

REFUSE TO GO DARK

Written by

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Based on, my dreams

ON SCREEN:

DENVER — TEN YEARS AGO

INT. MAKESHIFT OFFICE — DAY

A folding table for a desk.

Buzzing fluorescent light.

A hand-painted sign on the wall:

"A&G BUILDING CONSULTANTS."

A framed photo:

ANGELO and GUNNER on a muddy construction site.

Young. Proud. Unbreakable.

BRIAN, a city planner in his forties, sits across from them.

A contract rests on the table.

The conversation is already tense.

ANGELO

Look, Brian, if you'd just
see the bigger picture--

BRIAN

(flat)
I don't have to see it your way.

Angelo's jaw tightens instantly.

Gunner calmly places a hand on Angelo's chest.

Grounding him.

GUNNER

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

(beat)
We can deliver.

Brian studies them both.

Doesn't trust one of them.

BRIAN

Fine.
(then)
But I deal with you, Gunner.
Your partner?
(eyes on Angelo)
He makes me uneasy.
Like a wild dog
always ready to bite.

A beat.

Then Angelo smiles.

Sharp.

Too sharp.

ANGELO

Brian...
you cut me to the quick.
(leans in)
I don't bite.
(beat)
Much.

Brian signs fast.

Gets up. Leaves.

Silence.

The fluorescent light BUZZES overhead.

INT. LOCAL BAR - NIGHT

Hours later.

Empty bottles. Shot glasses. Victory soaked in whiskey.

Outside the front window: snow falls over Denver.

Gunner laughs hard at something Angelo said.

Drunk. Loose. Happy.

EXT. LOCAL BAR

In the parking lot --

Angelo jingles his truck keys.

GUNNER
(laughing)
No shot.
You're not driving.
I'll do it.

They climb into Angelo's massive truck.

The doors THUD shut.

Silence.

Angelo stares at him.

GUNNER (CONT'D)
What?

ANGELO
(slurring, raw)
I want you.

Gunner laughs once.

Nervous.

GUNNER
You're drunk.

ANGELO
Not enough.

Angelo suddenly grabs him.

Kisses him.

Messy.

Desperate.

Years buried alive finally surfacing.

Gunner shoves him back.

Hard.

GUNNER
Hey--
Buddy, what the hell--

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

And just like that-- Angelo collapses sideways.
Out cold. His head lands heavily in Gunner's lap.
Silence.
Snow falls outside.

ANGLE ON GUNNER.

Frozen.
His hand lifts slowly.
Hovers over Angelo's head.
Almost touches him.
Almost.
But it never lands.
Gunner stares down at him.
Heartbreaking realization.

GUNNER
(quietly)
Oh, Ang...
(beat)
Just ask me.
Say it.
You can want me.
(soft)
But look me in the eye
when you do.
Want me.
Not the fantasy.

Angelo snores softly. Dead to the world.
Gunner leans back in the driver's seat. Stares through the
windshield into the falling snow.
Already mourning something that hasn't happened yet.

FADE TO BLACK.

SETTING: DENVER, CO - PRESENT DAY

ON SCREEN: PRESENT DAY - 10 YEARS LATER

A sultry, soulful love anthem – in the spirit of Barry White's "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

The Rocky Mountains shimmer like fire-drenched stone.

The song swells – lush, romantic, almost overwhelming.

POV: Gunner's waist down, grooving. Manly. Sexy. Music in his head.

Gunner's phone lights up.

ANGELO (TEXT)

Let's hit the town later. I'll
drive. You drink.

Gunner reads it. A small smile.

He types–

GUNNER (TEXT)

You trying to get me in trouble?

Sends.

A beat.

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

(talking)

One drink – then I'm yours.

(beat)

You packed?

(smiles)

Sydney.

He hangs up.

A flicker in his eyes.

He reaches into his pocket.

CLOSE ON:

The ring box.

It opens— Simple. Classic.

Inscribed: Refuse to go dark. Always.

Gunner studies it. Quiet.

Then—

The door opens.

ANGELO (45). Dark suit. Smooth as oil. Twice as dangerous.
Stands there.

A beat.

Angelo's eyes flick—

Not to Gunner.

To the box.

Gunner closes the box.

Too casually.

ANGELO

Like I said, I'll drive. You drink.

(beat)

And if you pass out, I'll carry you
upstairs. You know how you get.

GUNNER

(laughs)

Ang, what a teaser.

ANGELO

(sly)

Try me.

GUNNER

You got my text?

Angelo stares a moment too long.

Angelo pours two fingers of something top-shelf.

Angelo clocks the ring box.

ANGELO
That what I think it is?

GUNNER
I am gonna propose.

ANGELO
You're serious?

GUNNER
Dead serious.

Gunner drops to one knee. Looks up. Opens the ring box.

GUNNER (CONT'D)
Will you marry me?

Angelo blushes. Silence.

Gunner holds the pose a beat too long.

Angelo actually smiles.

Small.

Real.

Dangerously hopeful.

Gunner gets up. Smiles. Bear hugs Angelo.

GUNNER (CONT'D)
And I want you there with me.
(beat, smiling)
Best man.

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

GUNNER
You sure? That time you got drunk
and-

ANGELO
Fuck you.

They laugh - danger tucked just beneath the sound.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
Francine's using you.

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

Gunner exits.

Angelo looks at the closed door.

Then down at the ring box imprint still pressed into the
leather couch cushion.

INT. UNKNOWN LOCATION - NIGHT

Darkness.

The soft HUM of electronics.

ON SCREEN --

FRANKIE'S STUDIO.

Frankie paints barefoot.

Vinyl crackles softly.

Warm light.

Real intimacy.

Gunner enters frame.

Loosens his tie.

Watches Frankie work.

FRANKIE
You're early.

GUNNER
Couldn't wait.

Gunner's phone BUZZES.

INSERT - PHONE
SCREEN:

ANGELO (TEXT)
Boss, where are you?

Frankie sees it.

Takes the phone. Powers it off. Tosses it onto the couch.
Gunner almost protests -- Frankie steps close.
Finger to Gunner's lips.

FRANKIE

Shhh.
(beat)
Tonight...
you're mine.

The image GLITCHES slightly.
Static flickers across the screen.

WIDER --

The footage is being watched on a surveillance monitor.

CLOSE ON:

ANGELO.

Silent in the glow.
Watching them.
Not blinking.

ON SCREEN --

Frankie and Gunner move closer together now.

FRANKIE

Don't go dark on me.
(beat)
When I need you most...

don't disappear.
A long silence.
Angelo leans forward slightly.
Something hardens behind his eyes.
Then --

ANGELO
(low)
The deal's changed.

TITLE CARD:

REFUSE TO GO DARK

INT. GUNNER'S OFFICE - 4:00 PM

The afternoon sun ignites the Rockies.

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.

Tension crackles.

ANGELO
(scoffing)
Don't you have an old man
to bankrupt?

GUNNER
(firm)
Angelo—

Frankie raises a hand.

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 don't want love.
You want ownership.

Frankie touches a finger to Angelo's lips.

Then—whispers in his ear.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
 All this alpha-male theater...
 (glances down)
 ...and that's the weapon?

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?

ANGELO

Francine, we are far from done.

FRANKIE
 (sighs)
 Like my sixth grade teacher said--
 "Food gets done.
 People finish."
 (shrugs)
 Guess some people never graduate.

Angelo lunges— Gunner steps between them.

Frankie laughs. He winks at Gunner. Angelo sees the wink.

EXT. STREETS OF DENVER - DUSK SAME DAY

Gunner and Angelo are driving in the KIA.

ANGELO

(irritated)

All the money we make
and you drive a fucking KIA.
You gotta show them what you're
worth.

GUNNER

(laughs)

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

ANGELO

(defiant)

I own boots.

GUNNER

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

They park and get out.

Angelo pins him against the KIA, harder than necessary.

A beat.

Too long.

ANGELO

I don't like Francine and -

GUNNER

That sounds like your problem, not
mine.

ANGELO

Yea, well (pause)

Gunner leans in just a breath away. His eyebrow arches

GUNNER

(Gunner growls, smirks)
Careful.
Another inch and I might get the
wrong idea.

Angelo release his grip and steps back. Claiming space.

ANGELO
That's not what this is.

GUNNER
Say it louder, maybe you'll believe
it.

Gunner moves back to the street.

GUNNER (CONT'D)
(he speaks easy)
Angelo, I always got your back. I
got you unconditional. Now come
on, let's nail this deal.

Angelo says nothing.

Then— He looks away first. He turns.

WHOMP. Angelo collides with a body.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
What the Fuck?

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

ANGELO (CONT'D)
(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) (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.

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.

GUNNER
Tommy you sure your 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.

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

ANGELO
Snitches end up lonely.

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

GUNNER
(change up)
And Tommy?
(MORE)

GUNNER (CONT'D)
If you ever see something wrong--
you come find me.

