BLACK FRIDAY

by

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FADE IN:

Evening. Sunset. A highway winding toward a major city. Dots of light marking a string of cars. A smattering of dirty, melting snow on the ground. *Cold.*

A RED SEDAN.

Changes lanes. Slows down. Changes lanes *again*. Horns begin honking. *Beeping*. Holiday traffic.

7:14 PM. November 27th.

INT. SEDAN - THAT MOMENT

MATT MURPHY, 20's. At the wheel. Nice-looking kid with a slim but solid build. He taps his hand on the dashboard. Impatient. He's trying to remain calm. Not doing a good job at it.

MATT
Wonderful. Backed up for two miles. We should have packed a dinner.

KATIE
(O/S)
Matt. 'Tis the season to be jolly.

And we meet - KATIE ROGERS. Also 20's. Small town beautiful. Matt's fiancee. His girl. His *life*. She fiddles the ring on her hand. Spinning it around her knuckle. *No* diamond. Just the band.

MATT
I *am* jolly. Don't I look jolly?

KATIE
Santa Claus looks jolly. You don't look like Santa Claus.

Matt eyes the ring as she plays with it.

MATT
(Off ring)
Is the band too big?

She pulls it tighter on her finger.

KATIE
No. *It's perfect*. You got the list? We have to strategize.

MATT
Um...

He thinks.

KATIE
Tell me you have the list.

Matt shoves a hand into his jacket pocket, keeping his attention on the road. He pulls out a stained, wrinkled, crumpled Post-It. Glances at it. Reads it.

MATT
Ok. Portable humidor for your Dad. We can get that at *Brookstone*. Perfume for your Mom. Get that at *Sephora*. Some kind of weird...anti-cellulite cream for your Aunt. I *don't* know what to do about that--

KATIE
--We can get it at *Vitamin Shoppe*.

MATT
Awesome. And...'*Gears of War*' for your nephew?

KATIE
Electronics Boutique.
(beat)
And it's *Gears of War* 2.

MATT
Gears of War 2. What's the difference between *Gears of War* 1 and 2?

KATIE
About fifty bucks.

Matt shoves the Post-It back in his pocket. Eyes the road.

MATT
That's like 200 bills right there.

KATIE
Friday after Thanksgiving, baby. *Black Friday*. Everything's cheap. Everything's on sale. We can afford it.

MATT
Maybe we can just do it another night?

KATIE
Matt. We don't *have* to see my parents this weekend. I just thought--

MATT
I know.

KATIE
--We're *not* seeing them for Christmas so this is basically--

Matt shakes his head.

MATT
--No, no. *I want to.* I want to see your parents.

KATIE
You have to ignore my Dad.

MATT
I can't ignore him, I'm going to be legally *related* to him.

Matt turns the wheel, trying to edge into another lane. Katie is quiet for a moment.

MATT (CONT'D)
What are you thinking about?

KATIE
Us.

MATT
Us, how?

KATIE
You and me. Engaged. Getting married. Starting a life together. Eight kids. White picket fence. Milkman.

MATT
Do they even *have* milkmen anymore?

KATIE
They probably don't.

MATT
We'll make it.

KATIE
We'll make it to the mall, or we'll 'make it'.

He looks at her.

MATT
Both.

EXT. MONTCLAIR MALL - PARKING LOT - LATER

Madness. Too many cars. Not enough parking spaces. Matt drives aggressively and thrusts the sedan into a space before a larger SUV can monster-truck its way in. The SUV *screeeeeches* to a halt behind Matt's sedan. Angrily.

MATT
(O/S)
Think he noticed?

Matt and Katie scramble out of the car. Into the cold. Around them, the bustle of a busy mall parking lot. Shouting. Laughing. *Cursing.*

KATIE
Can't believe we got a space.

Christmas music lilts from outdoor speakers. '*Silver Bells*'.

They approach -

MONTCLAIR MALL

A sprawling New Jersey mega-mall. Illuminated in blue and white lettering.

A LARGE MAN

Steps out from behind his idling SUV. Thick neck. Looks like a FOOTBALL HERO. Scopes Matt.

FOOTBALL HERO
Hey, asshole!

He's talking to Matt. Matt doesn't know.

FOOTBALL HERO (CONT'D)
You, *asshole*, in the blue jacket!!

