

The Connection

By

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EXT. PORT OF SAN YSIDRO, U.S./MEXICAN BORDER - DAY

Under a haze of exhaust, thousands of cars idle in a slow-moving line into the U.S. Radios blare in Spanish and English; engines rev; vendors roam in the chaos, hawking souvenirs.

JACK SULLIVAN (30s), Customs and Border Patrol, works a northbound lane, pacing in and out of his Primary Inspection Booth. Even as he's cooked alive in the heat, he's a handsome, athletic man, with eyes reading the landscape of fuming cars.

Suddenly, the monotony is interrupted by A WHITE VAN *accelerating* straight at him, rushing the border. It takes Jack a moment to realize it's not stopping.

He leaps out of the way, as the van caroms off a concrete barrier and continues north. A second VAN breaks out of the line, following it through.

JACK  
Port runners!

As soon as he shouts it, an ALARM SYSTEM is activated. STEEL PLANKS shoot up from the ground, shredding the tires of both vans. One stops, surrounded instantly by CBP AGENTS; but the second continues onward on sparking rims.

As it reaches the traffic ahead, it attempts to drive OFF-ROAD. It breaks through a guardrail and churns up dust. Finally, the van tips over as it hits the scrubby incline, rolling down into a drainage ditch along I-5.

Jack runs all the way to the overturned van, lying on a spray of broken glass. A few DOZEN IMMIGRANTS climb from the destroyed windshield, fleeing into the hillsides. But -

- the rest of the illegals, at least FIFTY PEOPLE, now lie bloody and injured inside.

JACK  
Let's get an ambulance here!

As he looks on, out-of-breath - his friend and fellow CBP OFFICER CLINT DANIELSON (40s) catches up. He glances at a woman, blood gushing down her face from a split forehead.

CLINT  
Jesus Christ, lady. Welcome to  
America.

EXT. PORT OF SAN YSIDRO, U.S./MEXICAN BORDER - DAY

Jack watches the chaos as CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL responds, cordoning off all but one lane. TRAFFIC jams up for miles in both directions.

JACK (V.O.)

So you wonder what's real and what's  
a diversion, who's the professional  
and who's the victim, who's just  
desperate, and who's running the  
show. You live every day in a puzzle  
you'll just never solve.

Jack works his lane. We move rapidly from car to car, showing flashes of the lives inside, as Jack scans for clues.

JACK (V.O.)

The big picture's too much for your  
head. So you just focus on the  
little things.

The cars move at an accelerated pace, TIME-LAPSE, speeding to streaks, as Jack continues at NORMAL SPEED amid the blurs. One car freezes, and we ZOOM IN ON THE HUBCAPS.

JACK (V.O.)

Those lug nuts are too shiny for  
those old hub caps. Something's in  
the wheel.

At regular speed, Jack directs the driver to a SECONDARY SEARCH AREA, until the frantic speed of traffic resumes.

FREEZE and ZOOM IN on an old truck with one FRESHLY PAINTED PANEL on the side.

JACK (V.O.)

One newer-looking patch: might be a  
compartment. Even the richest  
smugglers never want to waste a whole  
can of paint.

Cars flicker past, pausing on different FACES. The pace is like a deck of cards shuffling, a few sticking along the way. We stop on a colicky BABY, which Jack studies closely.

JACK (V.O.)

Once you find enough ecstasy in dirty  
diapers...

Jack pulls a BAG OF PILLS from the baby's diaper; then directs the CRYING MOTHER to a secondary-search area. The SPEEDING PACE begins again, until we slow down on a HEARSE.

JACK (V.O.)

...you start assuming the worst.

We glimpse CLINT supervising, as BALLOONS OF HEROIN are extracted from the mouth of the CADAVER.

JACK (V.O.)  
You can't think about what you  
missed: it's already gone.

The SMUGGLING SCOUTS are taunting Jack from across the border, cheering that a LOAD just went through safely.

JACK (V.O.)  
All you can do is keep your eyes  
open.

Suddenly we stop for a LONGER BEAT on a woman we'll know as -

AMANDA MARTINEZ (28). Not just beautiful, she has an empathic depth to her face. Amid so many harried commuters, she's the first to LOOK CLOSELY at Jack.

She passes slowly, studying Jack as he studies her.

Regular speed resumes; the car passes; and Jack turns back to the glare of approaching windshields.

JACK (V.O.)  
Every trick, every toy, every new  
system... we're still just sandbags  
against a flood.

We move across the lanes to where a STEEL BOX is mounted on a TRACK beside an 18-wheeler. The VACIS SCANNING SYSTEM.

INT. SCANNING BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

A CBP OFFICER watches the VACIS SCREEN: a RADIOLOGICAL IMAGE of the truck's interior: wavy, rainbow images of people hiding inside BOXES of some kind.

CBP OFFICER  
We got a whole crowd in there!

EXT. 16-WHEELER - DAY

A dozen OFFICERS enter the truck with weapons drawn. It's filled with WASHING MACHINES, each one with an IMMIGRANT crammed inside. As they crawl out, Jack watches, making eye contact with a man who just looks relieved to take a full *breath* again.

EXT. JACK SULLIVAN'S HOUSE - SUNSET

A rundown ranch-style house (one step up from a trailer) on a street of low-cost housing in East San Diego County.

A battered JEEP CHEROKEE pulls up. DARLENE SULLIVAN carries a bag of groceries inside. She's pretty, looks thirty, just can't afford a beauty parlor to make her look twenty.

INT. SULLIVAN LIVING ROOM - SUNSET

ON TV: "Animal Planet." AN UNDERWATER SHOT of hundreds of salmon, lined up in layers in an Alaskan river.

NARRATOR

This is where the salmon will spawn  
and die.

ON JACK, in a Lazy-boy chair with his daughter, MADDY (4), on his knee as they watch TV.

NARRATOR

But first, they must pass the last  
deadly obstacles.

ON TV: Five grizzly bears are lined along the top of a waterfall, where salmon leap.

NARRATOR

Now only the Grizzly, waiting to  
stock up for hibernation, can stop  
the salmon from reaching their  
spawning ground.

As the bears pick off the salmon, Maddy starts crying.

JACK

What's wrong?

She clutches BLUE RABBIT, her favorite toy.

MADDY

I don't like this show.

JACK

All right, all right.

Darlene appears. She leans in and kisses Jack. As she pulls away, she notices Maddy's worried face.

DARLENE

What's wrong, sweetie?

MADDY

The bears were eating them!

Jack switches to a cartoon.

JACK

Here, that's better.

As Darlene heads into the kitchen, *the phone rings*.

DARLENE  
Don't answer that.

JACK  
Why not?

DARLENE  
It's the landlord. He called twice.

*Ring, ring.*

JACK  
(raising his voice)  
No, I talked to him.

DARLENE  
What?

JACK  
I said I TALKED to him.

*Ring, ring.* Darlene re-appears.

DARLENE  
Well, what did you say? So we can  
get on the same page here.

JACK  
That we'd pay him Monday.

She just gapes at him, wondering how.

JACK  
I'll borrow it.

He turns back to the TV, now on *Tom and Jerry*. Tom's tail is  
shoved into a meat grinder. Maddy looks on happily.

JACK  
(to Maddy)  
You're telling me *this* is better?

INT. BRIEFING ROOM, SAN YSIDRO - DAY

Jack sits beside CLINT DANIELSON in the morning muster.  
SALAZAR reads from a clipboard. The CBP officers are an even  
mix of white and Hispanic, mostly ex-military. It's a room  
full of buzz cuts.

SALAZAR  
First off, congratulations on some  
cold hits yesterday. If anyone's  
interested, we've got some government-  
seized washing machines on sale...

Some laughter from the group.

CLINT  
(whispering)  
Come down tonight. I got a fighter  
in the mix. Tough kid, welterweight.

ANOTHER INSPECTOR (O.S.)  
Listen to Don King over here.

As a joke, Clint musses up his hair and sneers at the inspector.

JACK  
Maybe later.

SALAZAR (O.S.)  
...according to the report, with  
border patrol assets moving into  
Arizona, we expect to see increased  
narcotics and human traffic in the  
San Diego sector....

CLINT  
(quiet, to Jack)  
Come on, man. Put five hundred on my  
guy, and you'll make rent.  
Guaranteed.

JACK  
Why? Somebody taking a dive?

ANOTHER INSPECTOR  
*Danielson*. Just buy yourself a  
goddamn *rooster*?

SALAZAR (O.S.)  
(in the b.g., continuous)  
...the BIC in Tijuana reports of  
increased competition among coyote  
organizations - not affiliated with  
the AFO or the Sinaloa cartels...

CLINT  
(quiet, to Jack)  
You got to lay your money down  
sometimes. Nothing ventured, nothing  
gained.

SALAZAR  
Now, a technical note.

Salazar holds up a small, portable RADIATION DETECTOR.

SALAZAR  
*Please* do not attempt to adjust your  
new PRDs.

They're set to detect very low levels of radiation. So, yes, you're going to get ceramic tiles, TVs setting them off...

Salazar waves his PRD over a tile on the table. It goes off.

SALAZAR

If anyone has recently had *chemotherapy*, they'll set it off, too. Smoke alarms, *bananas*.

(pause)

But it's better to follow procedure and deal with a few false alarms.

The CBP OFFICERS groan: there's been more than a "few".

INT. PRIMARY BOOTH - PORT OF SAN YSIDRO

Further back, Jack studies a battered FORD FOCUS, videotaped in line, appearing on the monitor screens. A young Mexican woman is driving two children.

The DOGS are led through the lanes, and one of them begins sniffing around the Focus. Jack studies the monitor first.

Jack waves through the cars between them, stepping out to the FORD FOCUS. A little girl, MARIA (8) sits beside the driver; a boy, JESUS (11), sits in back.

The woman hands Jack a California Driver's license.

JACK

(studying it)

Pilar Ramirez? How are you doing, Ms. Ramirez?

PILAR

Good, sir. Officer.

JACK

You're an American citizen?

PILAR

Yes, sir.

JACK

And these are your children?

PILAR

Yes.

JACK

They're American citizens?



PILAR  
Yes, born here.

JACK  
(to Maria)  
How you doing, sweetie?

There's panic in the girl's eyes.

MARIA  
Yes.

Just the faintest change in mood indicates that Jack is on alert. He looks into the backseat.

JACK  
What's your name, big fella?

JESUS  
Jesus.

JACK  
What school you go to?

The boy looks bewildered, doesn't answer. Jack looks to Pilar. CLOSE SHOT: There's a throbbing pulse in the vein in her neck. Jack is trained to notice.

JACK  
(to the boy)  
What's your mother's name?

JESUS  
Jesus.

JACK  
(in Spanish)  
*No, buddy, I asked you your mama's name. This is your mother, right?*

The boy is frozen. Tears appear in Pilar's eyes.

PILAR  
Please, sir, they are my sister's children. She hasn't seen them in three years.

She grabs Jack's wrists, begging, crying; and the little girl has begun to cry as well.

PILAR  
Please, let us go. Please.

Jack tries to pry her hand from his wrist.

JACK  
Ms. Ramirez, please pull up to  
Secondary Lane number 3.

As Pilar keeps pleading with him, Jack looks away, at the line of cars stretching miles back into Mexico.

Then he leads the children toward Secondary.

INT. SECONDARY SEARCH AREA - MOMENTS LATER

Jack stands beside Pilar and the children near the car, with Assistant Port Director JUAN SALAZAR (50s), who studies her license.

SALAZAR  
Where did you get this license,  
Pilar?

Pilar is still sobbing.

PILAR  
In Tijuana.

Jack looks at the kids, eyes wide with fear. He has a pounding headache, and gloom hanging over him.

JACK  
Can I leave this with you, boss?

He looks back at the children: a small puddle is forming beneath Maria's feet - as she pees herself.

EXT. PARKING LOT - LATE AFTERNOON

Exhausted at the end of the day, heading back to his dented CHEVY CAVALIER, Jack looks at an OVERPASS in the distance. Shimmering in the highways' fumes, SMUGGLING SCOUTS are watching him.

EXT. LAKESIDE, CALIFORNIA - LATE AFTERNOON

Jack drives through a working-class neighborhood of East San Diego. All around him is a mix of Spanish and White Power graffiti, vying for space.

EXT. PAY DAY LOANS - LATE AFTERNOON

Jack moves through a security door.

ON JACK'S HAND: signing papers.

LENDER (O.S.)  
And then read and initial here.

INT. PAY DAY LOANS - CONTINUOUS

The LENDER is going over the CONTRACT, standing behind bulletproof Plexiglas, with "Puto" etched into it.

LENDER  
This states that if you can't repay  
the amount plus interest by the  
nineteenth, then...you'll be charged  
an additional late fee...

JACK  
It's fine. I know.

CUT TO:

A TRAMPOLINE

Jack's nephews--HUGO (9) and BRYCE (7)--are bouncing up and down, while MADDY lies giggling on the canvas, stretched out dangerously under their feet. CLARABELLE, the dog, circles the children, barking. We're on:

EXT. SULLIVAN BACK PATIO - EVENING

Jack stands at the grill. He watches the bouncing children across the humble plot of dying grass.

At a fold-out table, his wife, DARLENE holds a glass of red wine. She drinks as quickly as she speaks.

Her sister, MARCIE (33), is a stoic military wife.

DARLENE  
(mile-a-minute)  
No, no, I'll just have to go back to  
teaching in the fall. But I got to  
find some kind of day-care situation  
for Maddy that's not just, like,  
breaking even. I don't want to work  
all day just to pay for somebody else  
to take care of my kid. Just...  
medical, you know. It's killing us.  
It just kills us dead every month.

MARCIE  
(drolly)  
Tell me about it. Average army  
family lives on food stamps.

HUGO (O.S.)  
Mom! Bryce keeps trying to land on  
my feet. On *purpose*.

MARCIE  
Work together over there guys!

DARLENE  
I miss teaching: I never should have  
taken this whole year off. But when  
Jack came home, it was just pure  
honeymoon, you know. I couldn't even  
*think*. I was... just....  
(toasts her cup of wine)  
...so happy to have him in one piece.

Deep in thought, she looks over at Jack - a wistful  
expression on her face. She notices the smoke off the grill.

DARLENE  
(raising her voice)  
Baby, don't overcook 'em. Nobody  
likes them burnt-to-death but you.

INT. SULLIVAN LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Jack goes to the closet, searches through a jacket, comes out  
with a prescription bottle: there's one pill left. He's  
annoyed.

INT. SULLIVAN KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

He tosses it into his mouth, taking a handful of water from  
the kitchen tap.

Behind him, Darlene drops a WINE GLASS, which shatters across  
the floor.

DARLENE  
*Oh... shoot.* We're down to our last  
two grown-up glasses.

Stoic, Jack gets a dustpan and begins cleaning it up.

DARLENE  
I'm so nervous for her. Brian's on  
his third tour, and -

Jack is just sweeping the glass, a hundred miles away.

DARLENE  
We could move in with them.

She's raw with wine and emotion, and Jack can't look at her.

DARLENE

Jack?

He rises and drops the debris into the trash.

JACK

I'm going to head over to Clint's.

DARLENE

(wide-eyed)

Right now?

EXT. PORT OF SAN YSIDRO, U.S./MEXICAN BORDER

Jack crosses the border in his Chevy Cavalier. As soon as he rattles over the tire guards, the lanes vanish, and traffic becomes chaotic.

EXT. TIJUANA PHARMACY - AVENIDA REVOLUCIÓN - NIGHT

Through the clamor of drunken teenagers, hustlers, booming car stereos - a night full of run-down, tacky color...

Jack heads into one of the hundreds of sidewalk pharmacies along the main drag, each with placards advertising cheap Viagra, Wellbutrin, and Oxycontin.

Jack steps up to a pharmacist in a white coat.

JACK

I need generic for Xanax. *Entiendes?*

PHARMACIST

*Sí, entiendo. Pero no tenemos*  
"Generic."

JACK

(in Spanish)

*Shit. And I need "Maxalt," too.*

PHARMACIST

For Migraines. *Sí, lo tenemos.*  
*Pero, no hay "generic."* For these  
two... seventy-five dollars.

Jack is a little irritated, particularly by how the vendor continues trying to speak to him in English.

JACK

*How about sixty?*

PHARMACIST

*Bueno.*

Jack gives a flicker of a smile at the negotiation, then peels the money off a roll in his pocket.

We hear a *sound prelap* of a STARTING BELL.

INT. PALENQUE ARENA - TIJUANA - NIGHT

More like a tin barn than an arena, for years this place has shown classic Mexican wrestling. Now, the lopsided ring is a site for an "MMAX" fight, Mexico's version of UFC.

A haze of smoke hangs over the crowd, some arena seats torn out and replaced by foldout chairs. The spectators are a mix of old-fashioned wrestling fans and newer, aggressive teens.

CLINT (O.S.)

That's our boy in the red shorts.

Two lean WELTERWEIGHT FIGHTERS come out and immediately lock up in an ugly dance of Krav maga.

Jack and Clint watch closely, lagers in their hands.

CLINT

*Fuck.* He's no good on the ground.

JACK

You're crazy coming down here, Clint.

CLINT

Why? You come down here for your *meds* every week.

The fighters are bound together in a brutal contortion.

CLINT

What is that? Pillow talk? Kick his ass, Blancón.

JACK

Anybody recognizes you from the line, you'd be in for it.

CLINT

Jesus, he's going to break his fucking leg.

Clint groans as the ref dives to the canvas, then rises, waving the fighters off. Clint's fighter loses: *heel hook submission*.

JACK

Hell of an investment, Clint.

INT. PALENQUE ARENA - TUNNEL

Jack stands further back, watching Clint talk heatedly with his fighter's TRAINERS. Clint uses the PANTOMIMING GESTURES of a man growing angry in his second language.

INT. PALENQUE ARENA - SPORTSBOOK - NIGHT

At one of the booths for illicit gambling, Clint begins laying down a PILE OF MONEY. He discreetly says something to the CASHIER, who takes the money and disappears into a back room.

JACK  
(noticing)  
You won?

CLINT  
Yeah... decided to bet against my own  
guy tonight.