Tommy nods and then walks away.

ANGELO
Kids. Glad I am not a father.

GUNNER
Damn.
And I was THIS close
to calling you Daddy.

Gunner walks towards the bar.

Angelo stops.

Breathes into the sleeve that just pinned Gunner to the wall.

Eyes closed.

Holding the scent.

CLAP. CLAP.

Gunner turns back.

GUNNER
Where the fuck are you?
(laughing)
Come on.

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

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

The restaurant murmurs with old money and quiet threat.

Waitstaff straighten their ties. A sommelier palms his brow.

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

A pair of doors open--*just enough*.

Then--

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

GUNNER (TO ANGELO)
 She doesn't enter rooms.
 She claims them.

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

He stammers. Nods. Lights it for her.

SHE BLOWS SMOKE LIKE A CURSE.

Only then does she look to Gunner.

He rises.

GUNNER (CONT'D)
 (grinning)
 Pandora. Why have you been avoiding me?

He growls—like he knows she likes it.

PANDORA
 (tilts her head, slow smile)
 Oh... I didn't know you were available.

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

ANGELO
 Pandora.

PANDORA
 (dryly)
 You brought the bulldog. Where's Frankie? He suits your appetite.
 (MORE)

PANDORA (CONT'D)
Besides, I need help with my party
this weekend and want to get his
design input.

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

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

GUNNER
(confidently)
Now Pandora you know in business it
is always Angelo and me.

PANDORA
You mean: You and Angelo

BEAT.

GUNNER
Close enough.

PANDORA
No, sweetheart.
You lead.
He follows.

Gunner nods and pulls Angelo back in.

GUNNER
(easy)
Us. Angelo and I are business
partners.

PANDORA
That's all it is?

Beat. Angelo blushes.

GUNNER
Ang and I go back years.

PANDORA
That dog watches you like you hung
the moon.

Frankie approaches.

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.

GUNNER

Let's get a drink, shall we?

PANDORA

No, I'll pass.
I'm suddenly, utterly bored with
the view.
Is he even house-trained?

She locks eyes with Angelo. Smiles.

Angelo's eyes sharpen.

PANDORA (CONT'D)

Send Frankie. He knows what I like.

Pandora wafts into the restaurant. People adore her.

A beat.

Gunner exhales. Takes the ring out. Looks at it.

Angelo shifts beside him, starts to speak—

Gunner raises a hand. Cuts him off.

GUNNER

You know/

ANGELO

I hate that bitch. Bull dog. Fuck
her.

GUNNER

My boy, she brings us clients.

ANGELO

I am NOT your boy.

Gunner sips his drink. Calm.

GUNNER

(laughs)
Touchy.
Drink?

ANGELO
(seething)
Fuck you. I need air.

GUNNER
Nah. You need to get laid.

ANGELO
You need to stop looking at my ass.

He turns. Storms off.

CRASH.

He slams into a passing WAITER with a tray of four martinis.
Glass shatters. Liquid everywhere. The waiter hits the floor.

Silence.

The entire restaurant freezes. Heads turn.

A slow tilt down to:

-- Glass shards

-- Martini pooling

-- Angelo's reflection—distorted, furious

ANGELO (CONT'D)
(low, controlled)
Jesus Christ. Watch where you're
going.

Gunner steps in to smooth it all out.

GUNNER
(easy, comforting)
Ang, relax. Come by in hour. Let
me clean up this mess.

ANGELO
What about Francine?

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

ANGELO
That cunt.

GUNNER
 (smirk)
 Which one?

ANGELO
 (low)
 Both.

Angelo heads out.

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

EXT. CAPITOL HILL - MOMENTS LATER

ANGELO stands on a street corner with FINCH and CROSBY.

Across the street, Gunner's taillights disappear into the
 Denver night.

Angelo watches until they're gone.

Too long.

FINCH (25), Cuban muscle with ambition, lights a cigarette.

CROSBY (45), Irish Boston thug turned Denver operator,
 watches Angelo carefully.

The city HUMS around them.

FINCH
 (in Spanish)
 Ese cabrón no sabe con quién está
 jugando.
 (then)
 I can take care of him, boss.

Clean. Quiet. You say when.

ANGELO
 (calm, dangerous)
 No seas tan caliente, Finch.
 Esto no es Cuba.
 (beat)
 We're not killing anybody.
 Not yet.

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

ANGELO

Exactly.
 Saturday night.
 Pandora's place.
 Fancy crowd.
 Big diamonds.
 Just a little disruption.
 (beat)
 One shot.
 Blood on the floor.
 Panic does the rest.

FINCH

(smiles)
 So it's theatre.

ANGELO

(with a loaded smile)
 It's leverage.

A long beat.

Traffic lights flicker red across Angelo's face.

CROSBY

Boss...
 what about Gunner?

Angelo ignores the question.

ANGELO

Make sure the blood looks real.
 And if Frankie asks questions...
 (smiles faintly)
 Smile when you lie.
 He'll believe you.

FINCH laughs softly under his breath.

CROSBY

And Gunner?
 What do we do about him?

FINCH

(in Spanish, grinning)
 Ay, Papi...
 déjame encargarme de él.

ANGELO

(cold, immediate)
 Déjenme a Gunner.

Silence.

Angelo steps toward the curb.

Eyes on the city.

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

INT. GUNNER'S PENTHOUSE - LATER

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

EXT. BALCONY - NIGHT

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

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

Angelo fixes a drink.

Passes the full-length mirror. He stops. Opens one more button. Lets his chest breathe.

Muscles. Control. Desire.

ANGELO joins him. Silence. They clink. Smoke.

 ANGELO
 You deal with it?

 GUNNER
 (cigar smoke, calm,
 relaxed)
 Handled.
 Pandora got her blood.

 ANGELO
 Bitch.

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

ANGELO

I know.
(soft)
I'm sorry.

GUNNER pulls him into a firm bear hug.

They separate.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

(quiet)
When did you know?

GUNNER

(quietly)
About you?

ANGELO flinches. His face flushes. Then—

ANGELO

Bullshit.
(beat)

His eye twitches.

Then—

He swings. A clean right hook.

Gunner takes it. Drops—hard.

Angelo blinks. Reality catches up.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

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

Gunner wipes the blood.

Smiles. Not angry. Not forgiving. Just... knowing.

Then he stands.

Takes the drink from Angelo. Sips.

Holds his gaze.

Hands it back.

Angelo drinks.

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

ANGELO falters.

GUNNER (CONT'D)
 I'm taking a shower.
 You've got fifteen minutes to stop
 lying.

GUNNER steps inside. Offscreen:

ANGELO stares out into the dark.

ANGELO
 Fuck.

A jet glides overhead—quiet, unreachable.

INT. GUNNER'S PENTHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The faint sound of running water. Steam curls out of the
 bathroom. ANGELO stands alone.

A silhouette behind the fogged glass. Muscle. The sound of
 skin and water. ANGELO inhales—slow, sharp.

Then—buzz.

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

ANGELO startles. Turns.

CLOSE ON SCREEN: FRANKIE CALLING.

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

ANGELO
 (slick, slow)
 Francine.

FRANKIE (V.O.)
 (confused, panicked)
 Angelo? Where's Gunner? Why are you
 answering?

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

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

Ends the call. Deletes the log.

Wipes the screen with his sleeve.

Places it back—exact position.

The SHOWER STOPS.

Footsteps. A door opens.

GUNNER ENTERS in a towel—damp, cut, impossible to ignore.

GUNNER
(dry, smiles)
You good?
Or was that gasp for me?

Gunner looks around. Angelo eyeing the phone.

ANGELO
(beat)
Your phone's got a nice weight.
Feels powerful.

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

ANGELO
(nods, almost dreamy)
Yeah.
The company pays...

GUNNER
(snaps fingers)
Hey.
You with me?

BEAT.

ANGELO looks up. Smile tight. He's already somewhere else.

Gunner kills the lights. Keys jangle.

Two silhouettes swallowed by Denver moonlight.

GUNNER
 Dinner? Company's buying. You
 hungry?

Gunner heads out.

ANGELO
 (sotto)
 You have no idea
 what I'm hungry for.

Angelo sees himself in the moonlit mirror.

A slow smile spreads across Angelo's face. A low sound
 escapes him. Almost pleasure. Almost grief.

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

He heads out.

CLICK.

INT. PANDORA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

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

INTERCUT WITH ANGELO answering the phone (already scripted).

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

ANGELO (V.O.)
 (relaxed, cruel)
 Calm down, boy. He's fine.
 I got him. We're going to dinner.
 He won't be needing you tonight.

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

PANDORA
 That didn't sound like "he'll be
 right over."
 (smirking)
 (MORE)

PANDORA (CONT'D)
 Lemme guess. Italian Psycho picked
 up?

FRANKIE
 (deadpan)
 So let's plan the party.

