

REFUSE TO GO DARK

Written by

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07.11.25

Based on my dreams

NOTE ON MUSIC

Throughout this script, musical references are written "in the spirit of" certain songs or artists. These are intended only to suggest tone and atmosphere, and may be replaced in production. One exception: Bonnie Tyler's "Total Eclipse of the Heart" is woven into multiple sequences and is essential to the storytelling.

PRE-OPENER - 10 YEARS AGO

ON SCREEN: DENVER - 10 YEARS AGO

INT. MAKESHIFT OFFICE - DAY

A folding table for a desk. A buzzing fluorescent light. BRIAN (City Planner, mid-40s) sits across from ANGELO (35) and GUNNER (26). A secretary types faintly outside.

On the wall: a hand-painted sign - "A&G Building Consultants." A photo of Angelo and Gunner on a muddy job site.

The conversation is already heated.

ANGELO

Look, Brian, if you'd just see it my way-

BRIAN

(flat)

I don't have to see it your way.

Angelo's jaw tightens. Gunner presses a hand to his chest, steadying him.

GUNNER

Brian, you know Angelo's just... *passionate*.

(beat, forcing a smile)

We can deliver.

Angelo flashes teeth. Brian doesn't buy it.

BRIAN

Fine. I'll sign. But I want to deal with you, Gunner.

Your partner, Angelo, he makes me uneasy. Like a wild dog - always ready to bite.

Angelo's smile is sudden. Sharp.

ANGELO

Brian, come on - you cut me to the quick. I don't bite... much.

Brian stiffens. Gunner forces a grin to smooth it over.

Brian nods, doubtful. Signs. Exits. Silence.

INT. LOCAL BAR - NIGHT

Hours later. Bottles. Shots. Victory drowning in whiskey.

In the parking lot, Angelo jingles his keys.

GUNNER
(laughing, drunk)
No way, brother. Not you. I'll
drive.

They collapse into Angelo's massive truck. A beat. Angelo
just stares at Gunner.

GUNNER (CONT'D)
What?

ANGELO
(slurring, raw)
I want you.

GUNNER
You're drunk.

ANGELO
Not enough.

He kisses Gunner. Hard. Messy. Gunner shoves back.

GUNNER
Hey. Buddy. What the hell—

ANGELO
I'm not gay.
(beat, locked on him)
I just want you. Forever.

Angelo's head drops heavily into Gunner's lap. Passed out.

ANGLE ON GUNNER — frozen. His hand lifts, hovers just above
Angelo's head. Almost tender. Almost protective. But it never
lands.

He pulls back. Clenches his fist. The weight of it presses
down — and will never leave.

He exhales, voice barely a whisper.

GUNNER
(afterthought)
Oh, Ang... just ask me.
Say it.
You can want me.
(MORE)

GUNNER (CONT'D)
But look me in the eye when you do.
Want me – not the fantasy.

Silence. Angelo snores, dead to the world. The ache hangs in the air.

FADE TO BLACK.

TITLE CARD: REFUSE TO GO DARK

INT. FRANKIE'S STUDIO

ON SCREEN: IN THE NEAR FUTURE

Frankie (30) wipes paint from his hands, packs a bag, kills the lights. Warmth lingers.

EXT. SIDE STREET – NIGHT

A dark van idles, headlights off.

QUICK WTF
FLASHES:

– A gloved hand pulls a mask down over Frankie/

– A door SLAMS open.

– Heavy boots hit the pavement.

– A roll of duct tape pulled tight.

– A child's scream bleeds into the night – wrong place, wrong time – drowned under the van's screeching tires.

– Tires screech against asphalt.

The van disappears into the night.

BLACK SCREEN.

SILENCE.

INT. FRANKIE'S STUDIO – NIGHT

ON SCREEN: Present day

A sultry, soulful love anthem – in the spirit of Barry White's "You're the First, the Last, My Everything" – plays

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
Gunner, you're early.

GUNNER
Frankie, I couldn't wait.

Gunner pins Frankie to the wall. The camera pulls back. The song fades and then mashes up with a vibrant beat.

INT. GUNNER'S OFFICE - 4:00 PM

ON SCREEN: NEXT DAY

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
(firm)
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. I don't come this far
 to only get this far.

FRANKIE
 Angie you are a lost boy with no
 moral compass.

Frankie touches a finger to Angelo's lips.

Then—whispers in his ear.

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

He kisses Angelo on the mouth.

Gunner stiffens — jealous, protective, aroused? Even he
 doesn't know.

Frankie steps back. Smiles.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
 Now.
 Fuck off.

Silence.

Gunner starts to smile. Angelo sees it.

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, over-
loaded, 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. Gunner thinking about the meeting and Angelo thinking about his next move.

WHOMP. Gunner collides with a body.

GUNNER (CONT'D)
What the Fuck?

Tommy had been racing down the block. The collision with Gunner knocked him flat

ANGELO
(aggressive)
Jesus, kid – what the hell were you thinking?

He yanks TOMMY up like a rag doll.

GUNNER
(easy, calm)
Hey – you okay?

Tommy nods, eyes wide... but hardening.

GUNNER kneels to his level.

ANGELO paces, fists clenched, lighting a cigarette. Still fuming.

GUNNER (CONT'D)
He's just a kid, Ang.

ANGELO
(gritting)
Careful, kid. I'm the Big Bad Wolf.

TOMMY locks eyes with him.

No fear. Just fire.

GUNNER sees it. So does Angelo. A long beat.

GUNNER
(smoothing it out, gentle)
Wait... I know you.

TOMMY
You came to my school.
You're Mr. Gunner.
Your boyfriend, Frankie – he teaches art.
He's amazing.

GUNNER smiles. It's real.

Gunner smiles.

ANGELO

Kid

GUNNER

Tommy this is my friend, Angelo.

Tommy holds out his hand. Angelo looks like WTF. Gunner gives Angelo a look. Angelo then shakes hands with Tommy.

ANGELO

You gotta watch where your going.
Why were you running?

GUNNER

Tommy you sure your ok?

TOMMY

Mr. Gunner, I am ok.

Angelo peels back a \$10 and hands it to Tommy.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Oh I shouldn't take money from
strangers.

ANGELO

Kid, take it. I was ruff on you.

TOMMY

Mr. Gunner I see you around here.
I see a lot of what goes on, and
nobody sees me.

ANGELO

Nobody like a snitch.

Tommy and Angelo lock eyes. Angelo threatens with his look.

GUNNER

(change up)

Well, Tommy, we gotta go. If you
see me be sure to come up and see
hello. Andy if you ever see
anything not right you know where
I am.

Tommy nods and then walks away.

ANGELO

Kids. Glad I am not a father.

GUNNER
Shit and I was just about to call
you Daddy. Come on time for
drinks.

There is an alley and Angelo 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 like you.

GUNNER
Say it all you want, Ang.
You're still the one who kissed me
first.

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.

SFX: Faintly and weirdly "*Total eclipse of the Heart*" is
playing in Angelo's head.

Gunner walks towards the bar. Angelo stops for a moment and breathes in his arm that just pinned Gunner to the wall. Smelling in the scent.

CLAP CLAP - the song abruptly stops.

Gunner just clapped his hands twice (like you would for a dog)

GUNNER (CONT'D)
Where the fuck are you? (he laughs)

Gunner walks on.

ANGELO
(low and under his breath)
Turn around bright eyes.

INT. THE WOLF'S TAILOR - LOUNGE - NIGHT

ON SCREEN LAST WEEK, FRIDAY NIGHT.

Gunner and Angelo enter.

Low hum of wealth. Waiters twitch, like animals before a quake.

Frankie having a drink at the opposite end of the bar. Low key.

Doors part.

PANDORA WHITELEY (50s) enters - red coat whispering across the floor, black gloves, eyes like scalpels.

She doesn't enter. She claims the room.

A waiter sees her - can't look away - and bumps into a woman in a **bias-cut silk gown**.

Off-white. Clinging. Impossibly pristine.

The Bloody Mary splashes across her hip like a wound.

The sound - *wet, intimate* - cuts the room sharper than a scream.

Pandora sees it. Winks at the waiter.

He flushes - equal parts shame and pride.

She plucks a cigar from a man's table without looking.

He lights it, trembling.

She exhales smoke like a curse.

PANDORA
(to Gunner, smooth)
You've been avoiding me.

GUNNER
(grinning, growls)
Or making you chase me.

ANGELO pushes into her eyeline. She barely registers him.

PANDORA
(dry)
You brought the bulldog.

Angelo stiffens. Gunner slings an arm around him, masking the sting.

Across the bar, Frankie catches it. A smirk. Just enough to needle Angelo deeper.

Angelo clocks Frankie's smirk. It burns deeper than Pandora's words.

GUNNER
In business, it's always Angelo and me.

PANDORA
(cutting)
No. It's you. Then scraps for him.

Pandora motions for Frankie to come over. He does and he and Pandora lock arms.

PANDORA (CONT'D)
(beat, to Gunner)
Bring Frankie Friday. He has taste.
You? Style. Him? Sparkle.

She brushes Gunner's chest, then turns – the whole room following her like smoke.

