

HANDPRINT

A MODERN NOIR SET IN LOS ANGELES

72 HOURS. 8 BODIES. 1 SURVIVOR. One left to lie.

Lone wolves don't know they're alone.

*Until one day, they wake up hunted.*

Written by

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OPENING IMAGE – PROLOGUE

BLACK SCREEN

The word “\*\*PROLOGUE\*\*” fades in like fog across a stage.

INT. SOUNDSTAGE – NIGHT

A cavernous black box. Dust hangs in the air like ghost-light smoke. A single GHOST LIGHT glows center stage.

A GLOVED HAND enters frame. Reaches for the switch–

Just as it’s about to flick off–

WHISPER (O.S.)  
\*Macbeth.\*

The hand freezes. The light stays on.

SMASH CUT TO:

CLAPPERBOARD – "DEUCE'S WILD – TAKE ONE – SOUNDSTAGE #5"

\*\*CLACK.\*\*

INT. BRIDGET’S STUDY – NIGHT

ALEX flips through a worn photo album. Edges soft. Pages fragile.

A photo: A YOUNG WOMAN – fierce, laughing – holds a baby.

ALEX  
(soft)  
Rose.

Below the image, written in a flowing hand: \*\*Rose Delaney – 1997\*\*

He turns the page. Another photo: Rose and Bridget. Too close. Too posed.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
(quiet)  
What were you hiding, Bridget?

BLACK SCREEN.

ALEX (V.O.)  
Lone wolves don't know they're  
alone. They just keep moving. Cool.  
Controlled. Until the blood says  
otherwise.

A SINGLE THUNDERCLAP - LOUD.

A bolt of lightning slices through clouds. We PUSH THROUGH  
STORM - then THROUGH SUN - then THROUGH A WINDOW-

FADE TO BLACK &  
WHITE:

INT. FERNANDO'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - 2001 - DAY

ON SCREEN: 2001

Block letters spell "FERNANDO" above the bed. A SMALL BOY (5)  
in a red sweater opens a drawer. Inside - an old LOCKET. He  
opens it. Two women: \*\*ROSE\*\* and \*\*BRIDGET\*\*.

FERNANDO  
(softly)  
Two mothers. One too many.

He sets it beside a crude crayon drawing: A stick boy. A  
woman. A jagged red slash.

He draws a knife. Then blood. Scribbled. Childlike.  
Disturbing.

ON SCREEN: IN SHAKY RED CRAYON, HE WRITES:

\*\*ONE DOWN.\*\*  
The "N" is backwards. The "D" has a  
heart inside.

A small RED fingerprint smears the page.

CHILD'S VOICE (O.S.)  
(sing-song, soft)  
One down...

CAMERA HOLDS.

SFX:

A heartbeat. A faint THUD – a body on stairs. A woman's scream –

CUT OFF.

SILENCE.

CAMERA PUSHES OUT – THROUGH THE WINDOW.

ALEX (O.S.)  
(hums )  
"Flowers" by Miley Cyrus.

ON SCREEN:

FRIDAY – 10:00 AM – TICK TOCK. 72 HOURS REMAINING.

BACK TO COLOR.

BEGIN FILM PROPER:

INT. ALEX'S HIGH-RISE APARTMENT – 27TH FLOOR – MORNING

Sunlight floods a minimalist, high-end bedroom. White sheets. One pillow disturbed. Stillness too clean to trust.

A low purr.

ROCKY, a sleek gray tabby with yellow, knowing eyes, hops onto the bed. He pads silently over to ALEX (30) – sculpted, unreadable, with the stillness of a sniper.

Rocky presses his head into Alex's chest. Right over where the heart is.

A soft meow.

Alex's eyes blink open. No panic. No alarm. Just... awake. Like he heard a cue no one else did.

He slips from bed, naked. Graceful. Controlled. Slides into fitted black boxer briefs. One motion. One breath.

Rocky follows, tail up – but his eyes stay fixed on the hallway.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Alex walks barefoot across polished floors. LA sprawls beyond the glass - glittering and indifferent.

♪ He hums "Flowers" by Miley Cyrus. Off-key. Calm. Ironic.

Rocky hops onto the couch. Eyes lock. Tail stiffens. Muscles tense.

He SEES something.

ALEX  
(soft, amused)  
What caught your eye, Rocky?

Alex turns casually, still humming - ♪ "I can buy myself flowers..."

-and stops.

His breath freezes.

A NAKED BODY lies face-down on the living room floor. A chef's knife buried between the shoulders. Blood pooled and drying - sticky, maroon, already turning.

Francisco.

Alex locks up. One heartbeat. Then two.

He looks down.

His left hand - stained in blood.

His breath catches. He stumbles backward, knocking into a chair. Rocky hisses.

Alex turns toward the hallway mirror -

INT. BEDROOM - MIRRORED WALL - MOMENTS LATER

He moves like he's underwater. He stares at himself - pale, shirtless - and then he sees it.

A single bloody handprint - pressed over his chest. Not smeared. Not accidental. Deliberate. Human. Right over the heart.

He stares at it.

And for just a beat " behind him in the mirror " Rocky sits in the doorway. Watching. Silent. Knowing.

Alex breathes.

CUT TO:

The phone RINGS.

Alex flinches.

INT. ALEX'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Alex walks fast - barefoot, boxer briefs, chest bare, blood visible.

The floor-to-ceiling mirror catches him.

He sees it now - full frame.

The smeared handprint across his chest.

Deliberate. Ritual. Like a mark that was meant to be left.

His lips?

Smeared in deep red lipstick.

Somehow... perfect. A kiss, or a warning?

He wipes his forearm across his mouth - the lipstick streaks like war paint.

The phone RINGS again. Loud. Closer. Meaner.

Alex glances to the bed - sleek, designer perfection. Cold neutrals. Crisp edges.

Then he sees it.

A corner of red. A shadow in white.

He pulls back the duvet -

The bloodstain spreads - massive, dark, alive.

Like a red flower blooming in slow motion.

Or a wound that's been waiting to be found.

♪ The ringtone distorts - turns harsh, electronic, menacing.

Think Hitchcock dialed through a broken synth.

Alex sways.

The room bends. Color sharpens. Sound warps.

VERTIGO.

For a second – Rocky is in the mirror, perched on the windowsill behind him.

Watching.

Still.

Tail flicking like a metronome.

His reflection doesn't blink.

Then – SNAP. Alex breathes. A single, cold breath.

He crosses to the nightstand, grabs the phone, answers.

PHONE CALL – FERNANDO

ALEX (GRUFF, SHAKEN)

Hello?

FERNANDO O.S.

(Bright, unbothered)

Alex! WTF, man – I've been calling for an hour. You must've had one hell of a night. Still with him? God – is he a keeper or what?

ALEX

(foggy)

Who?

FERNANDO (O.S.)

You two still going at it right now? Damn, Prince Charming – slow down before you break him. Anyway, Bridget's lunch – 11:30. They wanna talk to you about that new flick. "Deuce's Wild" – some modern noir thing. New playwright. Script's solid. You thinking of taking the lead?

ALEX

What? Slow down. I need to catch up.

FERNANDO (O.S.)  
 Are you home or with him? Is he  
 still there?

ALEX (QUIET)  
 Yeah. I'm home. He's dead.

FERNANDO (O.S.)  
 FUCK YES. You wore him out. Damn, I  
 wanna be like you – just not gay.

(Pause. Then more playful  
 poison)

I'll be over in twenty. Gotta meet  
 this guy you literally killed with  
 love. Tell him to wake the fuck up  
 – your older brother's coming over.  
 And tell him NOT TO HIT ON ME. I  
 mean it. I love you, Prince  
 Charming, but we bat on different  
 teams.

(pause)

Oh – and hey – pitcher or catcher?  
 Just curious. I heard you gays get  
 real specific about that. Ha!  
 Big weekend ahead. Don't fuck it  
 up.

CLICK.

Call ends.

Alex stands still.

Dazed.

ROCKY pads silently into frame.

Tail curled. He sits in the open doorway – like a sentry.

ALEX  
 (whispers)  
 Fuck.

SUDDENLY –

A CLOTH CLAMPS OVER ALEX'S MOUTH. FAST. CHEMICAL.

His body jerks – one breath, one struggle –

His eyes lock on Rocky.

Still watching.



Still silent.

Still knowing. Hold Alex's eye. Pupils dilating. Reflection of Rocky. THEN blackout.

INT. ALEX'S LIVING ROOM - MORNING - TIME JUMP

Eerie distant sound, repeating. Muffled like waking up from a dream. Sounding off-key and warped. Echo it like it's bouncing around inside ALEX's head - a trauma loop.

VOICE O.S.

"You told me I was all you'd ever need....You told me I was all you'd ever need....You told me I was all you'd ever need...."

FERNANDO

(O.S., muffled, through door)

Alex... Alex... hey, Prince Charming.. okay, I'm coming in.

A key turns. The lock clicks. The door creaks open.

THE "LIPSTICK LOOP" STOPS COLD WHEN THE DOOR OPENS.

FERNANDO (28) enters - cocky, confident, tight tee, sex in sneakers. He walks like he owns the place and sold it twice.

Rocky hops down from the couch. Pads over.

Fernando crouches, clicks his tongue, fingers twitching.

FERNANDO (CONT'D)

Rocky. Been keeping an eye on Prince Charming for me?

Rocky purrs. Licks his fingers. Pauses. Then looks at Alex on the floor. Eyes narrow.

FERNANDO (CONT'D)

What are you tasting, gato?

Rocky meows. Low. Like he knows something. Then turns. Pads away.

ALEX stirs - sprawled on the floor in boxer briefs, body glistening with sweat. One hand holds a lipstick case like a weapon. His other hand - faintly red at the fingertips.

FERNANDO (CONT'D)  
 Daaamn. Nice abs. I need your  
 trainer's number. Don't care if  
 he's gay - I want that body.  
 (notices) You inked Zeus? You  
 really think you're a god, huh?

ALEX (STONE-COLD)  
 No. But I know what it feels like  
 to be struck.

FERNANDO  
 So where is Mr. Last-Night-One-  
 Night? If he's got your abs, I'll  
 go gay for pay. That lipstick,  
 though? Not your shade. Mauve is  
 murder on your skin tone.

He laughs. Alex doesn't.

ALEX  
 You ever seen this before?

Fernando plucks the lipstick case. Rolls it between his  
 fingers. He smirks. A red fingerprint smudges across the  
 silver casing. He pockets it.

FERNANDO  
 Cute prop. But don't let the studio  
 catch you with it. You gotta play  
 butch for this role. Clean that  
 shit up.

INT. ALEX'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Fernando walks in like a tour guide.

Alex follows - on edge.

ALEX  
 Don't touch anything! There was  
 blood. On the sheets. Call the  
 police.

FERNANDO  
 Jesus, save the kink stories for  
 therapy. I'm your brother, I got  
 your ass covered - But if we're  
 late? Bridget will go for blood.

Fernando scans the room. The bed: perfect. Sheets: white.  
 Crisp. No blood.

FERNANDO (CONT'D)  
Only crime I see is you making ten  
times what I do in a day. You got  
nine minutes. Hustle.

He CLAPS twice.

FERNANDO (CONT'D)  
Tick. Tock.

He struts out. Humming "Flowers."

Alex stays frozen. Then turns back to the bed.

Something catches light – a smear of red. Just along the edge  
of the frame. Hidden. Recent. Intentional.

He kneels.

Touches it.

Still wet.

Fernando returns, coffee in hand. Sips.

FERNANDO (CONT'D)  
Here. Fuel up. You look like you  
died twice.

He hands the coffee cup over.

CLOSE ON:

The red fingerprint near the rim. Still wet.

Alex hesitates. A flicker. Then – He drinks.

FERNANDO (CONT'D)  
Seven minutes, diva.

He CLAPS again. Louder. Snap of command.

INT. ALEX'S BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

CAMERA PULLS BACK – SLOW, CONTROLLED.

Alex stands at the sink. Wiping lipstick from his face. It  
smears. It stains. It won't come off easy.

