BAD GUYS

BY

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12.19.2013

INT. NYPD PRECINCT. THE BRONX. LINEUP ROOM. DAY.

A WOMAN'S FINGERS run over a FLOWER CHARM on a necklace. This is LEA MORRIS [31], NYPD detective, pretty eyes, hard to surprise. Her boss, LT. CARLSON RYAN [38], stocky, enters with TY HOWARD [23], the driver of a recently hijacked truck. Ryan nods at Lea, and she speaks into a nearby INTERCOM.

LEA
Okay, bring 'em in.

On the other side of the room's large ONE-WAY GLASS WINDOW, THREE MALE SUSPECTS enter and form a lineup.

LEA (V.O.)
There are three basic types of criminals in the world:

Lea observes the men, details large and small.

LEA (V.O.)
The extremely stupid, natural born scumbags, and people who, for whatever reason, made a bad decision. Now it's tempting to think of this last bunch as good people who just made a mistake. But you know what makes someone a good person? <u>Good decisions</u>. Remember this the next time an ex-con asks to borrow your car.

She notices the skin on SUSPECT #2'S HAND IS DISCOLORED.

INT. OTISVILLE PRISON. UPSTATE NEW YORK. CELL. SAME.

NALIN MORRIS [54] stares at his reflection in a mirror. A silver fox even in prison orange. Not too shabby.

LEA (V.O.)
Or be around your kid.

In one hand he's holding a small, but well made, SHIV.

FRANKLIN (O.S.)
Sorry I'm late, Nalin.

Nalin pockets the shiv, turns and sees FRANKLIN, a guard.

NALIN
It's okay, Franklin. I'll live.

Nalin grins, he's got a 1000 watt smile.

INT. OTISVILLE STATE PRISON. UPSTATE NEW YORK. HALLWAY. DAY.

Nalin and Franklin walk down a hallway.

NALIN (V.O.)
The three categories of incarcerated individuals are as follows: morons, degenerates, and stand-up guys who gambled, lost, and kept their mouth shut.

Nalin and Franklin CROSS with a scary-looking inmate, BIG TIM. Nalin slips the SHIV out from under one of his sleeves.

BIG TIM
Nalin... The man with the plan.

NALIN
Stay out of trouble, Big Tim. Thanks for all the cigarettes.

The men SHAKE -- by which Nalin passes Tim the SHIV, without Franklin noticing. They continue on in opposite directions.

NALIN (V.O. CONT'D) (CONT'D)
I'm talking about good guys who caught a bad break. Remember this if your kid ever gets locked-up. And know it could be worse - your kid could be a cop.

INT. NYPD PRECINCT. THE BRONX. LINEUP ROOM. SAME.

Back with Lea, Lt. Ryan and Howard staring at the lineup.

LEA
The TVs in the truck you were driving? Were they LED or plasma?

HOWARD
Don't know. Didn't load it. And they made me keep my head down while they was taking everything, had a gun on me.

Lea notices Howard has the same SKIN DISCOLORATION on one of his hands as the suspect.

LEA
I'm thinking they were plasmas... Plasmas use a special kind of wire, an alloy, with a high melting point. Like gold.
(MORE)

LEA (CONT'D)
So if you're smart, or in this case, less stupid, you steal plasmas, and replace the wiring in 'em with cheap copper wire. Then you combine the wire from the plasmas with some chemical, I forget the name, and whip up some fake-gold, stuff that'll pass a heat-discoloration test. But that chemical gets on your hands? Leaves a nasty mark, like on Suspect # 2. And... Mr. Howard here.

RYAN
How do you possibly know all that?

LEA
My mother.

RYAN
She steal a lot of TVs?

LEA
No, but she had lot of fake gold.

Lea's phone RINGS. She answers. As Ryan turns to Howard,

LEA (CONT'D)
(into phone)
This is Detective Morris...

HOWARD
What's she saying?

RYAN
That you were in on it. You might want to call a lawyer, Mr. Howard.

LEA
(into phone)
What? Hacked?

INT. MARLTON SCHOOL. HEADMASTER'S OFFICE. LATER. DAY.

ASTER MORRIS [14], in army camouflage pants and a Julian Assange T-shirt, sits defiantly in a hard-backed chair.

ASTER
Not hacked. Liberated.

Across from him are Lea and the school's HEADMASTER BAELITZ [41] surprisingly not stuffy, at least for Marlton, which is among Manhattan's most prestigious private schools.

HEADMASTER BAELITZ
And what exactly were you attempting to *liberate* from Richard's computer?

LEA
Don't humor him.

ASTER
Excuse my mother, Mr. Baelitz, she's an active member of the police state.

LEA
Who's Richard?

ASTER
A friend. It was just a joke. I have a very sophisticated sense of humor. Richard not so much.

LEA
I'm gonna cuff him...

HEADMASTER BAELITZ
You're a clever kid, Aster. But you're also on an academic scholarship, and -- clever or not -- this latest incident may well lead to it being revoked.

EXT. OTISVILLE STATE PRISON. MAIN GATE. DAY. SAME.

Nalin walks out of the main gate. He's wearing the same cool black suit (white shirt, no tie) he walked in wearing. Across the street, standing in front of a car, waiting, is a muscular, tatted-up Puerto Rican, MIRACLE HERNANDEZ [29]. Nalin approaches. Miracle, a little emotional, hugs Nalin.

NALIN
All right, all right. Keep yourself together there, Miracle.

MIRACLE
Just happy to see you, man.

NALIN
You been feeling all right?

MIRACLE
Thanks to you.
(then)
Here. Check out Julius...

Miracle hands him a PHONE with a photo of JULIUS [3].

NALIN
Handsome. You sure he's yours?

MIRACLE
So talk to me Mr. I'm A Free Man...
What do you want to do first?

NALIN
Pick up some flowers.

Nalin gets in the car.

INT. LEA'S CAR. PELHAM. EVENING.

Lea drives, Aster sulks beside her in passenger seat.

LEA
Do you have any idea how much
yearly tuition is at Marlton?

ASTER
Thirty two, five. Comes up a lot
when the industrialist offspring
douchebags you go to school with
know you're a charity case.

LEA
You don't like some of the kids
there so you're <u>trying</u> to lose your
scholarship? Is that it?

As they park in front of a small house in working class Pelham, a town on the Long Island Sound, bordering the Bronx.

EXT. MORRIS HOUSE. NIGHT. CONTINUOUS.

Aster gets out of the car and heads for the front door, followed by Lea, still trying to get through to him.

LEA
You don't seem to understand that
actions have consequences, that--

ASTER
My actions are a part of an overall
life philosophy. I'm a rebel, mom.

They are at the FRONT DOOR.

LEA
No, Aster, you're 14 years-old, and--

Now she notices a SMALL SECURITY LIGHT BLINKING.

LEA (CONT'D)
A*gain* you forgot to set the alarm?

ASTER
I didn't forget!

Lea shakes her head and unlocks the door, they head inside.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE. ENTRANCE AREA. CONTINUOUS.

LEA
You want to act like a criminal-in-training? Fine. I'll treat you like one. From now on you--

They hear NOISE COMING FROM UPSTAIRS.

ASTER
What was that?

She listens, unsure. Then ANOTHER NOISE FROM UPSTAIRS.

LEA
Wait outside.

Lea pulls a GUN from her bag.

ASTER
Give me a piece. I'll go with you. Let's bust this punk together, mom.

Not amused, she points for him to go outside. Heads upstairs.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE. LEA'S BEDROOM. MOMENTS LATER.

A MAN in a SKI MASK crawls on the floor looking for something. Some furniture has been moved for a more thorough search (that sound of it being moved created the noise.)

He stands, frustrated, then notices a CLOSET DOOR. Opens it. Looks around, sees HIGH STORAGE SHELVES, one of which holds THREE PORCELAIN FLOWERS -- <u>a NALIN, an ASTER, and an OLEANDER</u> (names written on the base.) The man smiles.

As he reaches up, LEA CLOCKS HIM FROM BEHIND with the butt of her gun. He stumbles out of the closet. We hear SIRENS approaching. As Lea SPINS him around and CUFFS him.

NALIN
Closet always was too damned small.

Huh? She RIPS OFF THE MASK. It's Nalin. HER FATHER. She can't believe it. Hasn't seen him since she was 7 years-old.

NALIN (CONT'D)
Howya' doin', Lea?

She's speechless, as now Aster and a COP rush into the room.

ASTER
Mom, are you okay?

LEA
Go back downstairs, Aster.
(to the cop)
I'm fine. He's cuffed.

NALIN
Aster? God, he looks like your mother.