Angelo simmers. Bulldog humiliated.

FRANKIE
Gunner I have a client in 30 minutes.

ANGELO
People actually pay you for that
shit?

Frankie not bothered. He smiles to Gunner and leaves.
A beat. Gunner exhales. He takes the ring out. Stares at it.
Angelo shifts, about to speak—
Gunner cuts him off with a hand.

GUNNER
You know—

ANGELO
I hate that bitch. Bulldog. Fuck
her.

GUNNER
My boy, she brings us clients.

ANGELO
I am not your boy.

Gunner sips. Calm.

GUNNER
(laughs)
Touchy. 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 storms off—

CRASH.

He slams into a WAITER with a tray of martinis.
Glass explodes. Liquid everywhere. The waiter hits the floor.
Silence.

Gunner's smile holds, but his eyes flick — dark, clocking
Angelo's spiral. A mental note he won't forget.

The room freezes.

Glass shards. Martini pooling. Angelo's reflection—distorted, furious.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
(to waiter, venomous)
You fucking faggot. Watch where
you're going.

Gunner steps in, smooth, calm.

GUNNER
Easy, Ang. Go home. Come by in an
hour, we'll get dinner.

ANGELO
What about Francine?

GUNNER
I'll have him hook up with Pandora.
They'll talk for hours.

ANGELO
That cunt.

GUNNER
(smirk)
Which one?

ANGELO
(low)
Both.

He storms out.

CAMERA PULLS BACK — Gunner pays for the damage, consoles the waiter, and slips into casual conversation at another table.

Scene ends.

EXT. CAPITOL HILL - MOMENTS LATER

Angelo on the street corner with FINCH and CROSBY

From across the street, Angelo watches Gunner's taillights vanish. Eyes hungry, jaw tight. Left out. Again.

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 Spanish)

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
Spanish 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)

Friday 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 Spanish)
 Ay, Papi... déjame encargarme de
 él.
 (Oh Papi, let me take him
 out.)

ANGELO
 (cold, calm—in Spanish)
 Déjenme a Gunner.
 (Leave Gunner to me.)

The streetlight flickers. His shadow swallows Finch and Crosby whole.

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

INT. GUNNER'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

ON SCREEN ONE WEEK EARLIER, FRIDAY NIGHT GUNNER'S PENTHOUSE

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

EXT. BALCONY - NIGHT

Vodka. Lime. Cigar. GUNNER stands at the railing, city sprawling below.

Keys drop. Ice cracks. Pour. Footsteps. ANGELO joins.
 Silence. Click. Smoke.

INT. GUNNER'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Angelo fixes a drink. Passes the full-length mirror.

He stops. Opens one more button. Lets his chest breathe.
Muscles. Control. Desire.

The light flickers. In the reflection: Gunner appears.
Standing beside him. Strong. Loyal. His.

Angelo doesn't move. Doesn't blink.

He touches the mirror. Just for a second. Like he might reach
through.

Flicker. Gone.

Just glass now. Just him. Alone. Again.

His face hardens – mask returning.

He downs his drink.

Heads for the balcony.

EXT. BALCONY – NIGHT

ANGELO
(cool)
You deal with it?

GUNNER
Handled. Pandora got her blood.

ANGELO
Bitch.

GUNNER
(nods)
Aren't we all.
(beat)
You got to stop losing control.
Reflects on both of us.

ANGELO
(soft)
I know.

GUNNER pulls him into a quick, crushing hug. A second of
softness. Then gone.

They separate. Smoke again. Another clink.

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

Gunner winks.

GUNNER
About you? Or me?

Angelo flinches—then SWINGS. Clean right hook.

GUNNER drops, wipes blood, grins — not angry, not forgiving.
Just knowing. He stands. Hands the glass back.

GUNNER (CONT'D)
(low, knife-edge)
You've been dodging my cologne
fifteen years.
(beat)
Guess you like it rough.
(cool)
I'm taking a shower. Fifteen
minutes, Angelo.
We're gonna talk, truths.

For a second, Angelo looks like a man drowning, clutching at
smoke. Gunner holds his look.

Gunner goes inside. Offscreen:

GUNNER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Alexa, play Barry White.

Barry White fills the night.

ANGELO exhales — turned on, torn open. Stares at the city
like it might save him.

ANGELO
(whisper in Spanish)
Los secretos sangran
(Secrets bleed)

Jet overhead. Quiet. Unreachable. His eyes follow it into the
dark.

INT. GUNNER'S PENTHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Water runs. Steam curls.

ANGELO stands alone. Shaken. Hungry. He glances toward the
bathroom — silhouette behind frosted glass. Muscle. Skin.

He breathes in, sharp. Takes a step closer— Gunner's muscled
body through the steamed glass.

Angelo exhales a low, guttural sound. Rubs his jaw raw, hungry for what he sees.

Buzz. Gunner's phone lights up.

CLOSE ON SCREEN: FRANKIE CALLING.

Angelo stares. Lets it ring. Then-picks up. Cool, silk on steel.

ANGELO

Francine.

FRANKIE (V.O.)

(confused)

Angelo? Where's Gunner? Why are you answering his phone, again?

ANGELO

(relaxed, cruel in French)

L'amour est une arme (Love is a weapon)

(Now in English)

Calm down, boy. He's fine.

I got him. We're going to dinner.

He won't be needing you tonight.

He ends the call. Deletes the log. Wipes the screen.

The reflection in the black screen stares back – not Frankie. Not Gunner. Just Angelo, alone.

Puts it back – perfect position.

The SHOWER STOPS. Door opens. GUNNER enters in a towel – damp, cut, gold-shadowed.

ANGELO gasps. Turns away, flustered.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

(beat, almost dreamy)

Your phone's got a nice weight.
Feels powerful.

GUNNER

(eyes narrow)

Ang... You want a phone, get a phone.
The company pays for it.

Angelo drifts towards the windows. IN the reflection Gunner drops his towel and dries off. Angelo see the reflection.

Gunner sees that he is seen. Gunner pulls on jeans and his boots.

He pulls out his own phone. Fingers dance across the screen.

ANGELO [TEXTING]
*I have big plans for you, Francine.
 Be patient. I'm almost done seeking
 the talent. Then you'll be my only
 focus. For now.*

He hits SEND.

INT. PANDORA'S PENTHOUSE- NIGHT

FRANKIE'S PHONE LIGHTS.

He reads the message. Sharp intake of breath.

ANGELO (V.O.)
*I have big plans for you, Francine.
 Be patient. I'm almost done seeking
 the talent. Then you'll be my only
 focus. For now.*

Frankie freezes. Pandora notices.

PANDORA
 Frankie? You okay?

INT. GUNNER'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Angelo smiles big and let's out a low moan.

ANGELO
 (in Spanish)
 El amor es guerra, y yo nunca
 pierdo
 (Love is war and I never
 lose.)

In the reflection Gunner puts on his shirt, not yet buttoned. Angelo sees the reflection. He turns. Looks at Gunner full-on. Captured by the man in front of him.

GUNNER
 (snaps fingers)
 Hey. You with me?

Beat.

ANGELO looks up, smile tight. The mirror catches him — split in two.

One side wants Gunner.

The other knows he already lost.

INT. PANDORA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

ON SCREEN: ONE WEEK EARLIER, FRIDAY NIGHT - Pandora's Penthouse

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.

INT. PANDORA'S ESTATE - PRIVATE STUDY - NIGHT

CLICK. The phone line dies. Frankie just stares at it in his hand, as if it might bleed.

PANDORA
(smirk returning, armor
back on)
That didn't sound like "he'll be
right over."
Cuban Psycho pick up?

Frankie nods. His voice flat.

FRANKIE
Yeah.
(beat — Pandora studies
him, her smirk fading.
She softens.)

PANDORA
I've made choices.
I let things go.
(MORE)

PANDORA (CONT'D)
(beat, glancing at him) And I'm not
happy about all of them. But they
were mine. And I have to live with
them.

She slides a check across the table. Frankie stares.

FRANKIE
Pandora... this is too much.

She pushes it back, firm.

PANDORA
No. It's not enough.

Frankie exhales, then tucks the check into his pocket. No
more words. Acceptance.

Then Pandora exhales – mask slipping back on.

PANDORA (CONT'D)
So let's plan the party.

FRANKIE
Color theme?

PANDORA
(flat, deadpan)
Cops & Mobsters. Full Dick Tracy.
And white roses. My son hates red.

FRANKIE
(beat, surprised)
I didn't know you had a child.

PANDORA
(mask snapping back on –
smirk)
Oh darling, you don't know half of
me. Now—roses. White. Perfect.

FRANKIE
(flat)
Oh me too. Red roses are so
overdone.

PANDORA
(smiles)
We're hosting a costume party in a
city full of criminals.
White will be—

FRANKIE + PANDORA
Perfect.

ON THE WORD — "Perfect."

The sound holds, echoing too long. A glass clinks. A candle flame flickers.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT — NIGHT

A candle between ANGELO and GUNNER flickers the same way — but harsher, like a fuse ready to burn. Upscale but low-lit. Leather booths. Jazz drifting in from another room. A whiskey bottle between them. Two glasses. Neither relaxed.