In the mirror – the bloody handprint still faint across his  
chest.

No time.

He throws on a black ASRV tee – tight, fitted, armored.

OPENING CREDIT SEQUENCE – “LIPSTICK PROMISES”

As each on-screen lyric hits a visual (e.g., lipstick, cup, mirror), add a subtle heartbeat or camera shutter click.

Bump. Click. Bump. Click. It’s memory being recorded in trauma.

♪ “You told me I was all you’d ever need...”

- Camera swirling above the dead Francisco.

-Alex and Francisco laughing on a rooftop. - Wine. Kisses. The skyline glowing.

♪ “You said my love would always be enough...”

- Francisco whispering in Alex’s ear. - FLASH: Francisco’s body – face down.

♪ “Your scarlet kisses on my skin fooled me ‘til the end...”

-Alex’s chest rises once. His reflection lingers in the mirror.

CUT TO:

-The cover of the screenplay “Deuce’s Wild” on a table. (sound of a knife slashing into a watermelon) as a chef’s knife stabs the script. Blood seeps out onto the cover.

- Alex in bed. Alone. Asleep. Hand pressed over the bloody handprint. - Rocky curled at the foot of the bed – eyes open.

♪ “Every single word you said / Every drop dead shade of red...”

- Lipstick across a mirror: You’re mine. - A red paw print on the floor. - A coffee cup with a blood-red fingerprint. - Anne reapplying lipstick in the shadows. - Fernando lighting a cigarette – and leaving a print on the lighter.

♪ “...lipstick promises...”

As the credits roll with the song, intercut:

ON SCREEN:

“Some scars don’t fade.” “Some lies wear lipstick.”

"Some promises... bleed."

Short, punchy. They dissolve before you finish reading.

FADE ACROSS THE SCREEN: Beautifully Unstable. Written in blood. Sung with Grace. (Blood drops on the words)

SMASH TO BLACK.

ON SCREEN:

TICK TOCK. 71 HOURS REMAINING.

Mirror Match Cut (Post-Song) SILENCE.

The sound of Alex's controlled breathing. His well muscled chest pumps in and out.

After the song ends, go back to Alex in the mirror, now dressed – the camera tracks from his chest (bloody handprint covered) to his eyes.

Hold on those eyes.

Then:

SFX: One last lipstick kiss whispered faintly in the mix.

CUT TO FERNANDO. Coffee. Countdown.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Fernando sips his second coffee. Calm. Confident. He taps the counter rhythmically with two fingers –

A silent countdown.

FERNANDO

Two minutes, Prince Charming.

Alex enters – sharp. All black. Fitted. Controlled. But his eyes betray him. Haunted. Hollow. Not here.

Rocky watches from atop the fridge. Tail flicks once. Still as sculpture.

Fernando drains the cup. Alex grabs his keys. They don't speak.

They move like it's all rehearsal. Like they've done this before.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Fernando locks the door. Click. Deadbolt. Double tap.

He looks left. Looks right. Too casual. Like he's not actually looking.

Behind them - a 1953 DODGE CONVERTIBLE waits. Top down. Paint deep red. Hood gleams.

They step toward it.

POV - ACROSS THE STREET, THROUGH BINOCULARS

In the shadows, someone watches. Hidden.

A heavy, slow breath. Steady. Animal. The lenses adjust - focus in tight on Alex's chest. The shirt. The shape beneath. The memory of the handprint.

We don't see the figure - only their shape. Still. Cold. Patient.

The Dodge engine growls to life.

FERNANDO (O.S.)  
Top down, baby. We burn it clean.

The car peels off - sunlight knifing through the windshield. Fernando behind the wheel. Alex in the passenger seat. Neither looking back.

Rocky watches from the apartment window.

Eyes unblinking.

Tail like a fuse, twitching slow.

INT. FERNANDO'S CAR - DAY - MOVING

Fernando drives like he's auditioning for his own biopic. Big energy. Big sunglasses. Hands waving, mouth moving.

We don't hear a thing.

In the passenger seat - Alex stares forward. Coal-black eyes. Still.

His fitted black tee clings to him like armor. Tattoo just hidden beneath the sleeve. Left shoulder tight, flexed. Controlled.

FLASH:

Francisco. Face-down. Knife in his back. Blood like punctuation. Final. Lipstick on his neck. Smudged. Stained.

Back in the car.

Fernando's still talking, laughing. Alex – frozen. One breath.

ALEX  
(quiet. clear. cuts air)  
Where's the body?

Sound slams back. The engine growls. A siren blares in the distance. Fernando glances over – still smiling.

FERNANDO  
You did read the script, right?  
I'm your brother. Your manager.  
Don't embarrass me.  
Alex... come on. Bodies are  
everywhere.

ALEX  
(never raising his voice)  
I said – where is he? Francisco.

Fernando's grin slips. The window's rolled down but the tension is thick.

FERNANDO  
Don't get weird on me.

ALEX  
Pull over.

FERNANDO  
We've got a meeting in twenty  
minutes–

ALEX  
Pull. Over.

Fernando exhales. His right hand clenches the wheel. His left – smears his coffee cup with a red fingerprint. He flicks the blinker.

FERNANDO

Fine. Jesus. But get your shit together, little brother. You're the actor. So act like it.

EXT. SIDE STREET - DAY

They switch. Alex slides behind the wheel. His arms loose. Jaw tight. Voice low. Lethal.

ALEX

You're not listening.  
Where's the fucking body?

Fernando shifts, rattled but trying not to show it.

FERNANDO

Francisco knew what he was walking into. Maybe he moved on. You guys are known for y our one-night, or is it one-hour stands. (he laughs)

Alex stares with his coal-black eyes.

FERNANDO (CONT'D)

If you're not ready to carry the weight - Someone else will.

Alex punches the gas. The city warps. The buildings smear.

EXT. SOUNDSTAGE PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

The Dodge screeches into a space.

Tires scream. Coffee erupts across Fernando's white tee.

He stares down at the stain like it personally betrayed him.

FERNANDO

Jesus...

Alex steps out. Back straight. Zeus ink barely visible as the sleeve rides up.

He doesn't flinch. Doesn't blink.

Fernando opens the trunk. Swaps the stained tee for a crisp Cuban shirt - pure white. Changes fast, like he's done this before.



FERNANDO (LOW, BITTER) (CONT'D)  
 Every time I try to help...  
 You turn it into a fucking movie.

CAMERA TRACKS ALEX'S POV – slow, deliberate.

Above the entrance:

INT. SOUNDSTAGE – DAY – DEUCE'S WILD TABLE READ

Above the entrance:

🎬 WELCOME TO THE FIRST TABLE READ OF "DEUCE'S WILD" 🎬

The letters gleam like a dare.

Sunlight glints off the camera dolly like a blade.

Alex walks toward it. Tight black tee. Fitted grey jeans.  
 Left shoulder inked beneath the fabric – ZEUS, unreadable in  
 shadow.

Fernando trails. Shirt flawless. Mask back on.

They reach the door. Alex pauses. Breathes. He pushes inside.

INT. SOUNDSTAGE – CONTINUOUS

They're late.

A CLIPBOARD PA (25, caffeinated chaos) intercepts them mid-  
 stride.

CLIPBOARD PA  
 There you are – go, go, go. They're  
 about to roll.

They're ushered inside like suspects at a line-up.

Long table. Script packets. Folded name cards. A low hum of  
 tension. BRIDGET sits next to QUENTIN, flanked by notes and  
 decisions.

ALEX sits across from DWAYNE (22) – already in character as  
 JACK.

Their eyes meet. It's heat. Real. A threat and a promise.

Alex lowers his gaze for a breath – not submission, just  
 strategy. Dwayne watches him the whole way down.

In the scene:

DEUCE (ALEX)

JACK (DWAYNE)

FRANCIS (SUPPORTING ACTOR)

STAGE MANAGER (reads cues)

Anne watches from the wings. Red lipstick sharp. Arms folded. Eyes narrowing. She's not just watching the read. She's watching history loop.

QUENTIN

When you boys are ready –  
You've had the scripts.

FERNANDO

(talking for Alex,  
controlling)  
Alex is all set.

DWAYNE

The JACKpot is ready.

Alex gives a sly roll of the eyes – measured, cocky.

ALEX

Bring it on, motherfucker.


QUENTIN

Let's do it.

Roll camera.

He nods. A clapper slams:

DEUCE'S WILD – SIDETRACKS – READ-THROUGH.

 SCENE BEGINS

STAGE MANAGER

FRANCIS leans on the bar.  
All muscle. All charm. Eyes on  
Deuce.

FRANCIS

So... you just looking?  
Or planning on making someone's  
night?

STAGE MANAGER

Deuce tilts his beer. Unreadable.  
Doesn't answer. Doesn't have to.  
Francis smiles. Drawn in. Slides a  
little closer.  
Then—a presence.  
Jack. Already in the room. Already  
watching.  
He steps forward — between them.  
Commanding. Subtle. Effortless.

JACK (TO DEUCE)

Damn. I leave you alone for five  
minutes and you're already the main  
attraction.

STAGE MANAGER

Deuce turns.  
Meets Jack's eyes.  
Francis lingers. Jack glances once  
— dismissal enough.  
Francis backs off.

JACK

Tell me, cowboy...You testing the  
waters — or here to swim?

STAGE MANAGER

Deuce sips.  
Slow. Measured. Alex's grip  
tightens. Barely. A twitch in the  
wrist. Dwayne's laser-locked.  
The air shifts. The city moves. But  
this moment — still.

JACK (GRINNING)

You want instant gratification? Go  
with that hand. You want the  
JACKpot—

STAGE MANAGER

Deuce smirks.  
Eyes drop — brief flick to Jack's  
crotch.

JACK

(snaps fingers)  
Hey, cowboy. Eyes up here.  
(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)  
 We'll get to that... if you're ready.

STAGE MANAGER  
 A wink. A war declaration.  
 Francis drops a card on the bar.

FRANCIS  
 My WhatsApp.

STAGE MANAGER  
 Jack looks at the card. Then at Deuce. Then back to the card.

FRANCIS  
 Jackie, you want another or-

STAGE MANAGER  
 Jack cuts him off with a hand wave.  
 Never breaking eye contact.

JACK  
 I'll let you know when I'm ready.

STAGE MANAGER  
 Francis slinks off. Jack leans in close to Deuce. Fifteen seconds pass. Jack pulls back.

DEUCE (ALEX)  
 (slow, in control)  
 I'll go... hands down.

Alex stumbles. Stage manager and all look. Alex doesn't show his falter.

Beat.

Dwayne swoops in - cool, confident, covers it smooth.

JACK  
 Hands down is good but-

He rises.

JACK (CONT'D)  
 Wouldn't you rather have the JACKpot?

Growls it. Winks.

Alex shoots him a look. Half thanks. Half fire.

DEUCE

(low)  
Hope the jackpot's worth the wait.

STAGE MANAGER

Jack picks up the business card.  
Flicks it between two fingers.  
Smirking.

JACK

No need for this.

STAGE MANAGER

Drops a \$5 on the card. Walks off.

QUENTIN

CUT.

Bridget leans to Quentin.

BRIDGET

They're either rehearsing...  
or foreplay.  
(beat) Someone better die or kiss  
by act two.

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - BREAK AREA - MOMENTS LATER

Anne leans against the wall. Eyes lit. Lipstick still  
perfect. Watching.

ANNE

(low, half to herself)  
That wasn't acting. That was  
foreplay in iambic pentameter.

She takes a long sip from her water bottle. Smirks. Then  
disappears into shadow.

ALEX walks toward the coffee urn. Still steady. Still  
unreadable.

DWAYNE approaches - slow, smooth. Still carrying Jack in his  
walk.

ALEX

Thanks for the save.

DWAYNE

(low, still Jack)  
If you're going all-in for the  
JACKpot...

(MORE)

DWAYNE (CONT'D)  
 (leans in, breath brushing  
 Alex's jaw)  
 ...you better be ready to lose  
 everything.