Matt turns around to face Football Hero who is obviously pissed. Football Hero stalks toward him. Imposing.

MATT
Wait, me?

Matt - deliberately - looks at his own *blue* jacket. Touches it. Looks up.

FOOTBALL HERO
You cut me off.

Matt clears his throat. Football Hero is at least *twice* the size of Matt. He gets closer. Katie gets nervous. *This is escalating.*

MATT
It's the holiday season, why don't you lighten up? Sing a carol or something? Eat a candy cane.

FOOTBALL HERO
You cut me and my wife off. Stole my spot.

Football Hero's got him by a few inches, but Matt doesn't seem to care.

FOOTBALL HERO (CONT'D)
What are you gonna do about it?

MATT
What do you *want* me to do about it?

A HONKING from behind Football Hero alerts him to his wife's displeasure.

FOOTBALL HERO'S WIFE
(O/S)
Charlie! Get your ass back here, I am *not* missing my sale at Nordstrom's!

FOOTBALL HERO
(off Matt, pointing)
You got *lucky.*

Football Hero backs off. Walks away. Matt is left standing in the lot next to Katie. She takes his hand.

KATIE
You were good.

He looks at her.

MATT
I can't get into any trouble, Katie.

KATIE
Next time, just let *me* kick his ass.

INT. MONTCLAIR MALL - A MOMENT LATER

Matt and Katie enter onto the ground floor through a pair of glass, electronic sliding doors. Into -

THE MAIN CONCOURSE

Huge inside as it is outside. Split into three levels, like a layer cake. The mall spans the length of *two* football fields. Each level is equipped with a matching glass elevator and escalator. A concourse walkway circles every floor. The three tiled concourses are wide, but not *too* wide.

Heavy foot traffic chokes most of the walkways.

An elaborate FOUNTAIN is the centerpiece of the first floor.

Matt and Katie are elbowed by passing shoppers.

KATIE
We gotta keep moving. We stop, we die. Like a shark, c'mon.

She shoves him forward. Security cameras buzz and whirr on every corner...

SECURITY CAMERA POV:

The camera feed is clear, and detailed - but not in color. Time stamps dot the bottom of the screen. The view is being monitored by SECURITY BOARD OPERATIVES - commenting on the action being transmitted to them...

- Matt and Katie entering the mall on the first level. Looking around. Overwhelmed.

SEC BOARD OP
(O/S)
That's right kids, *it's a mall*.

- Skater kids hanging out by the immaculate fountain.

SEC BOARD OP (CONT'D)
(O/S)
Someone get The Little Rascals away from the fountain before they piss in it.

- A shoplifter, in a Barnes & Noble, shoving a book into his jacket. A moment later: *grabbed by security guards*.

SEC BOARD OP (CONT'D)
(O/S)
Oh! It's *sooo* pretty.

- A young, attractive woman adjusting her thong inside an Express.

SEC BOARD OP (CONT'D)
(O/S)
We're always watching baby. *Always*.

INT. MONTCLAIR MALL - THAT MOMENT

The rest of the SECURITY GUARDS mill around the walkways. Occasionally disappearing into the Employees Only corridors located every few hundred yards. There only seems to be a few guards on the actual floor itself. Most of them are positioned around -

A DIAMOND STORE

Labeled '**Cirque**'.

And then there's the crowd...Hundreds. Thousands. Men, women, children. Impossible to count. It's thick. Moving through this place is like moving through a *night*club. It may be freezing outside, but it's *hot* in here. Kids cry. Adults argue. Cash registers ring and bling.

Matt is overwhelmed. Katie pulls him through. Matt blithely follows, but spots:

A KIOSK MAP. One of those 'You Are Here' layouts.

He darts to it. Katie fumes.

KATIE
Oh, come on *Matt* - are you serious? Maps are for tourists and Indiana Jones...

MATT
I'm in good company.

He scans the map. Taking it in:

First Level: Cirque Diamonds, Starbucks, Radio Shack, Coffee Bean, Express, Gap, Sports Authority, Macy's, Hollister, Foot locker, Sephora, Victoria's Secret.

Second Level: Toys R' Us, Hot Topic, Brookstone, Suncoast, Aldo, Gucci, Coach, Nordstrom's, Food Court, Abercrombie, Wireless World.