Music swells in — sultry, tragic, twisted. A song in the spirit of Beyoncé's "Back to Black."

Lyrics coil like smoke: ownership, loss, obsession.

The silence between them says more than the music ever could.

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.

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— (beat, eyes
fixed)
You'd bro-hug me just a little too
long. Then pass out on my lap while
I was the one driving.

CLOSE ON ANGELO — the smallest flicker crosses his face.
Almost human. Almost. Then gone.

The song in the style of "Back to Black" bleeds back in,
darker now – ownership, obsession.

ANGELO
And if I say yes?

GUNNER
Then say yes.

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
(with frustration and
passion in French)
Regarde-moi. Toujours moi
(Look at me. Always me.)

Gunner unsure what the means in French. Looking for a
translation. He doesn't know the words, but the obsession in
them hits like a blade.

Angelo steps forward and takes Gunner's forearm, hard.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
(sighs)
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 dead on look and squeezes Angelo's hand

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

Beat.

Angelo just surrendered in that moment.

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

He gets up. He rubs his jaw.

GUNNER (CONT'D)
I bet this leaves a bruise. I will
catch you tomorrow.

He winks.

Angelo's grip tightens on the glass. It cracks — a hairline fracture that runs straight down the stem.

SFX - CLINK as the glass fractures.

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

ONE WEEK AGO, SATURDAY.

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

What?

Gunner takes out his phone. His reflection in the screen.
He scrolls. No message or call from Frankie.

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. Wait is that
a bruise?

Beat. He notices the jaw line on Gunner from the hit the
night before.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

Are you two...?

GUNNER

No. He's... complicated.

FRANKIE
(sips, watching him)
He's obsessive.

GUNNER
No, that's just Ang.

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 Friday at
Pandora's. She is lining up
clients for you.
Costumes mandatory.
If he shows up with a fake Tommy
gun, I'm calling SWAT.

GUNNER chuckles. Barely.

Gunner looks out the window.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
She gave me a check last night.

GUNNER
A check? For what?

FRANKIE
Wants to invest in my future.

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)
Not my lamp.
I love you, Gunner.

Silence. Eyes locked

Gunner's jaw works. His lips part. Nothing comes.
Then—finally:

GUNNER
I know.
(beat — he won't look at
Frankie, eyes on the
glass instead. A wall. A
shield.)

FRANKIE
(questioning, quiet)
And?

The jukebox skips. The chatter thins, as if the room itself
is holding its breath.

Frankie doesn't break eye contact. Gunner finally looks up —
and the armor cracks.

GUNNER
(soft, unguarded)
And I love you, too.

A hand — hesitant, then sure — finds Frankie's across the
table. Not a grip. Just contact.

The noise of the bar rushes back in, but off-key: laughter
too loud, glasses clinking too sharp. Frankie exhales, the
faintest smile breaking through.

For one suspended moment, the world isn't theirs.

But they claim it anyway.

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.

Outside, the cruiser siren wails. Neither moves. The sound
bleeds into the next scene.

GUNNER
I'm heading to the office.

INT. A&G BUILDERS OFFICES - WAR ROOM -

A&G Builders sign on the wall. Awards. Photos of Angelo and Gunner.

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 Spanish,
smooth like sin)
La fête est vendredi.
Costume party. Cops and Mobsters.
Juego empezado. (Game on.)

FINCH
(grinning, in Spanish)
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. Gunner is down to business.

GUNNER
Crosby, Can you run a background on
two guests showing up Friday 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 Spanish)
¿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 Spanglish?
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?

GUNNER pulls out a business card, flips it between his
fingers like a gambler.

Reads it aloud. CAMERA CLOSE on the card.

GUNNER (CONT'D)
(beat, smirks)
"Jack Wild — WILD CARD INC. Private
& Personal Security."

Ah—The Wild Card.

Gunner wry smile.

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. A&G BUILDERS OFFICES - WAR ROOM - 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. The conversation is in progress.

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
(leans forward, even))
No, Angelo. But we are the first
ones who didn't ask.
You're not giving us the keys.
We're showing you how the door
opens now.

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*.

Angelo's eyes narrow. He flushes. The kettle of obsession inside is building. Jack sees it.

Gunner clocks Angelo's flush. Files it away. Another mental note.

Silence.

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

JACK (CONT'D)

(smooth)

Angie, looks like you want to say something?

ANGELO

(sharp)

Don't call me by that, ever, again.

They stare. Jack winks. Deuce smiles.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

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.

(MORE)

GUNNER (CONT'D)
You're on the list for Friday.
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, *Angie*, to quit
making eyes at me. We're not in bed
together. Yet.

ANGELO
(cutting)
You wish.

JACK
(smiles)
Don't flatter yourself.
I know the difference between
hunger and fantasy.

They exit.

Angelo watches the door too long. His reflection stares back
in the glass wall, eyes darker than before.

DEUCE
(offscreen, laughing)
Told you, Jack. Denver's got heat.
Now let's see if it burns.

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

LAST SATURDAY

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.

Each push-up hits like penance. Each rise, a vow.

Sweat drips like blood on concrete.

He counts out each one.

ANGELO
(as he pushes)
One — Frankie.
Two — Gunner. Three — forever.
(beat, ragged))
Ten — he dies.
Eleven — Frankie dies.

Candle crackles, cutting the silence

Sweat hits the concrete – dark, like blood.
(closer to breaking)

ANGELO (CONT'D)
Twenty-five – Gunner's mine.
Twenty-eight – if I can't have him..
Twenty-nine – I will.
Thirty – forever.

The votive candle by the photo strip flickers – almost
gutters out – then steadies.

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

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 (QUIET, ALMOST TENDER)
It seems plain to me that Gunner
just doesn't see me... yet.
Whatever he sees in Francine— (he
glances at himself in the mirror.
Abs. Chest. Face. Approves.) —I
have more.

(beat)

INT. ANGELO'S OBSESSION ROOM – NIGHT

Candlelight. Angelo stares at Gunner's photo. Ragged breath.

ANGELO
(low, to himself)
It should be me. Frankie's just the
stand-in.

Gunner and Angelo – forever. Or not at all.

He rubs his chest. The song swells –  "Nothing I can do... a
total eclipse of the heart..." 

He closes his eyes. Thumbs his phone.

TEXT (ANGELO TYPING)
*Francine, soon it will be just you
and I. No words needed.*

He hits SEND.

The door creaks. CROSBY steps in, wide-eyed at the shrine.

CROSBY
Boss?

Angelo turns, wild-eyed.

ANGELO
(deadly calm)
Not. A. Word.

Then, in French:

ANGELO (CONT'D)
Pas un mot... ou tu es un homme mort.

He turns back, kisses Gunner's photo. Presses it to his chest.

Crosby looks on — like he's watching a man pray to a god who never loved him back.

INT. GUNNER'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Gunner's phone buzzes. He frowns, picks it up. Reads:

TEXT (ON SCREEN)
*Francine, soon it will be just you
and I. No words needed.*

His brow furrows.

GUNNER
What the fuck is this?

He dials.

SPLIT SCREEN - RIGHT: GUNNER / LEFT: ANGELO

Angelo sees Gunner's name. Smiles.

ANGELO
(light)
Gunner. Just thinking about you.

GUNNER

(angry)

What the hell is this? You and
Frankie hooking up behind my back?

ANGELO

(stunned)

What? Hell no. Frankie's not my
type.

GUNNER

Bullshit. Look at the text you just
sent me.

Angelo checks – sees his mistake. Face drains. His lips part.
For a breath, he almost believes he meant to.

ANGELO

Fuck. I messed up.

GUNNER

Messed up? You're my best friend.
I'm gonna marry Frankie. What the
hell are you doing?

ANGELO

(stalling)

It's not what you think–

GUNNER

Then think fast, Ang. Convince me.

ANGELO

It was a joke. A stunt. For the
party. Frankie and I–

GUNNER

Stop. You've never even seen
Mildred Pierce. You wouldn't know
obsession if it was right in front
of you. You're lying.

ANGELO

(defensive)

So what, you threatening me?

GUNNER

No threat. Last chance. Truth.

Angelo paces, cornered.

ANGELO

Fine. I wanted a rise out of him.
Frankie always cuts me down. I
wanted to make him flinch.

GUNNER

You just lit a tornado.

Beat.

GUNNER (CONT'D)

I'm clearing this up with Frankie.
I find out more, you're finished.

CLICK. Line dies.

SPLIT SCREEN ENDS - BACK TO ANGELO'S SHRINE

Silence.

SPLIT SCREEN ENDS - BACK TO ANGELO'S SHRINE

Silence.

CROSBY

Boss... you good?

ANGELO

(icy calm)
Right as fucking rain.

Crosby shifts, uneasy. Angelo stares past him, lost in the
flicker of the candles.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

(low, mystical)
It always ends this way.
They think they can leave.
Nobody leaves.
(beat)
Just you and I.
No words needed.

CROSBY

Boss?

ANGELO

(snaps, venom)
"Obsessive"? Fuck that.
Gunner'll see it my way.
Or I bury the bridge.
Like before.