Jack looks puzzled.

CLINT  
Like I said, he's no good on the  
ground. That other guy was a cartel  
fighter, better funded, better  
trained.

JACK  
Clint, this was information I could  
have used.

CLINT  
You start betting around here -  
somebody sees you, *they* bet. The  
price goes down.

JACK  
Some friend.

CLINT  
Business is business.

In the milling crowd, Jack sees AMANDA MARTINEZ, the young woman from the border. She passes and Clint nudges Jack.

CLINT  
She was looking at you earlier. *Como  
se llama, sexy mama?*

JACK  
Fuck off.

The cashier returns and gives Clint a CASHIER'S CHECK, which he quickly folds up and places inside his jacket pocket.

## THE RING

Now *El Hijo de Santo* fights *Misterio* in a classic Mexican wrestling bout. Fathers carry toddlers wearing wrestling masks; a young boy eats a Popsicle through the mouth slit. Jack looks on, absorbing the details...

As he scans the crowd, he meets eyes with AMANDA again.

CLINT

Like to get her in a secondary  
search, huh...

No response. Jack just stares at her, wondering where he recognizes her from.

INT. PALENQUE ARENA - BY THE BATHROOMS - MOMENTS LATER

With a weak lager, Jack washes down a Xanax. He's radiating tension; but the drug begins take hold, loosening his neck.

But as he turns to the ring, he sees CLINT, down by the tunnel, complaining to a Gringo in a Gore-Tex jacket.

We'll know this man later as BEN LANGFORD (late 40s) - broad-shouldered, faintly sunburned. He has the tough directness of a football coach or an off-duty cop.

ON AMANDA MARTINEZ: Further back in the stands, totally focused. She's watching Jack as he watches Clint. After a few more heated words, Clint leaves with the man, up the stairs and out toward the parking lot.

JACK: follows, anxious to find out what's going on.

ON AMANDA: she hurries down another set of stairs.

EXT. PALENQUE ARENA - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

A massive dirt lot, filled with cars on the uneven ground. Vendors sell corn on the cob from steaming pots; Children sell wrestlers' masks, shouting, "*Máscaras, máscaras.*"

Jack sees Ben Langford now in a shouting match with Amanda between rows of cars. BEN twists her arm behind her back, cursing through his teeth.

Jack pauses, reluctant to intervene. Then Ben sees Jack approaching and shouts...

BEN

What the fuck you looking at?

Jack fumbles through his pockets, jammed with prescription bottles. He holds up his CBP BADGE, a little intoxicated.



JACK  
Let her go.

BEN  
That badge doesn't mean a fucking  
thing down here.

JACK  
U.S. Customs and *Border* Protection.

BEN  
So you want to look through my bags,  
motherfucker?

AMANDA  
If that snap was my arm, I'm going to  
kill you.

JACK  
Let her go. *Now*.

AMANDA  
God. *Ow, puto!*

Abruptly, Ben lets her go. He raises his shirt to show the  
GUN in his waistband.

BEN  
Got one of these, too? They'll lock  
you up a long time for it down here.

Jack is standing still, as Ben begins backing away.

BEN  
(calling back)  
Nice to meet you, Officer. Maybe  
I'll see you at the border some time.

With his nostrils flared, Jack stands still, watching BEN  
move away and drop into a Green Jaguar.

AMANDA  
(rubbing her arm)  
Thanks. I thought he was going to  
rip my arm off.

JACK  
You know that guy?

Jack stares at her with real concern. She smiles.

AMANDA  
Unfortunately.

Jack laughs. As he helps her up, he can't help but be  
attracted to her.

She feels around her left ear.

AMANDA  
Shit, I lost an earring.

Jack focuses on her OTHER DANGLING EARRING.

JACK  
You want me to go track it down?

AMANDA  
(re: the wide empty space)  
Good luck.

JACK  
(full of bravado)  
I once found a contact lens on a  
football field.

AMANDA  
That's very *gallant* of you, but -  
(a beat)  
I'm parked a few blocks away. Maybe  
you could just walk me to my car. I  
think I hit my head, and I'm a  
little... dizzy.

Cloudy with beer and medication, Jack just nods.

EXT. TIJUANA STREET - NEAR PLAZA ZAPATO - NIGHT

They walk together, through the club crowds amassing around  
*discotecas* and bars full of *banda* music.

JACK  
How did you know that guy?

AMANDA  
He's kind of like a relative. My  
family owns a share of the arena.  
Goes back a long way...

JACK  
You know, I know you from somewhere.

AMANDA  
Past life, huh?

JACK  
I see so many faces every day -  
sometimes I feel like I recognize  
everybody. But you... your face I  
definitely remember.

AMANDA  
You've got a sad job.

JACK

Well, no, it's a hard job, but it's important.

(a little boastful)

I'm protecting my country.

AMANDA

Your country?

(a beat)

You're just American because some guy a hundred years ago let your great-grandfather off the boat.

JACK

Luck of the Irish.

AMANDA

Yeah, well, a lot of people down here are all out of luck.

(a beat, softening)

I'm sorry. You help me, and then I offend you.

Jack wants to change the subject. *Banda* music blasts out of a nearby club, trumpets echoing in the plaza.

JACK

(smiling)

That's why I come down here. So I can have these debates with strangers.

AMANDA

So? You ever let a stranger buy you a drink?

She flashes a beautiful smile. He thinks about it a moment.

AMANDA

Just to say thank you. And *vaya con dios*.

INT. CLUB - PLAZA ZAPATO - TIJUANA - MOMENTS LATER

Amanda leads Jack in by the hand, through the crowded dance floor. She gestures to a BARTENDER from ten yards away; and by the time they hit the bar, two shots are waiting. She downs hers, and hands one to Jack.

AMANDA

(over the music)

Tijuana pain-killers.

Jack shrugs and down his shot.

Amanda waves a bouncer over, whispers to him. The bouncer pushes through the DJ booth, whispers to the DJ, who smiles.

The song switches, and gunfire blares out of every speaker. The DJ adds to it by firing a pistol into the air with blanks. The audience goes wild. A wall of trumpets blasts. Jack laughs at the way she's changed the entire club.

AMANDA

COME ON!

She pulls him out to dance. She's an amazing dancer - liquid sex. They're *thisclose*.

Then, through the crowd, Jack sees something that slows him:

BEN, watching from the sidelines. Amanda sees Jack's eyes, and follows them over to BEN.

AMANDA

ONE SECOND.

She pushes through the crowd, confronts Ben, wagging her finger. He's now smiling and nodding, apologetic.

Jack watches two BOUNCERS move in behind Ben, intimidating. Ben leans in, kisses Amanda's cheek, and leaves.

She pushes back through. JACK checks his watch.

JACK

I SHOULD GO.

AMANDA

NO?

He nods yes.

AMANDA

HOME TO YOUR WIFE?

He nods yes again.

AMANDA

I'LL WALK YOU OUT.

EXT. PLAZA ZAPATO - CONTINUOUS

As they pick through the sidewalk crowds to his car, she hands him a card.

AMANDA

That's my number. If you need a friend down here.

He just looks at her. She leans in and kisses him on the lips, soft, an if-only kiss. He's completely frozen, but closes his eyes for a moment.

JACK

Maybe I'll see you on the line.

He turns to the street, then sees something that stops him in his tracks.

JACK'S POV: Two kids, a little boy and a girl holding out begging cups to the tourists. It's Jesus and Maria.

AMANDA

What? What's wrong?

JACK

Those two kids.

AMANDA

That's Tijuana.

JACK

No, I just...

He's stunned to see them. Jesus catches sight of him. There's recognition, then fear; he grabs his sister and they run.

Jack is moving ahead, his last dollars in his hand.

A SCREECH OF TIRES -- a car almost hits him. The kids disappear.

Amanda is beside him now.

AMANDA

They're just street kids.

JACK

I've got a sad job.

EXT. PALENQUE ARENA - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

He sits down into his Chevy Cavalier, alone now in the middle of a wide open parking lot, nearly pitch black.

He starts the car and begins crunching ahead over the dirt and gravel lot. Suddenly -

HIS ENGINE SEIZES UP. The car dies and rolls ahead, finally stopping in the dark. Jack curses under his breath, and tries to start it again. It sputters but won't turn over.

He slaps the wheel, exasperated. As he drops his head...

CLINT (V.O.)  
(pre-lap)  
You gave me a scare vanishing like  
that.

CROSS FADE TO:

INT. CLINT'S MUSTANG - MORNING

Clint lights his second cigarette of the day.

CLINT  
You know, what happens in Vegas stays  
in Vegas. What happens down there...  
*it follows you home.*

JACK  
What was going on last night at the  
ring? That argument you had.

Clint pauses. For a millisecond he looks irritated; but then  
he resumes a bantering smile.

CLINT  
What argument? Maybe that's just how  
I talk.

JACK  
No, I saw you with some guy. Gringo.  
You looked pissed.

Clint thinks before responding.

CLINT  
Oh, yeah. That asshole's got a piece  
of the action. He takes a cut from  
every fighter in the place.  
(a beat)  
Where's your car anyway?

JACK  
On the other side.

Clint's laugh carries over...

EXT. PALENQUE ARENA - PARKING LOT - TWENTY MINUTES LATER

CLINT  
(laughing)  
Hoo-wee!

From the mustang, Jack looks on in despair at his car,  
stripped to the bone, only a shell left.

CUT TO:

A FORD FESTIVA

Barely running, it chugs and coughs out pollution beside Jack's PRIMARY INSPECTION BOOTH. He checks the paperwork of two hardened looking gang-bangers (both valid drivers' licenses), then he sighs and waves them through.

The next car is a mini-van, and he eyes inside.

FLASHES OF THE CARS INTERIOR

JACK (O.S.)  
We got something in the seats over  
here.

EXT. SECONDARY SEARCH AREA - DAY

Three INSPECTORS are going through the MINI-VAN. They cut back the NAUGAHYDE MESH over the seats, as Clint approaches.

CLOSE ON MESH

From beneath the webbing, a HUMAN FACE emerges inside the seat covers. Coughing, sweating, struggling for breath.

EXT. SECONDARY SEARCH AREA - CONTINUOUS

PORT INSPECTOR  
(from inside the van)  
They sewed the covers over 'em.

Jack is watching this scene unfold, more affected than usual.

CLINT  
(peering in)  
Hey, Jack, I heard you needed some  
new furniture. How 'bout *that* guy!

Jack looks exhausted, drained further by every bust.

EXT. SONORAN DESERT - CALIFORNIA - DAY

Darlene's battered CHEROKEE travels through dry countryside.

DARLENE (V.O.)  
Why would anyone steal that?

JACK (V.O.)  
Spare parts. Airbags.

EXT. MARCIE'S RANCH HOUSE - EVENING

It's a wide open, dusty piece of land at the Southeastern corner of the county. The undulating terrain looks inhospitable for anything; and the stables are now empty. Desert mountains loom in the distance.

They're all eating around a barbecue table. DARLENE is almost drunk, cradling a plastic punch glass of Merlot.

MARCIE

What are you going to do?

JACK

(to Darlene)

We'll have to make do with one car.

DARLENE

If we stayed out here, you could take my car. Couldn't he, Marc? What? Forty minutes to San Ysidro?

Jack looks irritated.

DARLENE

I'm just *asking*. God. I'm just trying to be practical. With one car, I'm just stranded. What if there's an emergency?

Maddy slips some of her meat to Marcie's dog, BOXCAR.

DARLENE

Maddy, honey, don't do that. It teaches him to beg.

Suddenly BOXCAR freezes, hackles rising, then

TWO LOUD GUNSHOTS ring out - followed by what sounds like MACHINE GUN FIRE. It echoes across the broad, evening sky.

Jack REACTS immediately. He gets RIGHT IN FRONT of Maddy and Darlene, before they even realize what's happening.

The shots trail off, as Darlene realizes what's happening. She sees how quickly Jack threw himself in front of them. The dogs bark like crazy.

MARCIE

Oh God. Not again.

Marcie downs the rest of her beer.

JACK

Everybody just get in the house.



ANOTHER BURST OF GUNFIRE. Jack shepherds Darlene and the kids into the house, while Marcie tries to wrangle the dogs.

INT. MARCIE'S DEN - CONTINUOUS

All business, Jack goes to jacket and takes out his PISTOL. At first, he's not aware that the kids and Darlene are watching him with huge eyes.

But when Marcie comes inside, dragging the dogs, she has a different response.

MARCIE

It's just life on the underground railroad. I got a shotgun in the bedroom.

JACK

It's all right.

MARCIE

You want to check it out?

EXT. DESERT MESA - CONTINUOUS

In the CHEROKEE, Jack and Marcie pull up beside deeply worn jeep tracks in the sand.

Jack hops out, and Marcie steps in behind him. Jack looks down at the tire-treads, then sees spent shell-casings scattered around the brush.

MARCIE

Minutemen. Playing soldier.

Jack moves further into the brush, where he sees a pile of discarded belongings: toe-nail clippers, lighters, pictures.

JACK

We had a group drop everything and run. I got to call it in.

He leans down and picks up Super Glue.

JACK

They had a coyote with them.  
(showing her the super  
glue)

They use super glue to sear off their fingerprints.

MARCIE

I'm telling you - every month it's worse. I got a highway through my backyard.

Against the setting sun, A JEEP is carving up a trail of dust, a mounted machine gun on the roll bar: sunburned men in camouflage, out on a hunting expedition.

MARCIE

And we got these assholes trying to  
hunt them down all night.

(a deep sigh)

Coyotes are armed to the teeth, too.

They watch the flaring taillights of the jeep, mounting the ridge. One of the MILITIAMEN fires at a ROAD SIGN.

MARCIE

Someday I want to live in a  
neighborhood without bullet holes in  
every stop sign.

INT. MARCIE'S FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

The kids are watching CARTOONS on a big-screen TV, while Marcie, Darlene and Jack gather around an out-of-date computer with a webcam. The image on the screen is Marcie's husband, BRIAN, in his battle fatigues, on video chat from Afghanistan. The images are staccato, the audio out of sync...

BRIAN (ON VIDEO)

Oh yeah, it's been cold. Freezing.

JACK

Eight months. Heads down, Brian.

BRIAN (ON VIDEO)

Yeah, heads down.

JACK

Take care, buddy.

BRIAN (ON VIDEO)

Tell the kids to turn that damn TV  
down. I talk to y'all once a week  
and all I can hear is *Tom and Jerry*.

INT. MARCIE'S KITCHEN - BREAKFAST NOOK - CONTINUOUS

As the kids listen to *blaring* television in the next room, Marcie and Darlene sit at the table. Darlene's slurring.

DARLENE

What happens, Marc - and this is what  
I *know*, because I've been through it  
with Jack - just like what you're  
going through now - with Brian - you  
get so worried, and it's so constant -

Jack enters the room, carrying Maddy's things in a pink backpack. He wants to leave, but waits to interrupt.

DARLENE

- the fear that he's not coming home -

JACK

Darlene.

DARLENE

- that your brain just doesn't work the same. You can't even -

JACK

*Darlene.*

DARLENE

- concentrate.

Finally she looks up at Jack.

JACK

I'm going to load up the car.

EXT. MARCIE'S RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT

Passing through a MOTION-SENSITIVE LIGHT, Jack heads back toward Darlene's CHEROKEE, carrying Maddy's pink backpack.

As he's unlocking it, he hears something in the STABLES: it sounds like RUNNING WATER from a spigot.

He paces across the gravel, peering into the dark. We see MOVEMENT, all around, WHISPERS, as if the darkness is alive.

A DOZEN SHADOWS break across the stables; they move out through a BUSTED SLAT in the side wall. Jack hears RUNNING WATER, a faint CRYING sound.

From behind FEED SACKS a MOTHER rises up, carrying an INFANT. She rounds the STABLES, trying to catch up to the group as it vanishes into the darkness of the dry fields.

Jack is so upset that he's shaking. He calls after the woman in Spanish.

JACK

*Señora... Wait! You're going to die out there.*

He returns to the stables, finds the SPIGOT of RUNNING WATER, and TURNS IT OFF.

## INT. DARLENE'S CHEROKEE - NIGHT

Jack is driving back, headlights shining ahead on a lonely ranch road. Maddy is asleep in her car seat with her BLUE STUFFED RABBIT; Darlene has dozed off against her windshield.

JACK

Nothing makes any sense, Darlene.

She's sound asleep, and Jack looks saddened by her state. His HEADACHE is miserable. He stops and turns on the INTERIOR LIGHT. Grimacing, he opens Darlene's purse, searching for his migraine meds.

What he finds is a hidden cache of PRESCRIPTION PAINKILLERS, along with MINIATURE AIRLINE BOTTLES OF BOOZE.

Darlene begins waking up; then she's suddenly alarmed at his discovery. He just eyes her, demoralized. They stay idling on an empty road.

## EXT. SULLIVAN HOUSE - NIGHT

Jack carries Maddy inside, in a tangle of blankets. He doesn't notice as HER BLUE RABBIT falls onto the driveway, rolling BENEATH the Cherokee.

Once he leaves, Darlene sits alone, and begins CRYING.

## EXT. PORT OF SAN YSIDRO, U.S./MEXICAN BORDER - DAY

Jack waves a car through, then awaits the next. It's AMANDA.

She raises her sunglasses to show a BLACK EYE, taking in its effect on him. She hands Jack a CARD.

Jack moves to the COMPUTER in his booth and SCANS the biometric information on the card: AMANDA MARTINEZ.

JACK

Look into the camera, please.

She faces a CAMERA. On the computer screen, her current BATTERED FACE appears beside the PRETTY ONE already in the IBIS system. AGE: 28. BIRTHPLACE: TIJUANA.

JACK brings a fingerprinting scanner to her window. Never taking her eyes off him, she places her FINGERTIP onto it.

AMANDA

Is there someplace we could talk?

Jack returns to the computer, seeing that all biometric information MATCHES up.

JACK  
Not here, we can't.

AMANDA  
Some friends of yours are in trouble.  
Serious trouble.

We only know that Jack's listening by the slightest lag in his procedure.