ASTER
Do you know this guy, mom?

She looks at him.... How to say this?

LEA
He's your grandfather.

ASTER
What?

COP
You're related to this guy? So what do you want me to do?

She looks at him, at Aster, then at Nalin.

LEA
Arrest him.

She WALKS OUT. The cop, shrugs, starts to do as he's told.

NALIN
Wow, she's tough, huh?

And as Nalin is taken away by the cop.

ASTER
You have no idea.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. PELHAM POLICE STATION. HOLDING AREA. MORNING. NEXT DAY.

Lea ENTERS and sees Nalin sitting at a table, he doesn't see her. She looks at him, his face. Still can't believe it's him... He turns around and sees her, and smiles.

THE TABLE

She sits across from her father. Something surreal about seeing him again like this. And while she's here with a purpose, there is also simple curiosity about the guy.

Nalin, as ever, all charm, plays it easy like Sunday morning.

NALIN
It's good to see you, Lea. Even under the circumstances. Jeez, the last time I saw you were--

LEA
Seven. I was seven.

NALIN
Isn't that something, huh? And look at you now, a beautiful woman.

She just stares at him, icy.

NALIN (CONT'D)
House looks good. You redid the kitchen, huh? Remember when you cut your foot on that broken tile near the 'fridge? I took you down to the emergency room and then we--

LEA
(all business)
What were you doing in the house?

NALIN
Well, trust me, it's not how I wanted to first see you again, or meet Aster. Good looking kid, by the way. So what's he like?

LEA
He's great, except for what he's got of his grandfather in him.

NALIN
Well that's family for you, right? You can run but you can't hide.

LEA
What were you doing in the house?

NALIN
You know, Lea, I've had a long time to think about the mistakes I've made. As a person, and as a...

Lea just looks at him -- Don't. He gets it.

NALIN (CONT'D)
Shoes. Wingtips. Handmade, by a guy who, sadly, is no longer with us. Your mother saved 'em for me. But I didn't think you'd let me just come over and pick 'em up, so...

She looks at him... Icy.

LEA
Do you think that sometimes, maybe on Christmas, or my birthday, I find myself thinking about you?
(beat)
Well, I don't. And all I see in front of me now is an old ex-con dumb enough to break into my house.

NALIN
It's really *our* house if you think about it. I made the down pay--

She's done with this, with him. GETS UP to leave.

NALIN (CONT'D)
I'm sick, Lea.

LEA
Yeah? Is it foot related? Would marry nice with the shoe thing.

NALIN
It's cancer related.

She looks at him... No, not a chance. Almost chuckles.

LEA
Jesus, you are really something, aren't you?

NALIN
I'm serious. It's why they let me out early. Doctors say I've got nine months, give or take... I'm not lying about this, Lea.

LEA
But your lips are moving?

As a station cop, MAURICE, brings them TWO COFFEES.

NALIN
Thanks, Maurice.

MAURICE
No problem, Nalin.

Lea watches this exchange, unbelievable.

LEA
(to Maurice)
You two go to summer camp together or something?

Maurice EXITS.

LEA (CONT'D)
Still a charmer, huh, dad?

NALIN
I try to connect with people.

LEA
Mom loved to talk about what a charmer you were... But I'd catch her crying all the time. I'd ask what was wrong and she always said the same thing... Your father.
(beat)
Come by the house again and I'll shoot you.

Starts to WALK AWAY, then turns back.

LEA (CONT'D)
And good luck with that cancer.

Lea EXITS. OFF Nalin.

EXT. MARLTON SCHOOL. ENTRANCE COURTYARD. SAME. MORNING.

Aster sits alongside his one and only friend at school, fellow sophomore DJANGO BERKOWITZ.

Django is slightly more of an outcast at the school than Aster. They watch OTHER KIDS arrive for the day. Waiting for one in particular.

DJANGO
What'd he go to jail for?

ASTER
Diamond heist, like thirty years ago. Made the back page of The Post.

DJANGO
Swagger, yo.

ASTER
Yup. He's an outlaw, Django. Like me. It's just who we are. The law is there, and we're, you know, here, outside of it.

DJANGO
(noticing someone)
Hey... There's Richard...

They turn and see RICHARD GLOVER [15], the student whose computer Aster hacked. He is with a few FRIENDS.

RICHARD AND HIS FRIENDS - MOMENTS LATER

ASTER (O.S.)
Yo... Got a second?

Richard and his friends turn and look at Aster with ruthless condescension and disdain. They are truly douches.

CLOSE ON AN EXPENSIVE RING - MOMENTS LATER

ASTER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Here, okay? Just take it.

ASTER WITH RICHARD -- Aster HANDS HIM THE RING. Richard smiles, puts it in his pocket.

ASTER (CONT'D)
What's wrong with you, dude? I thought we were in this together?

RICHARD
You're a sucker then. I only invited you to Sean's party in the first place because I knew I could convince you to take some of his mom's stuff, because you're so desperate for friends and whatnot.

ASTER
I'm not desperate.

RICHARD
You took a ring, didn't you?

ASTER
So did you! But I didn't blackmail you about it, did I?

RICHARD
Because I wasn't dumb enough to let you snap a pic of me while I was doing it. Rookie move, dude.

He whips out his PHONE and shows him a PHOTO of Aster in the bathroom of a fancy apartment [Sean's mom's], goofing around, proudly wearing the same ring he just gave to Richard.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Oh, and, *duh*, I have the picture on my computer *and my phone*. So you're little hacking plan to get it back wouldn't have worked anyway.

ASTER
God, why are you such a dick?

RICHARD
Because I can be. And as I long I got that pic, I own you, bitch.

OFF Aster, a new low.

EXT. PELHAM POLICE STATION. DAY. LATER.

Nalin walks out. Looks around for Miracle (he'd called him from the station,) but he's not there. Instead, he's approached by a tough-looking guy, MARCO [29].

MARCO
Nalin, right?

NALIN
Do I know you?

MARCO
Marco. I think you know my cousin... Tommy Grigorias.

The name registers. And not in a good way. Marco gestures across the street to a BLACK ESCALADE WITH TINTED WINDOWS.

MARCO (CONT'D)
Got a second for him?

NALIN
Yeah. 'Course.

INT. TOMMY'S ESCALADE. MOMENTS LATER.

Nalin gets in the backseat, joining TOMMY GRIGORIAS [40], wiry, a guy who vibrates with scary, off-kilter energy.

TOMMY
There he is, Nalin Morris! Back in the land of the free and the home of the... What is it? Brave?

NALIN
Tommy, Jeez... It's been a while.

TOMMY
That's an understatement.

NALIN
Good to see you. How's your dad?

TOMMY
He's old. Guy should just croak already. Do himself a favor.
(to Marco)
Nalin did a lot of work for my old man back in the day. He went away for a job he was doing for us. Diamond score.

MARCO
You were saying.

TOMMY
So what the hell is wrong with you, Nalin? You get busted the first night you're out? Breaking into your cop daughter's house, no less.

NALIN
Go figure, right.
(then)
How'd you hear about it?

Tommy looks at him. Shrugs.

Then reaches into his jacket and pulls out a small, but powerful/intimidating, STUN GUN.

TOMMY
Ever seen one of these? Looks like a toy. But this one zaps out 2.5 million volts. Not for kids. Unless they're really, really bad.

He squeezes the gun's TRIGGER and we see its POWERFUL ZAP-FLASH OF BLAZING KNIFE-LIKE ELECTRICITY. Tommy loves it.

NALIN
I had some money stashed in the house. Couple thousand.

TOMMY
Yeah? You sure it wasn't any of those diamonds from the score? Clever guy like you must have put some of that away, right?

NALIN
Real clever, yeah, prison is full of us. No, cops got all those diamonds. Unfortunately.

Tommy looks at him, smiles. Then:

TOMMY
You ever tried Viagra? Maybe not, I guess, since you been in prison a while, and for God's sake I hope you didn't try it <u>in</u> prison. I tried it for the first time the other day. Stuff works. But it's not quite the same, if you know what I mean.

Tommy TRIGGERS THE STUN GUN AGAIN, giggles.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Point is... Things change. The way your dick works, everything. It's different out here now, Nalin, it's like the wild west. No rules. There's Mexicans now, and Russians. Jesus, the Russians are like... Zombies. Zombies are real hot now, you know in the movies and stuff. And that's what the Russians are like. Zombies. Seriously, they'll, like, eat your pets, eat your kids.
(then)
You had sex since you've been out?

Tommy puts the STUN GUN on Nalin's crotch.

NALIN
What do you want, Tommy?