Third Level: Best Buy, Old Navy, Archeology, Movie Theater, H&M, American Eagle, The Body Shop, Planet Punk, Adventure Inc.

MATT (CONT'D)
So, where first?

INT. 'CIRQUE' - DIAMOND STORE - MOMENTS LATER

Tight security. Matt and Katie have to be buzzed in. They pass through the bullet-proof glass into -

AN ELABORATE RUNWAY OF GLASS CASES FULL OF EXPENSIVE DIAMONDS.

We can't afford any of them. Neither can Matt or Katie.

KATIE
Can't hurt to look, right?

She bounces off, checking the cases. Matt looks around.

POV - A DOZEN SECURITY CAMERAS: Aimed down at him.

Katie gazes at an off-blue diamond in a center case. Price tag: *10,000*. It's the cheapest one.

A SALESWOMAN

Approaches Matt and Katie from behind the counter. Name-tag reads: CLAIRE. Perky. Heavily made-up.

CLAIRE
Searching for something special?

KATIE
We're engaged.

CLAIRE
Oh, wow - what kind of diamond do you have?!

Katie shows Claire the bare, brass ring.

KATIE
The invisible kind.

Matt interjects.

MATT
In a parallel universe, it'd be a really nice rock.

Claire unlocks the glass case, with two separate keys. She removes the Ocean Soul from its velvet bedding. *Ooohs and Aaahs.*

Matt looks away. He glances around.

A VAULT DOOR

Is locked off by a massive pneumatic hinge. He sees A PAIR OF GUARDS. Older men. Strutting around the premises. Eyeing folks. Eyeing *Matt*. Vigilant.

KATIE
Matt?

He's not paying attention.

KATIE (CONT'D)
Matt!

Katie holds the 'Ocean Soul' against her ring finger.

KATIE (CONT'D)
You see this? Oh - wow. Just--

MATT
--Wow?

KATIE
You said it.

EXT. 'CIRQUE' - MINUTES LATER

Matt and Katie exit. Empty handed.

KATIE
What was that back there?

MATT
Guards. Watching me. Like they *knew.*

KATIE
All they *know* is that you're a great guy taking his fiancee to drool over diamonds.

MATT
I didn't feel that way.

Katie spins around. Stops him.

KATIE
I thought we got *past* this.

MATT
I keep thinking--
(beat)
What your Dad said last week. He's right. I got a criminal record. I'm never gonna get a good job.

KATIE
My Dad's an *asshole*. He's a grade-A *asshole*. You give *me* everything I need. You keep the heat on. And that's all that matters. Keeping the heat on.

MATT
That reminds me, I need to pay the electric bill.

She ignores. Katie spots a promotional -

2009 MUSTANG BULLITT

A full-fledged car. Muscle. On the mall floor. Red. Shiny. Some sort of 'toss your phone number in the window and get the car' nonsense.

She changes the subject.

KATIE
Someone's gotta win at some point, right?

She grins. Shoots him a look. She grabs an entry form.

KATIE (CONT'D)
Might as well be you!

MATT
I'm not--

KATIE
--Do it!

Matt relents. He leans down, signs up at the sheet. Tosses the slip of paper into the car window.

MATT
No one wins those things.

KATIE
You gotta ‘Secret’ it!

INT.’BROOKSTONE’ - SECOND CONCOURSE LEVEL - LATER

A hip, post-modern shop full of useless electronic equipment. Matt and Katie navigate through the throngs of people and attempt to browse.

KATIE
Ok, keep an eye out for that humidor. No browsing!

Matt walks over to a station where he picks up a small, black box that looks like a small state-of-the-art key-chain. He pokes around with it. For some reason, he sniffs it.

WADE
(O/S)
That’s a stun gun. Not a key-chain. *Don’t* sniff that.

Matt turns around to see WADE JEFFERS, an employee of Brookstone. We know his name is Wade, because it says so on his name-tag. African-American. Skinny, wiry, and full of sales-spunk.

WADE (CONT'D)
Why *would* you sniff that, anyway?

MATT
I don’t know. I just--

WADE
--What are you looking to buy today?

MATT
Something for my future father-in-law.

Wade grabs Matt by the shoulder and drags him over to a -

MASSIVE SOUND SYSTEM.