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. She looks at the phone.
 Changes the pace.

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

FRANKIE

(flat)

What could go wrong?

PANDORA

(smiles)

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

PANDORA & FRANKIE

Perfect.

ON THE WORD - "Perfect."

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

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Upscale but low-lit. Leather booths. Jazz from another room.
A whiskey bottle between them. Two glasses. Neither relaxed.

ANGELO and GUNNER sit across from each other.

GUNNER

Maybe a part of me...wanted this.

ANGELO

(his breath hitches; a
terrifying stillness)

Don't say that. Not unless you want
to see how far I'll go to keep it.

GUNNER

I don't care what you are—
Straight. Gay. Bi. Undecided.

That's not the question.

(leans in)

I want the truth.

ANGELO

(voice like a razor)

The truth is, you've been starving
me, Gunner.

You knew.

(almost tender)

So ask the question.

Before I just take what's mine.

GUNNER

(quietly)

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

ANGELO

And if I say yes?

GUNNER

Then I'll ask—why now?

Beat.

ANGELO

If you knew—why didn't you act on
it?

GUNNER

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

ANGELO

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

Beat.

GUNNER

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

ANGELO

(slow)

Then what's the hold up?

Angelo reaches across the table. Takes Gunner's hand—sure, steady. Their fingers lock. A waitress approaches, eyes the heat.

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

She scoffs, stunned—but walks away.

They hold the gaze. It crackles.

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

Beat.

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

He gets up.

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

He rubs his jaw.

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

He winks. Exits toward the restroom.

Angelo stares at the empty seat. He grips his whiskey glass until his knuckles turn white.

ANGELO
 (a whisper)
 You wanted it.

Gunner's phone, sitting on the table between the whiskey glasses, BUZZES.

CLOSE ON SCREEN: FRANKIE.

Angelo doesn't hesitate. He picks up the phone. Cool. Surgical.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
 (INTO PHONE)
 He's busy, Francine.
 (MORE)

ANGELO (CONT'D)
 (beat)
 He finally told me the truth.
 You're just the waiting room.

FRANKIE (V.O.)
 Angelo? What are you-

CLICKS the call end.

He doesn't delete the log this time; He wants the trail left behind.

He slides the phone slowly across the polished wood, stopping it exactly where Gunner was sitting.

He taps the glass with one heavy finger.

ANGELO
 (to the empty chair)
 Finally.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS OF DENVER - LATER

Angelo and Gunner are in the KIA. Silence fills the air.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - MORNING

A hip neighborhood spot. Sunlight.

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

FRANKIE
 So... I called you last night.

GUNNER
 Yeah?

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

GUNNER
 (freezes, plays dumb)
 What?

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

GUNNER
He shouldn't have answered my
phone.

FRANKIE
No, he shouldn't have.

Beat.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
Are you two...?

GUNNER
No.
He's... complicated.

FRANKIE
(sips, watching him)
He's obsessive.
Are you complicated?

GUNNER
I might be figuring that out.

Long beat.

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

Gunner exhales.

Wants to say something. Doesn't.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
Alright, lover boy.
Cops and Mobsters this Saturday.
Costumes mandatory. She's lining up
clients for you. If he shows up
with a fake Tommy gun, I'm calling
SWAT.

GUNNER chuckles. Barely.

Gunner looks out the window.

FRANKIE (CONT'D) (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
I'm not hiding anymore.
Not with you.
(beat)
I love you, Gunner.

Silence. Eyes locked

GUNNER
I know.

BEAT

FRANKIE
(questioning)
And?

GUNNER
And I love you, too.

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

FRANKIE
Don't say it to shut me up.
Mean it.

INT. OFFICE - MORNING

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

ANGELO
 (in French-laced 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

Then Gunner enters, and the room recalibrates.

He is in control without trying. Loosened tie. Day-old bruise
 on his jaw. He wasn't expecting an audience.

Angelo's eyes go straight to the bruise.

CROSBY (CONT'D)
 Gunner?

GUNNER
 (rubbing his jaw)
 Lucky shot. Won't happen again.

He winks at Angelo, no one else sees it but him.

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

CROSBY
 On it.

Gunner turns to Finch. Raises an eyebrow.

GUNNER
 (in Spanish)
 ¿Dónde has estado?
 (MORE)

GUNNER (CONT'D)
 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) (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)

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

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)
 (reading)
 "Jack Wild — WILD CARD INC.
 Private & Personal Security."
 (beat)
 The Wild Card.

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

Gunner glances at Angelo.

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)
People tell you who they belong to.
Eventually.

He picks up the yellow fedora. Stares at it.

Then sets it back down—just so.

INT. OFFICES - GLASS BOARDROOM - LATER

GUNNER and ANGELO sit side-by-side at the long obsidian table.

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

A beat. No one speaks.

GUNNER
Denver's not Chicago.
You get that?

DEUCE
That's why we're here.

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

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

Jack stares at him. Not intimidated.

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

Beat.

DEUCE

DEUCE (CONT'D)
 Wild Card's not a club.
 It's access.

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
 What you don't have— Is us.

Silence.

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

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

Deuce smirks. Jack doesn't move.

JACK
 That depends who's asking.

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

ANGELO
 Just bring your best disguise.

JACK
 That's all we've ever worn.

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

Deuce starts for the door. Jack follows. Then—

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

ANGELO
(cutting)
You wish.

JACK
(smiles)
I know the difference between
hunger and fantasy.

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

They exit.

GUNNER
(laughs and ribs)
You're making eyes at Jack?

ANGELO
That one just made the list.

SMASH CUT TO—

INT. ANGELO'S LOFT - NIGHT

Muted light.

Walls covered in photos.

Gunner smoking.

Gunner laughing.

Gunner unaware.

A votive candle flickers beneath a photo booth strip:

FRANKIE and GUNNER.

Smiling.

Foreheads pressed together.

ANGELO enters.

Silent.

Shirtless.

He drops to the floor.

Push-ups.

Slow.

Measured.

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)

Twenty-five - Gunner's mine.

Twenty-eight - if I can't have him..

Twenty-nine - nobody will.

Thirty - forever.

He rises.

Sweat glistening.

A haunting love song hums softly through the loft.

Angelo studies the wall.

He picks up a box cutter.

CLICK.

The blade extends.

Three notches.

He reaches for the photo booth strip.

Doesn't rip it.

Slices.

The blade traces the line

where Frankie's shoulder

meets Gunner's.

Careful.

Precise.

Frankie peels away from the image.

A scrap of paper falls to the floor.

Angelo pins the altered photo back into place.

Perfectly straight.

Now:

only Gunner remains.

Alone in the frame.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

(quietly)

You just don't see it yet.

He catches his reflection in the glass.

Studies the man Gunner wanted.

The door CREAKS open.

CROSBY stands there.

Frozen.

His eyes drift:

the wall,

the altered photos,

the pile of Frankie's faces scattered across the floor.

Angelo turns slowly.

Calm.

Deadly.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

Not.

A.

Word.

Crosby says nothing. Doesn't move. Doesn't breathe.

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.

GUNNER (CONT'D)

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

Beat.

CLICK. Line dies.

SPLIT SCREEN ENDS - BACK TO ANGELO'S SHRINE

Silence.

CROSBY

Boss... you good?

Angelo doesn't answer.

He stares at the altered photograph of Gunner.

The candlelight flickers across his face.

ANGELO

(quietly)

He felt it.

CROSBY

What?

ANGELO

For a second...
he felt it too.

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

In the dark -

Angelo breathes.

Slow.

Certain.

INT. PANDORA'S PENTHOUSE COPS AND MOBSTERS MASQUERADE PARTY

A live jazz band, slowed just a tick, dreamlike and haunting.
It drifts through the air like cigarette smoke.

The party is already in motion. 60 + people.

Gold light.

Velvet.

Fedora shadows.

Drag queens in pinstripes.

The party moves like organized gossip.

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

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

INT. FOYER - SAME

FRANKIE enters first.

1940s private eye by way of South Beach.

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

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

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

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

INT. BAR - CONTINUOUS

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

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

PANDORA
There, there. Now you're dressed.
Every killer needs a collar."
(Smile. Pat. Dismiss.)

The music swells.

INT. PARTY FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

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

JACK
(to Deuce)
Let's find out what Denver tastes like.

DEUCE
I hope it bites.

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

Crosby approaches Angelo. His eyebrow raises

CROSBY
Boss what the fuck? Killer?

ANGELO
(short)
Hold this.

He hands is whiskey to Crosby.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
 She wants a killer I'll give a God
 damned, fucking killer.

Angelo, in full view of the crowd, people start watching,
 Gunner clocks it.

Angelo sees him watching. And keeps going.

Gunner steps over to him. Hand on his shoulder.

GUNNER
 (low, close)
 Ang... easy.