Alex doesn't flinch. Doesn't blink.

ALEX  
 We'll see who walks away with the  
 winnings.

FERNANDO (O.S.)  
 (clapping once, too loud)  
 Prince Charming's finally found his  
 villain...  
 Or maybe just someone playing the  
 same game.

Fernando strolls by. All charm. All control. Mask polished.  
 Shirt perfect.

But his eyes flick – just for a second – toward Dwayne. Not  
 jealousy. Not admiration. Assessment.

The tension stays coiled in the air.

Around them, cast and crew drift away – like they're not sure  
 who's still performing.

Dwayne steps in. Close. He pins Alex against the wall. No  
 hesitation. Just heat.

DWAYNE  
 (still Jack, still velvet)  
 Your JACKpot's ready.

He snaps his fingers.

DWAYNE (CONT'D)  
 Eyes up here.

He leans in like he's about to kiss Alex – and the air  
 between them turns animal.

DWAYNE (CONT'D)  
 (low, dripping sex)  
 Like I said...  
*when I think you're ready.*

He turns. Walks out into the light. Like he owns the sun.

Alex leans back. Smoldering.

Runs a hand over his jaw – slow, sensual, burning.

ALEX  
 (low, breathless)  
 Fuck me.

ACROSS THE STAGE — ANNE WATCHES.

Red lipstick. Black notebook. Eyes like she's seen this movie before.

ANNE  
 Be careful, Alex...  
 with flames that look like lovers.

INT. BACK HALLWAY / SOUNDSTAGE — MOMENTS LATER

Dwayne moves quietly.

Water bottle in hand. Muscles loose.

He slows. Voices ahead. Around the corner:

FERNANDO and QUENTIN. Too close. Too smug.

Dwayne steps into shadow.

FERNANDO (LOW)  
 Francisco wasn't supposed to bleed  
 that much.

QUENTIN  
 It's Hollywood.  
 Blood sells.

FERNANDO  
 (grimace-laugh)  
 You should've lifted that gym rat  
 off the floor. Jesus.  
 (beat)  
 Although... great abs.

QUENTIN  
 (chuckling)  
 Are you guys all like your brother?

FERNANDO  
 Fuck no. And for the record — half-  
 brother.

They laugh.

QUENTIN

Still... Putting Prince Charming  
down like Sleeping Beauty with  
chloroform? That was... exciting.  
(beat) What if Alex had seen me?

FERNANDO

You knew the blocking.  
We rehearsed it. It had to feel  
real.

CAMERA PULLS BACK -

Dwayne stands frozen. Back pressed to the wall.

The voices blur - replaced by the loud tick of his own  
breath.

DWAYNE

(under his breath)  
Shit.

He takes a step back. Silent. Shaking.

He looks toward the set - the lights, the illusion, the lie.  
Then straightens his shoulders. Whatever he just heard.. he  
buries it. For now.

INT. REHEARSAL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

STAGE MANAGER

We're jumping to the apartment door  
scene. Right after "I Get Along  
Without You." Let's run this in  
action. Lighting - give me late-  
night hallway feel. Just notes for  
the DP.

LIGHTING TECH

Copy that.

STAGE MANAGER

Alex, Dwayne - lines ready?  
(beat)  
Alex... maybe don't mess it up this  
time.  
(laughs)

ALEX

(still, quiet)  
Yeah, yeah. Copy that.



His voice low. Focused. But there's tension under the skin. His left hand grips the side of his chair. Tight. The camera would catch the subtle flex – just like Zeus beneath fabric.

STAGE MANAGER

Sound, cue the final lyric. Let it roll in.

SOUND TECH

Standing by. Rolling on your mark.

QUENTIN

(stepping forward)

Alright, boys. Let's see what you're made of. Make us feel it.

The room settles. Lights dim. It's not just rehearsal. It's a knife fight in disguise.

QUENTIN (CONT'D)

And... ACTION.

STAGE MANAGER

Cue track.

MALE DUO (V.O.)

♪ "I get along without you very well..."

STAGE MANAGER

Deuce leans in the frame. His smile is sharp – but his fingers grip the edge of the doorframe. Deuce peels off his shirt.

Underneath – a black A-shirt. Tight. Clean. His back's carved from restraint. His arms, quiet strength.

And on his left shoulder – ZEUS. Lightning clenched in ink. Watching everything.

JACK

Deuce.

DEUCE

Jackpot.

## STAGE MANAGER

Jack grabs Deuce by the back of his neck – rough. Intimate. Deuce eases the door closed with his boot. It clicks shut like a trap.

## QUENTIN

Cut.

(beat)

We'll keep that one. Let's run it again. Boys – you're playing against type. Keep them strong. Controlled. Calculated. Make us doubt who's seducing who.

Quentin walks up to the glass office. Overlooks the soundstage like a king in a cathedral.

INT. PRODUCERS' GLASS OFFICE – OVERLOOKING THE SET

Bridget and Quentin sip midday vodka sodas.

Watching Alex and Dwayne like dolls in a box.

The scene below restarts. This time, we don't hear the dialogue.

Only:

The lights.

The blocking.

The looks.

It's sensual. Tense. Dangerous.

## BRIDGET

You sure Dwayne can carry the role?

## QUENTIN

Question is, can Alex keep up?

FERNANDO enters. Shark in silk. Smile like poison.

## FERNANDO

Alex is the star. He would die for this role. Just don't forget who's holding the strings...

(beat)

Or is it the knife?

They toast. Glasses clink.

Quentin smirks.

Bridget doesn't.

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - TABLE READ / SET IN CHAOS

The energy shifts. People murmur. The door SLAMS open.

SIMONE bursts in - trench coat, high boots, face full of storm. She walks like a bullet.

BRIDGET

Oh my God. The French Queen of  
Hearts is back.

QUENTIN

Children are such problems.  
I should've gotten a cat.

They step out onto the soundstage.

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - TABLE READ / SET IN CHAOS

The energy shifts. People murmur. The door SLAMS open.

SIMONE bursts in - trench coat, high boots, face full of storm. She walks like a bullet.

She doesn't wait. Doesn't hesitate.

SIMONE

Well. I leave for Paris and come  
back to find my brother replaced,  
my father drinking mid-day, and my  
legacy being rewritten by men in  
tighter pants. (pauses) Miss me?

FERNANDO

My little childhood friend returns.

SIMONE

Childhood? You played dress-up in  
my heels and cried when I took them  
back. Don't rewrite history,  
sweetheart.

She glances at DWAYNE, sizing him up - not impressed.

SIMONE (CONT'D)  
Is that the actor? He looks like he  
just got cut from a CW show.

She spots ALEX, pauses – interest sparks.

SIMONE (CONT'D)  
Mmm. You must be Prince Charming.  
Tell me... do you always make an  
entrance in blood?

Alex doesn't respond. He doesn't have to.

SIMONE (CONT'D)  
(to the room, tossing off  
her coat)  
Well. Let's make this fun again.

She struts into the soundstage like she owns it.

DWAYNE  
(rising, stunned)  
Sister!

SIMONE  
Relax. I know you missed me.  
(a smirk)  
Everyone does.

Dwayne rushes toward her like a puppy. She sidesteps it like  
a queen.

SIMONE (CONT'D)  
You look... soft.  
Is this the show?

Her eyes sweep the room. She's already clocked everyone –  
before she even walked in.

The room hums with Simone chatter.

CUT TO – ABOVE  
THE STAGE

Like Roman gods planning fate – FERNANDO, QUENTIN, and  
BRIDGET overlook the chaos. Their gazes like shadows.

FERNANDO  
Well. This just got fun.

QUENTIN  
She's early.

BRIDGET  
She's hungry.

FERNANDO  
So am I.

They swirl drinks. Their eyes land on Alex – a sacrificial lamb.

QUENTIN  
Let them tear each other apart.  
We get the footage either way.

INT. SOUNDSTAGE – WRAP-UP – MOMENTS LATER

Rehearsal ends in chaos. Someone yells "CUT" – even though they weren't rolling.

Fernando grabs Alex by the elbow at the door.

FERNANDO  
Come on, Prince Charming.  
Let's get you home.

EXT. JACK'S APARTMENT – 3:00 PM – FRIDAY

Fernando's cherry-red convertible glides to a stop.

FERNANDO  
Get some rest. You look like shit.

I'll swing by at six – meet-and-greet. Investors. Champagne. Charm.

Alex steps out, barely holding it together.

FERNANDO (CALLING OUT) (CONT'D)  
Don't fuck this up.

Tires squeal. Music blares. Fernando peels away.

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT – MOMENTS LATER

Sunlight slices the room like knives.

Alex enters. Drops his jacket. Strips off his shirt.

The bloody handprint is still there – faded, but unmistakable.

He stares at it.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Steam rises.

Alex steps into the shower. Scalding. Water hisses. Skin burns. Flash moments -

Lipstick. The knife. Fernando's voice: "Don't fuck this up..."

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Steam coils like smoke from a slow burn.

Alex wipes the mirror.

Nothing but his own reflection. Disheveled. Haunted.

He chuckles. Nervous. Fragile.

ALEX

Settle down, Prince Charming.  
Get it together.

He hums softly - ♪ "Flowers" by Miley Cyrus.

Drip. Drip.

Silence returns.

INT. KITCHEN - MINUTES LATER

A fresh cup of coffee.

He sips. Steadies. Pretending.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

He stops cold.

Francisco. Naked. Face-down. A chef's knife buried in his back.

ALEX

(shaky)  
You're back...

Blood floods the white sheets.

His hand trembles.

CRASH – the coffee cup drops – SLOW MOTION. Porcelain. Red. White. Shards everywhere.

Alex stumbles back. Turns toward the mirror.

Written in red lipstick:

“To be or not to be...”

His breath catches. He chokes.

He picks up the phone –

1 MISSED CALL – FRANCISCO

1 NEW VOICEMAIL

He hesitates. Presses play.

FRANCISCO (V.O.)  
 “We have time, Papi. We have a  
 lifetime of time, sí?”  
 (a soft laugh)  
 “Don’t run this time.”

Alex stares.

The handprint is still on his chest. His reflection is fractured behind the lipstick.

ALEX  
 Fuck.

INT. BEDROOM – MOMENTS LATER

Alex. Phone to his ear. Hands shaking.

RING. RING.

FERNANDO (V.O.)  
 (overly chipper)  
 Prince Charming! You got 2.5 hours  
 of beauty rest – not that you need  
 it, you bastard.  
 (beat)  
 You want a ticket for Francisco  
 tonight? Just have him sit there  
 like a corpse. Pretty. Quiet.

Alex says nothing.

FERNANDO (V.O.) (BEAT)  
 Alex? You there?

ALEX  
 (quiet. grave)  
 You better get here. Right now.  
 (beat)  
 There's a problem.

ON SCREEN:

2 DOWN.

(faint tick... tock...)

FADE OUT.

CUT TO:

FERNANDO (V.O.)  
 What kind of problem?

Alex doesn't answer. Just stares at the bloody scene.  
 Lipstick glows on the mirror – "TO BE OR NOT TO BE..." Wet.  
 Shimmering. Final.

ON SCREEN:

TICK TOCK.

66 HOURS REMAINING.

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT – LIVING ROOM – 4:00 PM

Fernando BURSTS through the door.

Alex stands in a towel – blood-streaked, shaking, panicked.  
 FRANCISCO'S BODY lies twisted by the bed. Blood pooled. One  
 of Alex's hands – red to the wrist.

ALEX  
 I tried to move him... he fell... I  
 tripped – and he landed–

FLASH: Francisco's body toppling onto Alex. Blood across his  
 chest. The handprint re-formed.

FERNANDO  
 Jesus, you stupid fuck. I'm always  
 cleaning up your messes.  
 (MORE)



FERNANDO (CONT'D)

(beat)

Between Bridget, Quentin and me, we  
always gotta carry you. God, I'd  
kill to live your easy fucking  
life.

ALEX

Fernando, please... you gotta help  
me.

FERNANDO

(quiet rage)

Of course I gotta help you.