AMANDA  
You could do a good deed, and help yourself in the process. I'll be at the Palenque Arena at 8 o'clock.

JACK  
Ms. Martinez...

He holds up her card.

JACK  
You're authorized to stay within the U.S. for 72 hours.

A TRAFFIC LIGHT turns GREEN ahead of her.

AMANDA  
Well, I only came to see you.

She drives off. Jack looks up and sees CLINT watching from another lane, with an uncharacteristic look of worry.

EXT. PALENQUE ARENA - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: STREET KIDS, 9 and 10 years old, wrestling in the dust amid parked cars, mimicking the action inside.

Now in jeans and a T-shirt, Jack watches as one of the boys gets another into a headlock. Slowly, it grows more violent, as the other boy kicks, squirms, and finally breaks away.

AMANDA (V.O.)  
When my grandfather bought this place, it was just wrestling. All staged, all for show.

He turns. It's Amanda, and beside her are JESUS AND MARIA.

AMANDA  
Nowadays, you need blood to sell tickets.

Jack doesn't hear, he's focused on the kids.

AMANDA  
This is Maria and...

JACK  
I remember them. What are they doing here?

AMANDA  
You ran after them...

JACK  
*These* are my friends in trouble?

AMANDA  
They're on the street. Begging.

JACK  
Where's their mother?

AMANDA  
In Los Angeles.

JACK  
The woman who got busted...

AMANDA  
The woman *you* busted was a coyote.  
*La Migra* dumped her back over the border - and she left these kids alone and broke.

JACK  
Amanda? *What* is going on here?

She takes a breath, like she's about to jump off of a cliff.

AMANDA  
Let them through, Jack... and I can help you with your problems.

JACK  
You're trying to bribe a federal officer. I don't need your money.

He turns to walk away.

AMANDA  
Jack, in a few weeks, somebody is going to pay good money to fuck this little boy.

JACK  
Stop it.

AMANDA  
I'll give you a thousand, US.

He turns around.

JACK  
This is a set-up.

AMANDA  
Fifteen-hundred. You know how the coyotes work around here... it's all based on race. Ten-thousand for the Chinese, twenty-Gs for an Arab. A couple of kids like this, home-grown, that's a good price.  
(a beat)  
All you have to do is wave your hand and they pass through.

We hear a prelap of a high-pitched scream...

MADDY (V.O.)  
No! She's lost. I can't find her anywhere! Blue rabbit!

...growing louder in the background, until we're in:

INT. SULLIVAN KITCHEN - EVENING

Maddy is throwing a fierce tantrum. Jack looks as if he's under sniper-fire, trying to remain calm in the face of his daughter's pure hysteria.

JACK  
Maddy, listen to me: You're going to go to your room until you can calm down and talk like a normal human.

DARLENE  
I've looked everywhere for this rabbit, and I swear to God, I'm going to kill myself...

JACK  
Darlene, that doesn't help!

MADDY  
My ra-ha-ha-habit!

Jack picks her up and carries her to her BEDROOM.

JACK  
Okay, so time-out. Ten minutes.

MADDY  
No! No! Daddy, no! No minutes!

JACK  
I'm not *negotiating* with a crazy person.

INT. SULLIVAN MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jack passes through and sees DARLENE'S SUITCASES on the bed, hastily packed. His shoulders droop at the sight.

INT. SULLIVAN KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Jack returns and fills a cup with milk. Darlene is sitting at the breakfast nook, stewing. They just glance at each other, a tough look.

JACK

Going someplace? Or you just like to get liquored up and pack a suitcase?

Jack heads back out with the cup of milk.

DARLENE

(calling after him)

I've spent half my life searching for lost toys!

INT. OUTSIDE MADDY'S DOOR - CONTINUOUS

JACK

Maddy? I'm putting a peace offering by the door. Seven more minutes.

JUMP CUTS

Jack is rifling through the house: cupboards, drawers. We see him pouring out bottles of VODKA and WINE.

INT. MADDY'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Her tantrum has played itself out.

JACK

I just got word from CENTCOM. We got to go on a recon for a missing bunny.

Still tear-streaked and flushed, Maddy now smiles.

EXT. BACKYARD - NIGHT

With a flashlight, Maddy and Jack comb through the SCRAP LUMBER along a ratty fence.

JACK

Are those rabbit droppings?

MADDY

*Daaad.*



INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

The flashlight passes over old toys, boxes, tools.

JACK

This is his hideout. He's a weird  
rabbit. Keeps to himself too much.

Maddy loves the game so much, she forgets that he's lost.

INT. MADDY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jack sits on Maddy's bed, stuffed animals strewn around the  
floor. He points at her other stuffed creatures.

JACK

(pointing to the reindeer)  
How about him? I bet you can get *him*  
to talk.

MADDY

*Daad.* None of them can talk.

JACK

Yeah. These guys are well-trained.

INT. SULLIVAN KITCHEN - NIGHT

Darlene waits in the breakfast nook. Jack sits down heavily  
across from her, a pile of DIRTY PAPER PLATES between them.

DARLENE

I was going to Marcie's. I was going  
to take Maddy.

Jack stares out the dark window beside them. This a brutal  
blow to him; but he responds with silence.

DARLENE

Jack?

JACK

Okay.

She wanted a reaction, and she grows angry at his reticence.

DARLENE

That's all you're going to say?

He rises and cleans up the mess on the table. He begins  
compressing the trash with his foot.

DARLENE

Say *something*, Jack. Tell me to  
stay, call me a bitch.

Show me you have a fucking pulse!  
I'm trying to *talk* to you.

JACK

We got nothing to talk about. You're drunk, and it doesn't matter what I say. Except for... you aren't getting in a car like this with my daughter.

Humiliated, she turns red as she faces him.

DARLENE

So what about you? I'm here all alone, trying to keep this house together - and *where do you go* after work?

Jack leans against the wall, avoiding her face.

DARLENE

I'm so tired of waiting for you. I waited all that time for you to come home, and...

(a beat)

You just never did.

She waits for him to respond to the provocation. When he does, his tone is as steady and calm as law enforcement.

JACK

You want to talk, I'll make you a deal: one month, trying our best. I'll clean up my act, and *you* do the same. Then we'll have this conversation. One month. Until then, 'til we clean up this mess, neither of us has got anything worth saying.

DARLENE

What's going to happen in a month?

(a beat)

You going to hit your number?

EXT. BOULEVARD - NIGHT

Jack is walking Clarabelle.

Jack gets to a pay phone and PILES THE QUARTERS beside the phone. From his wallet, he takes out the CARD Amanda gave him. He dials, as the dog strains to smell something around a newspaper stand. Amanda answers amid a sea of noise: voices, music, laughter.

AMANDA (V.O.)  
Bueno?

JACK  
Amanda.

AMANDA (V.O.)  
*Jack Sullivan.* You're not on a  
cellphone, are you?

JACK  
No, I'm not stupid.

AMANDA (V.O.)  
Meet me at the club.

JACK  
I'm not going down there. You better  
meet me somewhere in San Diego.

EXT. INTERSTATE - NIGHT

In the CHEROKEE, Jack drives west, anxious and paranoid.

EXT. STREETS OF SAN DIEGO - NIGHT

Jack parks and emerges from his car, with the loud THUMPING  
of the club like a heartbeat in the distance. He notices two  
SHADOWS sitting in a parked BLACK LINCOLN NAVIGATOR.

Suddenly, an ACURA pulls up and the passenger window slides  
down. AMANDA is behind the wheel, chewing gum.

AMANDA  
Get in.

JACK  
Not here.

He walks around the block, away from the parked Navigator.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET, FURTHER DOWN - NIGHT

Jack waits at the curb, vigilant. When Amanda pulls up, he  
gets in quickly.

I/E. ACURA - INTERCUTTING INSIDE/OUT

Amanda pulls away, blowing a bubble.

AMANDA  
You're paranoid.  
(pause)  
I like that.

Amanda stops at an INTERSECTION; and Jack SCANS the faces in every car. It seems like any of them could be trailing him.

Suddenly, Amanda leans over and KISSES HIM hard on the mouth.

AMANDA  
If anybody's following us, then you  
just act like you're in love.

She speeds off. The NAVIGATOR stays on her tail.

Jack is squinting at his side mirror.

JACK  
That's your fucking *back-up*, isn't  
it?

AMANDA  
I don't know who they are. If you  
want me to lose them, I will.

JACK  
Lose them or let me out.

Suddenly accelerating, she cuts through an alley and down another street, blowing an enormous bubble. The Navigator skillfully stays on her, a few hundred yards behind.

AMANDA  
I've got a lot of practice getting  
away from stalkers.

She makes a hard, skidding left turn into a parking garage.

INT. PARKING GARAGE, ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

The Acura pulls up to the gate, a few yards off the street. She takes a TICKET, raising the barrier, then she sticks her GUM INTO THE SLOT, blocking the opening.

INT. PARKING GARAGE, RAMP - CONTINUOUS

She loops around a tight ramp, creating centrifugal force in the car.

INT. PARKING GARAGE, ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

The Navigator pulls up to the dispenser; but the TICKET jams behind the glob of gum.

CLOSE ON FINGERS: trying to scrape out the gum. Someone is cursing *in English*.

INT. PARKING GARAGE, RAMP - CONTINUOUS

Amanda is still revolving around the steep spiral.

AMANDA

Baby, my purse is on the floor. Can you fish out a dollar? There's no grace period.

Jack begins fumbling through a HELLO KITTY purse, seeing a GLOCK, SEVERAL CELL PHONES, and huge amounts of CASH. He fishes out a dollar, as she reaches:

THE BOOTH

With a sweet smile, Amanda pays the attendant and SCREECHES through an ALTERNATIVE EXIT, out onto the empty street.

INT. ACURA - NIGHT

They drive in silence for a while, as Amanda continues checking the rearview mirror.

AMANDA

Okay? Satisfied? My turn now.

EXT. MCDONALD'S - SAN DIEGO - NIGHT

The Acura pulls up in the McDonald's parking lot.

She gets out, walks around, takes his hand.

INT. MCDONALD'S - SAN DIEGO - NIGHT

There's just a few lost souls and elders hugging coffees. Amanda pulls Jack up to the counter.

AMANDA

I need the restroom key.

The counter kids slides the key on a huge piece of wood. She grabs Jack's hand again, and leads him toward the bathroom.

JACK

You want me to stand guard?

She opens the door.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

She pulls him in, closes the door; then pulls off her blouse.

AMANDA  
Hurry up, strip.

JACK  
What? We can't do this *here*.

She drops her skirt, steps out of it. She wears a black, gossamer bra, lace panties, heels.

AMANDA  
Yeah, you wish.

She reaches over, rips two buttons off his shirt.

JACK  
Shit!

AMANDA  
Take it off. Drop your pants.

She spins around.

AMANDA  
No bugs, no wires. Is this enough?  
Or do you need to see everything?

She reaches around to undo her bra.

JACK  
It's fine.

He peels his shirt off, unbuckles his belt, and let's his jeans fall. He points to his boxers.

JACK  
Okay?

AMANDA  
You could be hiding something. *Micro-*  
technology.

JACK  
Fuck you.

She just stares at him. He takes it as a dare.

FROM BEHIND: Jack pulls down his boxers.

INT. MCDONALD'S - NIGHT

They walks out of the bathroom. Everyone in the place is watching, and Jack blushes.

Two old ladies look outraged.

OLD LADY  
Get a room.

Amanda slaps down the key. As she passes the old ladies, she winks.

AMANDA  
(an exaggerated Latina  
accent)  
Aaay, he's fast... but good!

INT. ACURA - NIGHT

Jack drives as Amanda digs into her bag and takes out a stack of cash.

AMANDA  
Advance payment. You'll get the  
second half when it's done. Here's  
the cell. I'll call you in the  
morning when you get your lane  
assignment.

JACK  
I'm not allowed to have a cell phone  
on the line.

AMANDA  
I figure you know plenty of ways to  
smuggle something by now.

He just stares at her, eyelids heavy.

JACK  
Why are you doing this?

AMANDA  
This is what I do. It's a *taxi*  
service - that's all. The clients  
pay good money to get across with  
less risk. They can do this, or they  
can die of thirst out in the desert.

Jack seems lost in a train of thought, then faces her again.

AMANDA  
I know they rotate you randomly, so  
we'll have to be careful.

JACK  
You know a lot.

She puts out her hand. Cautiously, he takes it.

AMANDA  
Sullivan, it's going to be a  
pleasure.

INT. SULLIVAN KITCHEN - EARLY MORNING

Just before dawn, Jack lingers in the half-light, counting out money. He puts some of the CASH into an envelope.

DARLENE  
Are you gambling again?

When he looks up, Darlene is in the doorway, watching.

JACK  
I got a loan from Clint.

She notices his shirt torn open.

He hands the envelope to her, businesslike. Darlene remains still, as if there's something dangerous inside.

DARLENE  
Jack?

JACK  
No gambling, no payday loans. Don't  
worry.

Darlene doesn't appear to believe him. But she looks at the money, then back at her husband.

DARLENE  
Maybe you'll get that promotion.

JACK  
Maybe so.

DARLENE  
(encouraging)  
You work until you can't stand up.  
You come home smelling like the  
freeway. You're *killing* yourself for  
them - you deserve a raise.

She starts to get upset, but contains herself, transferring it to anger at the department, trying to show that she's still behind him, no matter where the money's from.

DARLENE  
I *know* how hard you're working. And  
I'm sorry if...  
(trailing off)  
I'm just sorry.



EXT. PORT OF SAN YSIDRO, NORTHBOUND LANES - MORNING

Jack is eyeing the line. His cell rings, he slips in an earpiece, unnoticeable, hidden by his hand.

AMANDA (V.O.)

I had a nice time last night. When  
can we get together again? The 6th?  
The 7th?

JACK

I booked up 'til the 10th.

JACK'S LANE: NUMBER 10.

In the chaos, a FORD EXCURSION has to force it's way to the left a few lanes, lining up with Jack, and pulling in...

AMANDA

Good morning, officer.

Jack sees Jesus and Maria in back. He also sees the undercarriage hanging low, straining the shocks. There are other people in the SUV, a heavy load.

JACK

(furious)

You might want to check the *shocks* on  
your truck, ma'am. It seems to be  
riding a little low.

INT. COMMAND CENTER, PORT OF SAN YSIDRO

BANKS of MONITORS cover every angle of the crossing. Special officers watch over everything; no one pays particular attention to Jack's booth, as he waves AMANDA through.

INT. LUNCH ROOM - DAY

Jack sits down with his lunch, sweating. Suddenly, his phone buzzes in his pants. He gets up and heads into:

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jack closes the stall door, and sits down - checking a TEXT MESSAGE that's come onto his untraceable cell phone.

It's a VIDEO CLIP. He watches on the small screen:

THE REUNION, Jesus and Maria jump into their mother's arms. There's pure joy and gratitude, in the clamor of Spanish and on the dizzying camera work.

Jack is raw with mixed emotions. He takes a deep breath, and erases the VIDEO CLIP.

EXT. AVENIDA REVOLUCIÓN, TIJUANA - SUNSET

Jack waits impatiently beside a pharmacy. As he starts to grow frustrated from the wait, AMANDA suddenly emerges around the corner, in sunglasses.

She slips her arm under his, like an old friend; but he whispers under his breath.

JACK  
The deal was just for the kids.

AMANDA  
And that's all there was.

He rips away from her arm and faces her. Angry, he strips her sunglasses off her face.

JACK  
This will go a lot better if you  
don't act like I'm stupid.

Surprised, with a fading black eye - she's gone from a femme fatale to a vulnerable woman in seconds.

AMANDA  
Okay. I won't.

She walks him ahead, into an alley, then reaches into her bag, hands him an envelope.

AMANDA  
It's all there. Three thousand.  
There's extra for the Chinese.

JACK  
*Chinese?*

AMANDA  
You need the money for a new car. I  
don't know how your wife is managing.

CLICK: A FREEZE FRAME of Jack taking the envelope of money.

Up ahead, there's a CERVECERÍA with music coming from open windows. Amanda gestures to it.

AMANDA  
Can I buy you a drink?

He finally relents with a smile.

JACK  
You just bought me a car. I'll buy  
the drinks.

CLICK - FREEZE FRAME as they enter.

INT. CERVECERÍA - TIJUANA - MOMENTS LATER

The tequila arrives. Amanda lifts her toast.

JACK  
What are we celebrating?

AMANDA  
A mother-and-child reunion.

JACK  
Jesus, Maria... and what's the  
father's name? Joseph?

AMANDA  
You did more good today than in three  
tours in Iraq.

JACK  
(shocked)  
What do you know about that?

AMANDA  
I just *know*.

He sits in silence.

AMANDA  
Blackwater, private contractors, they  
were paying Border Patrol three-  
hundred Gs a year to guard the Syrian  
border. What do you make?

He's in a foul mood now.

AMANDA  
I'm just a businesswoman. You're not  
the first agent who's made this deal.

JACK  
Who else has? Clint?

AMANDA  
Who's Clint?

Either she's very good, or really doesn't know him.

AMANDA  
A good agent can make himself an  
extra 50 grand quickly.

He straightens out his life, calls it quits. I find someone else.

(a beat)

I'm like a charity service. I find families in need, on both sides.

JACK

Families without borders.

AMANDA

The people I help across - you need them up there - taking care of your kids, building your houses, washing your clothes.

(downing her drink)

I'm a humanitarian. They can cross with *me*, or they can die of thirst out in the desert.

Jack studies her face.

AMANDA

So you got your feet wet. If you want to keep doing business... our cover is - we're having an affair.

(pause)

That's why you're so secretive, because you're fucking me sideways and it's messing with your brain.

JACK

I bet.

AMANDA

I'll call on the pre-paid cellphones...

JACK

God damn it.

AMANDA

...let you know the cars, the tag numbers, E.T.A.

JACK

We're having an affair, so we talk about license plates?

She takes out a pen, and begins writing on the wooden table.

AMANDA

Try to hear it in the rhythm.

She times her voice with the letters and numbers.

AMANDA

*To be with me, just for one day...*

She's written 2BMJ41...