Jack and Deuce separated across the room see this and nod
 like Redford and Newman from "The Sting" as Angelo shrugs off
 the jacket. Unbuttons the shirt slow. Drops it.

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

His holster gleams. His body's a loaded threat

He walks up to Jack.

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

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

Angelo walks over to Pandora.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
 (low and dangerous)
 My lady.
 Your killer has teeth.

PANDORA
 Heel, boy. Remember I gave you that
 collar. I also hold the leash.

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

Pandora Doesn't blink.

Pandora smiles.

INT. NEAR BAR - LATER

DEUCE walks up to Angelo and Pandora, cocky AF.

DEUCE

DEUCE (CONT'D)

So this is how Denver works?
 Dress-up.
 Collars.
 Foreplay.
 (beat)
 Cute.
 Where's the real power in the room?

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

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

SFX: A GUN COCKS.

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

JACK

(low, lethal)
 You touch him again - we bury you here.
 You better calm the fuck down.
 (presses gun harder)
 Now... help my man up. And you apologize.

BEAT.

ANGELO

Fuccccck you.

GUNNER rushes in. Eyes on Angelo. Calm, trying to gain peace. Holds out a hand to Deuce. Helps him up. Gunner steadies Angelo.

GUNNER

Deuce, you okay? I'm sorry-

JACK

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

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

 ANGELO
 (half-hearted)
 I'm sorry.

Jack tilts his head.

Almost amused.

Then -- without breaking eye contact -- he slowly holsters the gun.

The gesture lands harder than a shot.

Dominance. Final.

BEAT.

He nods to Pandora.

 PANDORA
 Well.
 Now the party's started.
 (to band)
 Play on.

The crowd looks around. Laughter.

GUNNER leans in to Angelo.

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

 ANGELO
 (low)
 Still want that date? I'm ready.

INT. PARTY FLOOR AN HOUR LATER

The jazz band plays on.

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

Frankie and Gunner are laughing with investors.

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

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

FRONT DOOR SLAMS OPEN

Robber #1 & #2 enter. Guns up.

ROBBER #1 (FINCH)
(mean and low)
Everyone down!

Robber #2 fires two shots in the air. Chaos.

BANG. BANG.

Robber #1 and Robber #2 JERK and FALL. Blood sprays. Panic.

WIDER – JACK and DEUCE stand with smoking guns. They nod at each other.

Angelo's hand still frozen at his holster.

Angelo watches Gunner looking at Jack. His eyes narrow. Gunner can't help it. He's impressed.

REAL TIME

Screams. Guests frozen in fear.

PANDORA
Well.
Chicago came to play.

She applauds.

Slowly, nervously, the crowd joins in.

A terrified standing ovation.

Pandora smiles like she planned all of it.

She points to JACK, DEUCE, GUNNER and ANGELO.

PANDORA (CONT'D)
Kitchen.
Now.

The four men start moving.

Guests immediately clear a path.

Angelo trailing behind. He watches Gunner walk between Jack and Deuce. He hears it—the casual, respect-filled tone he usually reserves only for Angelo.

GUNNER

(low, to Jack and Deuce)
You two just painted targets
on all our backs.
(beat)
Nice fucking shot though.

DEUCE

(smirks)
I hate missing.

PANDORA

Reggie.
Music.

ANGELO doesn't flinch. He just watches the back of Gunner's head. His eyes are dark, calculating the distance between Gunner's shoulder and Jack's.

The jazz band kicks back in —

Pandora's inner circle disappears into the house.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Pandora.

Jack.

Deuce.

Gunner.

Frankie.

Angelo.

Crosby.

Too many dangerous people.

Not enough oxygen.

PANDORA

I want answers.

Nobody speaks.

PANDORA (CONT'D)
Real bullets?

JACK
Good aim.

GUNNER
(to Jack)
You didn't know about this?

JACK
This isn't foreplay.
I don't shoot blanks.

ANGELO says nothing. He leans against a marble counter, arms crossed. His eyes aren't on Pandora.

They are fixed on Gunner.

He watches the way Gunner squares up to Jack.

DEUCE
Two idiots pulled guns
in a crowded room.
(Shrugs.)
Problem solved.

FRANKIE sips champagne. He leans back, watching the tension like it's a Broadway show.

He catches Angelo's stare—and winks.

Slowly, deliberately, Frankie blows Angelo a kiss.

Angelo's jaw tightens. His gaze shifts—not to Gunner, but to CROSBY.

Crosby is frozen, his eyes darting between Frankie's mocking smile and Angelo's face.

He looks sick.

He remembers the box cutter.

He remembers the pile of Frankie's faces on the loft floor.

Angelo holds Crosby's look for a second too long.

A silent command: Don't blink.

Crosby looks away first.

JACK
(smiles faintly)
Think we're gonna fit in just fine.

PANDORA
Don't confuse surviving the room...
with owning it.

Her eyes shift:

Angelo.

Jack.

Deuce.

Nobody flinches.

FRANKIE
Honestly?
Best party I've been to all year.

GUNNER
(half-laughing, to Jack)
You're a lunatic. You know that,
right?

ANGELO
(low, cutting through)
He's a tourist.

Silence.

Angelo doesn't move. He just looks at Jack through Gunner.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
Tourists always think the scenery
belongs to them. Until they get
lost in it.

Gunner throws an arm over Jack's shoulder like new best
friends.

GUNNER
(smiles, easy)
Angelo, back off. They just saved
the night.

ANGELO
(to Gunner, voice like
silk)
I know exactly what they did.

Angelo pushes off the counter. He walks past Jack—close enough to brush shoulders—but his eyes never leave Gunner's.

Angelo stops inches from Gunner. He doesn't look at the arm Gunner has draped over Jack. He looks into Gunner's eyes.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

(low)

A week is a long time to wait for a
"real person," Gunner.

Angelo doesn't wait for an answer.

He raises a hand and SNAPS his fingers once—sharp, like a whip. He doesn't even look back to see if Crosby is coming. He just walks out.

CROSBY

(falteringly)

I... yeah.

Crosby sets his drink down with shaking hands and follows.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

The jazz from the party is muffled here. The air is cooler. Angelo is already halfway down the hall, but he stops, waiting in the shadows.

Crosby catches up, breathless.

CROSBY (CONT'D)

Angelo, look, Frankie—he's just
high on the adrenaline. He doesn't
know—

Angelo turns. He's perfectly calm. That's what's terrifying.

ANGELO

Did you see it?

CROSBY

(swallowing hard)

The kiss? Yeah. I saw it.

ANGELO

No. Did you see Gunner?

CROSBY

He was just... thanking the guys.

ANGELO

He was looking for an exit. He thinks those two are his way out of this. Out of us.

CROSBY

Maybe that's a good thing, Ang.
Maybe we just let-

Angelo steps into Crosby's space. He reaches out and adjusts Crosby's collar, smoothing the fabric with terrifying tenderness.

ANGELO

There is no "out," Crosby. There's just the waiting room... and the person who owns the building.

He pats Crosby's chest.

ANGELO (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Get the car. I want to be ready when he's done playing with his new toys

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

Pandora strides back into the room.

Jazz hums beneath forced laughter.

Pandora drifts through the crowd like smoke.

PANDORA

(to Woman in Silk)
Do you trust Angelo?
(smiles)
I wouldn't.

She moves on before an answer comes.

AT ANOTHER TABLE --

PANDORA

Jack and Deuce kill too easily.
(beat)
That kind of calm?
Never lasts.

Uneasy glances.

ANGLE ON FRANKIE --

Pandora leans close.

PANDORA
You shine brighter than Gunner
knows.

Frankie absorbs it.

Then --

Pandora settles beside Gunner.

Soft hand on his shoulder.

PANDORA (CONT'D)
Dangerous men eventually choose
hunger over loyalty.

Gunner's eyes flick toward Angelo.

The music dies.

Pandora clinks her crystal glass.

Every head turns.

PANDORA (CONT'D)
To blood...
(to Jack and Deuce)
...betrayal...
(eyes drifting to Angelo)
...and boys who play with fire.

Uneasy laughter. Glasses rise anyway.

Pandora smiles.

PANDORA (CONT'D)
Dinner is served.

The room exhales.

Guests drift toward the patio in uncertain waves.

PANDORA (CONT'D)
Reggie—
something French.
Café-style.

The jazz band shifts into a smooth Parisian waltz.

Too elegant for the mood.

Nobody relaxes.

The party moves again— tense, enchanted, watching.

DEUCE
 (low, to Jack)
 Think they like us?

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

Nearby guests raise shaky glasses toward them.

Star-struck.

Terrified.

Turned on.

Across the room—

FRANKIE
 So they were really gonna rob us?

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

Gunner catches Angelo watching him.

The look lingers a beat too long.

FRANKIE
 Jack didn't even 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 tonight.
Perfect.
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

Pandora glides between tables like royalty, inspecting a battlefield.