(then louder)

I ALWAYS gotta help you. Fuck me.

Fernando stalks the room like he owns it. Eyes scanning.  
Fast. Ruthless.

ROCKY appears at the edge of the scene – silent, alert, ears  
flicking as he watches Fernando.

He pads toward the blood. Stops. Stares.

Fernando clocks the cat. Softens – barely.

FERNANDO (CONT'D)

(slight smirk)

Still watching out for your boy,  
huh?

Rocky doesn't blink.

Fernando exhales, snaps into gear.

FERNANDO (CONT'D)

Alright, Prince Charming – get  
garbage bags. I'm making calls.

(beat) We've got that dinner in two  
hours.

INT. BEDROOM – MOMENTS LATER

Alex yanks open the closet. Garbage bags. His hands shake.  
Blood on everything.

He folds Francisco's limbs into black plastic. Zipper sounds.  
Sheets soaked red.

♪ A warped reprise of "Lipstick Promises" floats in –  
cracked, nostalgic, broken.

Fernando stands nearby. Watching. Calculating.

FERNANDO  
 (calm, dangerous)  
 It's gonna be okay.  
 I'll clean this up.

CAMERA PULLS  
 BACK:

Two MEN enter silently. Lift Francisco's body like it's nothing.

Two WOMEN with bleach and gloves get to work. The room transforms. Lipstick – wiped. Sheets – gone. Mirror shines again.

One woman strips the towel off Alex. He stands bare. Shivering. Vulnerable.

ROCKY leaps lightly onto the bedframe. Watches everything. His tail flicks once. Then still.

FERNANDO (CONT'D)  
 Prince Charming, go take a shower.  
 We leave in fifteen.

Fernando heads toward the kitchen.

HOLD ON ROCKY

Still. Silent. Eyes locked on the cleanup crew as they exit. He knows.

Rocky pads after Fernando. Leaps up onto the kitchen counter. Snuggles against him – like nothing happened.

MEOW.

Fernando eyes him. Scratches Rocky's chin.

FERNANDO  
 Good thing you're just a dumb cat  
 who can't talk. I don't have to  
 worry about you.

Rocky leans in closer. Then playfully bites Fernando's hand.

Fernando doesn't flinch. Just growls back – low and amused.

FERNANDO (CONT'D)  
 Oh... you like it rough?

He scratches Rocky's ears – one long, slow stroke.

CLOSE ON ROCKY

Purring. Steady. Deep. Like a drumbeat in the quiet.

The SOUND swells. Fills the frame. Not cute. Not calming. It's primal. Like something waking up.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. FERNANDO'S CAR – SUNSET

The ENGINE PURRS. Low. Sexy. Dangerous.

Fernando slides into the driver's seat. Smirks

ALEX, freshly dressed in noir-slick attire, sits beside Fernando.

FERNANDO

(on phone)

Yeah, I got him. We're on the way.

(beat)

Alex? He's on point. Ready to impress.

He glances over. Alex stares out the window – blank, broken, and beautiful. The city glows golden. Cold.

Alex looks over – hesitant – as if to ask about the cleanup.

FERNANDO (CONT'D)

Prince Charming, don't worry.

You'll get your happy ending.

(leans in, softer) Again, I do all the fucking cleanup.

(taps Alex's cheek like a mob boss)

But that's what a big brother's for.

MATCH CUT – SPLIT SCREEN

LEFT PANEL – INT. SUV – MOVING – SUNSET

Alex stares forward. Fernando drives. The city flows past. Their conversation continues.

RIGHT PANEL — INT. PARKED CAR — HILLSIDE VANTAGE — CONTINUOUS

ANNE and CARL sit in a nondescript black vehicle. Carl's hand adjusts a small receiver. Static clears.

Fernando's voice plays through the speaker — crisp.

FERNANDO (V.O.)  
"...that's what a big brother's  
for."

Anne flinches. Carl doesn't blink.

CARL  
(quiet)  
He's getting bolder.

ANNE  
He's getting reckless.

A beat.

CARL  
And our boy? He's not built for  
this.

Anne watches Alex through binoculars.

ANNE  
Not yet. But he will be.

ON SCREEN:

TICK TOCK.

63.5 HOURS REMAINING.

FADE IN:

SCENE: INVESTOR DINNER — INT. LUXURY HOLLYWOOD ESTATE — NIGHT

ON SCREEN: 6:30 PM — FRIDAY

A Gatsby-esque villa in the hills. Palm trees sway. Champagne flows. Waiters in bowties. Industry sharks pretending to be charmers.

CAMERA TRACKS the back of QUENTIN as he floats through the space, nodding, schmoozing. At his side: SIMONE, a vision in couture armor — poised, dangerous, and seething.

SHOT 1: PRIVATE ALCOVE - INTIMATE / DANGEROUS

They peel off to a quieter spot. A waiter passes - champagne flutes clink.

SIMONE  
(low, hissing)  
He's going to ruin this. You know that, right?

QUENTIN  
(sipping)  
Dwayne's doing fine.

SIMONE  
(leaning in)  
Fine? You see how much he's in love with Alex already? He's soft. I'm not sitting around and watching him fumble our legacy. I know things, Dad.

Quentin raises an eyebrow. Simone smirks.

SIMONE (CONT'D)  
Dwayne talks in his sleep. Loose lips...  
(pause)  
Told me all about-

SHOT 2: FERNANDO ENTERS - COOL, SMILING, CALCULATING

FERNANDO  
(interrupting, smooth)  
Quentin. Bridget needs you at the door. VIPs just arrived.

(BEAT)  
Turns to Simone with a predator's grin.

FERNANDO  
Simone, would you help me with the champagne?

SIMONE  
(snaps)  
Fuck you, Fernando.  
I didn't like you when we were kids and I sure as hell don't want to be pouring champagne with you now.

QUENTIN  
 (sighs)  
 I'll check in with Bridget.

He exits.

SHOT 3: SHOWDOWN - JUST FERNANDO AND SIMONE

Simone turns to leave. Fernando blocks her.

SIMONE  
 Move, Fernando.

He doesn't.

FERNANDO  
 (quietly)  
 You should've stayed in Paris.

SIMONE  
 You should've stayed in the closet.  
 (Fernando flinches - just  
 a hair.)

SIMONE (CONT'D)  
 Let's not pretend you're running  
 anything but your mouth. You were  
 always the backup dancer, never the  
 fucking show.

She steps closer - nose to nose. Pure venom.

SIMONE (CONT'D)  
 You think because they're scared of  
 you, they respect you? Please.  
 They'll gut you the second they  
 smell weakness.

FERNANDO  
 (softly)  
 Then I'll just make sure no one  
 smells anything.

THREE STABS. FAST. LOW. LIKE PRISON.

She gasps. Blood hits silk. She falls. No scream. Just disbelief.

As she drops, we slow the frame rate for half a second - not dramatic, just enough to feel time crack.

As her blood hits the marble: SFX: a faint splash... like red ink in water.

Her final breath curls into a grin.

SIMONE  
(soft, defiant)  
Still... not scared.

FERNANDO  
(casually, breathy)  
God, you were always trouble.  
Talk. Talk. Talk.

ON SCREEN:

3 DOWN.

(faint sound – TICK... TOCK...)

Then fade out.

SHOT 4: FERNANDO MAKES A CALL – STONE COLD

Pulls out his phone. Speed dial. No emotion.

FERNANDO  
Come now.

CAMERA WIDENS as two suited MEN in black gloves enter. One lifts Simone's body. The other mops up fast.

Like it never happened.

SHOT 5: DWAYNE ENTERS – BUBBLY, OBLIVIOUS

DWAYNE  
(cheerful, searching)  
Hey, Fernando – have you seen  
Simone?

FERNANDO  
(straight-faced)  
Stomach pains. Said she went to lie  
down.

DWAYNE  
Oh.  
(pause)  
Hey, they want us out front.

FERNANDO  
Let's go.

They walk off – one clueless, one carved in ice.

FADE OUT WITH:

A soft reprise of “Lipstick Promises” bleeding into the next scene – eerie, elegant.

INT. MANSION - STUDY - NIGHT

Dimly lit. Old money shadows. The kind of room where secrets get sealed in scotch.

ALEX walks down the hallway, tense – dressed for show, still bleeding inside. As he passes the STUDY–

A HAND snatches his wrist. Pulls him in.

ALEX  
(grunts)  
What the–

THWACK.

Instinct kicks in. Alex throws a right hook – fast, clean – straight to the side of the face.

DWAYNE stumbles back, clutching his eye.

DWAYNE  
(furious)  
Fuck, Alex!

ALEX  
(heart racing)  
Jesus–you scared the shit outta me.  
What the hell are you doing?!

DWAYNE  
(quietly)  
I wanted to...

He falters. Can't finish it.

ALEX  
(stepping forward)  
What?

A beat. No music. Just breath and heat between them.

DWAYNE  
(low, certain)  
This.



He grabs Alex's face – and kisses him. Full. On. Mouth. No hesitation.

Alex doesn't move at first. Shock. Then – his hands rise, trembling... To push him away – or pull him closer?

We don't know. He doesn't know.

DWAYNE (CONT'D)  
(whispered, hot)  
You want to rehearse the shower  
scene?

Alex growls. Hungry. Dangerous. On fire.

INT. GRAND FOYER – SAME TIME

FERNANDO, QUENTIN, and BRIDGET stand like a twisted holy trinity under the chandelier.

Three witches. One prophecy.

FERNANDO  
He's cracking. Dwayne's pushing him  
over the edge.

QUENTIN  
Let it happen.

BRIDGET  
And when he does?

FERNANDO  
We bury them both.

CAMERA PULLS BACK

In the distance – a shadow slips away from the STUDY DOOR.

Someone saw the kiss.

Someone who won't keep quiet.

INT. STUDY – NIGHT

Alex pulls back from the kiss. Breath shaky. He's not sure if it's lust, guilt, or both.

DWAYNE  
(low, sincere)  
Don't lie. You felt that.

Before Alex can answer—

ANNE bursts in, heels clicking like gunshots.

ANNE  
Enough. Now.

She doesn't wait. She grabs Alex by the wrist and drags him out like a protective storm.

EXT. GARDEN TERRACE - NIGHT

Lit only by moonlight and string lights. Jazz murmurs faintly from inside. A place untouched by the chaos — for now.

ANNE  
(whispers)  
You're going to implode.  
And you're going to take me with  
you.

ALEX  
(angry, unraveling)  
Then let me.

ANNE  
Not tonight. Not with them  
watching.

She turns to lead him deeper into the garden.

At the far edge, under a weeping willow—

A MAN IN SHADOW.

Cigarette glowing faintly.

ALEX stops cold. Eyes wide.

The man steps forward.

Sharp cheekbones. Weathered eyes. A stillness that belongs to ghosts.

CARL (60s). The first husband. The dead father.

Or not so dead.

CARL  
Hello, son.

EXT. GARDEN - NIGHT - MOMENTS AFTER CARL:

A moment of stillness. Alex frozen. Anne wide-eyed. Carl's voice still hangs in the air.

Then—

A MAN'S SCREAM (O.S.)  
HELP! OH GOD - HELP!!

All three bolt.

INT. MANSION HALLS / BACK DOOR - NIGHT

Footsteps thunder through marble. Doors fly open. Guests murmur, trail behind. Bridget, Quentin, Fernando — drawn by the chaos.

EXT. REAR LAWN - NIGHT

Moonlight carves every figure in cold silver.

DWAYNE is on the ground, cradling Simone's lifeless body. Blood across her dress like spilled wine.

His scream cuts through every guest's spine.

DWAYNE  
(choking, sobbing)  
Simone... Simone... I just got you  
back... and now you're gone...

He holds her tighter. Her head falls limp against his shoulder.

Gasps. Whispers. Phones come out. Cameras roll.

Carl steps forward. Cold. Controlled. Calm.

He sees Bridget. Quentin. Fernando. The axis of the evil.

CARL  
(smooth, cutting)  
Bridie. Well, you've changed a bit.  
I see ruthless does age a  
woman.