AMANDA  
...will mess your ass up for at least  
*five* years.

She finishes with: 5.

AMANDA  
Now the car: *find* a way to meet me  
tonight. Find - a - way.

JACK  
(smiling)  
*Pathfinder*. A Nissan Pathfinder.

She shows him a dazzling smile, her eyes locked on his. He's  
quiet for a long time... thinking...

JACK  
No drugs.

AMANDA  
None.

JACK  
No MS-13, 18th Street. No gangs.

AMANDA  
No *vatos*.

JACK  
No Arabs. I'm not racist, but...

AMANDA  
These are the times we're in.

JACK  
Give me your word.

AMANDA  
(smiling)  
Family values, Jack. Family values.

EXT. PORT OF SAN YSIDRO, U.S./MEXICAN BORDER

The never-ending line of cars crawls toward Jack, he stares  
out at it, as if waiting for an approaching storm.

BEGIN MONTAGE

(NOTE: Sequences below will progress on MULTIPLE FRAMES.)

JACK (V.O.)  
I'm having a hard time. I've been a  
family man almost *seven* years.

FRAME #1: FAMILY RESTAURANT - EVENING

Jack is having dinner with his family, watching quietly as Maddy devours a SUNDAE.

AMANDA (V.O.)  
I know this scary. It's all so new.  
But you're a *trooper*, you know that.

FRAME #2: A LINE OF CARS. An ISUZU TROOPER comes prominently into view, its logo visible. Jack notices a MOTHER and TWO CHILDREN sitting in the backseat, huddled together.

This frame remains a continuous display of border traffic.

AMANDA (V.O.)  
Look, affairs don't happen just *for*  
*two or three minor little reasons.*

FRAME #3: TIGHT ON THE TAGS: "Arizona 423 MLR."

AMANDA (V.O.)  
They happen when people stop  
communicating.

FRAME #1: The FAMILY RESTAURANT flips like a card into:

DARLENE AT THE GROCERY STORE. She has a full cart.

JACK (V.O.)  
It's just, I've been with my wife  
since I was *sixteen.*

FRAME #1: JACK GRILLING STEAKS.

AMANDA (V.O.)  
But you've got a *dark side* she  
doesn't know. You're not cut out for  
this *suburban* life.

FRAME #2: We see a CHEVY SUBURBAN, heading toward LANE 16.

AMANDA (V.O.)  
You hide yourself from somebody, it  
turns into a *handicap.* You can't  
protect her from what you are.

FRAME #3: THE TAGS HAVE THE ICON FOR HANDICAPPED ACCESS

FRAME #4: PALENQUE ARENA - AFTERNOON

Jack waits at the entrance. A STREET KID hands out fliers.  
He hands Jack a wad of fliers, MONEY inside.

FRAME #1: SHOPPING MALL

DARLENE has bought a heap of toys: it's a shopping bender, paid for with cash. She has a DUPLICATE of BLUE RABBIT.

FRAME #5: SULLIVAN HOUSEHOLD, LIVING ROOM

There's a Christmas tree, presents crowding under it.

Jack and Amanda's voices speed up and overlap, like a fugue.

FRAME #3: AN APPROACHING FLORIDA TAG

License Number: GDS 110. The TAG becomes color, while all else fades to BLACK AND WHITE.

AMANDA (V.O.)  
 You love her still? Or are you just  
*guarding* her from all that *dark shit*  
 you know about? She doesn't know *one-*  
*tenth* of what I do.

FRAME #6: ATTIC CRAWL SPACE

Jack pops up to hide another WAD of cash behind the insulation. He has BOXES filled with money. This shot REMAINS STATIC on the HIDING PLACE.

JACK (V.O.)  
 We're always talking about *sixteen*  
 things at once. I don't know what's  
 real anymore.

FRAME #1: SULLIVAN FAMILY ROOM

In a REDECORATED room, with a BIGGER TV, Darlene has given the DUPLICATE BLUE RABBIT to Maddy, but she isn't buying it.

The phone interactions begin to speed up, as EVERY FRAME now becomes the FACE of a different SMUGGLED IMMIGRANT.

JACK (V.O.)  
 ...I slept about *seventeen*  
 minutes last night...

AMANDA (V.O.)  
 ...it's getting bigger, isn't  
 it. It's not just some  
 little *excursion* anymore...

JACK (V.O.)  
 ...I can't go *twenty* minutes without  
 thinking about you.

AMANDA (V.O.)  
 I know. Because you can always talk  
 to me, sweetie. 24-7.

Each FRAME flips off the immigrants' faces, into ANGLES of the PORT OF ENTRY and its TWENTY-FOUR LANES. The multi-frame screen becomes:

A PANEL OF SECURITY MONITORS

We pull back to see, on the central MONITOR, Jack. He's on his cell phone, hiding in his booth.

JACK (V.O.)  
Say it again. I missed it. I missed  
the last part. Hello?

EXT. SCANNING BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Jack hangs up, plucks the earpiece out, and slides the razor cellphone into his sock under his uniform pants. He rises and studies his monitors. Outside, he hears...

BEN  
Come on, Officer. Let's go.

Jack looks toward a Green Jaguar. It's Ben.

JACK  
U.S. Citizen?

BEN  
(saluting)  
Yes, sir.

JACK  
I.D.?

Ben hands him his driver's license. Jack goes to the computer, enters the data into the IBIS system.

ON THE COMPUTER SCREEN: Scanned photo of Ben appears with data - Ben Langford. Born: Los Angeles. RETIRED C.B.P. BORDER PATROL. Current Occupation: Car Dealerships. Restaurateur. Night clubs. Primary Residence: LA JOLLA, CA.

Jack returns.

JACK  
Carrying any drugs, contraband?

BEN  
Not me, Officer. Never.

Jack hands back the license, watching him leave.

As the Jaguar gusts off, northbound on I-5, vanishing amid other cars, we hear a SOUND PRELAP of organ music, rising up.

INT. CHURCH - MORNING

The Sullivans sit. The collection plate is circulating. When it comes to Jack, he puts in a *conspicuous wad of cash*. Darlene frowns at him, then faces frontward, looking guilty.



EXT. SULLIVAN HOUSE - EARLY EVENING

THROUGH AN OUTSIDE WINDOW: We see Darlene, arranging the table for a DINNER PARTY. The interior of the house has IMPROVED DRAMATICALLY, the cumulative effect of the new money. Darlene looks different, too - happier, prettier, blossoming with more freedom and less isolation.

The phone rings, bringing her away from the table.

CLOSE ON DARLENE, as she answers the phone.

JACK (V.O.)  
Darlene? I'm going to be late.

She pauses a while, looking at the elaborate table-setting she's just finished. She takes a deep breath.

DARLENE  
But we have guests. I invited...  
(stopping, staying  
positive)  
Okay. How late?

JACK (V.O.)  
A few hours. I'll call you.

As he hangs up, she's staring at the table, wineglasses set around each plate. She pours a little cabernet into her glass, then sits in front of it, just staring, smelling it... *resisting*.

Finally, the doorbell rings, and she downs it.

EXT. BEACH PARKING LOT - SOUTH OF LAS PLAYAS - SUNSET

Jack waits in a new leased TOYOTA CAMRY.

We hear the approaching sound of high heels, until suddenly the passenger door opens and Amanda sits down in the car. She tosses an envelope into his lap.

JACK  
You can be a little more ceremonial  
than that, can't you?

AMANDA  
What a sensible *family* car.

He checks the money, then slips the envelope under the seat. Then he gives her a small VELVET BOX.

AMANDA  
Oh *shit*.

She opens it: EARRINGS, matching the one she lost in the parking lot. She's surprised, even a little affected.

AMANDA

Well, you're better with the little *details* than most guys.

JACK

Comes with the trade.

She kisses him, gingerly. The kiss holds longer than they both expected. Finally she breaks away, a cynical thought occurring to her...

AMANDA

Are you wired?

JACK

Why? You feel like ripping my shirt open again?

AMANDA

You're smarter than this.

JACK

Than what?

AMANDA

Presents? Out in the open. And... God, tell your cute little wife to quit *redecorating*.

JACK

If you don't like those earrings, I can take 'em back.

AMANDA

When I was a kid, even *I* knew when a cop got bought off: you could hear the new hi-fi blasting out of his shithole apartment.

JACK

(staying calm)

I'm trying to say thank you.

She won't look at him. She seems angered by the kindness, and the effect it has on her. He's staring at her profile.

JACK

You can't even look at me.

Instead, she turns and kisses him - *hard*. The kiss is aggressive, filled with lust and anger and resentment.

He responds with equal force. They tear into each other - violence in the way she opens his shirt, claws his neck, in the way he reaches under her dress and opens her up.

His lower lip is bleeding; her knees bang the wheel. He forces her back into the window, and she grabs his hair, like the reins of a horse.

In the hot, close space, they're so rough with each other that it seems like a mutual rape.

SLAM CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH BASEMENT - AA MEETING - NIGHT

Holding a Styrofoam cup, Darlene sits in the back of the crowd, shyly watching as another man gives his "share" to the group.

AA MEMBER (O.S.)  
...and along that road, there's a row  
of trees. And one's shorter than the  
rest.

MOVE IN, slowly, on Darlene - as she listens in the meeting.

AA MEMBER (O.S.)  
That's the tree I wrapped my car  
around - all those years ago. It  
survived, but... warped. Changed.  
Like me, I guess.

The fellowship laughs, and Darlene follows, a beat late.

AA MEMBER (O.S.)  
I've got that reminder. Six years,  
four months I been sober now...

The room erupts into applause, becomes the sound of...

INT. TOYOTA CAMRY - NIGHT

...rain, clattering on the hood and windshield. Amanda and Jack stare ahead through it, spent. For a long time, no one wants to utter a word. They're both lost in separate reveries. Finally...

AMANDA  
I need to show you something.  
(a beat)  
We should take *my* car.

EXT. CHAPULTEPEC NEIGHBORHOOD - TIJUANA - NIGHT

In a black sedan, Amanda drives Jack into the gated neighborhood of CHAPULTEPEC. Nice Spanish homes are carved into the steep hill, against a panorama of the highways below.

EXT. SPANISH-STYLE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

As they pull up, Amanda barks some quick Spanish to KOA (20s), who's completely deferential to her.

They exit the car beside a large but austere house. Dogs are barking behind a fence, pushing their muzzles underneath. Two more BODYGUARDS come outside. (Note: we should remember their faces, as we'll see them again.)

BODYGUARD  
(Spanish, with subtitles)  
*What are you doing now, Amanda?*

We see fractured, evaporating subtitles, indicated in italics: they show Jack's understanding of rapid banter, not a pure translation.

AMANDA  
*I'm bringing a man home to dinner.  
Get out the good silverware.*

The bodyguard laughs, then begins frisking him roughly.

AMANDA  
Don't be offended by the search,  
Sullivan. It's a family tradition.

JACK  
What are we doing here?

AMANDA  
Relax. This will take five minutes.

INT. ERNESTINA'S HOUSE - ENTRY HALL - EVENING

As Amanda moves through, Jack pauses at a WALL OF PICTURES. In one photo, A YOUNGER AMANDA holds a baby. In another, years later, she stands with a SMALL BOY. From the body language, it's obviously HER SON. Jack registers this, then looks up, seeing her watch him from across the house.

INT. ERNESTINA'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - EVENING

So elaborate, it appears not so much that dinner is being made, but that a potion is being brewed. At the center of three young women helping her is ERNESTINA FAUSTINO (70s).

She's an old matriarch, overweight, short of breath, using a walker as she commands the room: her personal LIVE-IN DOCTOR, and her oldest daughter, MARISOL LANGFORD (40s).

Ernestina warmly hugs Amanda; then struggles over to Jack, politely shaking his hand and smiling with SILVER TEETH.

ERNESTINA

*Mr. Sullivan. Welcome. Please, sit.  
Dinner will be ready soon.*

The DOCTOR helps Ernestina back around a counter, to a spot where she INHALES from an OXYGEN TANK.

ERNESTINA

*(fogging the mask)  
Give him a drink. Whisky. All  
cowboys like whisky.*

INT. ERNESTINA'S HOUSE - SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

Jack sits alone at a small table, nursing his drink. A young COUSIN sits on the couch across from him, picking out only the Brazil nuts from a large goblet of mixed nuts. Jack looks between the boy and Amanda, wondering...

JACK

*Is this the kid in the pictures with  
you?*

Amanda looks away, stung. She shakes her head.

AMANDA

*This is my primo, Martín.  
(a beat)  
That boy in the pictures was my son.*

Suddenly, there's a clamor in the entry hall. Across the open doorways, Jack sees the new GROUP that's just arrived: BEN LANGFORD tromps in heavily, with his son, RICKY (18); and GERARDO, a Faustino lackey.

Amanda gives a big, phony smile to the group, but her grief is still hovering on Jack.

MARISOL is Ben's wife and his connection to this vast family. Jack looks at Amanda with a question in his eyes.

AMANDA

*Guess who's coming to dinner?*

INT. ERNESTINA'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

At a long table, all the members of the sprawling family gather around Jack, chattering, as stray subtitles float.

Ernestina struggles over to sit beside Jack. The doctor places a chair beneath her, and she holds Jack's hand, facing him with great attention.

ERNESTINA

*Do you understand me, Mr. Sullivan?*

JACK

*Yes.*

ERNESTINA

*"La Migra" all speaks that academy Spanish - all with such terrible accents. I don't speak any English. It's been a great \_\_\_\_\_ to me.*

She gestures to her walker, repeating the word: *desventaja*, until it flashes "handicap" into the missing space of subtitles.

Ben is the only other ANGLO, but he sits beside MARISOL and leads the family in PRAYER. Everyone now joins hands for grace. They wait for Jack to COMPLETE THE CHAIN.

As they break, several POLICE OFFICERS enter the room. Jack's eyes open wide, as if ready for a bust. But the family warmly greets them as they join the table.

INT. CHURCH BASEMENT - AA MEETING - NIGHT

Darlene sits in the back of the crowd.

AA CHAIR (O.S.)

*...and it works if you work it.  
So...*

ALL TOGETHER

*...keep coming back!*

MOVE IN, slowly, on Darlene - as she listens, her face full of worry and determination.

INT. CHURCH BASEMENT - AA MEETING - NIGHT

As the group is letting out, breaking into clusters in the lobby, Darlene breaks away to make a call on her cell phone.

DARLENE

*(into the phone)*

*Marcie? Did she get to sleep?*

*(listening)*

*Okay? And did Jack call?*

*(disappointed)*

*All right.*

She's sad as she walks up the stairs, lost in thought.

INT. ERNESTINA'S DINING ROOM - LATER

Everyone is eating, talking. Jack sits silently before his plate.

BEN

Jack, don't insult my mother-in-law.  
We're gringos, so we've got to eat  
*twice* as much.

Jack takes a bite of rice, chews, too nervous to eat.

BEN

(in Spanish, to Amanda)  
*How much Spanish does your friend  
speak?*

AMANDA

*More than you.*

RICKY

*He knows how to say, "Pop the  
trunk..."*

BEN

Officer Sullivan? Forgive the  
insult. My sister doesn't bring very  
many of her friends to dinner.

RICKY

*Or "Spread your ass cheeks..."*

Ben laughs hard, and grabs Ricky's shoulder - an over-  
affectionate gesture that makes the teenager stoop forward.

MARISOL

*Ay, Ricky - stop it.*

Ernestina eats with her head down, oblivious.

Gerardo, the henchman, has been brooding the entire time,  
staring at Jack. Finally he chimes in....

GERARDO

*You were in Iraq, hombre? What  
division?*

Jack nods, with his mouth full.

JACK

*184th Infantry.*

GERARDO  
*Reservist, huh? I was 1st Marine  
 Division...*

He pulls back his sleeve to show his Marine tattoos.

JACK  
*Anbar?*

GERARDO  
*Sí. Joined up to be a citizen.  
 Now... we're on opposite sides again.*

Ben appears florid with drink, relaxed and jovial.

BEN  
*Sides? There's no sides? That  
 border - it's a line in the dust.  
 It's all a lie.*

MARISOL  
*Let's not do this here.*

BEN  
 Oh, he knows this. No rational man  
 can stand in that stampede and not  
 know this. All that border does is  
 raise the price of drugs to the  
 north, and the price of guns to the  
 south.  
 (finishes his drink)  
 And every pollo you bust and send  
 back down, it's the biggest charade  
 in history. Nobody's touching the  
 contractors that hire them up in L.A.  
 Nope. Because the whole American  
 economy depends on 'em. My friend,  
 you're job is designed for failure.  
 America depends on your ineptitude.

Ricky puts his pistol onto the table, and Ernestina nearly  
 chokes.

MARISOL  
*No guns at the dinner table.*

AMANDA  
 We're having a family dinner.

BEN  
 That's right, family. It all comes  
 down to family.

MARISOL  
*You're drunk, Corazón.*



BEN

Ten years ago... I had a partnership  
with the old man.

MARISOL

*Not here. Okay? Not now.*

BEN

With her father. Married his  
beautiful daughter...

*(gesturing to his wife)*

And every day, I thank God. I thank  
God for all of these people, this  
family that took in a bum like me.

Facetiously, Amanda toasts her drink. Ernestina eats  
quietly, in a partially deaf world of her own.

BEN

What the old man understood, Sullivan  
- and what Ernestina knows...

MARISOL

*Ben, don't.*

Amanda looks at Jack, rapt, waiting for his reaction.

BEN

What he knew is that the border is  
just another business. And the  
harder it is to cross -

From his wavering, it's clear that Ben is drunk.

BEN

- the more money there is to be made.

Marisol sighs.

BEN

*(laughing, to Marisol)*

*Relax, Ernestina can't understand a  
word.*

MARISOL

*(to Ernestina)*

*I'm sorry for my baboon of a husband,  
Mother.*

With her mouth full, Ernestina imitates a baboon, prompting  
sudden laughter from Gerardo, Ricky, and the boy.

## INT. ERNESTINA'S DINING ROOM - LATER

The table is mostly cleared and Jack watches Ben and Ricky arm-wrestle at the far corner. Ben is clearly drunk now, but he's still much stronger than his determined son.