He blows out the candle. Darkness swallows Gunner's face.

In the dark — Angelo's breath. Slow. Hungry.

Fade out.

INT. PANDORA'S ESTATE — NIGHT

ON SCREEN: FRIDAY NIGHT COPS AND MOBSTERS

A dreamy disco ballad — in the spirit of "Love Is In The Air"
— drifts smoky and slow.

Gold light. Crystal. Velvet and silk. Danger in the air.

FOYER, Frankie in 1940s private-eye chic.

Gunner in black three-piece. PANDORA descends in femme fatale
drag.

PANDORA
My angels of death and
virtue—welcome.

She kisses both men. Her eyes slide to ANGELO across the
room.

Angelo. Fedora. Red carnation. Scotch. Pandora approaches,
Angelo.

Pandora produces a chrome dog collar tag stamped: KILLER.
Clips it around his neck.

A ripple of laughter breaks out. Too loud. Too cruel.

Angelo forces a grin. But his knuckles whiten around the
glass — a faint crack spiders across it. A bead of blood at
his palm.

PANDORA (CONT'D)
There. Now you're dressed.
Every dog needs a collar.

The room watches. He bristles.

From the bar—

BAR PATRON
(sarcastic, loud)
Woof! Woof!

The laughter spikes. Then dies just as fast.

Angelo's eyes lock on the heckler. If looks could kill, the man would already be on the floor.

ANGELO
(under his breath, venom)
You die before the night is over.

CAMERA PUSHES IN — his reflection in the scotch glass warps into something monstrous. He sets the drink down hard. The ice CRACKS like a bone snapping.

ANGLE ON BAR PERSON — mid-laugh, but their smile falters when they see Angelo's stare. Unblinking. Animal. Promising.

The room carries on — laughter, music, chatter — but between the two of them, silence.

Predator and prey, marked in invisible ink.

A BLOOD-RED LIGHT from the disco ball passes over Angelo's face — like a kill mark.

Doors open. JACK & DEUCE arrive. Suave. Lethal. The crowd is intrigued.

Angelo shrugs off his jacket, strips to a white A-shirt. Animal unchained. His muscles and strength ripple through.

He walks up to Jack & Deuce.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
(to Jack)
Got a cigar, Chicago?

Deuce pulls out a cigar. Jack flicks the lighter. Flame between them.

DEUCE leans in to Angelo and needles something sharp — half Spanish, half French.

Angelo SNAPS — a blur — CRACKS Deuce across the jaw. Deuce goes down hard.

JACK's gun is already cocked, steady, cold. INches from Angelo's temple.

JACK
That's the last time you touch my
man. Apologize.

Angelo spits on the floor.

ANGELO
You think Denver bows to Chicago?
(In French)
Tout finit par brûler.
(Everything burns in the
end)

GUNNER steps in, low and sharp – the only thing holding the fuse.

GUNNER
Ang... come on. You're making a scene.

Beat. All eyes on Angelo. His pride burns, but the barrel doesn't blink.

Through clenched teeth–

ANGELO
I'm sorry.

Jack tilts his head, amused.

JACK
(in French, cold)
Et les cendres parlent plus fort
que les flammes.
(And the ashes speak
louder than the flames.)

Without breaking eye contact, Jack slowly holsters his gun.

The gesture lands harder than a shot. Dominance. Final.

Deuce hauls himself up, wiping the blood from his lip.

DEUCE
(in Spanish, mocking)
Gracias, Denver... por el espectáculo barato.
(Thanks, Denver... for the cheap show.)

He smirks, flicking the blood onto the floor at Angelo's feet.

The silence holds. Pandora CLAPS once, sharp as a pistol shot.

The air breaks.

PANDORA
Welcome to Cops and Mobsters.
Reggie play on!

The band SWELLS, music rushing in to smother the unease.

The band swells. Laughter covers unease—

FRONT DOOR SLAMS OPEN

FINCH & PARTNER storm in. "This is a robbery!" Shots in the ceiling. Chaos—then BANG. BANG. Both men crumple. Blood pools.

JACK & DEUCE stand smoking guns. Pandora applauds. Alone at first.

PANDORA
Our second act—brought to you by
our Chicago guests.

The crowd joins in—out of fear. Angelo cuts through, hissing at Jack:

ANGELO
Next time, the blood's mine to
spill.

Pandora smiles, directing traffic:

PANDORA
Kitchen. Now.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

PANDORA, GUNNER, FRANKIE, JACK, DEUCE. Angelo in the shadows.

PANDORA
Who planned this? Were those real
bullets?

JACK
We shoot truth.

DEUCE
In my town, we shoot first.

Pandora lets it simmer, then pivots—resetting her stage.

INT. PANDORA'S ESTATE - PATIO - NIGHT

The jazz waltz hums. Guests lean close, whispering. Pandora moves among them like perfume, silk gloves trailing.

PANDORA
(to WOMAN IN SILK DRESS,
sotto)
Do you trust Angelo?
(smile, sipping)
I wouldn't. He loves too loud. That
kind always betrays.

She drifts on before the woman can answer.

AT ANOTHER TABLE - She bends between a pair of bankers.

PANDORA (CONT'D)
(laughing, then low)
Jack and Deuce... they kill too
easily. You'll see. That isn't
power. It's panic.

They look rattled. She floats away.

ANGLE ON FRANKIE - already on edge, watching Gunner across the table. Pandora leans in, whispers like honey:

PANDORA (CONT'D)
You shine brighter than he does.
Don't let him tell you otherwise.

Frankie flinches - she smiles, gone before Gunner can notice.

AT THE HEAD TABLE - she settles finally at Gunner's side, brushing his shoulder.

PANDORA (CONT'D)
(soft, with steel)
You keep dangerous company.
And dogs on too long a leash bite
the master.

Gunner stiffens, but says nothing.

She stands, clinks her glass. The room hushes. Every guest she touched is staring, unsettled. We've seen her spin the web. Now she pulls it tight:

PANDORA (CONT'D)
(bold, final)
To blood... betrayal... and boys who
play with fire.

The crowd raises glasses – fractured, uneasy. Coup de grâce.

PANDORA (CONT'D)
(smiling)
Dinner is served.

EXT. PATIO – NIGHT

Dinner under string lights. French café jazz.

Guests whisper: actors or real?

JACK & DEUCE eat like wolves.

DEUCE
Think they like us?

JACK
They should. We're the only reason
they're still breathing.

POV – Gunner and Frankie at their table.

FRANKIE
(quiet, to Gunner)
Jack didn't blink.
(beat)
...Is it bad I think that's hot?

GUNNER
Only if you think about it twice.

Frankie's phone BUZZES. Screen glows in the dark.

INSERT – The message.

****ANGELO (V.O., TEXT)****
*I saw you. You looked perfect
tonight. Killer.*

Frankie's breath catches.

GUNNER
Frankie... what's that?

FRANKIE
(quiet, evasive)
Nothing I can't finish.

Gunner studies him – long, hard.

Frankie doesn't flinch.

BALCONY - SAME

ANGELO smokes. PANDORA joins - silent at first. She studies the party below like a queen watching pawns.

PANDORA

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

ANGELO

Dead.

PANDORA

(eyes narrowing)

Leave Frankie out of this. Gunner's downfall is the headline.

She taps the table to get his attention.

ANGELO

(flat, dangerous)

I heard you.

(beat; he fingers the dog collar)

Killer suits me.

He strides off. Pandora watches the ballroom - the party breathes like a wounded animal.

PANDORA

(soft, to herself)

And the wolves are already circling.

EXT. PANDORA'S GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

ANGELO catches CROSBY in the shadows. Frankie lingers unseen, half-concealed.

ANGELO

(low growl)

Finch dead? You stupid fuck.

He CRACKS Crosby across the face. Crosby drops hard, choking back a groan.

ANGELO grabs his collar, hisses close - quiet rage more lethal than shouting.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

You screw me again, I'll put you in the ground next to him.

Frankie GASPS – barely – as he stumbles into a garbage can.
The clang echoes.

Angelo's head SNAPS toward the sound. His eyes blaze –
predator scenting prey.

Silence. Frankie eases back into the party.

Angelo lingers on the darkness – listening. Savoring the fear
he knows is there.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
(low, to Crosby)
Get up. Get it together.

He shoves past, wolf-eyed, back toward the ballroom glow.

Crosby groans in the dirt.

TERRACE - LATER

Moonlight. Smoke. JACK & DEUCE close in on GUNNER.

JACK
We like you. And Frankie.
But Angelo? He's hungry. And hungry
eats. Let us take his place.

A long pause.

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

They vanish into the night. Gunner exhales smoke. Frankie
watches, wary.

FRANKIE
What just happened?

GUNNER
The floor just moved. Toward blood.
Or better

INT. BALCONY - SAME

ANGELO watches from above. The city glittering behind him.

Pandora joins him. She looks out. Sips her martini. Angelo
smokes his cigar.

PANDORA
Finch?

ANGELO
Dead.

PANDORA
You were supposed to shoot.

ANGELO
That won't happen again.

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

She looks dead-on at Angelo.

PANDORA (CONT'D)
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.