Tommy pulls away the stun gun. Then, quick and fast, puts it to Nalin's arm and ZAPS him. It's fast and brutal.

Nalin SCREAMS in pain, convulses slightly.

TOMMY
I want the diamonds, Nalin. I know you lied to us about the score back then. And that you still got the extra now. I know.

NALIN
Tommy--

Tommy ZAPS him again, on the neck this time, holds it there a beat longer than last time. Nalin's head snaps backward, he SCREAMS again, his eyes rolling back in his head.

Tommy chuckles like a sadistic child.

TOMMY
(re: the gun)
This thing is incredible, right?

Nalin can barely speak, his whole body humming with pain.

NALIN
I don't have 'em yet...

Then Tommy puts the stun gun to Nalin's heart.

TOMMY
(to Marco)
Directly on the heart, guy his age? What do you think? He live?

MARCO
Probably yeah.

NALIN
Just give me a couple of days.

TOMMY
How about one day? 24 hours.

Tommy puts the gun on Nalin's neck and ZAPS him once more.

Nalin SCREAMS and convulses again.

EXT. PELHAM POLICE STATION. DAY.

Miracle in front of the station, looking around for Nalin, hears his SCREAM, turns toward Tommy's parked Escalade, and watches as Nalin is shoved out the door to the street.

Miracle rushes to him, and Tommy and Marco drive away.

INT. MIRACLE'S APARTMENT. KITCHEN. DAY.

Nalin sits across a table from Miracle, on whose shoulders sits Julius, smiling, playing with his dad's hair and ears as the men speak. Nalin looks the worse for wear.

NALIN
The diamond job came to me through Tommy's dad. Was supposed to be a 500k worth of ice. And when I got pinched that's what the cops got. But there was more than that, and I didn't tell anyone about it. I had the extra put in a bank deposit box and hid the key.

MIRACLE
In the flower in the closet.

JULIUS
(mimicking)
Flower!

NALIN
So do you think you can get in the house and get it?

MIRACLE
Me? It's a cop's house now, Nalin! Even if she is your daughter!

NALIN
So what? You're young. Plus, c'mon, it's not like you don't owe me.

Miracle looks at him -- really?

NALIN (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. Forget I said that.
(then)
But it's true.

MIRACLE
What's wrong with you?

Miracle shakes his head, then...

MIRACLE (CONT'D)
How much extra?

Nalin looks at him, the slightest bit hesitant.

MIRACLE (CONT'D)
Okay, you know what? Don't tell me. You know I got your back no matter what, so however you want to--

NALIN
Around $1.2 million worth.

MIRACLE
Damn.

JULIUS
(mimicking)
Damn!

Nalin nods, smiles at the boy again. Exactly.

RAY (PRE LAP)
Here you go, Lea...

INT. NYPD PRECINCT. LEA'S DESK. SAME.

Lea at her desk -- cluttered, lots of paperwork -- speaks with RAY GONZALES, a uniformed cop in her precinct, holding a BOX teeming, overfilled, with FILES/FOLDERS.

RAY
Your father's NYPD arrest records.

He puts the box down on her desk with a thud. Heavy. A lot.

RAY (CONT'D)
What are you looking for?

LEA
The reason he was in my house.

Ray WALKS AWAY. She pulls out the files, where to begin? Starts reading. After a beat we hear:

ADAM (O.S.)
Wow. You're alive.

She looks up and sees ADAM GREEN [29], an assistant district attorney who she's been dating, when she can, for six months.

ADAM (CONT'D)
I thought you were dead. Why else would I come to check on you, all the way here in the Bronx, far away from lower Manhattan. Wait, lower Manhattan, that reminds me--

LEA
Dinner last night. I'm sorry, Adam, I totally forgot. Someone broke into the house last night and--

ADAM
Your house? Did you kill the guy?

LEA
Unfortunately, no.

ADAM
Then there was less paperwork. You should have called.

LEA
You're right. I should have.

ADAM
You'll need to make things right, you know that? Sexually. That's how it works. Not my rules.

As Lt. Ryan approaches them.

RYAN
Lea, good, I just got call from...
(re: Adam)
Who's this?

ADAM
Adam Green. ADA.

RYAN
Your parents must be so proud.
(to Lea)
The Joint Organized Task Force Commander wants to talk to you. In person. Right away.

Lea's face lights up. This is the call she's been waiting for. Adam and Ryan know it, too. Lea collects her things.

RYAN (CONT'D)
I'm not gonna let those pricks steal you away without a fight.

ADAM
Knock ‘em dead, Lea.

She smiles, excitedly EXITS. Adam looks at Ryan.

ADAM (CONT’D)
My parents are very hard to please.

EXT. MARLTON SCHOOL. AFTERNOON. LATER.

A dejected Aster stands alongside Django. It’s lunchtime. As usual they are by themselves, watching the other kids.

DJANGO
If you get expelled I’ll be the least popular person at school.

ASTER
Uh, hate to break this to you, but--

Aster notices someone across the street -- it’s Nalin, who waves hello to him, and gestures for Aster to join him.

EXT. STREET ACROSS FROM MARLTON SCHOOL. CONTINUOUS.

Nalin watches as Aster crosses the street and approaches.

NALIN
Your mother would put a bullet in me for coming to see you like this.

ASTER
That might be getting off easy.

NALIN
But I feel like you and I should get to know each other. Can I buy you a coffee? That is if you can keep it between us?

INT. JERRY’S DINER. MANHATTAN. LATER.

An old school diner. Before Nalin went to prison it was like a second home for him. We watch as he ENTERS with Aster... The place looks the same. But he doesn’t see anyone he knows... Then again why would he? Been a while.

NALIN
Was a time I would know everyone in here... That was my booth.

Nalin points to a booth, OTHER PEOPLE sitting in it.

ASTER
You want to wait for them to leave?

Nalin looks at him, a tiny bit touched. As they hear:

JERRY (O.S.)
Someone call the FBI!

They turn and see a large and smiling, JERRY ROTHER [58], the owner of the place, an old buddy of Nalin's.

JERRY (CONT'D)
Nalin! I heard you were out.

NALIN
Yeah? From who? When?

JERRY
(to Aster, re: Nalin)
Always thinking there's an angle. I love it. Do you not love it?

NALIN
Jerry, meet my grandson, Aster.

JERRY
Your grandson! I love it!

NALIN
So, Jerry... You ever see any of the old crew around?

JERRY
They're all dead, Nalin. All of 'em.

BACK BOOTH. MOMENTS LATER.

A booth in the back where the OLD CREW -- 5 GUYS, 1 WOMAN -- are sitting. All old school criminals, characters. Like the table of comics in "Broadway Danny Rose," but crooks.

JERRY
Look who I got here! I told him you were all dead! You shoulda seen his face, he coulda cared less.

Everyone lights up, greets Nalin like a returning hero. OFF Aster, watching, entranced.

COMMANDER RICKEY (PRE LAP)
Tell me something, Detective...

INT. JOINT ORGANIZED CRIME TASK FORCE OFFICE. SAME.

Lea sits across a desk from the commander of the Joint Organized Crime Task Force (henceforth to be referred to as the JOC,) JOHN RICKEY [38]. He is looking at a FILE.

Behind him is a LARGE BOARD with NAMES/PHOTOS of various criminals in NYC, the task force's radar. Within the web -- around the middle -- is TOMMY. There are OTHER NAMES/PHOTOS on the board, higher up, some of which we'll recognize later.

COMMANDER RICKEY
Why didn't you press charges on your father for breaking into your house last night?

Not what she was expecting to hear.

LEA
I... I told him if he came around us again I'd shoot him.

COMMANDER RICKEY
Do you know who Tommy Grigorias is?

She looks up at the PHOTO on the board, behind him.

LEA
His name comes up from time to time, yeah. Nasty customer.

COMMANDER RICKEY
We got him for eight murders, just that we know of. Including the daughter of a guy he also killed. Their ears were cut off. The daughter was seven years-old.
(then)
We picked up some chatter, something's going on with Tommy and your dad.

LEA
What?

COMMANDER RICKEY
So when I learned he came to see you last night--

LEA
See me? You mean rob my house?

COMMANDER RICKEY
Know what was he doing in your house?

She's frustrated with his cagey-ness.

LEA
Not exactly. Looking for money, probably. Maybe if you explained more about what's going on, big picture, then--

COMMANDER RICKEY
What's going on is that I want to get to Tommy, and it's possible your father could help us with that. It's possible he could help us get to a lot of people we're interested in. Your dad is as connected as they come. Guy could probably be elected president of the New York Crooks Rotary Club.