BEN

Come on, you get your strength from  
your mother. You see this, Sullivan?  
I'm not old yet.

Having put her son to bed, Amanda returns the doorway.  
Marisol squeezes past, to clear the last few dishes.

Ricky reaches out and tickles his father under the arm, using  
the tactic to push his hand down onto the table with a thud.

Marisol laughs, and Ben clownishly plays up his defeat.

BEN

Oh! I was robbed.

Amanda escorts Jack back outside, beyond a volley of good-  
byes; but she waits to let Ernestina walk ahead with him.

## EXT. ERNESTINA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jack offers to help the old woman down the stairs, but she  
won't accept. She works her way down, moving to the gate,  
then holding it for support. She faces Jack with an  
intensity we haven't seen before.

ERNESTINA

*I will speak very clearly to you.*

JACK

*Thank you for dinner.*

ERNESTINA

*Amanda wouldn't have brought you here  
if she didn't believe you were \_\_\_\_.*

Because of her unclear speech, it takes a moment for the last  
subtitle to arrive: "discreet." Jack nods.

ERNESTINA

*You're a good man, I can see. But  
you have too many big questions in  
your eyes. Please know what I am.*

In the light along the fence, her silver teeth shine.

ERNESTINA

*I am an old woman in a young man's  
game.*

*I'm here because I've survived two husbands, and because I've buried three sons.*

She pats him on the cheek.

ERNESTINA

*These greedy children, they're waiting for me to die. But while I'm alive, the business runs my way: with my word. By coming here tonight, you gave me your word. Now live by it.*

EXT. HILLSIDE STREET - CONTINUOUS

Jack joins Amanda, and they walk against twinkling city lights below, the pulsing river of red taillights heading into the United States. Amanda seems loose now, relieved.

JACK

That was an ambush.

AMANDA

You needed to know. My family has been in this business a long time.

JACK

How did Ben get into this?

AMANDA

I didn't know he was going to be here. I'm sorry. He worked for my father-in-law before he died. When he married Marisol... he was in.

JACK

And what about you?

AMANDA

I married into this, too. I had a husband and son... and they're not here anymore. Now I have the job.

Jack stops, staring out at the line for the border. He's cracking under the added pressure.

AMANDA

(hurt)

You want out? Don't you. It's more than you thought.

JACK

I don't even know what I promised tonight.

AMANDA  
No. You don't.

She grimaces and waves over KOA, from the shadows.

AMANDA  
This is Koa. He'll drive you back  
into San Diego.

JACK  
He's got a green card?

KOA  
I'm from East L.A., bro.

JACK  
You trapped me in something.

Amanda is shaking faintly with swallowed emotion.

AMANDA  
(contained)  
No, Jack. I told you it was your  
decision... and if you want out...

JACK  
Then I want out.

Their silhouettes stand against the valley of lights below.

JACK  
Look, what we *had* was working. The  
system we had.

AMANDA  
What we had was a little fantasy.

He stands his ground, holding eye contact with her.

AMANDA  
But I'm a real person, just like  
those people I get across every day.

JACK  
I know that. But...

She doesn't let him finish. She turns away suddenly, and  
begins heading back down the long stairs of the hillside.

INT. AMANDA'S CAR - NIGHT

Jack rides in the backseat, as KOA escorts him into the line  
for the border. As they turn off the Avenida de los Heroes,  
Jack rolls down his window, and -

CLOSE SHOT

*Smashes the pre-paid cell phone onto the pavement.*

EXT. PORT OF SAN YSIDRO, U.S./MEXICAN BORDER - DAY

Another flash of cars at an accelerated pace, TIME-LAPSE, speeding to streaks. Jack moves at NORMAL SPEED, efficient, mechanical, amid the blurs.

Then, at NORMAL SPEED, a brand new convertible MERCEDES pulls up. A rich TROPHY WIFE is on her cell phone.

TROPHY WIFE  
(on cell phone)  
I'd suck his dick in a heartbeat.

JACK  
U.S. citizen?

TROPHY WIFE  
(ignoring Jack)  
Why not? He's loaded.

JACK  
U.S. citizen?

TROPHY WIFE  
(to Jack)  
Do I look like a spic to you?

EXT. SECONDARY SEARCH AREA - MOMENTS LATER

CLOSE ON: a hand reaches into her Gucci handbag.

Jack pulls out Retin-A, Oxycontin, a mysterious cream. He studies the price.

JACK  
Five thousand!?

The trophy wife is livid at being searched.

TROPHY WIFE  
Pesos.

JACK  
Five hundred bucks? What is it?

TROPHY WIFE  
Rejuvenation cream.

He stares at her, studying.

JACK  
You sure it works?

TROPHY WIFE

Fuck you. I've got prescriptions for all of this.

She hands him pathetic Mexican prescriptions.

CLOSE ON: The Trophy wife's MIDDLE FINGER in the air, as her Mercedes roars off.

CLOSE ON: Jack's face, watching.

CLINT (O.S.)

Ah, it just makes you love humanity, doesn't it?

Slowly, a pre-lap of sunny Disney music rises up.

INT. SULLIVAN HOUSE - BATHROOM - EVENING

Jack is washing his face, when the phone rings.

JACK

Maddy? Your mom back from the store?

INT. SULLIVAN HOUSE - DEN - MOMENTS LATER

Maddy's constructed a tent-like fort out of blankets, couch pillows, and chairs - so that it's nearly impossible to traverse the room.

JACK

Baby, can we take down the big-top?

As the phone keeps ringing, he peers in at her, coloring inside, a lit flashlight beside her.

By the time he gets to the phone, he's missed the call. The answering machine plays only static and clicks off.

As he's heading back to the bathroom, it rings again. He grabs it.

JACK

Yeah... hello? Darlene?

BEN (O.S.)

We were having a lively debate the other day. I was hoping we'd have a chance to finish it.

JACK

(shocked)

Don't call me here.

BEN

Look, Sullivan - you're not an idiot. You know this game, so I don't have to tell you what your options are. Amanda says you're no longer in play, and I say *bullshit*.

JACK

I'm going to hang up.

BEN

And do what? One tip from *one* CBP agent and you're talking to a Grand Jury. That... or your daughter's an orphan. I don't have to explain all that, do I?

Jack closes his eyes for a moment. When he opens them, Maddy had begun to disassemble her fort.

BEN

Now this is the last time I'm giving you this pep talk, okay? You and I will get on the same wavelength real soon. You didn't take that bribe just because you needed money or pussy. Deep down, you were tired of the same bullshit. You were tired of playing a game you can't win. But...

(pause)

It's good for *one's* health, at *thirty-five*, to *be more flexible*. You catch that, buddy?

Stunned by the new voice, Jack has lost track of the code.

JACK

I didn't get it, no. 135... something.

BEN (V.O.)

You'll figure it out. Amanda always makes things more complicated than they have to be.

(a beat)

So you have anything you want to tell me, heartbreaker?

JACK

(fuming)

If you're asking me what I think you are - then I don't know yet. I won't know my lane 'til I'm assigned.

BEN

Oh, I been in this business a long time. My scouts will find you.

EXT. PORT OF SAN YSIDRO, U.S./MEXICAN BORDER - DAY

Jack is on the line, LANE 13, sweating, looking green with dread. Through the exhaust fumes, he sees DOZENS of scouts watching him through binoculars.

The car that PASSES through with the correspondent license (135 BMF), is a BLACK LINCOLN NAVIGATOR, which Jack has seen in various places. There's NO VISIBLE LOAD.

Behind the wheel is Ben's son, RICKY, smirking. Jack looks panicked at this arrangement, but he waves the car through.

INT. ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES, SAN YSIDRO - AFTERNOON

Jack is filling out paperwork, looking ill. Clint walks by in the hall and pokes his head in.

CLINT

You want to hit the ring tonight?

JACK

I'm going to pass for a while.

CLINT

My fighter has got his legs back.

JACK

Well, I *don't*.

EXT. PORT OF SAN YSIDRO, U.S./MEXICAN BORDER - MORNING

Jack is searching a commuter's car, just as his phone begins BUZZING. He waves the car through, then tries to move out of sight of other inspectors.

JACK

(answering)

It's ten fifteen. You call me this late, it's a *problem*.

Jack's dialogue is obscured by passing cars.

BEN (V.O.)

You're going to get a text message in about ten minutes.

JACK

Amanda and I had a rapport. I don't *know* you. I start an internal investigation if anybody even sees me on this *phone*.

Clint is WATCHING JACK CLOSELY, from across TWO BUSY LANES.



Jack closes his eyes. We hear his narration rise up. It's quieter than in the early scenes, but anxious, a paranoid interior monologue.

JACK (V.O.)  
You can tell yourself anything: all  
you're doing is closing your eyes.

As with the earlier effects, the cars and trucks are blurring past; but now there's a jerkier, manic quality--a shrill sound rising up, like a shrieking FAN BELT.

JACK (V.O.)  
All you're doing is missing something  
you might miss anyway...

We see faces flickering past, like SUBLIMINAL FLASHES.

JACK (V.O.)  
But you can't see those little  
details anymore. Everything you  
relied on is *gone*...

Spinning, a landscape of faces washing over him...

JACK (V.O.)  
Maybe you're paranoid. But you can't  
see *anything* but your own mistakes.

...the pace finally slows down to reveal commuters, but they're all JACK. Face after face.

Finally, the dreamlike sequence ends, and JACK is delirious and SWEATING, standing on the line, awaiting a RUSTED TOYOTA COROLLA in the line. GERARDO is driving, and AGAIN there's NO VISIBLE LOAD.

As the car pulls up to the PRIMARY INSPECTION BOOTH, we see Jack make a decision. GERARDO hands him his B1/B2. Jack examines it, then hands it back.

JACK  
Open the trunk, please.

Jack rounds the car, opens the trunk, and sees:

PILES OF PHOTOGRAPHS

Some pictures are of Jack and Amanda: outside the tracks, near the beach, at the bar. Another picture shows Jack taking a HAND-OFF OF MONEY along AVENIDA REVOLUCIÓN - from the STREET KID.

Jack closes the trunk quickly, and returns to the car. He looks enraged at GERARDO.

GERARDO  
Anything *illegal*, sir?

Dizzy, Jack glimpses the SCOUTS, the CAMERAS watching him, the OTHER INSPECTORS in their lanes, the miles of TRAFFIC. He waves GERARDO through, then faces a GLARING WINDSHIELD.

FLARE OUT TO:

EXT. SULLIVAN BACK PATIO - LATE AFTERNOON

Jack is sitting on a chair under his awning, as Maddy bounces on the trampoline. The sound of the HELICOPTERS has become DARLENE with the vacuum cleaner in the family room.

The phone begins ringing. Jack rises, checks the caller-ID, and answers cautiously.

JACK  
What?

From behind the sliding glass door, DARLENE watches Jack answer the cordless phone. She can read his body language. She looks concerned, as the vacuum still drones beneath her.

BEN (O.S.)  
I needed an insurance policy, you know. Like you said, we don't have much of a rapport yet.

Jack stands and moves across the backyard, toward the garage.

JACK  
(whispering)  
Listen: This is not happening.

BEN (O.S.)  
Can you listen for a second?

JACK  
There's got to be some way I can buy out of this.

BEN (O.S.)  
No, I don't feel like breaking in a brand new shell. Come down to the club tonight, around midnight. I'll make sure Amanda's there, and we can hash this situation out.

As he rounds the house again, he sees Darlene in the doorway, worry on her face.

Jack begins to respond, but Ben is already off the line.

JACK  
(to Darlene)  
Clint wants to trade shifts.

DARLENE  
(recovering)  
I tried to put New Blue Rabbit in her  
bed, and he's just been banished in  
the hallway. She knows he's an  
impostor. She's a good one, your  
daughter. She's not so easy to fool.

Her eyes seem to shrink as she watches him avoid her.

DARLENE  
Jack...?

JACK  
I just... money might get tight  
again. Okay?

Darlene smiles, almost laughs - but her eyes are on the verge  
of tears.

DARLENE  
Honey. That's okay.

EXT. AVENIDA REVOLUCIÓN, TIJUANA - NIGHT

The streets are packed with carousing people. Jack moves  
ahead tentatively, past vendors shouting, hawking meds.

He ducks into one booth and buys Xanax.

As he emerges, he sees THE STREET KID waiting on his bicycle  
at the entrance to an alley.

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Moving out of the chaos on the main drag, Jack follows the  
boy. The clamor of the street gives way to a deep THUMPING,  
the insistent, predatory rhythm of REGGAETON.

INT. CLUB - PLAZA ZAPATO - TIJUANA

THE STREET KID slips away into the crowd as if it's a briar  
patch.

Suddenly, Jack's grabbed from behind on the shoulder: it's  
RICKY, smiling. He navigates Jack through the madness.

RICKY  
Hola! La Migra! You can't help  
looking like a cop!

Ricky maneuvers Jack through the fray of the dancefloor.

They navigate their way up, past amorous couples, groups smoking in the shadows. They emerge onto:

INT. PRIVATE BALCONY - CONTINUOUS

In the corner, BEN sits with his own coterie of GANGSTERS and WOMEN. This quieter perch overlooks the stream-like flow of pedestrians and peddlers on the main drag, the murmurs punctuated by firecrackers.

Ben greets Jack warmly, clearing space for him at the table. Flanking Ben are some CHOLOS, in full gang regalia, MS-13 TATTOOS on their necks and shaved scalps.

BEN

What are you drinking, Jack?

JACK

Where's Amanda?

BEN

She's upset. She is a woman, after all... and it's never all business with women.

Ricky finds something hilarious, and he covers his mouth to keep from laughing.

JACK

If I could talk to you in private...

BEN

This is private. This is the *private* balcony.

(waiting for Jack)

You want to talk, *talk*. I'm *dying* to hear it.

JACK

I want to negotiate a deal. To get out of this. I'll buy my way out.

Below on the street, a SERIES of loud FIRECRACKERS go off.

JACK

I don't know what your arrangement is with Amanda, but...

BEN

D'you fuck her?

Ben and Ricky glance at each other.

BEN

I'm just curious. She's unprofessional. She's been a real concern in the family, you know. And she always liked guys in *uniform*.

Jack sits in silence.

RICKY

*Aww, what a fucking gentleman. I think I'm in love with him.*

Ben pops his son in the shoulder, playfully.

BEN

All right, don't tell me. But look, you're not *buying* your way out of anything, because you couldn't cover my son's drink tab here. In fact, you don't have a single fucking thing I give a shit about, other than that *lane* you stand in.

Jack is so filled with contempt, he has to glance away. Ben leans forward, trying to meet his eyes again.

BEN

We've got a big load coming through the day after Christmas.

(pause)

You'll get your money right *here* on the 27th, if everything goes through. Otherwise, those pictures go straight to the Inspector General's office.

JACK

I'm not letting past another load.

Ben grabs Jack's shoulder, shaking it sympathetically; but Jack stiffens.

Ben reaches into a BAG at his feet, then pulls up:

BLUE RABBIT

Chewed on the ear. The original. Ben waves it in the air, then drops it on the table.

BEN

See you *here*, on the 27th.

INT. CAMRY - NIGHT

Jack is driving home, eyeing BLUE RABBIT in the front seat.

INT. SULLIVAN HOUSE - DAY

The living room is meticulously decorated, as the SULLIVANS, for the first time, entertain Darlene's family for Christmas.

As the children tear through presents, Darlene pours coffee into the new china. Wearing cashmere and khaki, her family occupies a slightly higher class than Jack.

Darlene's youngest nephew tears open a deluxe PLAYMOBILE set.

DARLENE'S SISTER

Oh, Darlene - my God. You shouldn't have done that! Can you say thank you, honey?

The kid just stares at the box - no thank you.

Then Maddy opens a present: it's the ORIGINAL BLUE RABBIT. She's thrilled, and the adults laugh at the show of joy.

There's a flicker of strong emotion that flashes on Jack's face, as he sees his daughter's happiness. He grabs her and kisses her on the head. For a fleeting instant, he's happier than we've ever seen him.

DARLENE

Oh my goodness, Maddy. Where on earth did Santa dig him up?  
(realizing)  
It's the *original*.

She gives a searching look to Jack, who shrugs.

THE PHONE RINGS, and Jack gets up for it. Darlene betrays a slight glimpse of worry as he heads into the other room.

JACK

(standing quickly)  
Anybody ready for a drink yet?

A few people do, they call after him. Darlene *doesn't*. She watches him leave. EVERYONE LAUGHS at the punchline of a story, while Darlene fakes a smile.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jack locks the door and answers the cordless phone.

AMANDA (V.O.)

Merry Christmas.

JACK

You've got some kind of timing.

He rifles through the medicine cabinet, and takes a Xanax, swallowing it without water.

AMANDA (V.O.)  
Listen to me: wrap up some cash, get  
your family, and get out.

Jack gets into the SHOWER to muffle the sound.

JACK  
What is he pushing through tomorrow?

AMANDA (V.O.)  
You really don't listen, do you?

A long pause.

JACK  
I worried about you.

AMANDA (V.O.)  
*Sullivan.*

JACK  
I didn't want to, but... I kept  
thinking you got arrested.

Jack rubs his temples, sliding down on the shower floor.

AMANDA (V.O.)  
Please do what I say. Get your money  
- and go. Don't look back.

JACK  
You're as trapped as I am, Amanda.

Out the bathroom window, he sees two of the kids running around with a new soccer ball. Clarabelle runs into the mix, knocking a LITTLE BOY down. He begins sobbing - his mother running out to him.

AMANDA (V.O.)  
Just take care of your family.

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM - DAY

Darlene's two sisters and mother are gathered, putting DISINFECTANT on the boy's knee with forced levity, as the boy cries miserably.

Jack takes Darlene aside, speaking with a lowered voice.

JACK  
Dar? How late is everybody staying?

DARLENE

Until dinner is over. That's how long people stay when you invite them to dinner.

JACK

I thought it might be nice if we all slept in a hotel. The three of us.

DARLENE

On Christmas night?