WADE
23 quads per bass-line. Speakers are auto-hydrate multi-arc woofers that can be amped up to a full 100 second blowback. You can’t over-modulate this baby. The cymbal alone will break your windows.

MATT
You trying to sell me?

WADE
I’m trying to sell *me*.

MATT
It's really nice. But I can't afford this.

WADE
It's the plastic age, baby, no one needs to afford anything. *You like massage chairs*? I got a massage chair for you, my friend. Melt your spine.

MATT
My girl kinda does that.

Wade glances over Matt's shoulder. Spots Katie. She's waving.

WADE
That your girl?

MATT
That's my girl.

WADE
(off Katie)
Damnnn.

Matt shoots Wade a look. 'Watch it'.

WADE (CONT'D)
You're living above your pay-grade, partner.

MATT
She's not like that.

WADE
Cool, cool. If that's the case, you got all you want for Christmas, right?

Matt almost laughs.

MATT
Thanks.

Katie sprints over.

KATIE
Matt, we're outta luck! They're sold out. We gotta go.

She meets Wade.

KATIE (CONT'D)
Hi!

WADE
(Off Katie)
You like massage chairs?

KATIE
Excuse me?

MATT
Happy Holidays.

They walk away. Wade calls out.

WADE
My name's *Wade*. Ask for me by name!

INT. MALL - SECOND CONCOURSE LEVEL - LATER

Matt and Katie weave through the crowd.

KATIE
Ok, we gotta hit Electronics Boutique, and then Sephora.

MATT
We could split up. Divide and conquer.

KATIE
We're going to Vicky's Secret first. They're having a sale.

MATT
I thought we were getting presents for your *family*?

KATIE
We are! I'm related to *me*.

A voice from behind.

LESLEY
(O/S)
Matt? Matt Murphy?

Matt turns around to see -

<u>LESLEY</u>.

She's hot. Tight body. In a way, she's prettier than Katie. But not by much. She's just a little more *colorful*. She's got a noticeable tattoo on her neck: A PAIR OF FLAMING DICE.

So, you *know* she's classy. Matt goes white.

MATT
Oh, *hey*.

She sprints up to him and kisses him quick on the lips. Whoa. Katie's eyes go wide.

LESLEY
<u>What</u> <u>is</u> <u>happening</u>?!! Its been -

MATT
A year.

An awkward moment. Matt, Katie, and Lesley have to move out of the path of human traffic, toward one of the stairway platforms.

LESLEY
So - what have you been up to?

MATT
Same ol'. Looking for a job.

LESLEY
A job for Matt Murphy? Let me think? There was a *bunch* of stuff that I remember you were good at!

Katie steps forward. Lesley sees her. Checks herself.

LESLEY (CONT'D)
Oh. Are you single?

MATT
I'm--

KATIE
I'm his *fiancee*. Katie.

Lesley blinks. Matt blinks. Holy shit, did he just forget to *introduce* his fiancee to her? <u>He did</u>.

MATT
This is Katie!

Katie limply shakes Lesley's hand.

KATIE
Charmed.

LESLEY
Katie! That's so awesome! Fiancee! Our little boy's all grown up.
(beat)
O.M.G. Matt - it was amazing to see you. You look great. Really, really great.

Katie's not letting this pass.

KATIE
What do you do, *Lesley*?

LESLEY
I work at SuperCuts. Over in Rochelle Park.

An awkward beat.

LESLEY (CONT'D)
I'd like to be an actress.

KATIE
Naturally.

Lesley gets it.

LESLEY
You look good, Matt. Nice to meet you too, Casey.

KATIE
Katie.

She lingers on Matt and struts past him, slaps his ass. Matt jumps. He smiles. Then, checks it.

KATIE (CONT'D)
Hm.

Matt's a deadman. He tries to recover. Katie eyeballs him.

MATT
That - was Lesley. Lesley Culp. You remember Lesley Culp? I told you about her, right? Right? Didn't I tell you about her?

Katie disappears into the crowd.

MATT (CONT'D)
Katie?! Come on!

He follows her.

INT. 'VICTORIA'S SECRET' - FIRST CONCOURSE LEVEL - LATER

Katie is too fast. She walks into VICTORIA'S SECRET and Matt barely catches up to her. Running after her, basically.

7:50 PM

KATIE
You didn't even introduce me to that...*that*...girl!