LEA
He won't cooperate with us.

COMMANDER RICKEY
Okay, not us, then. What about you?

She looks at him -- he doesn't get it.

LEA
The guy went to jail for twenty-four years instead of ratting on anyone. Growing up the two worst things you could call someone in my house were a snitch, and a cop. He roots for the bad guys. And he's never been in the habit of doing anything special for me, or for anyone other than himself.

COMMANDER RICKEY
I see. Well, then keep up the good work there in the Bronx.
(hands her his CARD)
Thank you for your time.

She looks at him. Realizing something.

LEA
Commander, I've applied for the Task Force six times.

COMMANDER RICKEY
Yes, I know.

LEA
Is my father the reason I've never been accepted?

COMMANDER RICKEY
Well, it is the Joint *Organized Crime* Task Force. And, like it or not, Nalin Morris is your father.

INT. JOC OFFICE. HALLWAY NEAR RICKEY'S OFFICE. MOMENTS LATER.

Lea WALKS OUT of the office, gets a few steps and SLAMS her hand against the wall in frustration. Gets a few stares from others. Glares back. Angry, but also hurt. She WALKS AWAY.

EXT. JERRY'S DINER. BACK BOOTH. ONE HOUR LATER.

Nalin and Aster now settled in to the booth with the rest of the crew. Some time has passed (empty plates around, etc.) One of the guys, KENNY CEREAL, is in the middle of a story.

KENNY
...Mind you, Nalin's *got* the damned painting *under his arm*. But he says to the cop. "Oh, but officer, it's not an alarm, it's the smoke detector. I was roasting a lamb!"

NALIN
What? You never roasted a lamb?

Everyone ROARS. Classic Nalin, who winks at Aster, loving it.

JERRY
So what about you, Aster? You gonna follow in your grandpa's footsteps?

NALIN
Kid goes to the fanciest school in New York. He's gonna work on Wall St. and rob people legally.

ASTER
Actually... I'm in the middle of a situation as we speak.

NALIN
Yeah, what's up?

TIME CUT -- MINUTES LATER. All the guys at the table are now MOANING. Aster has just relayed his school situation.

NALIN (CONT'D)
You let him take a picture of you *while you were on the job?*

KENNY
No bueno, kid. Not good.

ASTER
I know what bueno means, Kenny.

NALIN
Where was this apartment again?

ASTER
989 Fifth Avenue. Penthouse. Sean, the kid who lives there, his parents are away for like a month. Believe me, when they get back they're not gonna miss a couple of lousy rings.

JERRY
Victimless crime.

The crew starts talking among itself, moving on.

ASTER
I gotta say it's good to finally meet someone I'm related to who shares my, you know, values.

NALIN
Yeah. Likewise.

Now Nalin gets around to what he's been meaning to ask:

NALIN (CONT'D)
So, Aster, here's the thing... There's something in your mother's closet, a porcelain flower, a Nalin as luck would have it.

ASTER
Nalin's a flower name? So is Aster.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE. KITCHEN/ENTRANCE. SAME.

Lea comes home and races upstairs.

NALIN (O.S.)
Yeah, I know. So is Oleander, Lea.
Go figure, right?

INT. MORRIS HOUSE. LEA'S ROOM. CONTINUOUS.

She enters her room, goes to her CLOSET. Scans it. Looks up on one of the shelves and spots THREE PORCELAIN FLOWERS.

NALIN (O.S.)
Anyway, this flower is what I was looking for the other night.

CLOSE ON THE THREE FLOWERS -- on the base of each is the name of the flower: a Nalin, an Aster, and an Oleander.

NALIN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
And underneath it, in the hollow...

Lea GRABS the Nalin. Turns it over, reaches into the hollow of its cavity, feels around... And pulls out a SMALL KEY.

NALIN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Is a key. Think you can get it for me? Without your mom knowing?

ASTER (O.S.)
Yeah. Sure.

Lea looks at it, processing... She takes out the CARD with Commander Rickey's number. Dials the number.

LEA
(into phone)
Commander Rickey... This is Detective Morris. What if I did get my father to assist with Tommy? Would that punch my ticket?

INTERCUT -- Rickey on the phone in his office.

COMMANDER RICKEY
I thought there was no chance he'd ever cooperate.

Back to Lea, as she looks down at the key in her hand.

LEA
Who said anything about cooperate?

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. MORRIS HOUSE. KITCHEN. NIGHT.

Aster ENTERS. Lea is doing dishes. Doesn't turn around.

ASTER
Hi, Mom.

He notices that the FLOWER is right on the kitchen table. He walks over to it, stares at it. As Lea turns around.

LEA
Did you hear anything more from the Headmaster about your situation?

ASTER
(staring at the flower)
No. Nothing yet.
(re: the flower)
What's this?

LEA
It's... It was my mother's.

ASTER
Yeah? Why'd you bring it down here?

LEA
Because...
(down?)
Down? As opposed to where?

ASTER
(covering)
Wherever it was before.

Aster TOUCHES it. Lea watches him, her cop instincts buzzing.

LEA
Grandma would be so pleased you've developed an interest in flowers.

ASTER
Are you kidding? Not even.
I'm hungry. Can we order pizza?

LEA
Sure.

Aster HEADS UPSTAIRS to his room. OFF Lea, watching/thinking.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE. ASTER'S ROOM. MOMENTS LATER.

Aster walks into his room. Thinks, not really sure how to handle the flower situation. Catches himself in a MIRROR. Can't help but think to himself: What would Nalin do?

ASTER'S CLOSET. His one and only SUIT. Aster GRABS it.

ASTER IN FRONT OF A MIRROR - <u>WEARING HIS SUIT.</u> No tie, like Nalin. Even has his hair slicked back like his grandfather.

ASTER
(mimicking Nalin)
Howya' doin', mom? Nice flower.

LEA (O.S.)
Again with the flowers?

Aster spins around, startled, sees Lea in the doorway.

ASTER
Was my door not closed?

She moves toward him, intimidating.

LEA
Wow. The suit, the hair... Whole new look, huh? What gives?

ASTER
Aren't you the one always telling me I look like a--

LEA
You know who dresses like that? Has that look? Your grandfather.

ASTER
I wouldn't know, would I? Where is he now, anyway? Guantanamo? And can you leave my room, please? Next time get a warrant.

She is very close to him now. Feels his nervousness.

LEA
Have you heard from him? Had any contact with him whatsoever?

ASTER
What? How would I have--

LEA
I should make something real clear here, Aster. You've got one chance to cut a deal. To tell me the truth. After that, <u>when</u> I find out the truth, if that incriminates you, well, then it'll be too late.
(then)
Have you heard from him?

He looks back at her. Moment of truth.

ASTER
No.

Her eyes narrow. He looks back her, his eyes narrow.

LEA
Do you want me to tell you how I know you're lying?

They stare at each other for a beat. But he doesn't crack.

ASTER
I'm not lying.

She nods -- *have it your way* -- then starts to walk out.

ASTER (CONT'D)
All right, all right. He came by school. He just wanted to talk.

She rolls her eyes. Turns back around to face him.

LEA
You don't know him, Aster!

ASTER
Yeah, that's the point.
(then)
I'm sorry, okay?

LEA
No, it's not okay.

Aster knows he fucked up. Still, he's gotta ask:

ASTER
So... How did you know I was--

LEA
Lying?

ASTER
Yeah. Because you're a cop, right?

LEA
Because I'm your mother.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING. 989 FIFTH AVE. NIGHT.

CLOSE on the "989 FIFTH AVENUE" that's printed on the AWNING that juts over the sidewalk in front of this very fancy building. We watch as Nalin ENTERS. For the first time he's not in a suit, but instead wears jeans, a work shirt and work vest, and BASEBALL HAT pulled low (like a guy who might install your cable.) He's also got a SMALL TOOLBOX with him.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING. 989 FIFTH AVE.

A uniformed DOORMAN sits behind a desk. Nalin approaches, we see that on his vest is a patch that reads "METRO."

NALIN
Howya' doin? I'm here to inspect the elevators. There's just the service and the lobby, right?

DOORMAN
A guy was here to inspect a few weeks ago. Same guy as always.

NALIN
They lost the contract for the building. We...
(points to his patch)
Metro, underbid 'em. Not making a dime now, but welcome to the world, right? Anyway, every new property we do a fresh inspect. Won't take more than twenty minutes.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING. 989 FIFTH AVE. LOBBY/ELEVATOR.

The doorman shows Nalin into the open elevator. Nalin walks in and hits the DOOR CLOSE button.