JACK

Maddy could swim in the pool.

She just stares at him, some fear showing in her eyes.

DARLENE'S SISTER

(about the child's knee)

All right! I think we've got this kid back in working order!

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Jack opens the bathroom door to find DARLENE, right there, stuffing WRAPPING PAPER into a garbage bag.

There's something so strained in her movements, it's clear she's aware of something. Jack begins to talk, then waits.

She stops finally and looks at him, anger just faintly showing at the edges of her mouth.

DARLENE

Not now. No. It's Christmas dinner.

She moves into the kitchen, and Jack trails behind her.

INT. SULLIVAN KITCHEN - NIGHT

Two excruciating hours later, Darlene begins putting Saran Wrap over plates of hors d'oeuvres.

DARLENE

Okay, so... John and Linda, and Phil and Shiela, they're going to help clean up.

JACK

You know what's happening, Darlene.

Darlene is nodding down at a plate of deviled eggs.



DARLENE

And everyone else is going to scram.  
 Okay? How's that, Jack? Then I'm  
 going to - I'm going to take Maddy to  
 Marcie's tonight. We're going to -  
 (answering his posture)  
*Because I don't feel right sleeping  
 in a hotel.*

Her voice betrays a bit of heartbreak; but she recovers.

DARLENE

You promised me a month ago we were  
 going to have some big earth-  
 shattering *talk*.  
 (a beat)  
 Sounds like you're having it with  
 somebody else.

JACK

Do you want to know the details? Or  
 do you just want the money?

DARLENE

*Don't.* Jack. We've got guests in  
 the other room.

As he lingers by the fridge, she moves out into the entry  
 hall, to say goodbye to the last straggling guests.

TIGHT ON JACK, as he listens.

DARLENE (O.S.)

I'm sorry the turkey was dry. It  
 was, wasn't it?

PHIL (O.S.)

Heck, it was free.

SHIELA (O.S.)

Stop it. It was perfect, Darlene.  
 Everything was perfect.

There's another flurry of goodbyes, as Jack closes his eyes.

As she returns to the room, he feels her staring at him. He  
 opens his eyes and faces her.

Tears have welled up in her eyes.

DARLENE

I haven't had a drink for a month,  
 and no, I know, big whoop-de-doo.  
 That's nothing. I don't need the  
 medal-of-honor. But you didn't even  
*notice.*

(a beat)  
Who is she?

JACK  
It's not her. Not that.  
(choking)  
She's just... a go-between.

DARLENE  
Well, she certainly got between us.

EXT. SULLIVAN DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Darlene is tucking Maddy into her seat in the old CHEROKEE.  
Maddy is soothed by the rabbit.

JACK  
(falsely chipper)  
Maddy, we've got to bring those  
presents to Aunt Marcie's, 'cause she  
couldn't make it today.

Darlene is leading CLARABELLE to the Cherokee, but the dog  
gets away and trots out into the street.

DARLENE  
Clara, God! Jack? Can you please  
help me get her into the car.

He turns and begins clapping.

JACK  
All right, come on, Clara. You got  
to get up here in the car.

The dog won't move, so Jack grabs her and carries her  
forward. Darlene is slightly AMUSED by the absurdity.

JACK  
Look at this. I got to help my own  
family escape me.

This comment, mixed with the sight of him holding an enormous  
dog, brings a burst of laughter to Darlene.

She can't help herself. She gets down into the driver's  
seat, but - as Jack fights to get the dog into the back -  
she's in that gray area between laughter and tears.

He goes into the backseat and hugs Maddy. He closes her eyes  
and squeezes her, while she resists slightly.

MADDY  
Why isn't Daddy coming?

Darlene can't help but see how much he adores his little girl.

JACK  
You know I'm going to come for you  
when I can, Dar.

As he steps away, she begins backing out.

MADDY  
Mom! Why isn't Daddy coming?

Jack stands in the headlights, truly heartbroken. She stops a moment to look at him, rolling down her window.

JACK  
I got so scared and so tired,  
Darlene... I closed my eyes. You  
just can't look away from this life.  
You get used to pretending something  
is okay. But it's not okay. It  
never was. And I'm so sorry.

The venom leaves her, and she looks worried about him.

DARLENE  
Jack, what are you going to do?

JACK  
(thinking, deeply)  
I'm going to do my job.

PANEL OF SECURITY MONITORS

In black and white, Jack is on a screen going through usual procedures; Clint Danielson paces on the adjacent screen.

EXT. PORT OF SAN YSIDRO, U.S./MEXICAN BORDER - CONTINUOUS

In the fumes, Jack is facing Ben in his Jaguar. He sees the top of the WINNEBAGO approaching, a few cars back. Ben hands him a LICENSE.

JACK  
(with contempt)  
Where you coming from?

BEN  
Don't fuck this up. That's where I'm  
coming from.

Jack hands Ben his license back.

JACK  
Thank you... Officer.

EXT. PORT OF SAN YSIDRO, U.S./MEXICAN BORDER - CONTINUOUS

The WINNEBAGO has pulled up now. The MULE is sweating, nervous, a strung-out woman. Jack meets her eyes and sees complete terror. His radiation detector begins crackling.

JACK  
(into the radio)  
I'm getting a reading on the PRD.

Jack begins walking around the Winnebago. Halfway back, he pauses, leans against it, and takes a deep breath. On the distant overpass, SCOUTS are watching his every move.

MULE  
I'm in lane *fourteen*. Sir? I'm in  
the right lane.  
(watching Jack)  
*Sir*. Please. This is lane fourteen,  
I'm in lane *fourteen*.

Clint looks over, across the fumes.

EXT. SECONDARY SEARCH AREA - DAY

Jack is leading the Winnebago off the line. Then he enters:

INT. WINNEBAGO - CONTINUOUS

Jack steps inside and begins going through compartments under the seats. He looks out a window and sees CLINT watching.

INT. WINNEBAGO - LATER

Jack has got a power screwdriver now, and is undoing the panel, while other OFFICERS surround the mobile home.

JACK  
The screws are all stripped.

Outside the window, he sees the MULE sobbing.

The last screw comes out and Jack pulls back the panel. He's closing his eyes as if he expects an explosion. But, below him, in a dark, airless compartment, he sees:

FIFTEEN YOUNG GIRLS

Bound, gagged, brutalized, and barely alive.

This has such a violent effect on Jack that he needs to back away for a moment. He's trembling, but he turns back and tries to comfort the abducted girls.

JACK  
You're okay. You're with the good  
guys now.

The complexity strikes him, and he looks nauseous.

EXT. SECONDARY SEARCH AREA - LATER

The girls are being helped out. They're sick and dehydrated.  
Jack looks as if he's seen his own daughter brutalized.

The search of the WINNEBAGO has continued, one INSPECTOR  
finding SMOKE ALARMS planted all around the truck.

Clint sees this also, and gives Jack a pointed look.

CLINT  
*Smoke alarms.*

Jack shrugs at him: it makes no sense to either of them.

INT. PORT OF SAN YSIDRO, OFFICES - DAY

Jack is filling out paperwork.

Gradually, more and more SUITS begin to crowd around the  
cubicle - from the OIG (OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL).

VILLALOBOS  
Officer Sullivan?

Jack grunts and continues with his paperwork.

VILLALOBOS  
I'm Agent Fred Villalobos.  
(pause)  
We'd like to talk to you.

Jack nods, and looks back down.

VILLALOBOS  
This here is Agent DeMarco from  
I.C.E. Operation Predator.

JACK  
How are those kids?

DEMARCO  
They're getting medical treatment.

VILLALOBOS  
Any idea why that camper would be  
full of smoke detector cells?

JACK

It sets off the PRDs. Just stupid smugglers.

DEMARCO

Or some kind of message?

Jack looks up, confused.

DeMarco drops a pile of PHOTOGRAPHS onto the desk blotter: young girls arrested in a prostitution sting.

DEMARCO

They move these little kids up to brothels. *Sell them* like animals. There was a motel in Santa Ana.

ANOTHER PHOTO: The aftermath of a fire, charred bodies on the parking lot beside the scorched frame of a motel.

DEMARCO

We had a tip from an informant inside this, telling us there was a family disagreement, that some of them couldn't stomach the new loads. We were heading in to bust the place.

(pause)

But these roaches caught wind of it. Killed everybody. Burned the evidence. Left us to comb through the ashes. *Smoke* detectors. It's a message, right?

Jack faces him, squinting.

DEMARCO

You better get your tongue back real soon. Didn't take long for the driver to spill her guts: she said you were *bought and paid for*.

JACK

What else is she going to say? I just busted this load.

VILLALOBOS

Jack, we're not your biggest problem.

DEMARCO

We've been watching for months. You know these people?

PHOTOS: Amanda Martinez. Ben Langford. Ernestina.

JACK

No.

DEMARCO

Bullshit, you don't. You know what?

(leaning close)

If you busted a load you were paid to let through today, you're a fucking corpse. You should be hugging us. You should be begging us for help.

JACK

You want to talk to me like this, I need a lawyer.

VILLALOBOS

So get a lawyer.

DEMARCO

Go home. Sleep on this. Talk to your wife. We're coming back to talk to you. And for everybody's sake, Jack, I hope you survive the night.

INT. SULLIVAN HOUSE - AFTERNOON

TRACKING SHOT - In a frenzy, Jack packs everything essential. Clothes, toiletries, *money*.

Then, in the midst of the scramble, he pauses, looking at the CHRISTMAS TREE. On the mantel beside it are pictures of Darlene and Maddy. As he stands in the dim house...

A CAR passes by the front window, idling. As he notices, it accelerates away, engine gusting.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Jack makes a call on the cordless phone. It rings through, and finally he hears an answering machine: Marcie's voice.

MARCIE (V.O.)

"We're not here or we're outside - so... you know the drill."

JACK

Marcie? I need to talk to Darlene? Is this one of those machines that goes right to an answering service - or can you hear me right now?

Just then, he notices someone walking along the front windows of the house, across the front yard. Two men. The DOORBELL rings.

Jack retreats into the laundry room and ducks down.

JACK

Stay there, Dar - I need you to stay there and don't move.

With a click, Darlene answers the phone.

DARLENE

Jack?

He scans across the house, seeing a man PEERING IN through the bay window, standing in the flower bed below.

JACK

Darlene, I can't talk. You need to stay put.

(watching)

I'll explain everything when I get there.

DARLENE

(starting to cry)

Jack, please, tell me what's going on? I don't know what to think.

JACK

I love you, Darlene. Just hold tight.

He draws his own gun, as he sees more men circling the windows. As he comes forward, he can see:

It's the FEDS, gathering on his lawn, SEDANS pulled up along the curb.

He freezes in the middle of his house, thrown upside down by his harried packing.

Just then, his phone begins buzzing in his pants. He takes it out, opens it carefully, and answers.

CLINT

You're in serious shit, buddy. Feds are waiting on a search warrant. Don't tell me you're at home.

JACK

Where are you?

CLINT

I'm around the block. I been circling for an hour...

EXT. SULLIVAN BACK PATIO - MOMENTS LATER

Jack steps onto the trampoline, climbs over the fence.



OVERHEAD SHOT - he moves yard-to-yard through the ragged plots of Lakeside, past chained up dogs, and disassembled motorcycles.

CLINT (V.O.)  
(post-lap)  
Why don't you come say hi.

Jack emerges out of the last yard, and steps right into Clint's car.

INT. CLINT'S MUSTANG - CONTINUOUS

Jack ducks down, as Clint speeds away, past approaching POLICE CRUISERS. Clint looks down at him, affectionately.

CLINT  
I'll tell you when we're clear...

JACK  
When the fuck's that going to be?

EXT. I-5 - DUSK

Jack sits up finally as the car pulls onto the crowded freeway. There's more southbound traffic than usual.

CLINT  
I got into debt. She came to me one day, wiped it clean. I'd use the ring to get my payments, the fighter looked like a source of income. Every few days I'd let a car through - and pretty soon I was ahead. Then Ben took over - made me a better deal.

JACK  
So why did he need me? Why not run the kids through you?

CLINT  
He ran something else through me.

JACK  
What?

CLINT  
Meth, probably. It was a Yukon Denali, scraping the ground.

JACK  
So I was a diversion?  
(a beat)  
And the girl? Amanda?

CLINT

Those two hate each other. She's competing to take over the family business: La Madrina de Hada - the Fairy Godmother. When the old lady dies, somebody inherits this shit.

(a bite)

The old lady wants Amanda. Wants her to stick to running wetbacks across. They think they're a fucking ferry service.

JACK

Yeah, I got the pitch.

CLINT

They're going to want you to give up other guards. But if you turn yourself in - you won't make it. Ben doesn't fuck around. He makes half his money bringing guns down to arm the cartels, the other half bringing people up for them.

The lanes are bottled up on a Friday night as they cross the border into Mexico.

Vendors pass through the stopped traffic, peddling toys, churros, Raiders T-shirts.

JACK

You brought them right to me, Clint.  
*At the ring.*

(pause)

You fingered me to Amanda.

EXT. PEDESTRIAN BORDER CROSSING - CONTINUOUS

A line of pedestrians spans the kiosks at dusk. It's an ecosystems of salesman, hustlers, and street children.

In the drizzle, BEN stands among them, watching the traffic.

INT. CLINT'S MUSTANG - CONTINUOUS

Clint just frowns, moving ahead slowly in the line of cars.

CLINT

You made your own decisions.

JACK

I told you things that not even my wife *knew*. You gave it all to them.

CLINT  
Maybe you should have told your wife.

JACK  
Clint, you fucking -

CLINT  
I showed you a good deal. That's all I did.

Vendors zig-zag through traffic, selling Aztec plates and Sponge Bob stuffed animals.

CLINT  
Now I'm telling you how to protect your family. You hide them away. You make sure they're not watching where they go.

JACK  
They're not watching.

CLINT  
Make sure. Did they follow them?

Jack shakes his head, but his face looks worried.

CLINT  
Did they give you anything?  
Anything? Anything at all?  
(glancing over)  
Something in the mail for Christmas?

CUT TO:

BLUE RABBIT

The sun is just setting beyond a wide, sliding glass door. Nearby, there's the chatter of LOUD GUNFIRE.

PULL BACK TO:

A VIDEO GAME ON A TV SCREEN

It's CALL OF DUTY, in which a player armed with a machine gun blows away hundreds of people. We're in:

INT. MARCIE'S DEN - NIGHT

Hugo and Bryce are rapt at the game above them. Darlene is on the phone, while Maddy colors at her feet.

FROM THE STUFFED RABBIT

We rise straight up until we're looking down at the house and ranch on a GPS MAP. The map alters from the satellite picture to a grid, where a SINGLE BEACON is pulsing.

PULL BACK TO:

INT. BLACK SUBURBAN - SUNSET

GERARDO, watches the beacon on a GPS MAP.

INT. MARCIE'S DEN - CONTINUOUS

Hugo guns down soldiers in the game.

DARLENE

No, Mom. I'm at Marcie's.

(pause)

Could you guys please turn that disgusting game down?

Marcie enters with a tray of Pop Tarts and candy.

DARLENE

I have to go, Mom. I'm just worried.  
Jack was trying to call, and...

MARCIE

Turn it down, guys!

Suddenly, the BIG SCREEN TV goes blank - as the POWER GOES OUT throughout the house.

The sun has just set and there's only faint light through the rooms. For a moment, it's almost peaceful. Darlene exhales. But -

*THE SLIDING GLASS DOOR SHATTERS.*

Darlene screams as three men splash through the door, their faces covered with feed sacks.

INT. CLINT'S MUSTANG - JUST AFTER SUNSET

Jack has been trying to call Darlene, again and again. He gets her voicemail again and sighs, looking back up at the stopped cars. There's an ambulance on the highway ahead, blocking the traffic.

JACK

I got to get back there, Clint. What the fuck are we doing down here?

TWO VENDORS traverse through cars, heading toward them.

EXT. LINE OF CARS, SOUTH OF SAN YSIDRO - CONTINUOUS

We catch up to the vendor on the right as he pulls a BANDANA off his mouth. It's RICKY. He looks over to his associate.

They close in on Clint's mustang.

JACK (V.O.)  
We're going to jail, Clint. Both of us.

CLINT (V.O.)  
Relax. Quit being such an old woman.  
I'm trying to help you.

Jack looks in the passenger side mirror. He sees the THE VENDOR pull a pistol from his belt.

CLOSE ON RICKY: as he raises the GLOCK.

Clint catches sight of Ricky, AIMING AT HIM.

CLINT  
No! Not me...

Clint reaches for the door...

Jack finds the seat's adjustment handle and pulls. He falls back - as the first bullet grazes his leg.

CLINT CRIES OUT.

CLINT  
It's him! Not me! Not me!

But Ricky fires into Clint *first*.

Jack has fallen out of the line of fire.

Clint takes all of the rounds. He's dead instantly. His foot comes off the brake and the car lags into the bumper of the next car.

Jack scrambles into the back, as Ricky's wild shooting peppers the car.

FROM OVERHEAD: we see two street kids ride up on bicycles.

As sirens approach, Ricky and the other vendor jump onto the back chain stays of the bicycles, riding double, almost childlike - as the children pedal them against traffic and out of sight.

EXT. CLINT'S MUSTANG - CONTINUOUS

The back passenger door flies open. JACK falls out.

CLOSE ON: BEN, enraged, as he watches.

Jack climbs around the car to Clint's side, opening the door. Clint is dead, strung up by his seat belt. Jack pulls open his UNIFORM SHIRT, revealing a SMALL MICROPHONE. He winces: it's a crowning betrayal.

Jack plucks the microphone off and brings it to his lips.

JACK  
Fuck you, whoever you are...

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY ONE, OUTSIDE TIJUANA - NIGHT

Out of the drizzle and flaring taillights, Jack staggers along the emergency lane. He's covered with Clint's blood. From across the highway, BEN watches.

As the rusty bicycles trail off the highway, RICKY steps off, and watches JACK mount the stairs of an ELEVATED WALKWAY.

