angelo walks out, we hold one long, uncomfortable shot:

Frankie's body.

Red glass floor.

Angelo's bloody reflection split in half by a crack or ripple in the floor -

→ Symbolizing that his soul just split too.

FADE IN:

EXT. DENVER SKYLINE - SUNSET - MAGIC HOUR

The Rocky Mountains shimmer like fire-drenched stone. The city breathes. Ambitious. Cold. Beautiful.

BARRY WHITE (V.O.)
We got it together, didn't we?

Cue the 35TH FLOOR of a high-rise. Glass and steel. Golden hour light.*

INT. GUNNER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

A well-lived but minimalist space. No awards on the walls. Just art from Frankie—bold, honest, and full of color.

GUNNER (36) stands near the floor-to-ceiling windows. Confident but still. Handsome in the way that makes people feel safe. He dials.

GUNNER
(into phone)
Frankie. One drink with clients —
then I'm yours. You packed yet?
(laughs)
Wheels up at 10. Sydney, baby.
G'day, mate.

He hangs up. A flicker in his eyes. He reaches into his pocket.

CLOSE ON: A small black velvet ring box. He opens it. Simple. Classic. Unbreakable. Inscribed: Refuse to go dark. Always.

No smile. He knows what this moment means.

DOOR SWINGS OPEN — ANGELO (45).

Dark suit. Smooth as oil. Twice as dangerous.

ANGELO
You're really leaving?

GUNNER
Yup.

ANGELO
Francine's using you.

GUNNER
His name's Frankie.
And you use me every day.

Angelo pours two fingers of something top-shelf.

ANGELO
This city deal's gold.
You walk now, they won't wait.

GUNNER
They will.

He's not bluffing. He's just not afraid.

Angelo clocks the ring box.

ANGELO
That what I think it is?

GUNNER
Tonight I propose.

ANGELO
You're serious?

GUNNER
Dead.

ANGELO

Maybe...
you haven't found the right one -
yet.

GUNNER

I have.
And I want you to be my best man.

ANGELO

(scoffs)
Should've been me.
(pause)
But I'm not gay.

GUNNER

You sure?

ANGELO

Fuck you.

GUNNER

Nah, baby. I'm the top.

They laugh - danger tucked just beneath the sound.

GUNNER (CONT'D)

I've got a meeting.
I'll call you on the way to the
airport. The deal can wait.

He walks out.

ANGELO

(muttering)
The deal's changed.

MUSIC CONTINUES
- INTERCUT
SEQUENCE:

INT. DENVER BAR - NIGHT

Gunner enters - smooth, sharp, polished. But something is
off.

He spots Pandora at the bar. Alone. Watching.

GUNNER

(playful, uneasy)
So... do I call you "Mom" now?

Jack and Deuce BURST in. Urgent. No time for pleasantries.

DEUCE

Jesus, Gunner – pick up your phone!

JACK

Where the fuck is your head?

Jack SLAPS Gunner lightly on the back of the head.

GUNNER

What's going on?

JACK

Angelo took Frankie.

GUNNER

What do you mean "took"?

The bar door swings open.

ANGELO enters. Cool. Smiling. Like it's a surprise party.

ANGELO

Wow. Full house.

If I'd known it was a reunion...

I'd have dressed sexier. (to bartender) Six shots of Johnnie Walker Blue.

Jack and Deuce's hands hover near their holsters. Pandora freezes.

GUNNER

(tense)

Ang... don't.

ANGELO

(cheerful)

This is where you kneel, Gunner.

Pull out the ring. I'll act surprised. Classic, right?

Everyone stares. Confused. Afraid.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

Come on. We leave for Sydney tonight. Let's do it right.

GUNNER

(sharp)

Angelo – what did you do?

ANGELO

(tiny pout)

You're ruining the moment.

(MORE)

ANGELO (CONT'D)

(beat)

Okay, okay. Fine.

You want the truth?

(quietly, like a
confession)

I shot him. Frankie. Three times.

He laughed at me. Called me

"Angie." (snaps) So I made him
quiet.

(beat - then softly)

Ring.