ELEVATOR

There are BUTTONS for floors 1 though 12, and PENTHOUSE. NALIN presses 12. The elevator starts to rise. He begins to count the seconds it takes to go from floor to floor.

NALIN
One... Two... Three.

The car still rising, he OPEN his toolbox and takes out TWO BLACK DISCS -- powerful MAGNETS. Puts one in each hand, and very close to, but not touching, each of the doors.

He looks and sees the car is now passing FLOOR 12.

NALIN (CONT'D)
One... Two.

And SLAMS the MAGNETS down on each of the doors, which PULLS THE INNER DOORS APART, automatically FORCE-STOPPING the elevator a few feet from the OUTER DOORS to the PENTHOUSE.

He timed it perfectly, from here he can DISABLE the LATCH that OPENS the outer doors. Then he puts his hands on the landing and PUSHES HIMSELF UP onto the Penthouse foyer.

Immediately he looks for and spots a HOME ALARM CASING. Goes to it. There is BLINKING RED LIGHT (the alarm has been tripped because of the elevator doors opening) and there are NUMBERS COUNTING DOWN FROM 30 (seconds before initiation.)

Nalin removes a small HAMMER from the tool box and PRIES open the casing. After that it only takes a few twists of a SCREWDRIVER on the wire insets to DISABLE the system.

The alarm STOPS BLINKING/LOSES POWER.

He looks around. Nice place. He smiles. Still got it.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE. HALLWAY BY LEA'S BEDROOM. INTERCUT.

It's late, dark. But Aster is up, creeping by the DOOR to Lea's bedroom, OPEN A CRACK. She's sleeping. A floor board CREAKS. He stops... She doesn't stir. He keeps moving.

BACK TO THE PENTHOUSE -- THE BATHROOM.

We recognize this bathroom from the photo Richard had of Aster wearing Sean's parent's rings. Nalin is cleaning the place out, scooping all the JEWELRY/WATCHES into a bag.

BACK TO ASTER -- THE KITCHEN

The FLOWER, still on the table. Aster approaches it, picks it up, turns it over, reaches in and pulls out the KEY.

And because he doesn't know that Lea discovered the key earlier, he has no reason to be suspicious. He takes the key.

EXT. STARLIGHT STRIP CLUB. QUEENS. NIGHT.

A taxi drops off Nalin, holding a BAG. He ENTERS the club.

INT. STARLIGHT STRIP CLUB. QUEENS.

Nalin walks in, looks around for someone... As a gorgeous stripper, AMANDA [23], approaches him.

AMANDA
Hi. I'm Amanda

NALIN
Hi Amanda.

AMANDA
You want to buy us a drink?

NALIN
More than you know.

Nalin winces, a SHARP PAIN.

AMANDA
You all right?

NALIN
Yeah.

He digs into a pocket, pulls out PILL BOTTLE and POPS ONE.

Looks around again, and now spots Tommy -- the person he's looking for -- sitting with a few other guys in a corner.

NALIN (CONT'D)
(to Amanda)
Maybe later.

He heads toward the group and makes eye contact with Tommy, who gestures for Nalin to follow. They walk toward STAIRS.

INT. STARLIGHT STRIP CLUB. TOMMY'S OFFICE.

Tommy walks into his office, followed by Nalin.

TOMMY
Well... Show me.

Nalin dumps out the bag and we see it's all the JEWELRY he got from the 989 5th Ave. penthouse.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
What the hell is this?

NALIN
I'd say it's close to 100k.
(then)
I don't have the diamonds yet, Tommy. I'm in the process of getting 'em, but I don't have 'em yet. So with this stuff I'd like to buy another day.

TOMMY
Are you kidding me?

NALIN
I could have tried to dodge you, but I want to make this right. So came here to try and address the situation in a profitable manner.

Tommy looks at the stuff, then back at Nalin. Laughs.

TOMMY
Jesus, Nalin, they really don't make 'em like you anymore, do they? I don't know if you're stupid or smart or crazy or what?

NALIN
All of the above I guess.

Tommy looks at him, considering, then.

TOMMY
All right, Nalin, I'll give you another day. But follow me, I want to show you something.

Tommy WALKS OUT, Nalin FOLLOWS.

INT. STARLIGHT STRIP CLUB. HALL/STAIRS/HALL. CONTINUOUS.

Nalin follows Tommy down a hall, up some more STAIRS, onto a landing that leads to another door. Tommy uses a KEY to OPEN THE DOOR. We can see BLOOD everywhere, though the room is otherwise empty. Nalin stops. Tommy looks at him -- *come on.* Nalin reluctantly ENTERS. Tommy SHUTS THE DOOR.

INT. STARLIGHT STRIP CLUB. TOP FLOOR ROOM. CONTINUOUS.

Tommy opens another door in the room that leads to a dingy bathroom, in the bathtub of which there lies a man, VICTOR VESK [26], bound, gagged, and with a BLOODY BALL OF BANDAGES WRAPPED AROUND HIS RIGHT FOREARM. His hand has been cut off. But he's still alive. His eyes pleading for mercy.

TOMMY
This is Victor. We were doing some business together, not all that different from the arrangement you and I worked out the other day, actually. Victor here, like yourself, was less than forthcoming regarding some work we had engaged him for. So I had his hand removed from his arm, as you can see.

Nalin looks at what's left of Victor's arm, BLOOD DRIPPING through the bandages, utterly gruesome.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Victor's Russian. And it's like I was telling you, these Russians are like Zombies. *They must be stopped.*

Tommy pulls out a GUN. Hands it to Nalin.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Kill him and you got your day.

Nalin holds the gun, the man's eyes pleading with him.

VICTOR
Help me, please...

TOMMY
Do it, Nalin! Or I kill you!
(then, annoyed)
C'mon, it's like riding a bike.

Tommy shakes his head, GRABS the gun from Nalin, turns and SHOOTS Victor in the head, killing him. Fast and brutal.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
The watch and stuff was a nice gesture. You got your day.

Tommy WALKS AWAY. OFF Nalin, shaking.

INT. MARLTON SCHOOL. HALLWAY. NEXT DAY.

Aster walks through the halls and is approached by Richard, who looks around to make sure there's no one is listening.

RICHARD
Did you know that Sean's apartment got robbed last night. They took all his mom's jewelry.

ASTER
Was it you?

RICHARD
No! Was it *you*?

ASTER
Someone robbed them for real?

RICHARD
Yeah. Pros, I guess. Cleaned the place out. Sean told me the police were over there asking all sorts of questions about everything.

ASTER
About us?

RICHARD
No. Not yet.

ASTER
What do you mean not yet?

RICHARD
Just remember Asss-ter: I have those pictures of you. And if the cops, if anyone, asks me about anything to do with... Anything. Guess what I'm showing them?

Richard WALKS AWAY. OFF Aster, freaked out.

INT. JERRY'S DINER. AFTERNOON.

Nalin sitting in his booth, has a WRAPPED PRESENT with him. Sees Aster ARRIVE. He joins Nalin, clearly agitated.

NALIN
(giving him the present)
Got something for you.

ASTER
(leaning in, quietly)
Did you rob that apartment I told you about? With the jewelry?

NALIN
Yeah. Good tip. Enjoy that present.

ASTER
I told you this kid Richard has a picture of me in the bathroom there! If he decides to show the cops then I'm the one who's gonna get busted for your robbery!

NALIN
Don't worry about that. The thing went off beautifully.

ASTER
Are you even listening to me?

NALIN
All right, look, I'll address the situation with this kid that's messing with you. Nothing bad's gonna happen to you because of this. I promise. Don't worry.

ASTER
You don't get it, do you?

NALIN
Aster, I'll take care of it.
(then)
Did you get the key?

Aster looks at him, angry and hurt.

NALIN (CONT'D)
Well? Did you?

Aster digs into his pocket and SLAMS the key on the table.

NALIN (CONT'D)
Honestly, there's no need to get your panties in a bunch.

ASTER
Whatever. Mom was right about you.

Aster WALKS AWAY. Nalin watches him go.

He looks down at the key. At least he got that.

EXT. JERRY'S DINER. MOMENTS LATER.

As seen from a POV across the street from the diner, we watch as first Aster EXITS and WALKS AWAY. He's followed by Nalin, who watches Aster go, then waits... After a few beats Miracle drives up in his car and picks him up. They drive off.

After a few more beats ANOTHER CAR FOLLOWS THEM.

EXT. TRI-BOROUGH BRIDGE (MANHATTAN TO BRONX.) LATER. DAY.

BOTH CARS on the bridge, headed toward the Bronx/Pelham.