EXT. ELEVATED WALKWAY, OUTSIDE TIJUANA - CONTINUOUS

The walkway is CAGED IN by a wire mesh fence that looks gutted, with huge gaps and torn portions. At RUSH HOUR, the pathway is crowded with pedestrians. They gasp at the sight of Jack, parting for him.

EXT. ELEVATED WALKWAY - FURTHER BACK

Ricky tries to catch up to Jack through bottleneck of crowds, shoving commuters out of the way.

Jack pushes ahead. As GUNSHOTS FIRE, the crowd panics. Jack sees that Ricky is now just behind him, shooting through the crowd.

Jack hears ANOTHER SHOT from the CINDERBLOCK BUILDINGS: there's a SMUGGLING SCOUT sniping at him. Two shots splash into the cinderblock around him.

He's surrounded. He tries to stay low along the concrete wall, but a bullet strikes him in the arm, spraying blood across the stucco. Jack screams, but scrambles ahead.

Ricky empties out, the last of his bullets sparking off the fence. Then he chases Jack down along the blood-stained wall, to where the fence is broken away and the archway peaks over the crowded highway.

He comes at Jack furiously, and *pistol-whips him in the jaw*. Jack is wounded, out-of-breath; but as Ricky begins beating him -

- Jack grabs him by the throat and slams his face into the rusty pole along the walkway. Ricky spits blood. Then Jack throws an elbow to his face, stunning him.

Ricky is merciless, and rushes forward. But Jack gets low, picks him up, and *throws him into the rusted fence*.

The fence gives way. Ricky grabs onto the wire, but the poles rip out of the concrete, the mesh rips away. Suddenly - he drops...

...off the side of the walkway into the cars below. He caroms off A CAR and lands head-first onto the pavement, BREAKING HIS NECK.

EXT. HIGHWAY ONE, OUTSIDE TIJUANA - CONTINUOUS

BEN, on fire with rage, watches his son fall into the traffic. He rushes to him.

EXT. PLAZA - CONTINUOUS

Jack moves into a duty-free concrete strip just south of the border. He dashes upstairs to a second level. As SIRENS grow louder, he finds a public bathroom.

INT. PUBLIC RESTROOM - CONTINUOUS

After checking the stalls, he faces himself in the mirror. He scoops Clint's blood from his eye sockets. His cheeks and forehead are nicked from sprayed glass.

Then he checks his injury, tearing off his sleeve. The force of the bullet has stuck a portion of the fabric into the wound. He can barely lift his left arm.

He turns on the faucet: no water. So he tries to clean himself using paper towels and toilet seat covers. The sirens increase, Mexican police filling up the plaza.

The police begin banging on the locked door. Jack looks up and sees A ROTTEN PANEL in the ceiling. Using the sink, he hoists himself up, relying on ONE ARM and wincing at any movement in the other. He vanishes into:

CRAWL SPACE

Rats skitter away as he hears the Mexican police break into the room. He crawls ahead, toward a spot where drizzle falls through a collapsed section of the roof. He climbs up onto:

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

It's a separate plane of crooked TV antennas and phone wires. The cinderblock structures are huddled together in this poor section of the city. Jack takes a short run-up and LEAPS to the neighboring roof.

Stopping only to look down at the SQUAD CARS pushing through pedestrian traffic below, he continues to the NEXT ROOF.

He CLIMBS down into a TOP-FLOOR WINDOW.

INT. STRANGE APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Jack crawls into a family's humble room. We see the INTENSE PAIN on his face, as he's forced to use his left arm. A baby is crying as he rushes past, trailed by a woman's hollering.

INT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

He crosses the landing and scrambles downstairs.

EXT. TIJUANA STREETS - CONTINUOUS

In a busy commercial area, Jack weaves through the shoppers, alarmed by his appearance. Police roll through the PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC, parting it, but slowed by the crowds from a holiday festival.

EXT. ALLEY OF KIOSKS - CONTINUOUS

Jack stops at a stand and begins buying clothes.

His money is COVERED WITH BLOOD, and he needs to peel bills from his pants. The young SALESGIRL watches with fear, but allows him to make the purchase: a T-SHIRT, HAT, SUNGLASSES, and SHORTS.

He ducks into a NARROW SPACE between buildings, where he begins changing, maneuvering painfully around his injury.

EXT. TIJUANA STREETS - NIGHT

Dressed like an awkward TOURIST, he re-emerges into the street. It's just enough disguise for this large crowd, and he loses POLICE who are still pushing ahead.

He stops at a VENDOR who sells PRE-PAID CELL PHONES, and he holds up \$10.

JACK

*Ten dollars. For one call. Local.*



The vendor shrugs: why not? Jack flicks through numbers on his own cell phone, dials in Amanda's number.

THE CELL PHONE RINGS through.

AMANDA  
(answering)  
*Bueno. Bueno, digame...*

Jack closes his eyes and deciphers the loud ATMOSPHERE behind her. There comes the DISTINCT SOUND of the STARTING BELL.

Jack recognizes it. He hands the phone back to the vendor.

INT. PALENQUE ARENA - NEAR RING

The fighters have begun round one with kicks and jabs. We pull back to see AMANDA, clearly giving orders to her BODYGUARDS from the club. They nod and move off.

EXT. PALENQUE ARENA - PARKING LOT

Jack gets out of a cab and maneuvers through the fiesta crowd, past other taxis. As he does, he sees Amanda's car. He approaches cautiously and sees KOA, head back, sleeping.

EXT. PALENQUE ARENA - SPORTS BOOK

Amanda works through the crowd, smiling, greeting, but moving purposefully. Banda music blasts from competing boom boxes. As she moves out of the aisle...

JACK (O.S.)  
Don't react.

Jack has the pistol in her back.

AMANDA  
(sarcastic)  
Thank God you're all right.

JACK  
Don't try to call anybody. Just get me out of here.

EXT. PALENQUE ARENA - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

They arrive at her car, and he pushes Amanda inside.

INT. AMANDA'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

KOA, her driver, wakes up with a swipe of the gun against his head.

JACK  
*Despierta, pendejo.*

AMANDA  
You know, I've had a lot of guns pointed at me in my life: they don't impress me.

JACK  
Just take a ride with me, you psycho.  
*Please.*

AMANDA  
All you had to do was ask like a gentleman. Go ahead, Koa.

The car pulls out. Fireworks are going off everywhere.

AMANDA  
Jack, just listen to me.

JACK  
I don't want to hear any more bullshit. You sold me to that motherfucker. You lied to me.  
(to Koa)  
Turn off and stop up here.

EXT. TIJUANA STREET - CONTINUOUS

The car pulls to a halt. Jack pulls Koa out, then forces him to squeeze into the trunk.

INT. AMANDA'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Amanda at the wheel.

JACK  
I need to get back across somehow.

Amanda laughs.

JACK  
What's so funny?

AMANDA  
You killed Ben's son. He's got a half-mil reward on your head. You think you're going to drive through Otay waving a white flag?

He presses the gun against her temple.

JACK  
I should just leave your brains on  
the side of the road.

AMANDA  
(hurt)  
Go ahead, then. Why don't you?

She hits the brakes, throwing him against the windshield.

AMANDA  
(furious)  
Why didn't you listen to me, you  
stupid fucking grunt! I told you to  
run!

JACK  
Run *where*? My life is over.

AMANDA  
Not if you listen to me.

He laughs - a sad, derisive laugh.

JACK  
If you think I'm going to believe a  
word -

AMANDA  
I put those smoke alarms on that van!  
I BUSTED THAT LOAD!

Jack marvels at her, thinking it through.

AMANDA  
I rigged up the camper. There was *no*  
way I let a load like that get  
through. That's NOT what this  
family's about. It never was.

JACK  
You're too good for that, I guess.

AMANDA  
That was Ben's load, and I warned  
you. He has different ideas about  
this business. But you open the door  
to something that ugly, and it never  
stops. We run a service -

JACK  
You're a real fucking Samaritan.

She sees the blood seeping through his shirt.

AMANDA

Your arm.

(a beat)

Let's just get you fixed up. I can explain this. But...

(hears a thumping)

Let Koa out of the trunk before he suffocates.

EXT. LA COLONIA LIBERTAD - ABANDONED CAR LOT - NIGHT

At the outskirts of a hill packed with shanties, Amanda tears up an old towel from the trunk, making it into a tourniquet for Jack's arm. Koa paces outside, irritated, pulling on a cigarette.

AMANDA

I think the bullet went through clean. Nothing but soft tissue.

JACK

It'll get sceptic in a few hours.

AMANDA

You won't be here that long. One way or another...

(a beat)

I might have something to disinfect it a little.

(to Koa)

*Koa, do we have anything to clean this up?*

KOA

(bitterly)

*Nothing in the trunk.*

She begins searching the glove compartment and finds HAND SANITIZER. She shows it to Jack, with a worried face.

JACK

Fuck me.

AMANDA

This is going to sting a little.

She works some of it into the wound and he winces, groaning in agony.

JACK

You love it, don't you?

AMANDA

No.

JACK

Where the fuck are we anyway?

AMANDA

This? This used to be an old car lot. Part of the real economy. My late husband's father... he just owned this lot, back in the day.

(a beat)

In the beginning, he just took in stolen cars from San Diego and re-registered them. But, pretty soon, they were making compartments, prepping them for smuggling runs north.

(a beat)

People, just people. He stayed out of everything else - pretty soon, they were the biggest coyotes in the *Colonías*.

JACK

And what were you, an intern?

AMANDA

No. When my husband was killed, I was all alone with a sick little boy. Ernestina offered me a job. I made offers to *La Migra*. Followed them. Found the ones who were crooked. Or just desperate.

JACK

Perfect job for a pretty girl in Tijuana.

She finishes the tourniquet around his arm.

AMANDA

This family never worked with anything but everyday *people* until Ben.

JACK

So you did a background check on all of them, huh?

AMANDA

I did one on you. I studied you for a long time.

(affected)

I used those kids, Jesus and Maria. I saw my chance with them. I put sand in your gas tank, stalled you down here. I knew you needed a different kind of convincing.

You're a family man, after all. And all they wanted was their mother.

JACK  
And Clint?

AMANDA  
I just know Ben's order was to kill both of you. Clint was giving you to the Feds in a plea bargain.

Jack looks down, sighing.

JACK  
I should have turned myself in.

AMANDA  
And you'd be dead. And anybody you love... they'd be dead, too.

CUT TO:

INT. HORSE TRAILER - NIGHT

In light only from passing headlights through the vents of the horse trailer, we see DARLENE and MADDY, bound at the ankles and hands.

Further back, a SHADOW becomes visible in the hay, holding a pistol. One passing streetlight shows it's GERARDO. The rhythm of the tires changes as they roll onto the highway, heading south.

GERARDO  
This is the only time there's ever any traffic going south - Friday night. All your *spoiled* fucking kids. Even a civil war can't keep them from getting drunk and puking on themselves.

Maddy crying uncontrollably as they approach the border, headlights firing through the dark space.

GERARDO  
Tell her to shut up now.

DARLENE  
She's a little *girl*.

GERARDO  
Shut her up. Right now.

He pulls back the slide on a PISTOL and pushes it against Maddy's temple.

GERARDO

Shut her up. I'm not telling you again.

But Maddy cries even harder, eyes and nose leaking water.

Darlene faces her daughter in the flaring lights. Her eyes are intense, drawing all her focus...

DARLENE

Maddy, look right at me. Right at me. You only see me right now, okay. This is your momma, I'm right here. I'm not going *anywhere*. I'm right here. And you're going to take one breathe at a time. Deep breath... and you're not going to make a sound.

Her voice lowers to a whisper as the ease ahead, in stop-and-go traffic at the border. Outside the cars are blasting music, engines are gusting in low gears.

DARLENE

(whispering)

*That's a good girl. Not a sound. Not a sound.* Daddy's going to be proud of you. I'm proud of you. Shhhh... this is going to be okay. You just look at me. Me.

The tires roll over the cattle guard, and they're on the Mexican side - Darlene looks over at the man, with fury in her eyes...

Maddy is quiet. Gerardo smirks and lowers the gun.

ON BLUE RABBIT

Maddy clutches it.

EXT. LA COLONIA LIBERTAD - ABANDONED CAR LOT - CONTINUOUS

Jack is on the pre-paid cell, pacing, his arm now tied up.

AMANDA

Not answering?

Amanda is studying his face, as Darlene's recorded voice plays for her voicemail.

JACK

Darlene, it's me. You've got to call me if you get *one* of these messages.

ON AMANDA - She watches close as he paces farther away, growing emotional.

JACK  
Please. Please, be okay. Please,  
God - let me make this right again.

Amanda looks affected by him and his anguish. There's some memory passing over her. She looks at the lights along the crooked shanty, and her eyes gloss over faintly.

Jack approaches across the lot.

After a few strides, HIS PHONE begins ringing. He looks at the CALLER ID screen and sees that it's Darlene.

JACK (CONT'D)  
(relieved)  
Darlene. Oh, thank God. Thank God.

There's a long pause, then:

BEN (V.O.)  
No, don't thank God. God doesn't  
really give a shit, Sullivan.

INT. LINCOLN NAVIGATOR - NIGHT

Ben hangs on the phone, while Gerardo drives through desert, approaching the border at Otay Mesa.

BEN  
We're moving your wife and kid out of  
that ranch. They'd be dead already -  
but I thought I should get this  
family together one last time. Maybe  
you could bring your *girlfriend*, too.  
However you want to work it.

INTERCUTTING BETWEEN JACK AND BEN...

BEN (V.O.)  
See, I watched my son die tonight.  
So here's what you're going to do.  
In one hour, I'm going to call you on  
this line with a meeting place.  
You're going to come - with Amanda -  
and you're going to give yourself up  
to *me*. Otherwise, I am going to ruin  
these two ladies. I'm going to do  
much more than kill them.  
Understand?

Jack can barely speak. Amanda looks devastated for him.



JACK

Yes.

BEN (V.O.)

One hour.

The line goes dead, and Jack is pale with anger and disgust. He looks seasick, like he may throw up. He kneels down in the grit beside her car.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Are you going to get sick?

JACK

Just leave me alone for a second.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

I can get you to them. Before Ben knows anything.

JACK

Are they dead already?

She doesn't answer, but looks into the distance, the wind in her face, the distant roads BRIGHT RED with all the stopping taillights.

AMANDA

Just get in the car.

EXT. CHOP SHOP - AGUAS CALIENTES - TIJUANA

This is where stolen cars from San Diego are re-registered and outfitted for smuggling runs into the U.S. Jack sees it all now: the SUVs *raised* to carry heavier loads at normal height, the secret compartments being welded shut.

AMANDA

(opening her car door)

If he's tracking them with a GPS chip, these are the guys he used.

INT. CHOP SHOP - AGUAS CALIENTES - TIJUANA

All around Jack is eyed by SMUGGLING SCOUTS. He recognizes them; they recognize him - from the earliest scenes.

As Amanda leads him into the shop, GUARDS pull their guns on Jack. Amanda shouts in Spanish, dismissive, literally pushing gun barrels out of the way.

AMANDA

*Tranquilo! He's with me.*

She leads him into a room filled with electronic equipment: GPS Monitors, swarming with beacons.

AMANDA

We take the LoJack from cars stolen in San Diego. Then we reuse the GPS chips. Every mule that goes through, we're watching in case they run off.

Jack watches as she breaks away and greets two TECHS in the dimness at the corner of the cluttered room. On monitor screens, the SMUGGLING SCOUTS track GPS beacons.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

If she still has the teddy bear with her - was it a teddy bear?

JACK

A rabbit.

She holds back a slight smile.

AMANDA

Okay. I'll tell you when we get a fix on it.

EXT. CHOP SHOP - AGUAS CALIENTES - TIJUANA

Jack heads outside onto the dirt lot, pacing, making a call. After a few rings, *Marcie* answers.

JACK

Marcie.

EXT. MARCIE'S RANCH HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Police cars surround the house in dark, sirens churning. Her boys sit at the edge of the walk, talking to officers beside broken glass and a splintered door. There's the aftermath of a devastating gunfight.

MARCIE

Oh, Jesus - Jack. We thought... maybe this was the ransom call. Do you know what happened?

EXT. CHOP SHOP - AGUAS CALIENTES - TIJUANA

Across the field, past the stripped-down car frames, KOA stares at Jack, nervous.

JACK

I know. I can't talk for long. But you're okay, the boys are okay?

MARCIE (V.O.)  
We're okay. But Jack -

Amanda comes up behind Jack, with a LOUD WHISTLE.

JACK  
I got to go. Take care of the boys.

AMANDA  
We're going. We got a signal.  
Inside *La Colonia Libertad*.

JACK  
Cops won't even go in there.

AMANDA  
It's my old neighborhood.

INT. LA COLONIA LIBERTAD - DUSK

The shantytown ends right at the border, where transient houses use the PRIMARY FENCE as a fourth wall. Houses are made of stolen garage doors and scavenged plywood. But in this clutter, at the ends of busted concrete roads turning to rubble, there sit GANG COMPOUNDS of painted cinderblock.

INT. AMANDA'S CAR - DUSK

As Koa drives into the heart of the shanty, more and more people begin gathering on the road, watching their approach.

AMANDA  
We drive in, everybody knows. We  
have to go in on foot.

Koa pulls over beside a *Pescado* stand. They step outside.

EXT. LA COLONIA LIBERTAD - NIGHT

Moving into the narrow, laundry-strung alleys, JACK and AMANDA rush through flophouses. They pass shacks lit only with TVs hooked to car batteries.

Koa is breathing heavily, as they run up the avalanche trails of discarded trash and plastic sheeting.

AMANDA  
*You're out of shape, cabrón.*

He just breathes heavily, straining.

They come to a burnt-down house, blackened scraps on a bare concrete foundation - a perch overlooking the homes below.

As they peer down, Amanda points to an unpainted CINDERBLOCK house in the middle of scrap tin roofs. Parked beside it is a BLACK LINCOLN NAVIGATOR.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

There. I don't know how many of them are inside.

GERARDO and two other BANGERS come out of the house on cell phones, climbing into the NAVIGATOR and pulling away.

JACK

I'm going around the back.