FERNANDO  
(defensive)  
Who the hell are you?

BRIDGET  
 (quiet, lips tight)  
 Fernando... that's your father.

Beat. Shock. Murmurs. Heads turn.

CARL  
 (laughs darkly, voice  
 sharp)  
 Oh God no. Let's start telling the  
 truth around here – for a change.

RIPPLE EFFECT MONTAGE – POST-SIMONE DEATH

STYLE: Neo-noir montage. No dialogue at first. Just haunting sound design and a dark, slowed-down instrumental reprise of "Lipstick Promises."

INT. SOUNDSTAGE – LATE NIGHT

Empty. Just the hum of fluorescent lights. A forgotten scarf on a chair – Simone's. Blood along the hem. The camera lingers, slow zoom.

INT. DWAYNE'S APARTMENT – BATHROOM – NIGHT

Dwayne wipes off eyeliner. Red smear on the cotton pad. His eyes linger on it. He stares at himself in the mirror – broken. Smashes the mirror with his fist.

INT. PRODUCERS' OFFICE – SAME TIME

Bridget watches rehearsal footage alone. Freezes on Simone's face. Sips vodka from a porcelain teacup. Glass trembles in her hand.

QUENTIN enters – calm, cold, calculating.

BRIDGET  
 (soft, haunted)  
 She always made an entrance.

QUENTIN  
 She made a mistake.

BRIDGET  
 She was your daughter.

QUENTIN  
 Children should listen.

FERNANDO glides in. A knife in silk.

FERNANDO  
Talk, talk, talk. Jesus. Let's move  
on.

BRIDGET  
You didn't have to do it this way.

FERNANDO  
Simone knew the rules.

QUENTIN  
My lovely – death is so final.  
(beat)  
So... liberating.

BRIDGET  
What are you saying?

QUENTIN  
We have ourselves one hell of a  
story.

He exits.

Leaves the door open.

Night air slips in – cold and unsympathetic.

INT. GARDEN / REAR OF THE ESTATE – NIGHT

Anne walks with Alex and Carl through the garden. Moonlight.  
Silence. Older. Regal. Still dangerous.

CARL  
You don't know what they've done to  
you. But it's time you found out.  
Tell what is the locket you wear  
and never take off around your  
neck.

Anne pulls out the MASK OF COMEDY.

ALEX looks at her and pulls from his neck THE MASK OF  
TRAGEDY. He holds his mask to hers and they fit together  
exactly.

CARL pulls out a complete set of the exact COMEDY and TRAGEDY  
masks.

Alex stares, eyes wide. His whole world – unraveling.

ANNE

So what are you saying?

ALEX

Wait. Wait are you saying that  
Anne is my sister?

INT. SIMONE'S VANITY ROOM - NIGHT

Dwayne enters. The room still smells like her perfume –  
spicy, sweet, impossible to pin down. He moves slowly.  
Reverently.

The vanity lights are still on. Lipstick tubes like weapons.  
Perfume bottles like bombs.

He touches the brush still holding strands of her hair. The  
cigarette burned out in the tray. Everything exactly as she  
left it.

Then he sees it – A sealed envelope, propped perfectly at the  
mirror's base. Written in Simone's unmistakable scrawl: "For  
Dwayne."

He opens it.

INSERT: HANDWRITTEN LETTER

(V.O. SIMONE)

"Dwayne – Don't let them use you.  
Not Bridget. Not Quentin. Not  
Fernando. I don't know what they've  
promised you, but it's not love.  
Trust no one. Not even Alex –  
unless he proves himself. You're  
better than all of them. You always  
were.  
Your Big Sis, Simone."

Dwayne's breath stutters. He blinks back tears – Then lets  
them fall.

He folds the letter. Slips it into his pocket.

He walks out of the room – And doesn't look back.

INT. SOUND STAGE

A film slate labeled: "DEUCE'S WILD - Scene 43 - Bloodbath."  
The take is numbered. A hand claps the board.

The camera isn't rolling... But blood still stains the floor.

**MUSIC ENDS.**

SMASH TO BLACK.

ON SCREEN:

SATURDAY - 10:00 AM

TICK TOCK.

48 HOURS REMAINING.

INT. DWAYNE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Muted light. Blinds drawn halfway. Dwayne lies awake on the couch, fully dressed. Eyes open. Haunted. Still clutching Simone's letter in one hand.

The TV's on mute - an old noir film flickering. A kiss on screen. Followed by a gunshot. Dwayne doesn't blink.

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

Alex stares out the window. Shirtless. Pale. The handprint is almost gone - faded now, like memory.

He touches it anyway.

INT. BRIDGET'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Bridget stares into a vanity mirror. Perfect hair. Bloody eyes. She's already had two martinis.

She whispers to herself -

BRIDGET

Rose I warned you. I warned her not  
to love anyone.

INT. QUENTIN'S STUDY - SAME TIME

Quentin burns pages from the Deuce's Wild script in an antique ashtray.

Smiling.

ON SCREEN:

SATURDAY - 1:00 PM

TICK TOCK.

45 HOURS REMAINING.

INT. SOUNDSTAGE OFFICE - SATURDAY - 1:00 PM

Dark wood. Darker intentions. Quentin pours two drinks. Fernando doesn't take his.

FERNANDO

Call me father.

QUENTIN

God no, let's complicate things.  
Next, we'll be doing scenes from  
Oedipus Rex.

FERNANDO

I am your biological father-

QUENTIN

-and you left me behind with your  
sister, Bridget, so you could go  
chasing another whore while my  
mother died in childbirth.

QUENTIN (CONT'D)

She died because of you.

FERNANDO

No. I lived because of her. The  
strong survive. The weak? They're  
there to be stepped on while the  
rest of us climb.

Fernando paces. Quentin watches.

QUENTIN

So what's next?



FERNANDO

My God, you can't even think for yourself. It's plain what happens next.

Fernando pulls a folded letter from his jacket and hands it to Quentin.

FERNANDO (CONT'D)

Simone's final words. To Dwayne.

Quentin reads. His hands tremble.

QUENTIN

My own child... turned against me.

FERNANDO

Oh Hamlet... "To be or not to be."

QUENTIN

Wait— That was you who wrote that?

Fernando smiles. Pulls a tube of lipstick from his pocket.

FERNANDO

The mirror? The message? The murder? It was always me. Moving Francisco's body, hiding that gay boy in the closet— (laughs) And hiding him in the closet. Jesus.

QUENTIN

What was it like?

FERNANDO

What?

QUENTIN Killing Francisco. Driving that chef's knife into his back—

FERNANDO (CONT'D)

(pause)

Like a watermelon.

QUENTIN

What?

FERNANDO

The sound it made. When the blade went in.

(thumps chest)

Wet. Sweet. Final.

QUENTIN  
Jesus Christ... You have no moral  
backbone.

FERNANDO  
Look at the tree I came from.  
(beat)  
Fuck me.

QUENTIN  
So?

FERNANDO  
So you have to do it.

QUENTIN  
Do what?

FERNANDO  
(steps in close – venom)  
Are you not listening?

SMACK.

Fernando SLAPS Quentin across the face. Hard. Quentin  
stumbles into the chair – stunned.

FERNANDO  
Dwayne knows too much. He's soft.  
He's cracked. We need to own Delaney/Black by Monday.  
Fernando CLAPS once. Loud. Echoing. A warning shot.

FERNANDO (CONT'D)  
Tick tock.  
You've got two hours.  
Fernando exits – cold as smoke.

HOLD ON QUENTIN.

Breathing heavy. Shaking.

He pulls out his phone. Presses PLAY.

FERNANDO (V.O.)  
What was it like?

QUENTIN (V.O.)  
Killing Francisco?

FERNANDO (V.O.)  
Like a watermelon...

QUENTIN  
(quiet, lethal)  
Always good to have insurance.

He dials. The line rings.

QUENTIN (INTO PHONE)  
Dwayne. Your father here. I need  
you at the soundstage – now . We're  
running the death scene. I've got  
some notes.

ON SCREEN:

SATURDAY - 1:00 PM

TICK TOCK.

44 HOURS REMAINING.

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - STUDIO SET - SATURDAY - 2:00 PM

The lighting is set to "late evening." Outside the fake  
apartment window: thunder, lightning. Inside: cold, clinical.  
The apartment set is dressed... but the floor is covered in  
black plastic.

QUENTIN paces. Muttering to himself. Blocking the scene in  
silence.

DWAYNE enters, energetic, alert.

DWAYNE  
Dad?

Where is everybody? Is Alex not in this scene?

QUENTIN  
We've got a new side.  
(He hands it to him.)

DWAYNE  
I didn't hear about this – when are  
we rehearsing?

QUENTIN  
The director thinks you can nail it  
in one take.

Just be razor sharp.

DWAYNE  
(flattered)  
Okay... but can I talk to you about  
something first?

QUENTIN  
You know eavesdropping's a bad  
habit.

Fernando and I were workshopping a new piece. Same  
playwright. He's on fire.

DWAYNE  
So that wasn't real?

QUENTIN  
Son... life is made of scenes.

Let's act.

(Dwayne scans the new sides. Nods.)

DWAYNE  
I got this.

QUENTIN  
It's all in the eyes.

Camera pulls in. Nothing else matters.

DWAYNE  
(smiling)  
Ready for my close-up.  
(Quentin nods, then pulls  
out a collapsible prop  
knife and a small cloth.)

QUENTIN  
We'll block it.

Knife from behind. Cloth across the mouth. Silences the  
moment. Eases the death.

(They run it once – Quentin behind Dwayne, right arm forward  
with the blade, left with the cloth.)

DWAYNE  
So I see you come from behind the  
curtain, take me by surprise –

Got it. Now what's my motivation?

(Quentin rolls his eyes.)

QUENTIN  
(quiet)  
You just die.

DWAYNE  
Right.

All in the eyes.

He takes his place. Stands on the X. SFX: Thunder rumbles.

Quentin steps off-set. He swaps the prop knife for a real one. Soaks the cloth in chloroform. Calm. Smooth. Practiced.

DWAYNE (CONT'D)  
Ready when you are.

QUENTIN  
Remember – don't look at me.

Only dialogue is Deuce saying, "I'm sorry."

DWAYNE  
Copy.

Let's roll. One take.

QUENTIN  
ACTION.

Dwayne exhales.

Quentin emerges from behind the curtain. Dwayne turns halfway.

DWAYNE  
(quiet)  
I'm sorry–

Quentin drives the real knife into Dwayne's stomach. Covers his mouth with the soaked cloth. Eases him down.

Dwayne's eyes go wide. Then flutter. Then fade.

Quentin trembles. Takes the knife. Stabs him again. And again. And again.

QUENTIN  
(whispers, each time)  
I'm sorry.

I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

Silence.

Blood pools. The plastic floor glistens.

Quentin steps back. Breathless. He pulls out his phone.  
Dials.

FERNANDO (V.O.)  
(ice cold)  
Well?

QUENTIN  
It's done.

FERNANDO (V.O.)  
Good boy.

I'll send the team. Push rehearsal to 4 p.m.

Quentin hangs up.

He looks down at his son's body.

Then slowly turns off the stage lights.

ON SCREEN:

3 DOWN.

ON SCREEN:

SATURDAY - 4:00 PM

TICK TOCK.

42 HOURS REMAINING.

SPLIT SCREEN SEQUENCE

LEFT PANEL - INT. ALEX'S TRAILER - SOUNDSTAGE - 4:00 PM

Alex enters the trailer. Worn. Quiet. Tosses keys, throws his hoodie on the couch. A note taped to the mirror:

NOTE

"NEW SIDE - JACK DIES. REHEARSE ASAP."

Alex smirks. Pulls the side from the vanity.

ALEX  
(reading, amused)  
"Huh. Looks easy. All in the eyes..."

He flips the page. Frowns slightly. Then— Begins humming  
"Vampire" by Olivia Rodrigo.