Knee.

Now

Deuce and Jack clock Gunner. Pandora looking to gain control.

PANDORA

Killer, où est ton chien de garde,
Crosby ? Tu ne voyages jamais seul.

Killer, where is your guard dog,
Crosby? You never travel alone.

GUNNER

Crosby we supposed to meet today to
review/

ANGELO

(with brevity)

Dead. I shot him right after

Frankie. Can't have witnesses.

No, Gunner, sweetheart—on one knee.

Let's confirm the "til death do us
part" thing.

Deuce and Jack are at the ready to shoot.

GUNNER

Ang, let's just all/

ANGELO

Chicago boys, guns on the bar. I
won't say it again.

He reaches in his back packet and toss two sets of handcuffs
to Jack and Deuce.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

I am sure you gym rats are used to
these.

(MORE)

ANGELO (CONT'D)
Now cuff yourselves to the bar
rail. For fuck's sake Gunner get on
one knee.

Jack and Deuce cuff themselves to the bar. Gunner hands his
gun to Angelo.

Gunner on one knee looking up at Angelo.

SFX. Gun cocks. CLICK

Angelo has the gun at Gunner's temple.

DEUCE
Is this what they mean by a shotgun
wedding?

Jack rolls his eyes.

JACK
We've crossed the fucking line.

PANDORA
Angie, such drama.

ANGELO
Don't call me that name.

PANDORA
Angie. You really think a bullet
makes you royalty?

SFX. Juke box in the corner Coin drops. Records plays

AMERICA OS (TIN MAN)
*Sometime late when things are real
and people share the gift of gab
between themselves*

BOOM.

Angelo shoots Pandora in the chest.

Blood blossoms rapidly.

JACK
You crazy fuck.

ANGELO
One more word Chicago boy and you
will join her. (now calmly) So
Gunner, baby you were about to say
something? I am all ears.

Gunner trembles slightly.

DEUCE
(quiet, haunted)
"That he didn't, didn't already
have..."

Soft. Broken. Like the magic's gone.

Pandora gurgles and blood slips out of her mouth.

ANGELO
As she dies she still has to make
noise. Now Gunner the words? You
can do it.

Angelo presses the gun firmly into Gunner's head.

GUNNER
(weakly)
Ang, will you

ANGELO
Oh for the love God, take out the
ring. The ring. (He escalates)
Give me the ring.
Give me the moment.
Say yes, goddammit.

Gunner takes the ring out of his pocket.

GUNNER
(voice breaking)
You ruined everything.
(beat)
Even the song.

Boom.

Then SFX: Tin Man continues... but warped, slowed, broken

SFX. Lightening Cracks and hits a transformer. WHOMP

All the lights go out. Voices rising.

WHACK. THUMP. A body hits the floor.

One flickering light bulb remains. Swings. Sparks. Then
darkness.

Somewhere, the last line of "Tin Man" distorts into static.

Then silence.

JACK
Deuce are you free yet.

DEUCE
Hold up – almost there. Gunner?
GUNNER?

The emergency light comes on. Gunner, face down on the floor.

Pandora gasps once. Then still.

JACK
Where's Angelo?

Jack is free. He checks for a pulse.

JACK (CONT'D)
I got a pulse.

DEUCE
(on his cell)
Yea, 911 we got an emergency. One
dead. One down.

SFX: *"Nothing I can do a total eclipse of the heart."*

JACK
(urgent)
Gunner, breathe.
(beat)
Gunner, say something.

Lights flicker. Angelo is gone. Pandora is still.

The ring lies near Pandora's outstretched hand.

Blood seeps toward it. Never quite touches.

Bonnie Tyler howls the final line.

The ring sparkles under red light.

FADE OUT.

INT. FRANKIE'S ART STUDIO - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Frankie paints Gunner. Soft jazz playing.

He pauses. Looks at Gunner.

FRANKIE
You ever think love's just a long
goodbye?

GUNNER
Only if you stop saying it.

Frankie paints a small red heart on Gunner's bare chest -
then kisses the mark.

FRANKIE
Then don't stop.