Angelo smokes again. Cool. No response.

ANGELO
You want...You want. You
want...time I get what I want.
(low)
You don't tell me who to love. Or
who to bury.

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. She sees Crosby texting across
 the room.

Pandora's eyes narrow. Her smile never falters.

SF: the sound of her fingers drumming on the table.

The band strikes up a song in the likeliness of "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.

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 track him like a hawk sighting prey.

She leans toward a TUXEDOED THUG by the bandstand.

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

The band swells.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. PANDORA'S ESTATE - BACK BAR / LOUNGE - NIGHT

The disco ball spins. Velvet couches. Laughter muffled through the walls.

ANGLE ON SAL - laughing with an OLDER WOMAN.

From the shadows: ANGELO. A steak knife twirls low at his thigh.

He leans over the couch, gaze fixed on the woman.

ANGELO
(low, gravel)
Mind if I cut in?

The woman bolts. Her drink trembles on the armrest.

SOUND DESIGN - The party ducks into muffled silence. Just SAL'S BREATH and the faint clink of Angelo's blade.

Sal looks up - pale.

SAL
(stammering)
It was just a joke, man-

Angelo grips his shirt, lifts him effortlessly, and SLAMS him against the wall. Glass rattles.

ANGELO
(calm, deadly)
Jokes don't bleed.

Sal squirms. Angelo clamps a hand over his mouth, whispering in his ear.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
What's your name?

SAL
(muffled, terrified)
S-Sal...

The knife flashes. SLICE. The silence breaks with the wet sound of a body folding. Blood streaks down the wall.

ANGELO
(soft, venomous)
Not barking now, are you, Sal?
(beat)
Like I said... you die before the
night is over.

Angelo straightens. Lights a cigar off a candle.

Behind him — Sal's body crumpled. The PARTY ROARS on, oblivious.

ANGLE ON PANDORA from across the foyer, watching like a hawk. Her eyes narrow, smile sharp as glass.

PANDORA
(soft, to herself)
My Killer's off the leash.

INT. GUNNER'S PENTHOUSE - DUSK

Shades drawn. Dusk glow. An easel waits, paints ready.

FRANKIE adjusts a lamp, lost in ritual.

BUZZ. Phone lights up.

INSERT — TEXT MESSAGE.

****ANGELO (V.O., TEXT)****
When can I be your subject?
How will you capture me?
I already have you on a short
leash.
Nowhere to hide from me, boy.

Frankie's breath quickens. He looks around, unsettled.

The front door OPENS.

GUNNER storms in, shoulders heavy with the day. Long work day.

He yanks off his tie, cracks a beer, drinks deep.

A long sigh.

FRANKIE

Gunner?

GUNNER jumps, almost spilling the bottle.

GUNNER

Jesus—you scared me.

FRANKIE

I'm ready for you.

GUNNER

(suspicious)

Ready for what?

FRANKIE

Tonight... you're my subject.

(beat)

I want to capture your soul.

GUNNER smirks, dark.

GUNNER

Gotta have one first. Lost mine years ago.

FRANKIE

Take your clothes off.

GUNNER's eyebrow arches.

GUNNER

Finally, something I understand.

(beat)

You sure you don't want Angelo to pose? He's been on my ass all day—

FRANKIE

(sharp, cutting)

Shhh. Just you.

GUNNER hesitates, then obeys. Shirt falls. Frankie GASPS.

GUNNER

I know you want this.

FRANKIE
Boots off. Pants off.
(beat, teasing)
Boots back on.

GUNNER chuckles, does it. Frankie crowns him with a black cowboy hat, then slides it down to cover his crotch. A wink.

ANGELO (V.O.)
Whatever Francine has...
I have more.

— A MONTAGE OF POSES, LAUGHTER, QUIET MURMURS. CLOSE-UPS of paint strokes, sweat, eyes.

INT. GUNNER'S PENTHOUSE - LATER

FRANKIE adds one final brush stroke.

FRANKIE
There.

GUNNER steps behind him, arms wrapping around his waist as he stares at the painting.

GUNNER
Damn. That's me?

He takes the brush from Frankie's hand.

GUNNER (CONT'D)
Now this cowboy's ready to
ride-bareback.

He kisses Frankie's neck, leading him down the hall.
Laughter, moans fading.

The CAMERA HOLDS on the painting—Gunner's eyes alive on canvas.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. ANGELO'S OBSESSION ROOM - NIGHT

Those same eyes. But framed. Photographs. Hundreds of them.

ANGELO sits in the shadows, staring.

ANGELO
(whisper, venomous)
Whatever Francine has...
I have more.

INT. FRANKIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Dark. Quiet. Frankie moves with purpose.

He opens his laptop. Fingers tremble but his eyes are steady. A folder blinks: "PANDORA PARTY - SURVEILLANCE CAM 2." He clicks.

ON SCREEN -
KITCHEN
(EARLIER):

ANGELO, CROSBY, FINCH huddle.

CROSBY
Blood packs loaded.

Finch slaps his chest - proud, like a trained dog.

CROSBY (CONT'D)
Your gun's blanks only.

ANGELO pulls a backup from his boot.

ANGELO
Got a real one. Just in case.

CROSBY
Not needed. We've staged it.

Angelo leans in, voice a blade.

ANGELO
If this gets fucked up—don't run.
You'll die in Denver.

Crosby nods. Finch nods.

CROSBY
Fake stick-up. Blood pops.

Angelo rides in the hero.

BACK TO FRANKIE:

He freezes the frame. Shuts his eyes. Breath short.

Opens a new email.

TO: ANGELO.G@VEGASCOUNCIL.NET

SUBJECT: WE NEED TO TALK.

Attaches the footage. Types:

FRANKIE (V.O., TYPING)
Mr. Guerrilla—
Explain before I take this to
Gunner and Pandora. You get one
shot.

He hits SEND. The laptop hums — a lone blue glow. Frankie slams it shut, but the glow lingers in his eyes.

His hands shake.

He kills the lights.

Only the laptop screen remains — glowing in the dark.

A target painted on Frankie's face.

FADE OUT.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. GUNNER'S OFFICE - DAY

ON SCREEN SATURDAY

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
Ang, how's your mother, Maria?
Still ironing your shirts for you?

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)
Not a threat.
A flashlight.
So you could see yourself 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. You track me.
Watch me. You text me.
You don't know Gunner's heart when
it's steady. I do.

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

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
This obsession of yours.
You want him? Step out of the dark.
Take him. But you can't make
someone love you.

A long stare. No expression.

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

The blinds shift in the breeze. Bars of shadow crawl across
Frankie's face like prison stripes.

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. Slide the paper perfectly
square again.

ANGELO
Show yourself out.
And don't forget, KILLER sees
everything.

Frankie stiffens – only for a second.

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

Angelo taps his phone.

Back into his phone – robotic.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
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 in the moody spirit of "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)
Great party last night. 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.

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 doesn't forgive. Be sure
you've chosen your part.

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 up. Locks eyes with Gunner. For a beat, it feels
less like a song, more like a warning.

STREET SINGER (CONT'D)
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

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

(pleading)

Please—don't hurt her. I'll fix it. I'll make it right.

PANDORA
(cutting, to his mother,
not to him)
He talks too much, doesn't he?

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.)
Come get the body.
(beat)
I'll send flowers to the funeral.
And Crosby?
You have no place to hide.

INT. GUNNER'S PENTHOUSE – NIGHT

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

A song in the likeness of "WHY" by Annie Lennox underscores.

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.

Gunner Kisses. 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. They lean in and kiss. Long.

GUNNER
No.

A long breath. Tension folds inward.

GUNNER (CONT'D)
Not like this.

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

Silence.

ANGELO
No. It should be me.

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. Take him
with you.

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)
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.

Gunner and Angelo exit.

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 my favorite.

A song in the spirit of "Constant Craving" by k.d. Lang is played

MUSIC BEGINS - GUITAR ONLY

Soft. Plaintive. That first familiar pulse of longing.

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.

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.

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.

PANDORA (CONT'D)
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. The conversation is already in progress. Angelo is "feeding" Crosby, into a frenzy.

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.

(MORE)

ANGELO (EN FRANÇAIS) (CONT'D)
 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
Not a clue, yet.

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

ON SCREEN: SUNDAY

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.

(beat – he takes a breath, eyes steady)

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
You know what I hate?
How easy it is for people to choose fear over empathy. Fear makes enemies out of strangers. Silence out of truth. Walls out of bridges.
(MORE)

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
 If I could change one thing— I'd
 make empathy our first reflex.
 Not our last resort.

The jukebox CRACKS mid-song. A pool ball breaks — CLACK — then the bar noise drops to a muffled hum, like cotton over the mic. Frankie's words hang naked in the quiet, sermon in the middle of chaos.

Gunner doesn't blink. Jaw flexes. His eyes shine — but he swallows the tears. For once, Denver's wolf looks small. Like a man who wants to believe.

He leans closer, pulse hot.

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. The kiss lands, deep, hungry, overdue. On impact—

The jukebox UNFREEZES mid-chorus. Laughter returns. Glasses CLINK. The world exhales, catching up with them. Bar noise floods back like the air had been holding its breath.