Starts mouthing the lyrics - the soft venom of the chorus  
bleeding out casually:

ALEX (singing softly) "Bloodsucker, fame fucker, bleedin' me  
dry like a goddamn vampire..."

He moves around the trailer - light again, almost floating.

RIGHT PANEL - INT. BRIDGET'S ESTATE - FOYER - 4:00 PM

Party prep in full swing. Servers bustle. Champagne chilled.  
Strings tuning in the distance. Fernando moves through the  
house like smoke.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Bridget holds a martini. Looks up. Fernando blocks the  
doorway.

FERNANDO  
You always loved Alex more.

BRIDGET  
Fernando—

FERNANDO  
Why did you take me in?

You should've left me with the wolves.

BRIDGET  
We were a family—

FERNANDO  
No.

You were an act. And I'm calling CUT.

He pulls the blade. Fast. Drives it into her - mid-sentence.

BRIDGET  
(shock)  
Wait-

Three quick thrusts. Cold. Controlled. She falls against the white cabinetry.

Martini glass shatters. Blood spreads over the tile like spilled gin.

FERNANDO (SOFT)  
Tick.

Tock.

LEFT PANEL - INT. ALEX'S TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

Alex finishes tying his boots. Still humming. Opens the closet to grab a jacket -

Freezes.

On the MIRROR:

IN LIPSTICK

"TO BE OR NOT TO BE..."

Alex turns- DWAYNE lies face-up on the trailer couch.

Stabbed. Eyes open. Mouth slightly parted. Knife still in his stomach.

Alex staggers back.

ALEX  
Oh my god-

He fumbles for his phone. Dials.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
(into phone)  
Fernando. You better pick up.

NOW.

CUT TO BLACK.

ON SCREEN:



4 DOWN.

SATURDAY - 4:30 PM | TICK TOCK. 41.5 HOURS REMAINING

INT. ALEX'S TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

Alex, breath ragged. Staring at Dwayne's dead body. Blood drips from the knife to the floor.

He dials again. On speaker.

RING. RING.

FERNANDO (V.O., ANSWERING)  
 (cheerful, ice-cold)  
 Prince Charming. Now what mess are  
 you into? (snickers) I'm not  
 cleaning up another body. (a beat,  
 amused) God, I love you.

INT. ALEX'S TRAILER - MOMENTS LATER

DWAYNE'S BODY still slumped. Knife glinting in the low light.  
 Blood like punctuation.

FERNANDO storms in. Gloves on. Eyes colder than death.

FERNANDO  
 Jesus Christ, Alex.  
 (beat)  
 Dead men really do seem to follow  
 you.  
 (approaches the body)  
 Tell me—do you kill them with  
 love...

Or do you just kill them?

ALEX can barely breathe.

ALEX  
 What are we going to do?

FERNANDO  
 We?  
 (beat)  
 No, no. You are going to the party.

ALEX  
 What?

FERNANDO

Tonight.

You'll be there. Bridget and Quentin and the investors expect you.

ALEX

But how can I—

FERNANDO

SMACK.

A vicious slap across the face. Alex stumbles back. Breath stolen.

Fernando crosses fast. Leans in. Fist curls into Alex's shirt—RIP.

FERNANDO (CONT'D)

(low, savage)

You, dear brother—are just an actor. That's it. So act. Fucking act. One more time, I clean up after you. One more. Then you're on your own.

ALEX

I want to call Mother.

FERNANDO just stares.

Then—

FERNANDO

Mother?

(laughs, venom)

Who the fuck is that? Bridget? She's NOT been a mother to us— Just a credit card in heels and a martini glass. (beat) You get out of here. Clean yourself up. (stepping back) I'll pick you up at 7:30. (beat) This is a big night for me. So don't fuck it up.

Fernando gently slaps Alex's cheek—like petting a dog.

FERNANDO (CONT'D)

Good boy.

(glances at the torn shirt)

I'm sorry I ripped that. I'll replace it. Monday.

CAMERA PULLS BACK

Alex stares—torn shirt, trembling hand, broken heart.

Fernando makes a call.

FERNANDO  
(into phone)  
Cleanup. Now.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. ALEX'S CAR - DRIVING - SUNSET

The city is all glare and steel.

Alex grips the wheel like it's the only thing keeping him upright. He dials.

VOICEMAIL BEEP

ALEX (INTO PHONE)  
Anne... it's me. Come to my place.  
I need help.

EXT. LA STREET - GOLDEN HOUR

The sun BURNS. The wheels of Alex's car blur into heatwaves.

He disappears into it.

INT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS ESTATE - NIGHT

ON SCREEN:

SATURDAY - 8:00 PM

TICK TOCK. 38 HOURS REMAINING.

Champagne flutes clink. Forks against china. Velvet laughter wrapped around lies.

The party is peak LA — glowing skin, darker souls.

QUENTIN, stage-ready, stands under a massive crystal chandelier.

QUENTIN Ladies and gentlemen—thank you for being here.

(beat) Bridget regrets she couldn't join us tonight. She's feeling... dead to the world.

(scattered chuckles) But rest assured, Deuce's Wild is right on track.

Scattered applause. Sips of sparkling cruelty.

INT. ESTATE - ENTRYWAY - CONTINUOUS

FERNANDO enters like a shadow in custom tailoring. On his arm-

ALEX.

Fitted. Composed. Dangerous.

He walks like James Bond into a casino. Like he knows someone's holding a gun under the table. He just doesn't care.

Whispers follow. Heads turn. But no one dares greet him first.

INT. ESTATE - VARIOUS SPACES - NIGHT

Guests swirl and sip. The questions are silent but deafening:

WHERE IS SIMONE?

WHERE IS DWAYNE?

WHERE IS BRIDGET?

No one says it. But everyone thinks it.

ALEX moves through the room like a ghost in a black suit.

FERNANDO watches everything. Calculating. Cool. He feels the tension.

And then-

THE DOOR OPENS.

CARL enters. Smooth. Silent. Dangerous.

At his side – ANNE.

Heads turn. Mouths tighten. Glasses freeze halfway up.

CARL  
 (apologetically to the  
 crowd)  
 Fashionably late... but worth the  
 wait.

He scans. Sees Quentin. Smiles like a loaded gun.

QUENTIN  
 Carl.  
 (beat)  
 Didn't know you were still in town.

CARL  
 Oh, I'm here.

And there's so much to catch up on.

Polite smiles. Razor eyes. The unraveling begins.

FERNANDO doesn't move. But his entire body goes on alert.

QUICK CUTS  
 THROUGH THE  
 ROOM:

- Someone whispers, "That's Alex's father, right?" - Someone else mutters, "Didn't he die?" - A woman clutches her pearls like it'll protect her from the past.

CAMERA FINDS ALEX.

INT. QUENTIN & BRIDGET'S ESTATE – GRAND SALON – NIGHT

SATURDAY – 8:00 PM

ON SCREEN: TICK TOCK. 38 HOURS REMAINING.

A ballroom dressed as a high-rolling fever dream.

Waitstaff move like clockwork – all dressed as old-school casino dealers. Black vests. Red bowties. Too much charm.

A GIANT CAKE dominates the far corner – frosted to look like a pair of oversized white dice. Brownies shaped like tiny dice are passed on trays.

Mini skewers pierce bites of raw tuna, black olive, white cheese, red tomato – like edible symbols of blood, luck, and choice.

A LOUNGE SINGER hums a smoky, jazz-slowed version of "Flowers." 🎷 "I can buy myself flowers..." The melody drips over the crowd like spilled liquor.

CAMERA FINDS ALEX

Black tux. Open collar. Eyes like heat-seeking missiles. He spots Carl. Anne. And – just for a flash – his armor cracks. Then? Mask on.

Alex lifts a glass from a tray. Raises it, half-smirking.

ALEX  
 If Hamlet's ghost is watching...  
 (beat)  
 "To be or not to be."  
 (sips)  
 Let the games begin.

MURMURS ripple. Glasses clink. Power shifts.

CARL  
 (stepping into center  
 frame)  
 I always find truth so much more  
 enjoyable when it's out in the  
 open...  
 (beat)  
 Not some veiled handprint on  
 someone's heart.

MURMURS GROW – guests shifting, clocking the tension.

FERNANDO  
 (chiming in, faux-  
 charming)  
 Oh Carl...

I see where Alex gets his acting chops. (Alex offers a single, feigned chuckle – glass still lifted)

QUENTIN BURSTS IN

Louder than the piano. Louder than sense.

QUENTIN  
 Pass the hors d'oeuvres!

He waves to a passing tray – skewers clatter gently. Themed. Loaded.

CONVERSATION SNIPPETS float up:

WOMAN IN PEARLS

Where's Simone?

MAN IN GUCCI

Can't wait to meet Dwayne.

WOMAN (WHISPERING)  
Will the playwright be here?

I must invest in his next project. This one's a gold mine.

CAMERA FINDS FERNANDO

Holding court. Surrounded. Worshipped. Arms wide, drink in hand, voice like gospel.

FERNANDO  
You see, the essence of Deuce's  
Wild is risk.

Danger. Seduction. (beat) Every game is a love story. Every hand... a betrayal.

CAMERA PULLS BACK

The party whirls. Secrets swirl.

And above it all – the singer's voice threads through the air like a noose.

🎵 "...say things you don't understand..."

INT. QUENTIN & BRIDGET'S ESTATE – GRAND SALON – CONTINUOUS

The music still lingers – soft jazz, seductive and slow. The camera floats above the crowd...

CARL Glides through the room like he owns it. Whiskey in hand. Eyes locked on Quentin from across the glittering floor. Measured. Calm. Dangerous.

Quentin panics. He turns sharply and grabs the elbow of WOMAN IN PEARLS standing nearby.

QUENTIN

(too loud, too fast)

Ah yes, and the key to staging any good betrayal – theatrical or emotional – is lighting. You want something that screams sincerity... while stabbing you in the back.  
(laughs too long at his own joke)

WOMAN IN PEARLS

(dead-eyed)

Fascinating.

She sips her drink with all the enthusiasm of someone swallowing poison for sport. She glances toward Carl. Then back to Quentin. Bored. Curious. Unimpressed.

QUENTIN

(still rattling)

Of course, the Greek masters knew it best– A single spotlight. A stage. A scream. (adds quickly) Not that Deuce's Wild has anything in common with tragedy, no no– This is pure entertainment.

Carl keeps coming. Unbothered. Unflinching. The distance shrinks. So does Quentin's composure.

The room is spinning in slow motion.

CAMERA HOLDS on Quentin's sweaty smile.

Then a beat–

CARL (O.S.)

Don't let me interrupt your monologue.

(beat)

But I'm afraid you've already lost your audience.

Quentin turns. Carl is inches away now. Whiskey. Ice. Silence.

The Woman in Pearls slips away. She silently whispers "Thank you."

CARL (CONT'D)

Just us now, producer.



EXT. BRIDGET'S GARDEN - SATURDAY - 9:45 PM

Low music drifts from the house. Laughter, clinks of champagne glasses, murmurs.

A WOMAN clutches her pearls like it'll protect her from the past.

CARL  
(approaching)  
Quentin... why don't we "dads" have  
a little talk?

He gently guides Quentin out into the jasmine-scented moonlight. They stroll.

INT. PARTY - CONTINUOUS

FERNANDO clocks this from across the room. He abandons a fawning group mid-sentence.

MAN  
Hollywood types... so fascinating.  
I have the money, and they get the  
power!

A WOMAN laughs politely. It's all fake.

EXT. GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

QUENTIN  
Carl. I'm... surprised. I thought  
you were dead.  
(gasps, performative)  
Really.

CARL  
Money can only keep me dead for so  
long.

QUENTIN  
Now Carl, I have no idea—

CARL  
Where's Bridie? She never misses a  
party. Not in twenty years.

QUENTIN  
(aloof)  
Dead to the world tonight. Didn't  
have the stomach for it.

CARL  
 (deadpan)  
 Really? Well, I need a word with  
 her. We've got unfinished  
 business..

QUENTIN  
 If it's business, then it's my  
 business.