MATT
I just - blanked. I swear. I wasn't expecting to see her. I meant to say something, but, I just--

KATIE
--Why'd you date *her*? What'd you do, meet her on a reality show?

MATT
I was two months out of the Fort. Two months clean. It was just some girl.

KATIE
I just don't like secrets.

MATT
It wasn't a secret until just *now*!

Katie is silent for a moment. She presses her hand against his chest. She playfully shoves him away.

MATT (CONT'D)
Don't be like that.

KATIE
Oh, I'm like that. No hot underwear for you.

She darts away.

MATT
That's just *un*fair.

She disappears between a pair of clothing racks, melting into the underwear section. She wags her finger at Matt. 'Don't follow me'. He hangs back. Suddenly solo, he feels awkward standing around. Other girls are looking at him. He fades away, heading toward the front of the store...

EXT. 'VICTORIA'S SECRET' - CONTINUOUS

Matt hangs on the first level. Notices the other husbands, boyfriends, men - waiting for their girls, just like Matt. He nods at them. A mutual understanding. Shopping widows.

He leans against the wall. Mildly bored. Watches the passing crowd. Until -

A TATTOOED MAN

Maybe 18, 19. Hastily walks past a strolling woman. Tattooed Man grabs her purse. Snatches it. Pushes the woman to the ground. Takes off running. She shouts. Matt sprints from the wall. Dashes over to her.

WOMAN SHOPPER
He's got my purse!

MATT'S POV: The Tattooed Man, making a bee-line for the escalator. Matt breaks for him.

MATT
HEY! Stop!

Matt's fast. Weaving between shoppers, couples, parents. He's quick. Tattooed Man wasn't expecting this. Jumps for the escalator. Looks behind him -

Big mistake.

Matt TACKLES the Tattooed Man from behind. Too much forward momentum.

Matt and Tattooed Man roll down the length of the moving escalator. Riders hang onto the sides. Trying to avoid the brawl. Screams.

Landing on the floor. BOOMP! A wrestling match.

Matt rips the purse out of Tattooed Man's hands.

MATT (CONT'D)
Don't move...

Tattooed Man doesn't listen. He fires a knee into Matt's sternum - ouch - and bucks up off the floor, racing away.

MATT (CONT'D)
HEY! HEY!! SOMEONE STOP THAT GUY!

MATT

Is suddenly tackled by A PAIR OF SECURITY GUARDS. A large knee goes right to his back, pinning Matt to the floor.

MATT (CONT'D)
It's not me! It's not me! It's--

THUNK! Matt's head is *bounced* against the ground.

EXT. 'VICTORIA'S SECRET' - LATER

Matt is escorted back to the front of the lingerie store by a burly security guard, name-tag reading WILKS. He's rope-necked. Solid. 40's. Older, but built like Mickey Rourke.

Matt holds a pair of food court napkins to the cut above his head. Wilks is filling out a report on a clipboard.

WILKS
(off-hand)
No hard feelings, right?

Wilks hands the clipboard to Matt. Matt doesn't respond. Takes the pen. Signs off.

WILKS (CONT'D)
Lincoln Wilks. Head of floor security.

Wilks holds out his hand. Matt shakes it. Weakly. Matt hands the clipboard back to Wilks.

WILKS (CONT'D)
Sorry about that bullshit back there. How's your head?

MATT
Bleeding.

WILKS
Goddamn punks, right?

MATT
Shouldn't you have more guys on patrol?

WILKS
We have enough.

Matt dabs his forehead.

WILKS (CONT'D)
You want something for that cut?

MATT
No. I gotta catch up with my girl. I'm good.

Wilks nods.

WILKS
Have a fantastic shopping experience at Montclair Mall, sir. And thank you again for your cooperation in this matter.

MATT
Anytime.

Wilks strolls off. Matt heads back into -

VICTORIA'S SECRET

He spots a brunette from the back. Katie? Matt approaches her. Sidles up close. Whispers in her ear...

MATT (CONT'D)
You're not gonna *believe* what just happened...

It's not Katie.

The Brunette turns around. Similar shirt. Similar look. *Not* Katie. She's mildly freaked out.

BRUNETTE
Excuse me?