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

Gunner grins, wolfish. For the first time in the scene, the noise feels like it belongs to them.

GUNNER
(low, wolfish grin)
Fuck yes.

FRANKIE
(teasing, leaning in)
I'm sorry? What did you say?

GUNNER
(confident)
FUCK YES.

Gunner arches an eyebrow, smirk curling.

GUNNER (CONT'D)
Make-up sex?

FRANKIE
FUCK YES. Always the best.

They rise. Hands graze. The jukebox swells—bar noise full again. For once, it feels like the world is on their side.

EXT. CHARLIE'S BAR - CONTINUOUS

They step into the night. Cold air. Streetlight buzz. Frankie exhales, lighter now.

GUNNER
Frankie, I am—

SFX: BOOM.

A gunshot cracks the night. Frankie and Gunner jerk forward, slammed to the pavement. Blood smears concrete. Two SHADOWED MEN bolt down the block.

GUY ON THE STREET

Call 911!

Chaos erupts. Screams. Glass shattering inside the bar. Sirens already swelling in the distance, like the city had been waiting.

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. At the corner: RENE (30s, Cuban,
thick, dangerous), nursing a drink.

Angelo approaches.

RENE
First time at Charlie's?

ANGELO
 (to the bartender)
 Two Johnnie Walker Blues.

Rene studies him. Intrigued.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
 (in Spanish, cool,
 dangerous)
 Suave, vaquero... yo te digo cuándo
 montamos.
 (Easy, cowboy... I'll tell
 you when we ride.)
 The drinks come. Angelo slides one
 to Rene. They knock them back.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
 (in Spanish, low, heat)
 Sígueme... ahora montamos.
 (Follow me... now we ride.)
 They head for the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Door locks. Boots plant. Shirts drop. Jeans hit the heels. A
 rough collision - bodies against tile. Breath. Heat. Release.

Silence. Then: zippers. Shirts back on.

INT. CHARLIE'S BAR - CONTINUOUS

They return, composed. Angelo signals two more shots. They
 drink.

RENE
 Can I see you again?

ANGELO
 Like a date?

Rene grabs his ass. Angelo pushes him off.

RENE
 Yeah. Like a date.

ANGELO
 No. I'm taken. Got a boyfriend.

RENE
 (scoffs)
 So what the fuck was this?

ANGELO
Insurance. Had to be sure.

RENE
Damn. Who's the lucky guy?

ANGELO
Gunner.

A beat. The silence is deadly.

RENE
The Gunner?

Angelo flashes his holster.

ANGELO
(in Spanish)
Dices una palabra... y estás
muerto.
(Say one word... and you're
dead.)
Rene pulls him into a kiss – slow,
dangerous.

RENE
Tranquilo, papi... nadie va a saber
nada.
(I'm cool, Papi... no
one's gonna know
anything.)

ANGELO
(in Spanish, colder)
Si tengo que encontrarte otra vez –
y puedo – vas a rezarle a Jesús
para que te mate rápido.
(If I have to find you
again – and I can –
you'll pray to Jesus I
kill you quick.)

Angelo turns. Rene grabs his arm.

RENE
You never asked my name.

ANGELO
Does it matter?

RENE
It's Rene. And you'll be back.

Angelo walks out.

Rene smirks, pulls out his phone. Starts texting.

RENE (TEXTING) (CONT'D)
At Charlie's Bar. You won't believe
who I just fucked... and what he told
me. Gunner. Yeah. That Gunner.

SEND.

A shadow crosses him. Rene looks up — startled. His cocky
smirk fades. We don't see who.

CUT TO:

INSERT - A PHONE LIGHTS UP IN THE DARK.

Only a hand. No face. Fingers turn it over slowly. A silver
ring catches the glow.

The screen goes black again. The silence hums like a secret
being pocketed.

CUT TO:

INT. CHARLIE'S BAR - CONTINUOUS

A shadow falls. Rene looks up — ANGELO. Already back. Cold.

RENE
(smiles, low growl)
Told you you'd be back.

Angelo's hand slips inside his coat — not rushed, deliberate.
Could be a weapon. Could just be a warning.

ANGELO
(aggressive, low)
You stupid man. Was I not clear?

He yanks Rene to his feet with effortless force. Rene grins —
misreading the danger as play.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
Door. Now.

RENE
(grinning, leaning in)
Oh great — my car's parked right
outside. Your place... or mine?

Angelo's jaw tightens. Stone. No humor. No give.

RENE (CONT'D)
I never got your name.

ANGELO
(low, lethal)
Killer.

They move toward the alley. Rene's cocky smirk lingers – but the trap's already sprung

EXT. CHARLIE'S BAR - ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Moonlight. Trash bins. A single flickering streetlight.

Rene digs in his pocket, cocky grin never fading. He dangles his car keys, jingling them like a prize.

RENE
(low, teasing)
Your place... or mine?

Angelo doesn't answer. Just exhales, slow. He lights a cigarette—smoke curls like a noose.

He plucks Rene's phone from his pocket – calm, surgical.

Rene smirks, still cocky, teeth flashing in the moonlight.

RENE (CONT'D)
What—checking my texts, Papi? You
jealous already?

Angelo's eyes don't flicker. He pockets the phone.

SFX – a WOMAN'S SCREAM offscreen.

Then: BANG. THUD. BANG. BANG.

Muzzle flashes tear the night. Keys scatter across the pavement. A body drops beside them. The jingle dies in the dirt – the only answer to Rene's question.

Angelo exhales smoke. Already walking away.

The night swallows the sound.

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

ANGELO (V.O., AUTHORITATIVE, SMOOTH)
Crosby... we move the plan up.
Tomorrow – 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 (O.S.)
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.

He laughs once. It dies in his throat.

His eyes stay locked on her, but the mask is thinning.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
I always figured if I ever heard
from my mother...
it'd be a voicemail.
Or a ghost.

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 check still in his hand.

He doesn't look at it.

Just stares at the open door.

Like he might follow.

Like he never could.

FADE OUT.

 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.
Sydney... hear we come. A break
might be the only safe move.

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

FRANKIE

Yes.

The music swells under the silence...

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

FADE OUT.

SPLIT SCREEN SEQUENCE — MIDDAY — SET TO the likeliness of
"GOOD AGAIN" by Anne Murray

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.

EXT. FRANKIE'S STUDIO — DAY

Frankie steps out, smiling, breathing in the day.

His PHONE BUZZES. Screen lights.

ANGELO (V.O., TEXT)

I want you alone, lover. Just us.
No one else.

FRANKIE

(scoffs, cutting)
Angie, baby... get a fucking life.

SCREECH — A VAN SLIDES IN.

Doors fly open. CROSBY lunges. ANGELO'S fist CRACKS into Frankie's jaw.

His bag drops — phone skitters across the pavement, glowing.

Frankie struggles — too late. They drag him inside.

INT. JEWELER'S — DAY

A small, sunlit shop. The JEWELER boxes a diamond solitaire.

Gunner slides it into his coat pocket. Tender. His smile grows.

This means something. Clean. Classic. Forever.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

A 10-YEAR-OLD BOY (TOMMY) watches from the shadows.

A card flutters from Frankie's fallen coat. He picks it up:

"Jack Wild - WILD CARD INC. Private & Personal Security."

INT. JACK & DEUCE'S HQ - LATER - SPLIT SCREEN

LEFT SIDE - EXT. DENVER STREET

Tommy dials, nervous. Card in hand. Phone rings.

RIGHT SIDE - JACK'S OFFICE

JACK picks up, cocky grin. DEUCE lounges, boots up.

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

KID (O.S.)
Um... hi.

Jack leans in.

JACK
You in Denver, kid?

KID (O.S.)
Y-yeah... how did you know?

Jack and Deuce exchange a look.

JACK
How'd you get this number?

KID (O.S.)
It was in my friend's coat...
Frankie.

Music swells and matches the beats.

JACK
(easy, like a big brother)
Frankie's your friend from school?
What's your name?

KID (O.S.)
Uh... my dad says not to talk to
strangers. But Frankie's my friend.
He—he lets me paint after school.

JACK
Hey — you called me.
(checks caller ID)
Tommy Pritchard, huh?

Jack naps fingers — Deuce sits up, alert. Jack hits speaker.)

JACK (CONT'D (CONT'D)
Tommy, we're friends now. Friends
cover each other. Why'd you call?

KID (O.S.)
Two guys took Frankie. I don't
think they were good guys.

JACK
You sure? Now who's Frankie?

KID (O.S.)
My friend Frankie the painter. He
teaches art at school. And his
friend Mr. Gunner came in to talk
about building safety. Yeah. One
guy wore something around his
neck...
(beat)
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.

DEUCE
(into phone, steady)
Tommy, this is Deuce. I'm Jack's
friend, so now I'm yours. Got it?

KID (O.S.)
Yeah... I guess so?

DEUCE
Listen to me, kid. If you see those
men again, you run. You don't hide.
You don't scream. You run.

KID (O.S.)
Okay. I will.

JACK
(firm)
If I don't hear from you in eleven
minutes, I call the cops.