PANDORA
(to a guest, softly)
Isn't it romantic
(when men mistake
violence)
(for charm?)

The guest laughs too hard.

FRANKIE
You didn't come home.
(beat)
You let him answer your phone.
Again.

Gunner says nothing.

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

Gunner looks up.

Angelo locks eyes.

Listening without pretending otherwise.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
Forget it.

Frankie walks away.

Gunner doesn't stop him.

Further back—

Angelo and Crosby sit apart from the others.

Frankie hears the conversation.

A candle flickers between them.

 ANGELO
The bodies?

 CROSBY
In the van.

A beat.

 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) (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 (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

Angelo watches Gunner laugh at something Jack says.

His jaw tightens.

Across the room–

The jazz swells.

Angelo steps into the empty space Frankie left behind.

CUT TO:

EXT. PANDORA'S ESTATE - BACK TERRACE - LATER

The party has thinned.

Smoke curls from dying cigars.

Laughter drifts from somewhere deeper in the house.

Gunner leans against a marble column, tie loosened, watching the dark.

Jack and Deuce approach.

Sharp suits.

Moonlight.

Danger.

JACK
You throw a nice party.

GUNNER
Didn't throw it.

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

A small smile from Gunner.

DEUCE
We like you.
And Frankie.

JACK
But before this night gets worse—
Angelo.

Gunner's expression shifts slightly.

JACK (CONT'D)
I don't trust him.
It's the way he looks at you.
No—
studies you.
Like he's memorizing
where to make the cut.

GUNNER
Ang's a pussycat.

DEUCE

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

(leans closer)

And hunger like that
doesn't stop
until it eats you alive.

Silence.

Wind through the trees.

Somewhere inside—

a glass SHATTERS.

JACK

Buy him out.
Get him out of Denver.

GUNNER

He's my business partner.

JACK

And Judas was family.

Jack reaches into his jacket.

Slides Gunner a card.

JACK (CONT'D)

Come back to the hotel.
Bring Frankie.

Jack and Deuce head toward the gate.

GUNNER

Give us an hour.

Jack glances back.

JACK

We'll be waiting.

They disappear into the night.

Gunner lights a cigarette.

Exhales slowly.

The smoke rises like a warning.

Behind him—

FRANKIE emerges from the shadows.

Watching.

FRANKIE
What just happened?

GUNNER
The floor just moved.

They hold each other's gaze.

CUT.

INT. BALCONY - SAME

Angelo watches the party below. Smoke in one hand, whiskey in the other.

Pandora steps beside him.

Martini in hand.

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

Below:

laughter, music, people pretending they aren't afraid.

Pandora sips her martini.

Angelo smokes.

PANDORA (CONT'D)
Gunner's aligning with Chicago.

ANGELO
Didn't notice.

PANDORA
The bodies?

ANGELO
Gone.

A beat.

PANDORA
In rehearsal, it seemed easy.
A little blood.
(MORE)

PANDORA (CONT'D)
A little glitter.
Curtain call.

Angelo says nothing.

PANDORA (CONT'D)
People are talking about you and
Gunner.

Angelo exhales smoke slowly.

Controlled.

ANGELO
People always talk.

Pandora turns to leave.

Stops.

PANDORA
I changed my mind.
Leave Frankie out of it.

That lands.

PANDORA (CONT'D)
Gunner's the headline.
Frankie's barely a footnote.

Silence.

ANGELO
You want.
Chicago wants.
Gunner wants.
(beat)
My turn.

He turns to go.

Stops.

Touches the collar around his neck.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
I'm keeping the name.
"Killer" suits me.

He disappears inside.

Pandora watches him go.

Crosby approaches carefully.

PANDORA
You want a place in history?
Pick a side.
Understood?

A beat.

CROSBY
Yeah.

Pandora glides back into the party.

Crosby pulls out his phone.

Checks over his shoulder.

Types:
PLANS ARE CHANGING FAST.

Another message.

French.
LA REINE DE CŒUR
N'EST PAS TON AMIE.
(The Queen of Hearts
is not your friend.)

SEND.

Crosby looks back toward the party.

Uneasy.

CUT.

INT. UNKNOWN LOCATION - SAME TIME

A phone buzzes. Screen lights up.

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

We don't see the face—only a hand. A silver ring catches the light. A breath. A choice being made.

BACK TO:
BALLROOM - WIDE
ANGLE

FROM ACROSS THE ROOM - PANDORA CLOCKS CROSBY.

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

She turns toward a TUXEDOED THUG by the bandstand.

PANDORA
 (low, wicked - like the
 Evil Queen)
 Follow Crosby. Quietly.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. FRANKIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Dark. Quiet. Frankie moves with purpose.

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

He clicks open a secure folder labeled:

"PANDORA PARTY - SURVEILLANCE CAM 2."

ON SCREEN:

INT. KITCHEN - EARLIER THAT EVENING

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

ANGELO
 (to Gunner)
 So this is all set?

CROSBY
 The blood packs are loaded.

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

ANGELO pulls a backup from his boot.

ANGELO
 Got a real one. Just in case.

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

Angelo leans in. Voice low. Threat real.

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

Crosby nods. Finch nods.

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

BACK TO:

INT. FRANKIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Frankie stops the footage.

He opens a new email.

SUBJECT: WE NEED TO TALK.

He attaches the footage.

FRANKIE
(typing onscreen)
Angelo –
You really thought nobody would
look twice? You want to explain
this before I take it to Gunner,
Pandora, and everyone else?
You get one shot.

He HITS SEND.

Closes the laptop.

His hands shake.

He kills the lights.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. GUNNER'S OFFICE - DAY

Sunlight cuts through vertical blinds like prison bars.

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

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

The office door opens.

ANGELO doesn't turn.

He already knows who entered.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
 (low)
 Francine. You need lunch money?

FRANKIE
 Oh, I am hungry.
 But I don't feel like greasy
 Italian today.

ANGELO
 (murmurs)
 Cute.

FRANKIE
 I'm sure your mother packed your
 lunch anyway.
 How is Maria? Still ironing your
 shirts for you, Ang?

CUT TO:

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

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

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
 By the way-
 did you get my email last night?

ANGELO
 (dismissive, cool)
 I don't waste my time on junk mail.
 Or threats.

FRANKIE
 (lets it sit - half a
 smirk)
 Wasn't a threat.
 It was a flashlight.

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

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

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

This thing, this obsession of
yours.
You want Gunner? Then love him
honestly.
(Beat)
Stop trying to trap him into it.

A long stare. No expression.

ANGELO

(quiet, loaded)
I refuse to go dark.

Silence. Frankie stares at him. Something shifts.

FRANKIE

(beat – eyes narrow)
What?

SILENCE.

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

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

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

ANGELO

Show yourself out, Francine.
And see Ivette if you need bus
fare.
(beat – slow burn))
Don't think you're safe.
(MORE)

ANGELO (CONT'D)
 Or that your life is private.
 Ever.
 KILLER sees more than you think.

Frankie stiffens – only for a second.

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

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

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

ANGLE ON
 FRANKIE:

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

CUT BACK TO:
 ANGELO

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

EXT. DENVER COFFEE STAND - EARLY MORNING

A street performer plays on a guitar. 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.

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

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

GUNNER
 Maybe I did.

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

Beat.

DEUCE
Fuck I love this song.

Deuce sings along for a line with the performer.

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

GUNNER
Appreciate it.
But I think I got this.

Jack takes a slow sip. Looks over the mountains.

JACK
That's the problem with looking up
all the time.
(beat)
You still don't see it, do you?

GUNNER
See what?

JACK
Angelo.

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

DEUCE
If you're wrong...
everybody around you pays for it.

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)

This only gets uglier from here.

They walk off. No handshake. No goodbyes.

Gunner, alone now. He tosses the coffee. Walks into the sunrise.

INT. CROSBY'S LOFT - NIGHT

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

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

PANDORA

Crosby.

I've been thinking about you.

CROSBY

(nervous smile)

Yes, boss. What can I do for you?

PANDORA

Loyalty.

Honor.

Trust.

CROSBY

(chuckling, weak)

Boss you are sounding a little dramatic.

PANDORA

(smiling, but it doesn't reach her eyes)

No, darling.

I don't pay for theater. I produce it. Every word you say makes this uglier. And darling, I'm not the one holding the shovel.

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

CROSBY

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

You and Ma? Since when?

MOTHER
 (terrified)
 Son, I—

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

CROSBY
 (fumbling)
 Wait—
 Let me come over. Let's go out. The
 three of us. Ma, you'd like that,
 right?

MOTHER
 (tearful)
 Please, sweetheart—

CROSBY
 (to Pandora)
 We can step back. Just... talk.

PANDORA
 (cutting)
 No, Crosby.
 Too late. You warned someone.
 (calm, in French) La Reine de Cœur
 n'est pas ton amie. (The Queen of
 Hearts is not your friend.)