EXT. BONDI BEACH - SYDNEY - LATE AFTERNOON

SUPER: TWO MONTHS LATER - BONDI BEACH, SYDNEY

Waves roll in, slow and easy.

BARE FEET walk across the sand.

CAMERA PULLS BACK -

GUNNER. Shirtless. Alone.

A red heart tattoo over his chest.

He touches it. Breathes deep.

Then pulls the ring from his pocket.

Holds it.

A long moment.

Then he looks to the water.

ANGLE ON: See the inscription: **REFUSE TO GO DARK.**

Jack and Deuce walk over. They all stand there a moment
looking at the ocean.

Deuce pulls out of a satchel a bottle of champagne and 3
flutes. He hands the bottle to Gunner and the glasses to
Jack.

SFX. POP the champagne burst open. Gunner pours for all.

Gunner hands his glass to Jack.

Gunner puts the ring on a chain and slips it around his neck.

He takes back the glass. They All raise in celebration.

GUNNER
To Frankie. Refuse to go dark.
Always.

The toast.

Deuce takes out his phone and hits play.

BARRY WHITE "You're first You're The Last" plays

The music builds and the three stand as centurions boldly holding the future.

CUT TO:

INT. MOTEL ROOM THAT NIGHT

11 pm.

Gunner asleep on his back. The ring glistens on his powerful, broad chest.

Deuce asleep. Jack beside him, eyes open. Watching. Planning.

Phone lights up.

ANGLE ON THE MESSAGE

MESSAGE
JACKpot, we found KILLER. Wilton
Manors, FL.

JACK
(texting)
Be back in a week. Keep your eyes
on him. If he moves let me know.

Jack thinks. Smiles.

JACK (CONT'D)
(text to Angelo)
Nowhere you can hide.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - WILTON MANORS - MORNING

ON SCREEN:

WILTON MANORS, FL

Sunlight spills through lace curtains. Birds chirp. A kettle hisses gently. The radio plays:

RADIO DJ (V.O.)
It's another beautiful day in sunny
Wilton Manors! Pride parade
tonight, and temps in the low 80s—

CLICK.

Radio off.

Back of a man in a black T-shirt. Steam rises from the kettle.

CAMERA PANS —

ANGELO in an A-shirt, his KILLER chain gleaming. Calm. At home. Too calm.

From the speaker, "INTO THE WOODS" plays — soft, dreamlike.
"He's a very nice Prince... And—?
And— It's a very nice ball..."

Angelo sets down two teacups. Slow. Gentle. Practiced.
"And—? And— When I entered they
trumpeted..."

CAMERA REVEALS:

CROSBY.

Dead. Slumped in a chair. Wearing a fresh black t-shirt that reads: "GUNNER."

In his hand: A single playing card — Queen of Hearts.

On the table: A photograph. Gunner and Frankie. Frankie's face X-ed out in red marker.

"And—? The Prince—? Oh, the
Prince...Yes, the Prince!"

Angelo sips his tea. Smiles.

The wedding continues in his head.
*Well, he's tall? Is that all? Did
you dance?
Is he charming? They say that he's
charming."*

Angelo sits opposite. Adds sugar to his tea. Smiles.

ANGELO
(softly)
Guess he's charming after all.

BUZZ.

"His phone lights up.

We did nothing but dance. Yes, and-?

And it made a nice change. No, the Prince!

Oh, the Prince... Yes, the Prince. He has charm for a Prince, I guess..."

TEXT — JACK:

Nowhere you can hide.

Angelo doesn't flinch. He sips his tea.

"And it's all very strange..."

ANGELO
(soft)
Then come find me, baby.

"I don't know... Oh what I wouldn't give to be in your shoes..."

SMASH TO BLACK.

TOTAL ECLIPSE OF THE HEART plays as credits roll

ANGELO OS
Sweetheart, do sit up, Let's enjoy
the day. For better or worse. In
sickness and in health. Till death
do us part.

Angelo laughs.

CREDITS ROLL.

GUNNER OS
I won't go dark, ever. I won't.

THE END