The call ends. SPLIT SCREEN ENDS.

FULL FRAME - JACK & DEUCE

DEUCE
Gunner?

JACK
(nods)
Call him. Now.

DEUCE
Angelo's a rat. Time he felt the
heat from my gun.

Deuce's phone is already ringing. Jack holsters a weapon.

The light gone from his face.

JACK
(low, to himself)
Let's go find our boy.

Jack's PHONE BUZZES. Unknown number. *954 area code.*

JACK (CONT'D)
954? Where's that?

DEUCE
Fort Lauderdale. Wilton Manors.

JACK
(nods, grim)
Of course it is.

Jack answers.

JACK (CONT'D)
(into phone)
It's a go for the JACKpot.

Silence. Then—

CHILD'S VOICE (O.S.)
 Jack... it's Tommy. I didn't make it
 home.

CLICK. The line goes dead.

Jack's phone. BUZZ. A PHOTO flashes on screen — Tommy's face,
 scared, blurred mid-struggle.

BUZZ again — a new text.

INSERT - TEXT
 MESSAGE:

TOMMY TALKS TOO MUCH.
 NOBODY LIKES A SNITCH.

Jack's knuckles whiten. Deuce's jaw tightens.

DEUCE
 They got the kid?

JACK
 (quiet, lethal)
 Then we burn the whole house down.

EXT. DENVER INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - NIGHT

A JET TOUCHES DOWN. Tires screech. Landing lights blaze.

BOOTS HIT THE TARMAC.

Jack and Deuce exit, stone-faced.

INTERCUT - MONTAGE

- Deuce on the phone.
 - Gunner in the shower. Steam curling under the door.
 - A locked room: Tommy tied to a chair, gagged, terrified.
 - Another room: Frankie, bound, eyes blazing, listening.
- The HUM OF THE JET fades into silence. Dread thick as smoke.

INT. GUNNER'S PENTHOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Soft jazz plays - vintage Chet Baker. The light is warm. Too perfect.

Gunner stands before the mirror. Bruised. Battered. But dressed in a tailored blazer. Crisp shirt.

He adjusts the collar. Takes a breath.

GUNNER
(quiet, rehearsing)
Frankie...
(beat)
Will you marry me?

He winces. Not at the words - at what they cost to say out loud.

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

His reflection doesn't answer. It just stares back - bruised, unblinking. He almost breaks the mirror. Instead, he fixes the collar again.

INTERCUT - INT. JACK & DEUCE - MOVING CAR - DAY

Deuce on the phone. Jack at his laptop, booking a flight fast.

DEUCE
(frantic)
Pick up, Gunner. Pick up.
(pause)
Come on, man...
SFX: VOICEMAIL BEEP. Deuce
swears, hangs up.
DEUCE (CONT'D)
(texting)
CALL ME NOW. It's Frankie.

INT. GUNNER'S PENTHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

His phone lights up on the table behind him. He doesn't see it.

He's still rehearsing, softer now.

GUNNER
(almost to tears)
Frankie... I swear to God,
I'd do anything right
this time.

He opens the ring box. The diamond glints – a promise waiting to be made.

The PHONE BUZZES again. Unanswered.

INT. JACK & DEUCE DRIVING – MOMENTS LATER

Jack SLAMS the laptop shut.

JACK
Head to his office.

DEUCE
He's not answering.

MUSIC CUE:

♪ "Good Again" by Anne Murray
– soft, aching against the panic.

INT. GUNNER'S PENTHOUSE – BEDROOM – FINAL BEAT

Gunner at the mirror. Ring in hand. Practicing one last time.

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

BUZZ. His phone glows in the silence.

INT. VACANT WAREHOUSE – NIGHT

LIGHTS SNAP ON.

Frankie winces in the glare. Bound. Bloodied.

But smirking through the pain.

TITLE CARD:

NO MASKS. JUST TRUTH.

Angelo circles him like a wolf. Cigar smoke trailing.

ANGELO
Francine. So good to see you.

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

FRANKIE
You'll never be enough. You don't even know what you want.

Angelo FREEZES. The words echo. He lights a cigar. Flame flickers. Inhales deep.

ANGELO
(low, almost to himself)
You think I never loved?
(beat, eyes wet,
dangerous)
That I don't know what it is to
want someone so bad it burns?

He exhales the smoke in Frankie's face. Then leans close, whispering—

ANGELO (CONT'D)
Only difference... I don't beg for it.
(beat, hardens)
I take.

FRANKIE
There he is. The Wizard of OZ himself. The coward behind the text messages.

Angelo circles Frankie.

Tommy yells.

TOMMY O.S.
Hey, my dad is gonna be real worried that I didn't come home.

ANGELO
(to Crosby)
Why is that snitch talking?

CROSBY
(apologetic)
Boss he's just a kid.

CRACK. Angelo slaps Crosby hard across the face.

ANGELO
You are so weak. Go shut that kid
up, now.

Crosby leaves.

OFF SCREEN Tommy is heard begging then gagged

FRANKIE
So easy to take, but can you give?
Gutless hack. Hiding behind your
attitude. You took a kid? Jesus.
Bet you've got a little dick too.

SMACK. Angelo backhands him hard. Blood at Frankie's lip.

Crosby comes back in.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
(grins, defiant)
You'll always be sloppy seconds,
Angie.
(mocking sing-song)
"Oh Gunner... I have a boyfriend."
How was that bathroom quickie with
Rene?

Frankie laughs. Crosby flinches.

Then—

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
(innocent, sly)
Where is Rene, by the way?
He hasn't answered my calls...

Angelo doesn't blink.

He reaches into his coat — slow.

Pulls out a phone. Rene's.

The glow on the screen lights Angelo's face like a ghost.

FRANKIE clocks it. His smirk falters — just a flicker.

ANGELO
 (calm, lethal)
 I'm starting to lose track of the
 body count.
 (turns to Crosby)
 Crosby?

CROSBY
 (flat, automatic)
 Six.

Frankie's laugh hardens into a smile like a blade.

FRANKIE
 Sad, isn't it? Closeted queers.
 Just admit it, Angie. Move on.

ANGELO
 (starting to unravel)
 I said shut the FUCK UP. Don't call
 me by that name.

CROSBY
 Boss—please. Don't let him get to
 you.

FRANKIE
 Angie Baby... pull the fucking
 trigger or put the gun down.
 Either way, you'll still be nothing
 but Gunner's ghost.

A drip of water somewhere in the warehouse, echoing. Every
 pause stretches.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
 And Jesus — that cologne? Smells
 like your mother's disappointment.
 Is that Polo... or some Mary Kay
 knockoff?
 (he laughs, dry — then
 fangs)
 You smell like provolone cheese.

Silence.

ANGELO
 (in French, whisper)
 Ce qui est fait est fait.
 (What's done is done.)
 Beside them — a vase of white roses
 on a crate. Stark. Angelo plucks
 one, twirls it, then CRUSHES it.

The roses hitting concrete sound louder than the gunshots.

Angelo kisses Frankie on the forehead.

FRANKIE

(voice shaking, but
steady)

You think you win because you take?
Fear makes enemies out of
strangers.

Silence out of truth.

Walls out of bridges.

(beat, locking eyes)

I refuse to go dark, Angie.

Even if you pull the trigger—

I stay lit.

Petals rain at Frankie's feet.

Frankie looks up. Calm. Resigned. Clear.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

Angelo—

you're still just a sad little boy.

Lost in a man's world.

BANG. One shot. Then another. Again. Again.

Blood splashes across the fallen roses — red drowning white.

The floor gleams like glass. Shimmering.

CROSBY

(staggered)

Jesus, Boss. What are you doing—

ANGELO

(quiet, broken)

I told him to shut the fuck up.

(beat)

And now he has.

He stares at his reflection in the blood.

The face that looks back isn't a man.

It's the thing he always knew he was becoming.

He turns to leave. Crosby follows, frantic.

CROSBY

Where are you going? What do we do?

ANGELO
(smiling, eerie calm)
Me and my Gunner...
we've got a meeting. Then Sydney.

Crosby freezes.

CROSBY
(barely)
Boss... I chose you.

Angelo turns, quick.

BANG.

Crosby drops on top of Frankie. Their blood mingles.

ANGELO
(flat, final)
Never trust a liar.
Everyone wants. I take.

The music swells –

♪ "Total Eclipse of the Heart." ♪

Frankie's blood seeps into his fallen handkerchief-red
blooming through white like another rose, already dead.

A single drop falls... then another... then another.

Darkness deepens.

FADE OUT.

ANGELO (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(like the Big Bad Wolf)
Now... where's my little snitch?
(beat, low, amused)
Children should be seen.
(beat, colder)
Not heard.

He laughs. Two gunshots echo.

Another laugh – colder, emptier.

FADE OUT.

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

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

FADE IN:

EXT. DENVER SKYLINE - SUNSET - MAGIC HOUR

ON SCREEN: PRESENT DAY

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 don't bat for your team.

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.
 (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.

Angelo snaps his fingers.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
 (Like a drill sergeant)
 Ring. Knee. Now.

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

Gunner goes to one knee. Angelo puts out a hand. Gunner
 hands him his gun.