INT. MIRACLE'S CAR. BRONX NEAR PELHAM. LATER. DAY.

Nalin and Miracle drive through a neighborhood.

NALIN
Up here. This corner.

Nalin checks the rearview mirror again. Then looks out the front window, sees something that strikes him.

NALIN (CONT'D)
Well, how about that? Didn't used to be two banks on this corner.

NALIN'S POV -- TWO BANKS ACROSS THE STREET FROM EACH OTHER.

EXT. MIRACLE'S CAR. CONTINUOUS.

Nalin gets out of the car and walks into one of the banks -- EMPIRE SAVINGS AND LOAN. Miracle drives away.

INT. UNMARKED POLICE CAR. SAME.

The car that's been following Nalin. A JOC Detective, PAUL MCLAREN [28] young, ambitious, is driving. Lea is in the passenger seat. They watch Nalin ENTER the bank.

MCLAREN
So you're in the unit if your father plays ball, is that it?

LEA
Something like that.

MCLAREN
And to think that I did it without my daddy's help.
(MORE)

MCLAREN (CONT'D)
(then)
And how do you even know for sure what he's got in there is illegal?

OFF Lea, truth is, she doesn't.

INT. EMPIRE SAVINGS AND LOAN. ASSISTANT MANAGER DESK.

Nalin approaches an ASSISTANT MANAGER at her desk.

NALIN
Morning. I'd like to speak to someone about a deposit box.

INT. EMPIRE SAVINGS AND LOAN. DEPOSIT BOX ROOM.

Nalin INSERTS a deposit box key into a box, and OPENS it. (We cut away before seeing what's inside.)

INT. EMPIRE SAVINGS AND LOAN. MOMENTS LATER.

From a distance, we watch as Nalin walks out into the main bank area, from the back with the Assistant Manger. He's now holding a SMALL BAG emblazoned with the bank's logo. He smiles, they chat amicably for a moment (we see this, but don't hear it.) Then they shake hands and Nalin WALKS AWAY.

INT. EMPIRE SAVINGS AND LOAN. FRONT ENTRANCE AREA.

Nalin walking, approaching the entrance/exit. He notices someone walking toward him -- Detective McLaren -- and turns away from him (to his blind side) to find Lea there.

NALIN
Lea... Wow. You bank here too?

LEA
Mind if we look in the bag, Dad?

NALIN
Usually I'd ask to see a warrant, but seeing as how you're family...

He hands her the bag. She looks through it and finds only a variety of BANK BROCHURES AND FREE CALENDERS.

LEA
(grabbing Nalin's arm)
How about we go back and check that deposit box you've got the key for.

NALIN
What box? What key?

As the Assistant Manager we saw earlier approaches.

ASSISTANT MANAGER
Is there a problem here?

Lea FLASHES her badge, as Mclaren also steps up.

MCLAREN
Did this man just access one of your deposit boxes?

ASSISTANT MANAGER
He asked to take a look at one but--

NALIN
I decided against it. Frankly I felt they weren't safe enough.

LEA
So you made us, okay. But we both know you've got that key. So you're gonna use it <u>right now</u> to open up the box it's for and--

She starts RIFLING THROUGH HIS POCKETS.

MCLAREN
Whoa, easy there, Morris.

NALIN
It's okay. She's loved illegal searches since she was little.

Lea glares at Nalin, takes a deep breath, turns around to compose herself and in doing so <u>looks through the front entrance/windows toward the BANK ACROSS THE STREET.</u>

MCLAREN
Let's go, Morris. You've wasted enough of my time.

He BLOWS PAST HER, walks out of the bank.

Lea, embarrassed and angry, has no choice to follow him out.

EXT. EMPIRE SAVINGS AND LOAN. MOMENTS LATER.

Nalin walks out of the bank and spots Lea and Mclaren GETTING IN THEIR CAR. They PULL OUT and drive right past Nalin. Lea glaring at him. He watches them turn a corner and DRIVE AWAY.

He smiles. Looks across the street at the other bank -- CITY NATIONAL -- and heads across the street toward it.

INT. CITY NATIONAL BANK. DEPOSIT BOX ROOM. SAME.

CLOSE $1.2 MILLION IN UNCUT DIAMONDS.

And we watch as Miracle, under the approving eye of a BANK EMPLOYEE, transfers the diamonds into a SMALL BAG.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK. LATER.

Nalin sits on a bench, watching others in the park. There are more than a few PARENTS with their CHILDREN. He's watching one FATHER with his young DAUGHTER when he hears.

He now sees Miracle approach, with the GYM BAG.

NALIN
So... How we doin'?

Miracle hands Nalin the bag. He looks in it and SMILES. There are the DIAMONDS, uncut, in all their glory.

NALIN (CONT'D)
And you've haven't been home yet, right? No one on you?

MIRACLE
I think we're good, man. That double bank move, thing of beauty.

NALIN
Thank you neighborhood gentrification.
(then)
And you took your share, right? The Julius college fund?

MIRACLE
Yeah.
(and then)
Thanks, Nalin. For everything.

Nalin stands up. This is clearly goodbye.

MIRACLE (CONT'D)
You're not going to Tommy, are you?

Nalin just smiles.

NALIN
See ya around, Miracle.

They men HUG, and Nalin WALKS AWAY. Miracle watches him go. We stay with Nalin, walking, as he makes a call on his PHONE.

NALIN (CONT'D)
(into the phone)
Hey. It's me. Can you meet?

EXT. STREET ACROSS FROM MARLTON SCHOOL. DAY.

CLOSE on Aster, hard to read. REVERSE on Nalin.

NALIN
Thanks for coming.

They're standing across from each other on the same corner where Nalin met him before. We see Nalin has TWO SMALL BAGS now with him, the one from Miracle, and another one.

ASTER
I almost didn't.

NALIN
Well, I'm glad you did. Because I wanted to apologize to you, about that thing. I wasn't thinking. Bad habit of mine... And now circumstances have conspired as such that I have to leave town...
(then)
Look, Aster, I just wanted you to know how much I enjoyed getting to know you. It was... Pretty special for me. You're a great kid.

He hands Aster the smaller bag.

NALIN (CONT'D)
Here. It's the least I could do.

Aster looks inside and he/we see HALF OF THE DIAMONDS.

NALIN (CONT'D)
There's a card in there with the name of someone who'll help you sell 'em the right way. Open a bank account your mom don't know about. Use the money for important stuff, for you, and your mom... Take care of her, Aster, and yourself.

Aster looks at him, something is up.

LEA (O.S.)
Well, dad, I gotta say...

Now on Lea.

LEA (CONT'D)
That is very thoughtful of you.

Nalin turns and sees her standing behind him, with Mclaren.

ASTER
I'm sorry, Nalin, but...

NALIN
Nah, don't be. I get it.

He smiles.

NALIN (CONT'D)
She's your mother.

Then, a deep breath, and he turns to Lea.

NALIN (CONT'D)
I like your hair that way, Lea.
(then, to Mclaren)
Yours too.

As she CUFFS him...

LEA
You're under arrest, Dad.

OFF Nalin, as we--

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. JOC OFFICES. INTERROGATION ROOM #1. DAY. LATER.

Miracle sits across from Lea. He's stony silent.

LEA
Miracle, c'mon, you're really gonna keep quiet for him? Don't you have a little boy to look after?
(then)
Right, but guys like you two don't care about stuff like that...

MIRACLE
Only reason I'm around to see my boy at all is your dad.

LEA
Why? He protect you from all the nasty fellas up in Otisville? How long was it you two bunked together up there? Six years?

MIRACLE
He gave me a kidney.

LEA
A what?

MIRACLE
A kidney. One of his.

LEA
Jesus, the two of you with the tall tales. Go big or go home, huh?

MIRACLE
When I told him I was sick he just offered. He just said "that kid of yours gonna need a father."

She realizes he's serious. As Rickey OPENS THE DOOR.

COMMANDER RICKEY
Ready?

LEA
Yeah.

She looks at Miracle, then and WALKS OUT with Rickey.

INT. JOC OFFICES. COMMANDER RICKEY'S OFFICE. NEXT DAY.

Nalin sits across from Rickey and Lea. In the room, behind them, is the BIG BOARD with all the city's JOC TARGETS, the large, semi-connected web that includes Tommy and many more.

RICKEY
It's simple, Nalin. Do you want to go back to prison or not?

NALIN
For what? Possession of stolen diamonds I already did time for?

LEA
No, you actually haven't done time for <u>these</u> diamonds. Not yet.

RICKEY
And you don't have to. Not if you agree to help us out with Tommy. Be smart for once, Nalin. Look out for yourself.