CARL  
 I do hate wasting time with  
 gatekeepers. Always pretending to  
 know so much, when in truth... they  
 know so very little.

FERNANDO appears behind them like smoke.

FERNANDO  
 Let's show Carl the night-blooming  
 jasmine.  
 (polite smile)  
 The scent is deadly this time of  
 night.

They walk deeper into the garden.

FERNANDO (CONT'D)  
 So Father—  
 I mean, Carl...

Carl lights a cigarette. Exhales slowly. Blows the smoke in  
 Fernando's face.

CARL  
 Let's skip the lies. They're  
 boring. You and Quentin — same  
 blood, same mediocre talent.  
 It's time I'm back online. Bridie  
 needs a strong man to run this  
 empire. It was my money that built  
 it 25-yeqrs ago. I am tired of  
 being in the shadows.

A beat.

THUMP.

That sound.

Like a knife in a watermelon.

Fernando STABS Carl in the gut.

Again.

Again.

Carl gasps. Falls to his knees.

Fernando steps in and drives the knife into Carl's chest – hard – and leaves it there.

FERNANDO  
You pretentious fuck.  
I never liked you.  
Always smelled like Old Spice.

QUENTIN approaches. Calm, dry.

QUENTIN  
I didn't see that coming.  
You're capable of more than I  
expected.

FERNANDO  
(low, dark)  
You have no idea.

Don't even think of crossing me, Father.

QUENTIN  
(smirks)  
Oh heavens, no. And get stabbed  
like a commoner?

(beat)

How many are we up to?

ON SCREEN:

5 DOWN.

SATURDAY - 10:00 PM

TICK TOCK. 36 HOURS REMAINING.

From the mansion:

A BELL RINGS.

VOICE (O.S.)  
Dinner is served. All guests please  
join us inside.

Fernando takes out his phone. No rush.

FERNANDO  
 (into phone)  
 Cleanup in the garden department.  
 We got a dead plant out here.

As the call ends, faintly – from inside – we hear the soft, ironic hum of:

♪ "I can buy myself flowers..."

INT. BRIDGET'S ESTATE - KITCHEN - SUNDAY, 2:00 AM

TICK TOCK. 40 HOURS REMAINING.

Workers move like shadows—clearing plates, sweeping blood under silence. Two MEN carry BRIDGET'S BLOODIED BODY through the back hall.

MAN #1  
 Boss, where do you want her?

FERNANDO  
 Downstairs. Walk-in fridge.

MAN #2  
 It's... getting full. Francisco.  
 Simone. Dwayne. Carl.  
 What do I tell the cook?

Fernando doesn't blink. He picks up a carving knife from the bar. Twirls it between his fingers like a toy.

FERNANDO  
 There's always room for one more.  
 You want me to clear a shelf?

MAN #1  
 (nervous)  
 No boss. Copy that.

They scurry off.

INT. WALK-IN FRIDGE - MOMENTS LATER

The heavy door creaks open. Cold air spills out.

The men toss Bridget unceremoniously on top of the others. Limbs tangle. Dresses stained. Makeup cracked.

ON THE STACK:

Francisco. Simone. Dwayne. Carl. Bridget.

One man slams the door. They hang a handwritten sign: OUT OF ORDER A padlock clicks into place.

MAN #2

What are we gonna tell the cook?

MAN #1

(sighs)

That he's on vacation.

They disappear.

INT. BALLROOM - LATER

Empty champagne glasses. Torn cocktail napkins. Blood under polish. The last of the linens vanishes.

HEAD MAID

Señor Fernando... it's done.

Fernando peels off eight crisp \$100 bills. Hands them to her without looking up.

FERNANDO

Gracias. If I need you, I'll whistle.

She nods. Leaves.

Alone now, Fernando pours himself a drink.

He lifts a SAND HOURGLASS from the side table. Turns it upside down.

Watches the grains begin to fall.

FERNANDO (CONT'D)

(soft, to himself)

Not much time, Prince Charming. America loves a train wreck... But they worship a phoenix.

He raises his glass. Drinks.

The sand keeps falling.

MATCH CUT TO:

GRAINS OF SAND falling in the hourglass -

SFX: The grains become water - flowing, pouring - morphing into a sharp, hot SHOWER.

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - SUNDAY - 10:00 AM

ON SCREEN: TICK TOCK. 24 HOURS REMAINING.

Water steam and light slash across his sculpted frame. ALEX - back to us - soaking, silent, still. The audience breathes in. Tight shot. His body is Michelangelo meets sin on pause. No frontal. But yeah, it gasps.

He steps out. Dripping. Composed. Today's the day he takes back the narrative.

He wipes steam from the mirror. Watches himself. This time, he holds the gaze.

Grabs a towel. Wraps it. Checks his phone. Five texts from ANNE.

ALEX  
Jesus... it's Sunday?

He unlocks it.

TEXTS READ:

CALL ME.

CALL ME.

CALL ME.

CALL ME.

CALL ME.

He tosses the phone onto the bed. Slips into boxers. Clean. Black. Fitted.

ROCKY meows – pacing for food, for love, for attention.

Alex picks up a cold coffee from the dresser. Heads toward the kitchen – still drying off.

INT. ALEX'S LIVING ROOM – CONTINUOUS

He steps into sun. The view of LA hits him–

ALEX  
(startled)  
Jesus!

He drops the coffee. SMASH. Looks up.

FERNANDO  
Cool. Slick. In sunglasses, a  
fitted Cuban shirt, loafers.

Leaning against the window like a scene from Scarface.

FERNANDO (CONT'D)  
Get dressed, Prince Charming.

I got plans for you today.

ALEX  
I was gonna chill–

FERNANDO  
(claps twice)  
Tick.

Tock. Today's all about you, mi estrella. You got ten minutes.

ALEX  
What am I wearing?

FERNANDO  
(points)  
Chair.

Laid out: Black ASRV shirt, matching pants, designer shoes. Flawless. Tailored. Sleek.

FERNANDO (CONT'D)  
And I got you a swimsuit, oil, and  
a look for tonight.

Trust your older brother. We got eyes to impress.

ROCKY pads over. Rubs against Fernando's leg.

FERNANDO (CONT'D)  
 Rocky... the coolest fuckin' cat in  
 LA.

If you could talk, the stories you'd tell...

(turns to Alex) Nine minutes. Coffee's on the way. And today?  
 We show them the Deuce.

He hums the hook to "Flowers" – Like a threat with melody.

ALEX changes in frame. Slow. Deliberate. Camera loves him.

When he's dressed – he looks SEXY AF. Sharp. Deadly.  
 Controlled.

FERNANDO (CONT'D)  
 That's my boy. WeHo won't know what  
 hit it.

Alex grabs his phone. One last glance at Rocky.

FADE OUT.

EXT. WEST HOLLYWOOD POOLSIDE – SUNDAY – 12:00 PM

TICK TOCK. 22 HOURS REMAINING.

The sun blasts across the pool deck. Beautiful people drape  
 over cabanas, sunglasses, sculpted abs, and air kisses. A  
 curated frenzy of desire and distraction.

FERNANDO  
 (sharp)  
 Take off your shirt.

Alex hesitates. Then – gives in. He peels off his shirt.

The crowd notices. Gasps. Smirks. Phone cameras. A dozen  
 hands reach with numbers, compliments, lust.

OVERLAPPING VOICES  
 Are you on Grindr?  
 You're perfect.  
 I have a role for you.  
 Is there an hourly rate?  
 Do you like dogs?  
 Just one night?  
 What's your next project?

Fernando watches, beaming like a stage mom at the Oscars.



FERNANDO  
 (whispers)  
 Smile, Prince Charming. This is the  
 dream.

Alex turns. Forces the million-dollar smile.

INT. FERNANDO'S CAR - 5:00 PM - SUNSET

Fernando drives. Alex, silent in the passenger seat, stares  
 out the window. The shine has worn off.

FERNANDO  
 That crowd LOVED you.

ALEX  
 Yeah.

FERNANDO  
 You'll thank me one day.

Alex says nothing.

FERNANDO (CONT'D)  
 I'll pick you up tomorrow. 10AM.  
 Big finish. Just don't fuck it up.

Alex gets out. Walks toward his building. Looks back once.

Fernando is already gone.

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Alex enters. Rocky meows, rubs against his leg.

Alex checks his phone.

FIVE TEXTS FROM  
 ANNE:

"Call me."  
 "Call me."  
 "NOW."

INT. ANNE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Dark. Still. Just the whisper of a record needle.

A haunting, slowed-down instrumental version of "Lipstick  
 Promises" plays - warped and ghostly.

We pan across:

Ⓞ A MASSIVE WHITEBOARD - Taped-up photos. Torn script pages. Fragments of bloodied costumes. Center grid - a Hamlet character map.

☐ HAMLET → ALEX ☐ CLAUDIUS → FERNANDO ☐ GERTRUDE → BRIDGET  
 ☐ THE GHOST → CARL ☐ POLONIUS → QUENTIN ☐ OPHELIA → SIMONE  
 ☐ LAERTES → DWAYNE ☐ HORATIO → ANNE ☐ FORTINBRAS → ALEX  
 (RESURRECTED)

No lines of dialogue. Just:

- Anne writing names in red sharpie - Circling FERNANDO again and again - Tacking a bloody lipstick tube to the corner - Placing the ZEUS symbol next to Alex - Pinning a screenshot of the "Deuce's Wild" script with the words: "THE PLAY'S THE THING" underlined three times.

She steps back.

A single candle burns next to the board. Her reflection glows faintly in the window - twin to Alex's.

Anne picks up a marker. Under Fernando's name, she writes:

"The Puppet Master." Then below it, she writes in small letters: "The first lie was love."

She exhales. Hands trembling - not with fear, but with resolve.

She draws one final line. From FERNANDO to ALEX. Across it, she writes: "BROTHERS. BLOOD."

Hold on that.

Then:

CAMERA PUSHES INTO THE REFLECTION - mirror on mirror - until we are back inside the machine.

SCENE SPLIT: ANNE MAPPING / ALEX IN CONTROL

INT. ANNE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The whiteboard glows with connections - FERNANDO at the center. Anne draws the final line. "Brothers. Blood."

Her breath catches.

Cross-cut to:

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT - GYM ROOM / NIGHT

No dialogue.

Just the sound of his breathing. Controlled. Measured.

ALEX, shirtless, balances on his hands - A slow, brutal, shoulder press handstand. Controlled descent. Controlled rise.

The ZEUS tattoo gleams on his shoulder - perfectly aligned in the mirror.

He doesn't blink.

The world is chaos. But this - this is control.

Back to:

INT. ANNE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

She stares at the board. The candle flickers. She reaches out. Extinguishes the flame.

SFX: WHOOF

Then back to:

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Alex lowers slowly. Kneels. Rests his fists on his thighs like a warrior before the storm.

Still. Centered. Silent.

MATCH CUT TO:

FERNANDO at the investor dinner Raising a glass. Toasting.

But behind the eyes? He feels the shift.

INT. DARK ROOM / UNKNOWN LOCATION - NIGHT

ON SCREEN - THE GRID.

SFX: HEARTBEAT-STYLE RHYTHM: BUMP... BUMP... BUMP... AS NAMES DROP RED.

A white screen. Stark. Empty. Then - one by one - photos appear. Black and white. Mugshot-style. SIX faces.

Names fade in below them. Each one flashes. Then goes red.

ONE DOWN – FRANCISCO.

TWO DOWN – ROSE.

THREE DOWN – DWAYNE.

FOUR DOWN – SIMONE.

FIVE DOWN – CARL.

SIX DOWN – BRIDGET.

CLOSE ON:

The screen pulses. Then glitches. One face fades back in:  
ALEX – eyes locked. Alive.

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT – NIGHT

Slow, deep **\*\*breathing\*\***. Controlled. Grounded.

ALEX – shirtless, black shorts. Balanced on fingertips. Doing pushups like it's life or death. Each drop – an echo of a THUD. A past death. Each rise – a vow not to be the next.