PANDORA (CONT'D)
 I told you to choose your side.
 (beat)
 You chose wrong.

Pandora raises the pistol.

Crosby freezes.

MOTHER
 Please—

BANG.

The screen glitches. Gone.

THUMP. Something heavy — a body — hits tile.

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

Then—

PANDORA (O.S., THROUGH THE LAPTOP)
Come get the body.
(beat)
I'll send flowers.

The call disconnects.

INT. GUNNER'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

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

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 — low, instinctive.

He leans in.

ANGELO
This our first date.

A smile. Dangerous. Hopeful.

Gunner exhales. Long. Then pulls back — barely an inch.

But Angelo feels it.

— a cigar dying in the ashtray — sweat sliding down glass — sweat beading on skin

Angelo pulls him closer.

Gunner catches his hand. Firm.

SFX — DOOR OPENS.

A sharp click. FRANKIE steps inside.

He takes in the scene instantly.

No surprise. No fear.

He crosses to the speaker.

FRANKIE
Alexa, stop.

ALEXA (O.S.)
Okay.

The music dies.

FRANKIE
Angelo.
(beat)
Out.
Now.

Angelo doesn't move.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
You opened the bottle.
Now the genie's out.
(beat)
Your wishes? Fucked.

Silence.

ANGELO
You don't tell me—

FRANKIE
(interrupting, calm)
Gunner.
Take a walk.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
Gunner, if you want me —
then want me.
Not because I'm convenient.
(beat)
And right now?
I don't know what the hell you
want.

Gunner breaks eye contact first.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
So give us space.
Because I can't look at you right
now.

Gunner exits slowly. Shirt in hand.

A ghost leaving his own life.

Silence.

Frankie turns back to Angelo.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
Killer—
(beat)
If you want Gunner?
Make your move.

A long stare.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
Have at it.

Frankie steps aside.

Angelo exits.

Alone now, the room suddenly feels enormous.

INT. GUNNER'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

FRANKIE stands alone now.

Gunner gone.

Angelo's energy still hangs in the room like cigar smoke and bad decisions.

The whiskey glass sits untouched.

Frankie stares at it.

He crosses slowly to the windows. Denver glows below him — beautiful and unreachable.

FRANKIE
Alexa... play something sad.

A low, aching guitar fills the room. Soft. Familiar. The kind of song that already knows how this ends.

Frankie closes his eyes.

The music carries us into—

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. PANDORA'S ESTATE - PRIVATE LOUNGE - LATER

POP.

A champagne cork echoes through the room.

The music continues underneath – same ache, new setting.

Frankie sits across from PANDORA. Changed clothes. Same heartbreak.

Pandora pours champagne into crystal flutes.

Frankie says nothing.

PANDORA

To the things we crave.

(beat)

And the lies we tell ourselves to survive them.

She raises her glass.

Frankie finally looks up.

Clinks. Barely. Pandora studies him.

PANDORA (CONT'D)

Don't let anyone take your sparkle.

She pours again.

FRANKIE

(quiet)

You think there's any left?

Pandora almost smiles.

PANDORA

Honey.

You're made of it.

A beat.

PANDORA (CONT'D)

Alexa... something happier.

The room suddenly shifts.

Upbeat music floods in – too bright, too fast, too alive for the mood.

Pandora rises with theatrical flair.

PANDORA (CONT'D)
That's better.
No funerals tonight.

Frankie finally cracks the smallest smile.

Pandora watches him. Calculating.

INT. ANGELO'S OBSESSION ROOM - NIGHT

Muted light.

Walls covered in stolen moments: - Frankie laughing - Gunner smoking - blurry long-lens intimacy

Some framed. Some circled in red. Some ripped clean through.

Like evidence. Like worship.

ANGELO and CROSBY sit in the half-dark.

A bottle between them. Empty glasses. A loaded silence.

ANGELO
She did that to your mother.
(beat)
Your own goddamned mother.

Crosby stares ahead. Dead-eyed.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
And what?
You're just supposed to swallow it?
Drink about it? Pretend it doesn't
burn?

CROSBY
(low)
No.

ANGELO
Because if it were me?
(leans in)
I'd make her feel it.

A long beat.

Crosby absorbs every word like scripture.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
You a man, Crosby?
Or just another sad bastard
bleeding into a whiskey glass?

CROSBY
 (quiet)
 What would you do?

Angelo smiles slowly.

Predatory.

ANGELO
 I wouldn't hesitate.
 (beat)
 And brother –
 you wouldn't be alone.

Crosby finally looks at him.

There it is: devotion.

CROSBY
 You always got my back.
 (beat)
 She told me I had to choose.
 I did.
 (quietly)
 I chose you.

Angelo leans back. Victorious.

Then, in French–

ANGELO
 Je lui ferais ressentir chaque once
 de douleur.
 (I'd make her feel every ounce of
 pain.)
 (beat)
 Tu la regardes dans les yeux... et
 tu lui dis pourquoi.
 (You look her in the eyes... and
 tell her why.)

Crosby breathes shallow. Haunted.

CROSBY
 (en français)
 Elle m'appelait son petit roi.
 (She used to call me her
 little king.)
 A beat.

CROSBY (CONT'D)
 Et maintenant...
 tu veux que je devienne le monstre
 qu'elle priait que je ne sois
 jamais.
 (And now... you want me to become
 the monster she prayed I'd never
 be.)

Silence.

CROSBY (CONT'D)
 D'accord.
 (beat)
 Je le ferai.
 (Alright. I'll do it.)

His eyes sharpen now.

Resolve replacing grief.

CROSBY (CONT'D)
 Then... you and I take down Gunner
 and Frankie.

Angelo smiles.

CROSBY (CONT'D)
 Oh.
 You knew Pandora was his mother?

Angelo freezes.

Tiny. Dangerous.

ANGELO
 Who's mother?

CROSBY
 (smiles)
 Frankie.

Silence.

Then Angelo laughs once. Low. Disbelieving.

ANGELO
 Fuccccck me.

CROSBY
 And he doesn't know.

A slow smile spreads across Angelo's face.

ANGELO

Perfect.

He grabs a knife from the table—

THROWS IT.

WHAM.

Direct hit: Frankie's face on the wall.

The blade trembles.

Like the room just made a decision.

EXT. CAPITOL HILL - CHARLIE'S BAR - NIGHT

The bar hums with life.

Pool balls crack. Laughter drifts. Neon flickers across old wood and worn faces.

GUNNER and FRANKIE sit at a small side table.

Gunner's eyes stay locked on Frankie.

Frankie remains calm. Centered.

GUNNER

(apologetic)

Frankie...

I needed to be sure.

FRANKIE

About what?

GUNNER

Come on.

Don't make this harder.

FRANKIE

I'm not trying to make it hard.

(beat)

But I'm not making it easy either.

Too much is at stake.

Silence.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

If you don't want this—

if you don't want us—

then say it.

We'll survive it.

GUNNER
You really think I could walk away?

FRANKIE
I think you're scared.
(softly)
And I think you keep waiting for
love to feel safer than it is.

A beat.

GUNNER
You're strong as hell.

FRANKIE
No.
(smiles faintly)
I just refuse to go dark.
(beat)
Refuse to let people decide my life
for me.
Refuse to love halfway.

Frankie leans forward now.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
I want a fuck yes.
Not a "maybe." Not "when it's
convenient." Not "when nobody's
looking."
(beat)
A fuck yes.

Silence hangs between them.

GUNNER
God, Frankie... you make it sound
so simple. Like it's just a choice
you make in the light. But you
don't understand—everyone thinks
I'm fearless. They see the "boss,"
the guy who handles everything, and
they think I'm solid all the way
through.

Truth is... I learned young. I
learned that love isn't a "yes,"
it's a trade. If you become what
people need, they stay. Period.

So I became... everything. I became
the strong one, the protector, the
joke, the shoulder, the ride home.
I curated myself.

(MORE)

GUNNER (CONT'D)

I built a version of me that was so damn useful nobody could afford to leave. Whatever kept people close, that's who I was.

(He stops pacing and finally looks at Frankie, his voice cracking.)

And then you ask me for a "fuck yes." You're the first person who ever asked what I needed back. And it didn't feel like a gift, Frankie. It felt like an interrogation.

That's what scared me. And then you ask me for a "fuck yes."

You're the first person who ever asked what I needed back. That scared the hell out of me. Because if I stop being the boss, the protector, the useful one... I don't know who's left.

GUNNER (CONT'D)

(Beat)

You want a "fuck yes"? I want to give it to you. I just have to figure out who's actually saying it.

FRANKIE

Then let's find out.

(A small, steady beat)

I'm not looking for the "boss," Gunner. I'm not looking for a protector or a ride home. I have plenty of people who can be useful to me.

I'm looking for the man who's terrified right now. That's the guy I'm saying "yes" to.

(He stands up, closing the gap just enough to be in Gunner's space, but doesn't touch him yet.)