LEA
That shouldn't be too hard.

NALIN
(to Rickey)
We have some issues.

RICKEY
There's a lot of ways this can work. Information from you on a regular basis could go a long way.

NALIN
Yeah, toward Tommy putting a bullet in me, or worse. He's off his rocker. Are you aware of this? Guy needs to be locked up.

LEA
No one knows we got you, Dad. You just give the diamonds to Tommy like he wants you to, and then--

NALIN
What? You arrest <u>him</u> for possession?

LEA
No. You start working for him.

NALIN
Right. Just like that.

RICKEY
(frustrated)
C'mon, Nalin! Stop screwing around here. You're sick! You go back to prison now that's where you'll die.

Nalin looks at Lea, who turns to Rickey...

Did she just hear that right? She looks back at Nalin.

NALIN
Ya see... What'd I tell you.

He was telling the truth.

Rickey looks at Lea, then at Nalin, then back at Lea...

RICKEY
You didn't...

NALIN
She didn't believe me. I can't say I blame her.

RICKEY
Sorry, Lea, I just assumed...

As Lea processes this -- he's really got cancer.

LEA
It's okay, it's fine.

NALIN
Easy for you to say.

But Lea is clearly reeling slightly.

RICKEY
I'll give you two a second.

Rickey WALKS OUT. Lea turns to Nalin.

NALIN
I was diagnosed about a year and a half ago. I feel fine most of the time, actually, but... Not always.

LEA
I'm not really sure what to say.

NALIN
Nothing to say.

LEA
I'm sorry.

NALIN
For what? What'd you do?

LEA
I'm still sorry.

And he appreciates it. He looks at her.

NALIN
I'm sorry I was a lousy father.

Then, shakes his head.

NALIN (CONT'D)
It really is too damned bad about those diamonds. I liked the idea of doing something for you. Giving you and Aster a reason to remember me as, you know, not such a bad guy.

There's a question she can't shake.

LEA
Did Mom hide the diamonds for you?

NALIN
No. She never got involved with my stuff, you know that.

She knows he's lying.

Then:

LEA
You want to do something for me? Help us put away Tommy.

He looks at the BIG BOARD of JOC target names and photos.

Sees Tommy's name -- with a line drawn from it to the name/photo of VICTOR VESK -- who Nalin recognizes as the man he watched Tommy kill. And from Victor there's a line to someone higher up, SERGEI VESK, labeled Victor's brother.

Nalin takes this in, processing... Then turns back to Lea.

NALIN
Tommy’s a psychopath, Lea. My plan wasn’t to give him back the diamonds, it was to run.

LEA
We can protect you.

NALIN
Not my first rodeo, you know? Old crook informants are expendable.

LEA
Fathers not so much, though.
(then)
We can protect you.

He looks at the big board of names... Then back at her.

He would like to help her. And, as usual, he’s got an angle.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE. KITCHEN. NIGHT.

Lea sits at the kitchen table looking at a PHOTO of her at age six, with her MOTHER, and Nalin. All smiling, happy.

Aster WALKS IN. He looks upset.

ASTER
Hi.

LEA
What’s wrong?

ASTER
I can stay in school, but no more scholarship. They said I could finish out the semester, but...
(emotional)
I’m really sorry, mom.

She looks at him. And, surprisingly to Aster, instead of exploding, she gestures for him to come toward her, HUGS him.

EXT. JERRY’S DINER. MANHATTAN. NIGHT.

Nalin waits outside the diner, has a BAG with him. Tommy’s ESCALADE pulls up. Nalin gets in. They PULL AWAY.

INT. TOMMY'S ESCALADE. DRIVING.

Nalin settles in the back next to Tommy. Marco is in the front next to a DRIVER. The car begins to move.

TOMMY
Nalin, good to see you again.

NALIN
Howya doin', Tommy?

TOMMY
You tell me. Am I good? Are we good?

NALIN
Yeah, we're good.

Tommy grabs the bag. Looks inside. Nods. Okay.

TOMMY
Good. Okay, then.

Nalin PUTS ON HIS SEAT BELT. Tommy registers this.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Safety first, that's good.
(then)
You're a real of piece of work, you know that, Nalin? You're a real... What's the word? C'mon, what's the damn word? Ugh, I hate that. Don't you hate that?

NALIN
So where we going?

TOMMY
Must sting a little, huh? Handing these over after thinking about them in a cell for all those years?
(excited, remembering)
A conundrum! You're a conundrum! That's it. Is that a great word or what? It means, like, weirdo. You're a weirdo, Nalin!

Tommy grins, pleased with himself. He then reaches into his coat takes out his STUN GUN. Puts it on his lap. Smiles.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Where we going? It's funny you ask that. Well, maybe not *funny*, but--

As just then they are RAMMED FROM BEHIND BY AN SUV.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
What the--

Tommy and his crew TURN to look at who hit them -- and are SLAMMED INTO AGAIN BY ANOTHER SUV, into the front passenger side (Marco's side) of Tommy's car. The action of both cars, effectively STOPS TOMMY'S CAR (pinning it at an angle.)

THEN, SIMULTANEOUSLY, WITH BLAZING, MILITARY PRECISION, A THIRD SUV PULLS UP. THREE MEN WITH GUNS, FACES HIDDEN BY BANDANAS, GET OUT AND RUSH TO TOMMY'S CAR.

GUNMAN 1 opens Driver's door and SHOOTS him, dead.

GUNMAN 2 opens Marco's door and SHOOTS him, dead.

GUNMAN 3 opens Tommy's door and SHOOTS him, dead.

It's all amazingly fast.

Moving like a machine, Gunman 3 points his gun at Nalin's head. Registers him, and GRABS THE BAG OF DIAMONDS instead.

Then: MORE GUNSHOTS. Gunman 3 is SHOT IN THE ARM.

THE FIRST TWO CRASHING SUV'S SPEED AWAY.

Gunman 3, with the bag, now RACES BACK to the third SUV, and he and the remaining attackers SPEED AWAY.

We hear FOOTSTEPS RUNNING toward Tommy's car, toward Nalin. We're thinking it's one of Tommy's guy but...

IT'S LEA. Gun pointed at Nalin.

NALIN
Whoa, Lea, it's me!

She sees Tommy, Marco and Driver are dead. Puts down her gun.

LEA
Are you all right?

NALIN
Yeah... Yeah, I'm all right.
(beat)
How did you--

LEA
Did you think I was going to send you out with a million bucks of stolen diamonds and not follow you?
(then)
Who the hell were those guys?

NALIN
I don’t know.

LEA
They take the diamonds?

NALIN
What do you think?

She helps him out of Tommy’s car, sits him on the curb.

LEA
I thought you were dead.

NALIN
Me too.

And it freaked her out, more than she’d care to admit.

She gets on her PHONE and CALLS DISPATCH for ambulances, etc.

NALIN (CONT’D)
Lea?
(she looks over)
Thanks.

She nods. A small moment between then.

Then turns around to finish talking to the dispatch operator.

And as her back is turned Nalin reaches into one of his pockets and checks on a HANDFUL OF DIAMONDS.

Always an angle.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

INT. JOC OFFICES. COMMANDER RICKEY'S OFFICE. NEXT DAY.

Nalin, with Rickey and Lea, looks at the BIG BOARD with all the JOC TARGETS, including Tommy, and Victor and Sergie Vesk.

NALIN
So are you thinking it was one of the guys on your wall of fame here that was behind it?

RICKEY
Is that what you think?

NALIN
I don't know. Could be.

LEA
When I asked you if you had any idea who they were you said--

Nalin walks over to the board, points at Victor's photo.

NALIN
This guy, Victor... I saw him at Tommy's club a few nights ago. I'd gone over there to ask Tommy for more time to get the diamonds.

LEA
Why would he agree to that?

NALIN
Better than not getting 'em all.
(then)
Anyway, Tommy introduced me to that guy. You could tell there was something up with them. Bad blood.

Not telling them the whole story, not by a long shot.

RICKEY
Doubtful Victor could pull something like this off. But his brother...
Ever hear of Sergei Vesk?

Nalin looks at the board again, at Sergie's name/photo.

NALIN
Nope.

LEA
You know the deal was for you to help us get to Tommy. But now that he's dead--

NALIN
You're sending me prison?

RICKEY
Last night wasn't so bad for you, was it? Tommy dead. Diamonds gone.

NALIN
Are you kidding me? Lea saw what happened. It was crazy. I'd be dead too if she hadn't been there.

But he can see they are suspicious, rightly so.