Angelo takes Gunner's gun, weighing it with a lover's reverence before slipping it mob-style into his waistband.

The bar hums – glasses clink, low laughter, Barry White faint on the jukebox. A pool ball CRACKS in the distance. Normal life, unaware of the powder keg at the table.

Pandora smiles, calm, queenly. She scans the room like she owns it.

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.)

The bar hums – glasses clink, laughter low, Barry White on the jukebox.

A pool ball CRACKS in the distance.

Pandora smiles, calm, queenly. She lifts her glass.

The sound thins – chatter dropping out like the room holds its breath.

A tray rattles somewhere off-screen. Too loud. Wrong.

The silence stretches.

ANGELO

(with brevity)

Dead. Shot him right after Frankie.
Can't have witnesses.

Angelo turns to Gunner, sweet as venom.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

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

The room exhales – chatter rushes back, brittle and sharp.

CUSTOMER (O.S.)

Waiter, can you take my order?

MAÎTRE D' (O.S., NEAR THE DOOR, URGENT
WHISPER)

Sorry, we're booked. Private party.
I strongly suggest you leave.

The clamor masks nothing. Deuce and Jack exchange a sharp look.

GUNNER
Ang, let's just all—

ANGELO
(matter-of fact)
Chicago boys, guns on the bar. I
won't say it again.

Behind them, a WAITER drops a tray. Glass shatters across the floor. Nobody flinches. Not the guests. Not the staff. The fear is so deep it's silent.

Angelo doesn't even glance over. He reaches into his back pocket and tosses two sets of handcuffs to Jack and Deuce.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
I'm sure you gym rats are used to
these. Now cuff yourselves to the
bar rail.
(beat, to Gunner, almost
tender)
For fuck's sake, Gunner, I propose to
me. A man wants to be asked.

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

Gunner on one knee looking up at Angelo.

Angelo cocks the gun — CLICK.

The sound drains again. Glasses, laughter, all sucked into hush.

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?

The room noise thins – glasses clinking, laughter – all
sucked into a hush. One sound cuts through: the bartender's
tray rattling, too loud, like it doesn't belong.

Pandora smiles. Lifts her glass. A nod to the bartender – he
starts to pour. The liquor overflows, dripping steady to the
floor. A clock ticks. The world waits.

BOOM.

Angelo shoots her in the chest. Blood blossoms rapidly across
silk.

The bartender freezes – still pouring. Liquor cascades over
Pandora's empty glass, running across the bar, pooling. The
glug-glug is deafening in the silence.

No one moves. No one breathes.

JACK

You crazy fuck.

Angelo presses the gun firmly to Gunner's temple.

ANGELO

One more word, Chicago boy, that's
a warning.

(softly, calm again)

Now Gunner, baby... you were about to
say something? I am all ears.

Gunner trembles slightly.

Pandora gurgles and blood slips out of her mouth.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

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

GUNNER

(low, cutting)

You remember that first deal? You
cracked like glass – I had to
steady you, like a leash on a mutt.
Ten years later?
Same dog. Just more rabid.

CLOSE ON: ANGELO'S NECK

His shirt collar slips open as he leans forward.

Trembling. And for the first time in this scene –
the silver "KILLER" chain catches the light.

Not loud. Not announced.

But it gleams like a threat that's always been there.

The bar holds its breath.

A drop of liquor hits the floor – too loud.

Pandora oozes blood from her lip.

The gurgle echoes – louder than it should.

Jack and Deuce clock the angle –

hands twitching toward a move.

Angelo cuts them a look:

****Go ahead. Try it.****

Every sound is wrong.

Angelo presses the gun harder into Gunner's head.

GUNNER
(weakly)
Ang... will you–

ANGELO
Oh for the love of God, take out
the ring. The ring.
(pushing to manic)
I want the GOD DAMNED RING.

Gunner takes the ring out of his pocket.

****SFX: LIGHTNING CRACKS. TRANSFORMER BLOWS.****

The room is plunged into black. A chorus of gasps. Glass
shatters. Chairs scrape. A SCREAM cuts short.

WHACK. THUMP. A body hits the floor in the dark.

INT. DENVER BAR - NIGHT

The chaos swirls. Jack and Deuce shouting – distant, muffled. Pandora gasps once. Still. Bonnie Tyler wails: ♪ Nothing I can do... a total eclipse of the heart...

CAMERA – CLOSE ON GUNNER'S EYES.

Blinking. Heavy.

JACK
Deuce – you free yet?

DEUCE
(grunting, metal clanging)
Almost. One sec. Gunner–? Gunner!

Emergency lights SNAP ON. The room a ghost of itself – pale, green, trembling. Gunner face down on the floor. Pandora gasps once, then stills.

JACK
Where's Angelo?

He rips the cuff loose, drops it. Checks Gunner – hand pressing chest.

JACK (CONT'D)
I got a pulse.

DEUCE
(phone out, fast, shaking)
Yeah–911. Emergency. One dead. One down.

SFX: Bonnie Tyler's "Total Eclipse of the Heart" begins faintly over the chaos, like the world itself is mocking.

JACK
(urgent, yelling over the noise))
Gunner, breathe!

Jack slaps Gunner across the face.

JACK (CONT'D)
(beat, Jack shaking him)
Gunner–say something!

Lights FLICKER. People shriek. Angelo is gone. Pandora lies still. The ring glints near her outstretched hand – blood crawling toward it, never quite touching.

BONNIE TYLER HOWLS the final line – “There’s nothing I can do... a total eclipse of the heart...” The room spins in red haze.

FADE INTO:

GUNNER’S POV

A distant heartbeat slows... Transitions into the sound of waves.

SFX: WAVES

ON SCREEN:

TWO MONTHS LATER – BONDI BEACH, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

EXT. BONDI BEACH – LATE AFTERNOON

The surf rolls in. CAMERA PULLS BACK from Gunner’s eyes, open to sky and sea. Alive. Scarred. Breathing.

He exhales – like he’s been holding that breath since Denver.

Jack and Deuce step into frame. Silent. Solid. Survivors.

Gunner reaches into his pocket.

CLOSE ON:

The ring. INSCRIBED: Refuse to go dark. Always.

Deuce pulls a bottle of champagne from a satchel. Three flutes. He hands them off. POP. Gunner pours. He hands a glass to Jack. Slips the ring onto a chain. Wears it around his neck.

They raise their glasses.

GUNNER
To Frankie.

Refuse to go dark. Always.

They drink. BARRY WHITE swells – “You’re the first, the last, my everything...” They stand as centurions, bold against the falling sun.

SFX: A DRONE HUMS.

They all turn. A black drone hovers – unnatural against the pastel sky. It drops a small PACKAGE into the sand.

MUSIC STOPS.

Silence.

Gunner kneels. Opens it.

Inside: A small RECORDER. Taped Note: PLAY ME.

He presses play.

BOOTSTEPS echo.

 ANGELO (ON RECORDER)
 (like the Big Bad Wolf)
Now... where's my little snitch?
 (beat, low, amused)
Children should be seen—
 (beat, colder)
Not heard.

TWO GUNSHOTS explode on the tape. Then a final laugh – cold, hollow, endless.

Jack recoils. Deuce turns pale. Gunner crumbles.

 GUNNER
 (hoarse, breaking)
Just a kid...

BUZZ. Gunner's phone lights up.

 TEXT - UNKNOWN NUMBER:
RING.
KNEE.
NOW.

Then – the drone stirs. Its rotors spin back to life. It lifts. Smooth. Silent. Surgical.

They stand and watch it rise – into the pink sky – unhurried. Untouchable.

 JACK
 (quiet, deadly)
He's still out there.

 DEUCE
Not for long.

GUNNER
(eyes locked on the
horizon)
He wants us to chase him.

JACK
Then we hunt.

They turn. The wind stirs the sand.

INT. ANGELO'S APARTMENT - WILTON MANORS - NIGHT

Multiple monitors glow.

Drone footage plays - their reaction on a loop. Angelo
watches. Eats it up. Laughs.

He rewinds it.

Watches again.

Still laughing.

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

Angelo's phone lights up. The text from Jack. He smiles. The glow from the screen catches on the KILLER chain at his throat - burning in the dark like it's alive.

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 softly, dreamlike.

"He's a very nice Prince... And-? And- It's a very nice ball..."

Angelo sets down two teacups.

"And-? And- When I entered they trumpeted"

CAMERA REVEALS:

CROSBY. Dead. Slumped in a chair. Wearing a fresh black t-shirt. Across the chest: "GUNNER."

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

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 hunt me, baby. I'll be waiting.

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

SMASH TO BLACK.

Bonnie Tyler's howl bleed in under the last line of Into the Woods before it cuts.

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.

One last shimmer off the KILLER chain in the Wilton kitchen
as Angelo sips his tea.

CREDITS ROLL.

GUNNER OS
I refuse to go dark. Ever.

ANGELO (O.S.)
Let's get you dressed for our day
in Wilton Manors...
(beat)
No? Then I'll go out.
Meet the locals.

The song "Total Eclipse of the Heart" warbles. Stretches.

Then cuts. Silence.

THE END.