THUD – FRANCISCO'S BODY. THUD – SIMONE'S FALL. THUD – DWAYNE'S LAST BREATH. THUD – SIMONE'S GURGLE. THUD – ROSE'S SILENT SCREAM.

SFX: SILENCE

ZEUS tattoo glints on his shoulder. His reflection in the floor mirrors the strength.

SFX: STEADY BREATHING FROM ALEX.

He does a full-on perfect handstand. Holds. Lowers. Controlled. His chest swells. His biceps pumped. His breathing like a fine-tuned machine, barely a sound.

His coal-black eyes reflect no fear – only purpose.

Five o'clock shadow. He locks in the mirror, not in vain, not in awe, but in ZEUS, he controls his destiny.

Rocky watches from the counter. Silent. Still. Loyal.

SFX: Single Violin with the notes: "I can buy myself flowers" with the last note hanging.

INT. BRIDGET'S ESTATE - NIGHT

ON SCREEN:

TICK TOCK. 12 HOURS REMAINING.

EXT. GARDEN - BRIDGET'S ESTATE - CONTINUOUS

Blood from Carl's fall already scrubbed. But the wind carries memory.

INT. STUDY - CONTINUOUS

QUENTIN, hands trembling, plays a voice memo.

FERNANDO (V.O.)  
The sound it made?

Like stabbing a watermelon.

A pause. Then - the door opens. FERNANDO enters. Cool. Composed. Knife already in hand.

QUENTIN  
I have you.

FERNANDO  
No.  
(pause)  
You had time. You wasted it.

QUENTIN  
(pleading)  
I'm your father.

FERNANDO  
Then you should've taught me better.

A beat. FERNANDO steps forward.

QUENTIN backs up.

Lights dim.

FERNANDO (CONT'D)  
You're a failed producer and a worse liar.

QUENTIN  
I'll run this company-

FERNANDO  
 (interrupting)  
 Let me tell you a story. I killed  
 my mother Rose, because she forgot  
 me. You? I never remembered you.

QUENTIN  
 (sigh)  
 Such drama. Alex was always the  
 superior actor. "They say an old  
 man is twice a child."

Fernando slashes. Once. Twice. Four more times.

Quentin collapses. Bloody. As Quentin slides down the wall,  
 he catches his own reflection in a silver-framed family  
 photo.

A smear of blood crosses his cheek as he falls.

FERNANDO  
 God, what a waste of time you've  
 been.

He dials.

FERNANDO (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)  
 Got a body. Toss it with the rest.

ON SCREEN:

7 DOWN. TICK TOCK

SUNDAY - 10:00 PM

TICK TOCK. 12 HOURS REMAINING.

CUT TO:


INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT - MONDAY - 7:00 AM

Silence.

Light breaks through blinds like blades. The room is still.  
 Sacred.

CLOSE ON: A sleek black shirt. Then - a belt. A watch. His  
 signature boots.

Each item placed with quiet precision.

We hear the same violin motif –  the “Flowers” ghost note from earlier – now slightly fuller. Stronger. No lyrics yet. Just violin and breath.

INT. BATHROOM – CONTINUOUS

Alex stands shirtless in front of the mirror.

He rolls his left shoulder back. The ZEUS tattoo flashes.

He buttons the final black button. Smooth. Controlled.

Then – he reaches into a drawer. Pulls out the necklace. A double-cross. Heavy. Personal. Loaded.


He clasps it. Lets it rest on his collarbone. His armor is complete.

ROCKY watches from the sink counter. Head tilted. Eyes locked. A soldier at attention. Silent. Knowing.

ALEX  
(whispers)  
Time to finish the show.

SLAM TO BLACK.

ON SCREEN: TICK TOCK. MONDAY – 8:00 AM 4 HOURS REMAINING.

 AUDIO BEAT SFX: The faint pulse of “Calle Ocho” (Pitbull) Not the full song – just the rhythm. Bare bassline. Breath. A whisper of swagger.

Then:

VOICE (O.S.) – soft, ghostly, like a warning: VALE. ONE. TWO. THREE. FOUR. Uno... dos... tres... (beat) ...quatro.

QUATRO echoes long – pulled like a thread through black...

INT. SOUNDSTAGE – MONDAY – 10:00 AM – DAYLIGHT HARSH, TRUTH SHARP

FERNANDO  
You were always the weak one, Alex.  
I carried you. Protected you.  
Without me, you're nothing.

FERNANDO leans in. Too close. Too calm.

FERNANDO (CONT'D)  
 You always needed me. Always.  
 I made you. Without me—

ALEX  
 (quiet)  
 You done?

A beat.

Then — SLAP.

ALEX's hand snaps across Fernando's face. Not rage. Not panic. Control. Like slicing fruit with a single, clean blade.

FERNANDO freezes.

That silence? Biblical.

FERNANDO  
 (low, stunned)  
 You just hit me.

ALEX  
 (cold)  
 That wasn't a slap. That was the answer. You didn't carry me. You buried me. But I dug my way out. (steps forward) Pride isn't ego when it's earned.

FERNANDO  
 (chuckles, cold)  
 You really believe that?

Fernando turns. Alex turns — sees her. Not a savior. Not a sister. The storm.

ANNE  
 You're a poser, Fernando.  
 Your substance? As deep as a puddle  
 on Wilshire Blvd.

☞ THE HIT (UNCHANGED — PERFECT)

(SLOW MOTION)

Anne raises the gun — two hands. Steady.

ALEX  
 Anne — NO—!



He dives—

BANG.

(HOLD. TIME SUSPENDS)

The bullet rips through air. Alex takes it. Center mass. The heart. The light behind him flares white.

Then—

SLOW MOTION — ALEX CRUMPLES.

Blood blooms.

Fernando catches him.

FERNANDO'S BLOODY HANDPRINT presses to Alex's chest.

FERNANDO (QUIETLY)  
I told you... I always clean up  
your messes.

Blood starts to seep on to the floor.

Sirens WAIL in the distance. Red and blue lights flash faint outside.

ANNE (SCREAMING)  
Help! Someone help! He's been shot!

Anne bolts toward the light, a scream chasing her down the hallway.

The room spins.

FLASH IMAGE: ZEUS tattoo. Covered in blood.

THE FADE TO  
BLACK COULD  
LEAVE ONE FAINT  
RED PULSE, A  
HEARTBEAT-SHAPED  
GLOW, THEN  
VANISH.

ON SCREEN:

8 DOWN

TICK TOCK

BLACK SCREEN - AUDIO-ONLY SEQUENCE

SFX: HEARTBEAT.

Fast. Slowing. Fading.

BEEP. BEEP.

Medical rhythm. Then - a single breath from Alex.

FLATLINE.

Silence.

ON SCREEN:

ONE WEEK LATER.

EXT. CEMETERY - GRAVEL PATH - DAY

We see and hear only ANNE'S SHOES crunching gravel. Her breath. Her grief.

SFX: THE WIND. NOTHING ELSE.

She holds ROCKY to her chest.

One by one - the headstones.

Slow zoom on: ALEX VEGA - "He loved loud. He died silent."

You hold too long - audiences start tearing up.

We hold long on the gravestones:

FRANCISCO ALBA - Taken. Then taken again.

ROSE DELANEY - Mother. Sister. Ghost.

SIMONE BLACK - A voice too loud to silence.

CARL VEGA - A man they tried to erase.

QUENTIN BLACK - Producer. Manipulator. Liar.

DWAYNE BLACK - Believed in love. Died for it.

BRIDGET DELANEY - She wrote her ending in blood.

ALEX VEGA - He loved loud. He died silent.

We stay on Alex's grave for a few beats too long. The audience thinks:

ALEX (V.O.)  
 Eight graves. Eight stories buried  
 in silence. Seventy-two hours.  
 That's all it took. For everything  
 to change.

ANNE (V.O.)  
 You take that hurt.  
 You bottle it. Put it on the shelf.  
 You move on.

A soft wind moves the trees. Leaves drift like ash.

ANNE (V.O.)  
 You know that bottle's there.  
 Always. No worries. (beat) This  
 genie... Already out of the bottle.

ALEX (V.O.)  
 I shattered mine. So let them all  
 choke on the glass.

ANNE stands between the headstones. She holds ROCKY tight to her chest - the last warm thing. Her eyes scan the names.

ANNE (V.O.)  
 But one name... is missing.

From a distance, Fernando. - He watches. Sharp suit. Clean shoes. Unburied. Unbothered. Unforgiven.

He lights a cigarette. Takes one slow drag. Flicks it into the wind. And steps into shadow.

ON SCREEN:

There's always one left to lie.

FERNANDO (V.O.)  
 They were always playing checkers.  
 I was playing God.

Rocky's yes fixed on the horizon. Like he knows something.

Anne kneels. Whispers something we don't hear.

Rocky meows once, soft anlike an omen, a signal.

Then the faintest glint of the cane.

Anne touches the headstone. A HAND touches hers.

Gasps. A cane enters frame. She turns.

ALEX.

Bruised. Healing. Whole.

A whisper –

ALEX

Lone wolves don't know they're  
alone.

(beat)

They just keep moving.

(beat)

Vale.

Rumba.

FAINT SOUND – WIND. BIRDS. A BELL.

♪ MUSIC KICKS – “I KNOW YOU WANT ME (Calle Ocho)” – Pitbull  
(ALEJANDRO singing) Raw. Rough. Honest. Spanish and English  
flow like fire and gasoline.

SUNG O.S.

*Vale! One, two, three, four Uno,  
dos, tres, cuatro*

*I know you want me (Want me) You  
know I want ya (Want ya) I know you  
want me, eh You know I want ya  
(Want ya) (Ha-ha)*

Rocky leads. Alex and Anne walk slowly down the hill not  
running. Not hiding. Just moving forward.

The wind stirs the trees.

And behind them the city waits.

FADE OUT.

CREDIT ROLL AS THE SONG PLAYS. JUST OVER A MINUTE. LONG  
ENOUGH TO FEEL THE WEIGHT—AND THE LIFT

Silence.

FINAL IMAGE – POST-CREDITS



Outside – the world flows past. Silent. Watching.

Alex catches a flicker of himself in the SUV window – warped, fleeting. But just enough to catch it – the ZEUS tattoo glinting in the reflection.

A ghost of who he was. A glimpse of what he's becoming.

Ahead – the DEUCE'S WILD banner flaps in the wind.

ANNE

What about the movie?

A beat.

Alex doesn't turn. Just smiles – faint, bruised, burning.

ALEX

Still rolling.

(beat)

Taking the director's chair.

Thinking Gosling for Deuce.

ANNE

(smirks)

You're serious?

ALEX

Yeah. Launching my own banner. "**VR  
Productions.**"

She laughs. He leans his head back. The city opens up ahead.

EXT. HIGHWAY – CONTINUOUS

The SUV disappears into the horizon.

EXT. HIGHWAY – DUSK BLEEDS INTO NIGHT

The BLACK SUV disappears into the horizon.

CAMERA PANS LOW.

HOLD ON THE DRIVER-SIDE TAILLIGHT – the last pulse of red.

All goes silent.

The camera slips around the bumper... slower now... suspense and breath hanging...

CLOSE ON LICENSE  
PLATE:

REVNGE

BLACK SCREEN. SILENCE.

ALEX (V.O.)  
(low. final.)  
Macbeth.

Vale. Rumba.

CUT TO:

♪ "I KNOW YOU WANT ME (CALLE OCHO)" -  
PITBULL (ALEJANDRO)  
Latin beats. Swagger. Victory.

Let it ride for 30 seconds like a curtain call soaked in  
blood.

THEN - DROP TO BLACK. TOTAL SILENCE.

FADE IN - ONE  
LAST TIME:

INT. ALEX'S BEDROOM - UNKNOWN TIME

Rocky asleep on Alex's bare chest. Alex - alive. Healing.  
Asleep.

A moment that feels earned.

Then -

A VOICE (O.S.)

(soft, ghostly, sung like memory)  
"You told me I was all you'd ever  
need..."

Rocky's tail flicks once.

FADE TO BLACK.

**THE END.**