Nalin looks at the board again -- all the names/photos

NALIN (CONT'D)
I know a few of these guys, actually... And I've heard of this Sergie. In fact, I think we had a mutual friend, more of an acquaintance, I guess.

LEA
Had?

NALIN
He's dead now.

He's talking about Victor.

NALIN (CONT'D)
(to Rickey)
You know she didn't tell me she was following me last night. Is that how you guys operate? Isn't that, what do you call it? Putting an undercover agent in danger?

LEA
Agent? This isn't the CIA, Dad.

NALIN
I'm just saying... If we're gonna work together we need to be, you know, honest, open.

Rickey look at Lea.

RICHARD
You think you can mange him?

NALIN
Manage?

She considers this. Then:

LEA
Yeah. I do.

RICKEY
Okay, Nalin, I'm willing to see how this goes with you. But it's about you getting us action-able information on JOC targets. If you can do that... Then maybe we can keep you out of prison?

LEA
For a little while at least.

RICKEY
Lea will be your contact. If you're seen with her at least there could be a plausible reason for it other than you being an informant.

NALIN
Yeah? Like what?

He smiles. Joking. Then he looks at Rickey.

NALIN (CONT'D)
So Lea's a part of the unit now? You give her one of those nice JOC jackets with her name on it?
(off her look)
Gotta have your own jacket, Lea.

RICKEY
She's in. She earned it.

NALIN
Good. And keep in mind... I'm only useful as long as everyone still thinks I'm, you know, me.

LEA
What's that supposed to mean?

RICKEY
Means he’s not gonna be a choirboy. We understand that, Nalin. That’s how these things tend to work.

NALIN
It’s like a license to steal.

LEA
Uh, no. It’s not.

NALIN
I’m just playing with you, honey.

LEA
Don’t call me honey.

NALIN
This is gonna be fun.

INT. RESTAURANT. DAY.

Lea and Adam finally having a meal. Lea eats, relaxed. Adam is transfixed, just heard the story about Lea shooting Tommy.

ADAM
So now what? Is he gonna, like, move in with you or something?

LEA
Uh, no. But he’ll be around some.

ADAM
God, and I thought my relationship with my mother was fraught.

LEA
I’m not too worried about it.

ADAM
No, I bet you’re not.
(then)
What about Aster?

LEA
What about him?

ADAM
You gonna let him be around Nalin?

LEA
That’s up to him.

INT. MARLTON SCHOOL. ASTER'S CLASSROOM. DAY.

A full classroom. Aster at his desk. He looks up as the DOOR OPENS and the HEADMASTER walks in, approaches the TEACHER, and points toward Aster. He's being summoned.

HEADMASTER BAELITZ
(to Aster)
And please bring your laptop.

Aster does as he's told. The class watches.

INT. MARLTON SCHOOL. HALLWAY OUTSIDE OF CLASS. MOMENTS LATER.

Aster WALKS OUT with the Headmaster and finds his jewelry-robbing partner, Richard, also holding his laptop.

HEADMASTER BAELITZ
There's a police detective here to see you both. Follow me.

RICHARD
(whispering to Aster)
You're screwed.

INT. MARLTON SCHOOL. HEADMASTER'S OFFICE. MOMENTS LATER.

Aster and Richard walk into the office with the Headmaster. There is a man there, his back turned toward them.

HEADMASTER BAELITZ
Detective, here they are...

The man turns around and we see -- <u>it's Nalin</u>.

NALIN
Thank you. If it's okay with you I'd like to speak them alone. Neither is in any trouble, yet, I just need some information.

HEADMASTER BAELITZ
I'll be right outside.

The Headmaster EXITS. Aster, of course, plays along...

NALIN
I need to know where each of you were two nights ago.

ASTER
At home, with my mother, and my grandfather.

RICHARD
Me too. Home.

NALIN
Alone? Doing what?

RICHARD
Nothing. On my computer.

NALIN
That computer?
(off Richard's nod)
I'll need to run a check on it down at the station.

RICHARD
(handing it to him)
Okay.

NALIN
Yours too.

Aster hands him his computer, trying hard not to smile.

NALIN (CONT'D)
I'll need both of your phones too.

Each kid hands over his phone. Nalin manages to get off a quick SECRET WINK to Aster, who is loving this.

NALIN (CONT'D)
And your wallets.

RICHARD
What? Why?

ASTER
Identification. Probably.

NALIN
Exactly. Smart.
(to Richard)
Or I can call your parents instead?

Richard hands over his WALLET with a sneer.

NALIN (CONT'D)
Are you planning on attending a four-year university, son?

RICHARD
Yeah.

NALIN
I wouldn't be so sure of that.

RICHARD
Really?

NALIN
Get back to class. Now.

Richard turns and goes, afraid college might no longer an option. Once he's gone Nalin turns back to Aster, who grins.

NALIN (CONT'D)
I'll toss his phone and computer on my way out. Done and done.
(then)
So we good, you and me?

Aster looks at him. Smiles.

ASTER
Yeah. We're good.

Then Nalin checks Richard's WALLET, pulls out $80. Gives half the cash to Aster, keeps half for himself. Not bad.

INT. ANTIQUES SHOP. BRIGHTON BEACH. NEXT DAY.

Nalin sits across from a large Russian man, SERGEI VESK [37] wearing a track suit. We recognize him from the JOC Board.

SERGEI
One of my men was shot, Nalin.

NALIN
I know, but I had no idea that--

SERGEI
By your daughter.

NALIN
She wasn't supposed to be there, Sergie. She's... Hard to control.

Sergie looks at him, sighs.

SERGEI
Yes, daughters. I have two.

NALIN
You also have the diamonds. And, even better, the man who tortured and killed your brother is dead.

SERGEI
Yes, but it was you who came to me about killing Tommy.

And now we realize that Nalin set it all up.

NALIN
So what can I do to make it up to the man who was wounded? I owe him, I know. I want to make it right.

SERGEI
No, not him.

Of course not.

NALIN
You then.

SERGEI
I want eyes and ears within the New York Police Department Joint Organized Crime Task Force.

This gives Nalin pause. What does Sergei know?

SERGEI (CONT'D)
Don't worry. It will stay between us. You can trust me about this.

Nalin says nothing. Sergie is not comforting.

SERGEI (CONT'D)
Because you and I understand something, Nalin.
(beat)
That family is...

INT. MORRIS HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY. LATER.

Lea in the kitchen.

SERGEI (O.S.)
Everything.

Aster walks in, looks around.

ASTER
What was the kitchen like before you redid it? When you were a kid?

LEA
Worse.

ASTER
Nalin said you once cut your foot on some tile and he took you to--

LEA
The emergency room and then we went to Jerry's and I ate two stacks of pancakes. Yes. It's true.

ASTER
He said you told him that you didn't remember.

Busted. Outside, a CAR HONKS. It's Nalin.

LEA
Home by eight or--

ASTER
You'll shoot us, we know.

He heads out. She watches him from the kitchen window.

LEA (V.O.)
Aster stayed at his school because, somehow, his tuition was paid. By an anonymous donor. I knew it had to be Nalin, one way or another. But the truth is I didn't feel so bad about it. Like I didn't feel so bad about having him stick around. For a little while at least. Was either a good decision? Hard to say. With family it can be hard to tell.

EXT. MORRIS HOUSE. STREET. SAME.

Nalin watches from his car as Aster comes to meet him.

NALIN (V.O.)
Ask anyone lucky enough to be a grandparent and they'll tell you it beats being a parent by a mile. It's a second chance -- sometimes a first chance -- at doing things better.
(MORE)

NALIN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
It's even another chance with your own kid. To make their lives a little easier.

Aster gets in the car. As Lea WALKS OUTSIDE to watch.

NALIN (V.O.)
But is it all suddenly gonna be happy picnics together? C'mon...

Nalin and Aster start to DRIVE AWAY.

EXT. MORRIS HOUSE. FRONT DOOR.

Lea watches them PULL AWAY. Then turns and looks down the street behind then, and NODS to a guy behind the wheel of an UNMARKED CAR -- a cop -- which starts to FOLLOW Nalin/Aster.

INT. NALIN'S CAR.

Nalin with Aster, driving.

NALIN
So where'd you say we were going?

ASTER
The movies. Where are we going?

NALIN
I thought we'd drive over to your friend Richard's place? Turns out that computer of his had all the security codes for his house on it.

Nalin looks in the REARVIEW. Sees the CAR following them.

NALIN (CONT'D)
Ever lose a tail before, Aster?

ASTER
No.

NALIN
Kid, I got a lot to teach you.

And as Nalin makes a QUICK TURN, we--

END OF PILOT