You don't have to have an answer for who you are. You just have to stop performing. Just stand here. With me. In the dark.

(MORE)

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
That's the only trade I'm
interested in.

Then—

GUNNER
(low, wolfish)
Frankie...

FRANKIE
Don't use that voice on me.

Gunner grins.

Dangerous. Sexy. Certain.

GUNNER
Fuck yes.

He pulls Frankie across the table and kisses him.

Deep. Earned. Long overdue.

When they finally separate—

Gunner's smiling like he can finally breathe again.

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

Gunner leans closer.

GUNNER
I'm sorry...
What was your answer again?

Frankie holds his stare.

No fear now.

FRANKIE
(confident)
Fuck yes.

GUNNER
Make-up sex?

FRANKIE
Always the best kind.

They rise together.

EXT. CHARLIE'S BAR - CONTINUOUS

GUNNER
Frankie I am--

A BLACKJACK swings into frame--

CRACK.

A deafening blast of force from behind.

The world WHIPS sideways.

Gunner and Frankie are thrown hard onto the pavement.

Glass SHATTERS.

People SCREAM.

Smoke. Ringing ears. Chaos.

Two HOODED MEN sprint down the alley and disappear into the night.

GUY ON THE STREET
Call 911!

WOMAN
I'm a doctor!

She drops beside FRANKIE first.

Checks his neck.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
I got a pulse!

Gunner struggles to move.

Blood on his forehead.

Disoriented.

GUNNER
(hazy)
What happened?
(His eyes search.)
Find Frankie.

Blurred.

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

The woman moves to Gunner now.

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

Gunner tries to focus on her.

Then laughs once.

Broken.

GUNNER
Dead man.

WOMAN
What?

GUNNER
Can you hear me?

The woman leans closer.

WOMAN
Yes. I can hear you.

Stay with me.

Gunner's eyes drift toward Frankie.

GUNNER
(fading)
Tell him...
(beat)
When I find him?
(weak smile)
He's already gone.

His eyes close.

DISTANT SIRENS begin to rise.

RED AND BLUE LIGHTS wash across the street.

TIME LAPSE:

-- PARAMEDICS cutting away shirts.

-- Oxygen masks.

-- Frankie loaded onto a stretcher.

-- Gunner's hand hanging limp as they wheel him away.

-- Police taping off the street.
 -- A dropped beer bottle rolling slowly into the gutter.
 -- The bar sign flickers: REFUSE TO GO DARK

CUT TO BLACK.

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 (CONT'D)
 (to Frankie)
 And you too, my boy.

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

PANDORA (CONT'D)
 Crosby.
 I do wish you'd decide
 whether we're at war or brunch.

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

PANDORA
 Grief should feel expensive. We're
 good?

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.

They head for the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A violent collision of bodies against tile.

Hands gripping.

Breath ragged.

Something desperate underneath it.

Not romance.

Not even lust.

Oblivion.

Silence. Then: zippers. Shirts back on.

INT. CHARLIE'S BAR - CONTINUOUS

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

Rene subtly angles his phone beneath the bar.

Click.

A photo.

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

Wait...
The Gunner?
Capitol Hill 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

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

ANGELO

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 falls. Rene looks up –

ANGELO. Already back. Cold.

ANGELO
You stupid man. Was I not clear?

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

His hand slips inside his coat.

ANGELO
Door. Now.

RENE
I never got your name.

ANGELO
Killer.

They exit toward the alley.

EXT. CHARLIE'S BAR - CONTINUOUS

SFX: GUNSHOTS.

A SCREAM.

Another shot.

Silence.

CAMERA TRACKS:

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

FADE OUT.

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.

ANGELO (V.O.)
If you fuck a killer...
finish your drink.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. FRANKIE'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Low light. Paintings unfinished. Brushes untouched.

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

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

PANDORA
It's not.

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

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

FRANKIE
Box?

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

Beat. Frankie looks at her now.

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

Silence.

FRANKIE
Bullshit.

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

FRANKIE
Why now?

PANDORA

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

FRANKIE

You did what?

PANDORA

(quietly)

I did what mothers do. I protect my
own.

FRANKIE

With a bullet?

PANDORA

With certainty.

Beat.

PANDORA (CONT'D)

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

She rises. Adjusts her coat.

PANDORA (CONT'D)

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

She exits. Leaves the door open behind her.

Frankie sits in stunned silence.

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.

FADE OUT.

INTERCUT SEQUENCE - GUNNER / FRANKIE - MIDDAY

INT. JEWELER'S - DAY

Sunlight glints off glass cases.

GUNNER studies a diamond solitaire.

Clean.

Elegant.

Forever.

The JEWELER watches him carefully.

JEWELER
You know when it's the right one.

Gunner smiles faintly.

CLICK.

He snaps a photo of the ring.

SENDS IT.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. FRANKIE'S STUDIO - DAY

FRANKIE steps outside.

Arm still in a sling.

He breathes in the day.

Almost peaceful.

His phone BUZZES.

He smiles at the photo.

SCREECH.

A BLACK VAN rockets to the curb.

Doors FLY OPEN.

CROSBY grabs Frankie hard.

ANGELO drives a fist into his ribs.

Frankie collapses.

His phone skitters across the pavement.

FRANKIE
What the fuck--

Too late.

They drag him toward the van.

INT. JEWELER'S - DAY

The jeweler places the ring into a velvet box.

JEWELER
She'll say yes.

Gunner slides the box into his coat pocket.

Protective.

Tender.

His smile grows.

This means something.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. FRANKIE'S STUDIO - ALLEY - DAY

Frankie struggles.

 ANGELO
 Stop fighting.

 FRANKIE
 Go fuck yourself!

Crosby SLAMS him against the van.

A BUSINESS CARD slips from Frankie's coat.

It flutters into the alley.

The van PEELS OFF.

Silence.

A TEN-YEAR-OLD BOY - TOMMY - steps into frame.

He picks up the card.

INSERT CARD:

JACK WILD

WILD CARD INC.

Private & Personal Security

Tommy looks down the alley.

Scared.

SMASH CUT TO:

SPLIT SCREEN - TOMMY / JACK - LATER

LEFT SIDE - EXT. TOMMY ON THE STREET- DAY

Tommy on the street.

Door locked.

Card trembling in his hand.

He dials.

RIGHT SIDE - INT. JACK & DEUCE'S HQ - DAY

Controlled chaos.

Monitors.

Weapons.

Coffee cups.

Music low.

JACK WILD answers the phone with a cocky grin.

DEUCE lounges nearby, boots up.

JACK

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

TOMMY

Um... hi.

Jack leans forward immediately.

Clocking fear.

JACK

You in Denver, kid?

TOMMY

Y-yeah...

JACK

How'd you get this number?

TOMMY

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

Jack's expression shifts.

JACK

Frankie from school?

TOMMY

No...
Frankie the painter.
He teaches art sometimes.

JACK

What's your name?

TOMMY

My dad says not to talk to
strangers.

JACK

Hey -- you called me.
(glances at screen)
Tommy Pritchard, huh?

Jack snaps his fingers. Deuce looks over now.

Alert.

JACK (CONT'D)

(on speaker)

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

TOMMY

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

Jack sits straighter.

JACK

You sure?

TOMMY

Yeah.
(beat)
One guy wore something around his
neck...
It said "KILLER."

DEUCE

(mutters)

Mother of God.

Jack and Deuce exchange a look.

Danger.

JACK

Tommy.
(listens carefully)
You did real good.

Now I need you to go home and lock your door.

TOMMY

Okay...

JACK

Ten minutes.

Text me when you're safe.

TOMMY

I will.

JACK

And Tommy?

TOMMY

Yeah?

JACK

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

Tommy nods.

Terrified.

Hangs up.

Silence.

DEUCE

Gunner?

Jack already reaching for another phone.

JACK

Call him.
Now.

SMASH CUT TO BLACK.

FULL FRAME - JACK & DEUCE

Deuce's phone is already dialing.

Jack holsters a weapon with practiced calm.

The humor is gone now.

Pure business.

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

CUT TO:

INT. GUNNER'S PENTHOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Soft jazz drifts through the room.

Vintage Chet Baker.

Warm.

Dreamlike.

Too perfect.

GUNNER stands before the mirror.

Bruised.

Still healing. But dressed sharply now: tailored blazer,
crisp white shirt, trying to become whole again.

He adjusts his collar. Takes a breath.

GUNNER
(rehearsing)
Frankie...
(winces)
Frankie.
(tries again)
Will you marry me?

He stops.

The words hit harder than the bruises ever did.

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

A smile almost forms.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. JACK & DEUCE'S HQ - SAME TIME

DEUCE paces hard with the phone pressed to his ear.

Jack works fast at his laptop.

Flights.

Maps.

Addresses.

DEUCE

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

SFX: VOICEMAIL BEEP.