AMANDA

I'll go with you. Koa? Cover us.

Out of breath, he nods. They scramble down along the remains of a wall.

EXT. CINDERBLOCK SHACK - LA COLONIA LIBERTAD - CONTINUOUS

As they reach the lower tier, Jack takes off for cover in the shadows under the house.

Koa takes position in the hills across the street.

Jack hisses to Amanda, telling her to move, and they circle the house. The only sound is barking dogs.

They come to the wooden slats of a LOUVERED WINDOW, open. Jack peers through, seeing nothing.

Suddenly, Jack hears a faint CRYING SOUND, unmistakable.

He nods to Amanda, and he CRACKS THROUGH THE WOODEN SLATS, dropping into the window and into:

INT. CINDERBLOCK SHACK - CONTINUOUS

Amanda crawls in after Jack. In darkness, there's only passing lights from HELICOPTERS scanning the border outside.

JACK

Border patrol.

As he moves forward, he hears Maddy crying, "Nooooo." Faintly, he can hear Darlene comforting her.

Pistol raised, Amanda comes in beside him as he SMASHES OUT a flimsy door, and faces the back room:

INT. BACK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

There, BLUE RABBIT sits alone on the floor - in an abandoned room. Beside the toy is a CELL PHONE on speaker, with Maddy's voice crying from the other side.

Amanda and Jack look at each other, astonished. She picks up the cell phone, just as the line goes dead.

INT. CINDERBLOCK SHACK - INTERCUTTING INSIDE/OUT

All at once, GUNSHOTS *tear into the* room. Jack and Amanda drop to their stomachs. Jack crawls to the window, scanning the hillside...

Then he takes BLUE RABBIT and rips open the SEAM, pulling out - A GPS chip. He pockets the rabbit, and tosses the chip across the room.

AMANDA  
(screaming)  
Koa! Go! Get help.

Across the dark hillside, Koa takes off running.

Amanda fires out, a deafening shot, near Jack's ear. Jack holds down her gun. Facing her, calm.

JACK  
Don't fire when you can't see.

US Border Patrol Helicopters circle. The BRIGHT SEARCHLIGHTS rupture the darkness, then pass on.

As Jack and Amanda crouch in the dark, a TORRENT of gunshots puncture the walls, spraying bits of cinderblock and dust.

Amanda heads for the other wall; but heavy shots puncture it - 50-calibre rounds, blowing through concrete walls.

JACK  
Stay down!

Chips are flying in every direction, as the walls come apart. They lie flat on the floor, bullets shrieking overhead.

When Jack looks up, he sees the SEARCHLIGHT of a Border Patrol helicopter cross over the dirt road. He takes off his bloody TOURNIQUET, and tosses it aside, grimacing.

JACK (CONT'D)  
Border Patrol can't fire - *unless*  
they're shot at first.

AMANDA  
What!?

Jack nods upward. Then he surges up into the doorway and FIRES UP at the HELICOPTER, emptying a clip.

As he does, the helicopter cuts off toward the other side.

Jack drops back into the safehouse, as Amanda - lit by only a faint stripe of light - stares in disbelief.

EXT. LA COLONIA LIBERTAD - PRIMARY FENCE - NIGHT

From across a second, high-tech fence of concertina wire - US BORDER PATROL sets up trucks along the ridge, like police at the perimeter of a riot.

Suddenly - *poof, poof* - they fire TEAR GAS SHELLS TOWARD THE VIOLENCE in the shanty.

INT. GANG SAFEHOUSE - LA COLONIA LIBERTAD - CONTINUOUS

Amanda sees children and families scattering out of the lean-tos and shacks along the base of the hill. Her face is now lit by the glow of flashlights, as she sees:

TEAR GAS, rising up like a fog into the neighborhood.

JACK

See. We've been using tear gas on riots across the fence.

Panicked dogs run out of the billowing clouds.

The neighborhood is becoming sheer chaos: barking dogs, shouting, shots fired out of the dark hillside. Motorcycle engines are firing up, and a mob of flashlights.

Jack does a double-take, looking back at Amanda, and realizing - for the first time - that she's scared.

JACK

How long can you hold your breath?

The GAS CLOUD blows past the open doorway, faintly luminous.

JACK

Let's go. Now.

They cover their faces and rush into the fog.

EXT. LA COLONIA LIBERTAD - NARROW STREET

Jack and Amanda scramble up a hillside of debris - gasping and coughing as they climb loose stones and trash.

They pass through OTHER HOUSES, over families lying on the floor to wait out the gunshots. They can hear the bullets whistling past through the smoke.

A few feet behind Jack, Amanda winces and drops to one knee - the wind knocked out of her. He helps her up and they continue uphill.

EXT. HILLSIDE STREET - CONTINUOUS

From a ridge, BEN has been watching, with other THUGS around him. He sees the tear gas spreading through the lower tiers of the terraced hillside.

He looks frustrated to see Amanda disappear into the clutter, but he nods his head, resolute, and begins DIALING HIS PHONE.

BEN

*They took the bait, but they got back out. Get it done.*

EXT. SHANTY, ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

As Jack and Amanda race through, coughing, retching, eyes on fire... they see silhouettes lined up along the alleys in the passing lights: teenagers, armed with rifles, AR-15s, machetes, and sawed-off shotguns. Jack and Amanda keep passing through... cautiously, as the boys watch them.

It's a nightmare of tense shadows, a neighborhood watch. They hold their ground and let them pass.

AMANDA

*(to a boy)*

*You know who I am?*

TEENAGER

*Sí. La madrina.*

She's surprised by his response, as she continues with Jack through the darkness.

JACK

What did that mean?

AMANDA

It means Ernestina's dead.

She's hunched over as she walks, listing. Jack puts his arm around her to help her forward, then pulls back to see --

-- BLOOD, covering his hand. Amanda's been shot through the rib cage. There's a wild look of adrenaline on her face.

AMANDA  
Go. Keep going.

EXT. INLET TO ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

A Lincoln Navigator breaks through laundry lines, smashing flimsy houses along the way. Eventually it clogs in the debris. A GUNMAN rises from the top, blasting a bright headlight down the alleys, seeing shadows between alleys.

Suddenly - STREET CHILDREN emerge out of the recesses to attack the Navigator. A dozen shots put holes into the chassis. A teenager smashes the back window with a machete, and the chatter of gunfire continues from a window nearby.

The Navigator, reverses... skidding out. As -

JACK AND AMANDA

- flee deeper into the dark maze of alleys.

JACK  
But why did he call you that? *La*  
*Madrina?*

AMANDA  
Because they're choosing sides.

A MOTORCYCLE

...busts through a series of laundry lines, catching up to Jack and Amanda. It passes bonfires in rows of oil drums.

INT. SMALL ROOM, ADJACENT FLOPHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Jack and Amanda enter a shack. In the flickering light of a candle, it appears to be a refuge for indigent families. There are toys scattered around boxes and newspapers. At least a dozen kids and mothers cower as the shots ring out.

Breathless, Jack scans the room, seeing all the desperate faces. Oaxacans, Zapotecans - they're people who've failed in their attempts to cross the border. They greet Amanda with smiles and bows.

She reaches out and takes their hands, whispering to them. There's blood on her clothes and her fists. Finally, a woman blows out the candle.

IN PURE DARKNESS

JACK  
Do you *know* them?



AMANDA  
 (whispering)  
 Shhh.... yeah. They were dropped  
 back over the border. A week ago. I  
 know everyone.  
 (whispering)  
 Shhh.... quiet now. Quiet.

Outside the MOTORCYCLE growls, and a flashlight splinters  
 through the rickety shacks, searching for them.

AMANDA  
 Shhh...

Amanda sounds almost motherly as she quiets them.

As the motorcycle growls and the light passes on, down the  
 fence and away, Amanda leans forward to the group.

AMANDA  
 (whispering, in Spanish)  
*Amigas, niños, if any of you saw a  
 woman and a child - a white woman,  
 and a little girl...*

The subtitles rise and fade like smoke in the darkness.

AMANDA  
*No one?*

Suddenly, a little boy stands, lit only by the pulsing lights  
 outside. He heads toward the doorway and *points*.

AMANDA  
 He saw them, Sullivan. Go ahead. Go  
 with him.

Jack moves closer. He can smell her blood. He takes her  
 hand and grips it hard; but she lets go first.

AMANDA  
 Go on. He says he'll take you.  
 Ben's guys aren't really after you.  
 They want *me*. They'll keep coming.

JACK  
 Jesus, I can't leave you here like  
 this.

AMANDA  
 (laughing crazy)  
 Leave me where? I'm *home*.

He just waits, watching her. There's a moment that almost  
 looks like they might kiss goodbye; but she pulls back the  
 slide on her pistol and points it right between his eyes.  
 There's blood smeared in rivulets across her forearm.

AMANDA

I'm giving you three seconds to get out of here, Sullivan. And don't you ever fucking look back.

He leans forward to place his forehead against the muzzle of the gun, an almost affectionate gesture. And then he looks up and smiles, her blood streaked on his face.

EXT. LA COLONIA LIBERTAD - HIGHER ELEVATOR

Ben cusses quietly, then gets onto his phone.

BEN

(on the phone)

*Gerardo. Get it done.*

ON JACK AND THE BOY

They move along an alley of broken concrete, filled with puddles. The boy runs in front of them, pointing to a house on top of the ridge:

A GANG COMPOUND, rimmed with barbed wire and plywood fences emblazoned with graffiti.

JACK

(in Spanish)

*That's it? And you saw them go in?*

The boy nods.

Two GUARDS stand out front, cigarettes flaring in the dark.

BOY

*And the guard on the left - he's my neighbor.*

JACK

*Good boy. Now get out of here fast.*

He trails off into the dark.

EXT. GANG COMPOUND - CLOSER - NIGHT

Beyond the high fences of barbed wire, there's a scrap heap of old splintered wood and destroyed shacks.

In the wreckage, Jack finds a sheet of plywood, once the wall to a house.

He tilts it against the barbed wire fence.

Then Jack SCRAMBLES UP THE SLOPE, standing on the top, balanced on the wood and the stretch of concertina wire, looking at a drop onto the piles of junk.

He leaps off, landing on top of a parked car, and rolling off onto the ground below. His shoulder is in agony, and as he sits up, he squeezes it for a moment.

Just then GUNFIRE erupts in front of the compound. Jack drops and crawls, peering around the corner to see:

A SHOOTOUT

THREE PICK-UPS have rolled up full of Amanda's troops, firing AR-15s at the guards. Ben's men return fire from the compound.

Two of Ben's guards are gunned down in front; just as the driver of a pick-up is hit. The truck drifts back downhill, rolling into the shacks below.

As the headlights fade away -

ON JACK - HANDHELD

Jack rushes through the doorway into the dark compound.

Everyone has rushed out for the gunfight, leaving overturned tables and chairs. There's blood on the floor.

Jack moves quickly, scanning the downstairs; seeing nothing, heading, down a hallway of graffiti-covered drywall.

He kicks open a door, preparing to fire, and he's face to face with:

DARLENE and MADDY, bound with duct tape.

They're mummified: the tape covers their eyes, faces, hair. Only mouth slits remain for breathing, almost like the wrestling masks seen in the earlier scenes.

JACK

Darlene... it's me. It's *me*.

He can't get the tape off Maddy. She winces and cries at the pull of the tape. He panics. The shots outside are getting closer and louder.

So he turns to Darlene, whom he can free more roughly. His hands tremble. He gets down on his knees and bites the tape around her wrists, trying to tear it off with his teeth.

Finally he begins to breach the tape, tearing it, peeling it away like a cocoon, crying as he does.

Darlene's shocked eyes are on him as he tears it off her raw skin.

When she sees him, she makes a sound, almost a laugh - the sound of his love and relief. She grabs him in a hug.

He kisses her once - then they scramble to Maddy and begin freeing her.

EXT. GANG COMPOUND - CONTINUOUS

Ben's on his cellphone. He's approaching the entrance, as Gerardo and others fall into place behind him.

INT. GANG COMPOUND - CONTINUOUS

As Jack, Darlene and Maddy move to the entrance of the room, Jack glimpses Ben and the others approaching the compound from outside.

JACK  
Darlene, get down in the corner and  
cover Maddy's ears.

Without hesitation, she does - as Maddy is nearly catatonic.

Jack unloads, firing deafening shots that light up the darkness.

Ben and the others fall back from the doorway, and -

EXT. GANG COMPOUND - CONTINUOUS

- take positions outside, waiting. Ben sends two soldiers around the back to guard.

INT. GANG COMPOUND - CONTINUOUS

Jack drops the CLIP out of his gun... empty.

E/I. GANG COMPOUND - CONTINUOUS

Ben and Gerardo hear his gun click empty. Ben waits a moment, then calls into the dark doorway.

BEN  
Sullivan?

When there's no response, he rises and begins to move slowly into the dark house.

ON BEN

Coming forward in the corridor, gun raised.

Suddenly, GLARING HEADLIGHTS rise up on Ben from behind. There's a shootout behind him, and he turns.

EXT. GANG COMPOUND - CONTINUOUS

A BLACK PICKUP, drives right through the barbed wire gate. Three more of Amanda's soldiers fire on Gerardo and the others, executing two in front of the compound.

Gerardo manages to escape around the corner of the house, where he begins crawling through a destroyed window.

JACK

herds his family to the back window, where he sees GERARDO crawling through....

ON BEN

Men rush to the door, firing wild. Ben is clipped across the shoulder, but he spins, firing back.

He drops into the COMPOUND and crawls ahead.

Breathing heavily, he checks the magazine in his pistol - A FEW SHOTS left.

INT. GANG COMPOUND - BACK WINDOW - CONTINUOUS

Everything is silent, except for Gerardo, climbing through. In the darkness, his head emerges first, placing the RIFLE down onto the sink.

PAN DOWN TO:

JACK

- hiding just below him. He waits, hears Gerardo grunt - then rises up, grabbing the RIFLE off the sink and -

JUST AS BEN STEPS INTO THE ROOM

- *FIRING*, with a deafening flash of white light. Ben is shot straight through the torso, spraying blood against the white adobe wall behind him.

Stunned, he backs away toward the BRIGHT HEADLIGHTS filling up the front door.

Jack turns to Gerardo, stricken in the window. There's a moment of real fear in Gerardo's eyes, quickly becoming resignation, as...

ON BEN

...Jack fires, his gunshot echoing. Just as he does, Ben steps into the headlights of the PICKUP, full of Amanda's henchmen. Cowering, he raises his blood-drenched hands. But they pay no attention to his surrender.

They lower their rifles and tear him apart.

EXT. GANG COMPOUND - BACK WINDOW

Jack shoves Gerardo's limp body out the back window, then reaches out for Maddy and Darlene, hiding in the dark corner across the room.

EXT. GANG COMPOUND - BACK WINDOW - CONTINUOUS

Darlene, and Maddy climb out the back, dropping a few feet into the dust. Jack drops right behind them. The gunshots from the front sound relentless.

ON BEN

As he's shredded with bullets, he hits the trigger, over and over, firing a storm, until he's empty. Deliriously he repeats himself...

BEN

*That was nothing. Nothing. Nada, nada...*

...until his eyes glaze over in the bright headlights.

BEN

Nothing.

EXT. GANG COMPOUND - BACK WINDOW - CONTINUOUS

As Jack, Darlene and Maddy round the compound, they're blasted with a BRIGHT LIGHT.

They drop to their knees in the dust, faces down, as if about to face a firing squad.

As the light shuts off behind them:

KOA

Come on, *gabacho*. The lady sent you a ride.

Koa stands with Amanda's BODYGUARDS. Jack and his family rise and rush ahead to a battered FORD PICKUP, Mexican plates. As they're close, Koa throws open a door...

KOA

Keys are in the ignition. Just go.  
Go south, she says. You'll be taken  
care of.

JACK

Is she *alive*?

KOA

Just go, motherfucker. Go.

INT. OLD TRUCK - SONORAN HIGHWAY - NIGHT

We see only the SILHOUETTES of Jack at the wheel, Darlene holding Maddy. They bounce in the dark, heading south.

The lights of FEDERALES, POLICE AND FIREFIGHTERS accumulate in the REAR WINDOW around the fire. Darlene is holding Maddy tightly.

Jack reaches into his pocket and takes out BLUE RABBIT, torn along the seam. He hands it to Maddy, who takes it, watching him with huge eyes.

JACK

She's a tough rabbit. She's going to  
be okay.

INT. OLD TRUCK - NEAR DAWN

Jack is driving while his family sleeps. He looks over at them, and, for a fleeting moment, his face shows affection so strong it looks painful.

JACK (V.O.)

A border is just an agreement. Might  
seem arbitrary, at first.

Suddenly, the device from the border sequences begins again, with traffic RUSHING all around the TRUCK, which is moving at REGULAR speed.

JACK (V.O.)

It just means that one set of rules  
has ended, and another's begun...

EXT. GUATEMALA BORDER - MIDDAY

Amid the rapid wash of cars, the old truck enters the line for a tiny, backwater border crossing - just a concrete building and mud puddles shattering in the rain.

JACK (V.O.)

From this point forward.

Jack pulls up to an INSPECTOR, sheathed in a poncho.

CUSTOMS INSPECTOR (O.S.)  
*Where are you coming from?*

JACK  
*Los Estados Unidos.*

Then he smiles, ready to fuck with the Americans a little.

CUSTOMS INSPECTOR (O.S.)  
*Why don't you step out of the  
vehicle.*

Jack swallows, then faces him - nodding...

EXT. SECONDARY SEARCH AREA - GUATEMALA BORDER - MIDDAY

As Jack submits to a frisking, he watches his family in the car.

CUSTOMS INSPECTOR  
*This is going to be a long day,  
amigo. You don't have the  
registration for the vehicle?*

JACK  
*Please. Sir? Please.*

Jack closes his eyes and slips his hand out, clutching money.  
A payoff.

Only the Customs Inspector sees it: he's the only one man who  
would know. His eyes just move between Jack and the money.

Everything hangs in the balance.

JACK  
*Please, sir. Por favor.  
(facing him)  
Por favor.*

FADE OUT.