Deuce curses quietly.

Ends the call.

Immediately starts texting.

INSERT PHONE:

CALL ME NOW.
IT'S FRANKIE.

Jack doesn't look up.

JACK

Nothing?

DEUCE

Straight to voicemail.

Jack's jaw tightens.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. GUNNER'S PENTHOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gunner's phone lights up behind him on the bed.

Buzzing.

Ignored.

Gunner stares into the mirror again.

Trying to say the thing that terrifies him most.

GUNNER
 (softly)
 Will you marry me?
 (beat)
 I swear to God...
 I'd do anything right this time.

He reaches into his coat.

Removes the ring box.

Opens it.

The diamond catches the sunlight.

Beautiful.

Fragile.

Forever.

His phone BUZZES again.

Still unheard.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. JACK & DEUCE'S HQ - MOMENTS LATER

Jack SLAMS the laptop shut.

JACK
 Flight's booked.

Ninety minutes.

DEUCE
 He's still not answering.

Jack grabs a go-bag.

Checks the chamber in his weapon.

Cold focus now.

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

Deuce grabs jackets, ammo, passports.

The room moves with controlled panic.

JACK (CONT'D)
Call Pandora.

DEUCE
You trust her?

JACK
No.
(beat)
That's why we call her.

Jack heads for the door.

DEUCE follows.

The office lights shut off behind them.

CUT TO BLACK.

FINAL BEAT:

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

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

INT. VACANT WAREHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Dark.

A single bare bulb flickers alive.

FRANKIE sits tied to a metal chair in the middle of the room.

No windows. No way out.

His shoulder sling hangs half-torn.

Blood at the lip. Still defiant.

The steel door OPENS.

ANGELO enters first.

CROSBY behind him.

No masks now.

No pretending.

ANGELO

Francine.
 (smiles faintly)
 So good to see you.

CROSBY

He's got a lot of spirit.
 (shows bite mark)
 He bit me.

FRANKIE

You're both so tough
 when you have an audience.
 (beat)
 Why are you doing this?

Angelo circles him slowly.

Predatory.

Measured.

ANGELO

Because, Francine...
 isn't it ironic?
 Everything you have...
 I have more of.
 (beat)
 How Gunner ever chose you
 is beyond me.

Frankie studies him.

Then smiles.

FRANKIE

How was Rene?

A pause.

Angelo freezes.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

The bar bathroom guy.
 You fucked him at Charlie's.
 (mocking)
 "I have a boyfriend.
 Gunner."

Frankie LAUGHS.

Real laughter.

Dangerous laughter.

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

ANGELO
 Shut up.

TOMMY O.S.
 (yells)
 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.

FRANKIE
 Poor Angie.
 Not getting what she wants.
 Not getting the prince.
 Not getting the white picket fence.
 (now deadly)
 Not EVER getting Gunner.

Angelo's jaw tightens.

Crosby immediately clocks it.

CROSBY
 Boss, okay--
 he's trying to get under--

FRANKIE
 All the stars in the sky...
 and not one shining
 on your fantasy.
 (smiles)
 Angie.

Silence.

A snap.

BANG.

Frankie jerks violently. His head snaps back, then slumps.

Angelo stands perfectly still. The gun is still raised. He doesn't look at Frankie. He looks at the spent shell casing on the floor. It's smoking.

Blood spreading slowly across Frankie's shirt.

ANGELO

(quietly)

I told him to shut the fuck up.

A long beat.

The warehouse HUMS.

CROSBY

Jesus Christ...

Boss...

what did you do?

Angelo doesn't hear him. He's staring at the blood pooling beneath the chair. He sees his own reflection in the red gloss. He looks... different. He looks like a stranger..

ANGELO

(whispers, in French)

Ce qui est fait est fait.

Je ne peux pas revenir en arrière.

(English)

What's done is done.

I can't go back.

He turns toward the door.

CROSBY

Where are you going?

(beat)

What about the kid?

Angelo turns his head. Slowly. Like he's just realizing Crosby is in the room. He looks at Crosby the way a scientist looks at a specimen that has outlived its usefulness.

ANGELO

My Gunner and I have a meeting.

Then we're going to Sydney.

Crosby stares at him.

CROSBY
(staring, horrified)
Sydney? Gunner doesn't even know--
Angelo, you just killed his
boyfriend!

He turns. Cold.

ANGELO
You talk too much.

BANG. BANG.

Crosby collapses beside Frankie.

Their blood begins to merge together across the concrete floor.

Angelo turns back.

Calm now. Empty.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
Nobody stays.

He turns and exits. The steel door SLAMS shut, the sound echoing like a tomb closing.

Only the flicker of the bulb above and the spreading red beneath them.

ANGELO (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Where's my little snitch?

A BEAT.
Tommy...
(softly)
You should've kept walking.

Silence.

Then --

The steel door OPENS somewhere deeper in the warehouse.

Angelo laughs once.

CUT TO BLACK.

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.

(beat – then softly)

Ring.

Knee.

Now

Nobody moves.

The bartender slowly steps backward.

Ice melts in forgotten glasses.

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

PANDORA

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

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

GUNNER

Crosby we're supposed to meet today
to review/

ANGELO

(with brevity)

Dead. I shot him right after
Frankie. Can't have witnesses.
No, Gunner, sweetheart—on one knee.
Let's confirm the "til death do us
part" thing.

Deuce and Jack are at the ready to shoot.

GUNNER

Ang, let's just all/

ANGELO

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

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

ANGELO (CONT'D)

Cuff yourselves to the bar rail.

Gunner still standing , looking at Jack.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

For fuck's sake Gunner
get on one knee.

Jack and Deuce cuff themselves to the bar.

Gunner on one knee looking up at Angelo.

Jack subtly reaches--

CLICK.

Angelo already aiming at Gunner.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

Try it.

Angelo has the gun at Gunner's temple.

DEUCE

Is this what they mean by a shotgun
wedding?

Jack rolls his eye.

JACK

We've crossed the fucking line.

ANGELO

(Softly, encouraging)

The words, Gunner. We practiced this in our heads a thousand
times. Don't let the audience spoil it.

PANDORA

(Interjecting)

You're playing a part in a play
that ended hours ago, Angie.

Angelo doesn't look at her. He doesn't even seem annoyed. He
simply raises his hand and fires.

Pandora falls back, the silence that follows more deafening than the shot.

Blood blossoms rapidly.

JACK
You crazy fuck.

ANGELO

(Without missing a beat)

Now, where were we? Ah, yes. The promise.

Pandora gurgles and blood slips out of her mouth.

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

Angelo presses the gun firmly into Gunner's head.

GUNNER
(Choking out the words)
Ang... will you...

ANGELO
(Sharp, a flicker of the old fire)
The ring first. It has to be official. I want the ring.

Gunner reaches into his pocket, his fingers shaking as he produces the band of gold.

SFX: LIGHTNING CRACKS. The transformer outside explodes.

The bar goes pitch black. In the darkness, there are only the sounds of a scuffles, a heavy thud, the metallic scrape of handcuffs, and the wind whistling through the open door. G

WHACK. THUMP. A body hits the floor.

JACK
Deuce are you free yet.

DEUCE
Almost. One sec. Gunner. Gunner.

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

Pandora gasps once. Then still.

JACK
Where's Angelo?

Jack is free. He checks for a pulse.

JACK (CONT'D)
I got a pulse.

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

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

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

Lights flicker. Angelo is gone. Pandora is still.

The ring lies near Pandora's outstretched hand.

Blood seeps toward it. It sparkles under red light.

Bonnie Tyler howls the final line.

FADE OUT.

EXT. BONDI BEACH SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

ON SCREEN:

TWO MONTHS LATER - BONDI BEACH SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

Late afternoon. The waves easily rolling in.

Bare feet press into wet sand.

Slow.

Aimless.

Healing.

SFX: SIGH

Camera pulls back to Gunner on the beach.

He takes out the ring.

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

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

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

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

Gunner hands his glass to Jack.

He closes his fist around the ring first.

Then slips it over his head.

Lets it rest against his heart.

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

GUNNER

To Frankie. Refuse to go dark.
Always.

The toast.

Deuce takes out his phone and hits play.

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

Three survivors against the Pacific horizon.

Still standing.

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)
(texting)
Found you.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - WILTON MANORS - MORNING

ON SCREEN:

WILTON MANORS, FL

Sunlight pours through lace curtains.

Birds chirp.

A kettle whistles.

Too peaceful.

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)
Charming.

BUZZ.

"His phone lights up.

We did nothing but dance. Yes, and-?

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

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

TEXT - JACK:

Nowhere you can hide.

Angelo doesn't flinch. He sips his tea.

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

ANGELO
(soft)
Then come find me.

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

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.

SMASH TO BLACK.

CREDITS ROLL.

GUNNER (O.S.)
I won't go dark.
Ever.
I won't.

THE END