MATT
I'm sorry. I thought -

Slinking away, he walks toward the nightgowns. He goes over to the check-out counter. She's not in line. Frustrated, he strides back outside.

Where is she?

7:58 PM

EXT. MALL - FIRST CONCOURSE LEVEL - CONTINUOUS

Benches. Palm trees. A fountain. Hundreds of bustling shoppers. Katie's not around. He stays there for a moment. Unsure of where to go. He pulls out his cell-phone. Clicks over to 'Kat's Cell' and dials the number. It rings. It rings. It rings.

'*Hey this is Kat, please leave a message.*'

MATT
(into phone)
Katie, it's Matt. Where are you? I totally lost you in the store. I'm standing in front of Victoria's Secret.

He hangs up. Texts her.

WHERE R U?

He sits down on one of the benches. Waits. A MOTHER and KID sit down next to him. The kid starts screaming. Crying. Matt gets up, waits a little farther away.

No text back.

He paces. Goes back inside the lingerie store...

AT THE VICTORIA'S SECRET CHECK-OUT COUNTER

He approaches the busy LINGERIE GIRL behind the register.

MATT (CONT'D)
Did a brunette girl with a pink shirt check out here?

LINGERIE GIRL
How long ago?

MATT
I don't know - ten minutes.

LINGERIE GIRL
Not here. Are you going to *buy* something?

EXT. MALL - FIRST CONCOURSE LEVEL - CONTINUOUS

Matt's back outside. Waiting. Pacing. He's not sure if he should leave the storefront. He pulls out the cell. Dials again.

It rings. It rings. It rings.

'*Hey, this is Kat, please leave a message.*'

MATT
(into phone)
Hey, Katie, where are you?

He hangs up. He's not sure what he should do. Should he wait? Should he go look for her? Matt walks into -

'SEPHORA'

She's not in here.

He journeys into -

'THE VITAMIN SHOPPE'

Nothing. Into -

'ELECTRONICS BOUTIQUE'

Still missing.

He walks around the entire perimeter. He reads faces. Cranes his neck over the walking crowds of people.

It's as if she just vanished into thin air.

'*Hey, this is Kat, please leave a message.*'

MATT (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Katie. Just pick up. Pick. Up.

He notices another KIOSK MAP next to him. Goes over to it. Scans his finger down toward -

MALL SECURITY.

INT. SECURITY OFFICES - LATER

This is the brain of the mall. This is the security hub. It's surprisingly large - almost the size of a air traffic control room.

A WALL OF VIDEO MONITORS - screens displaying every single aspect of the interior of Montclair Mall flicker and move as their respective cameras track the shoppers, and the stores. We're in the Pentagon. Shop-lifters beware. This place is locked down tight.

A collection of BOARD OPS, and a trio of uniformed guards congregate. Matt enters. He waves one of the guards over. The guard, MARSHALL, comes over.

MATT
I want to report a...missing person.

Marshall exhales. Matt is led over to -

JAMES DECKER, Head of Mall Security. That's what his name-tag reads. He's got a face like a baseball glove and a gut that may or may not be the result of a serious six-pack diet. He's not that old, but he's got *those* lines.

Decker turns around.

MATT (CONT'D)
I'm trying to find someone.

DECKER
This look like a dating service to you?

MATT
My fiancee disappeared.

Decker folds his arms.

DECKER
Look, kid, this is the day after Thanksgiving. I got shoplifters, missing kids, vandals, and fist-fights over PlayStations to deal with. I got foot traffic topping a million walking through every store, kiosk, and bathroom. I got *50* different video monitors that I have to observe. I got an understaffed team of rent-a-cops that wouldn't know a security risk if it stole their colon out of their *ass*. I'm stretched thin. I have two ulcers. And the coffee here *sucks*.

MATT
I understand. But real quick - maybe I can have a look at one of your cameras from the store?

DECKER
I can't do that. Why don't you go check the parking lot, maybe she took off without you.

MATT
I have the keys.

He digs them out of his pocket, holds them up for Decker to see.

DECKER
So - she's still in the mall?

MATT
Please.

Decker regards him.

DECKER
Where'd you last see her?

MATT
Victoria's Secret.

AT THE VIDEO MONITORS

Decker flips a few switches and brings up the playback for VICTORIA'S SECRET. It's in black and white, and the resolution is kinda fuzzy.

DECKER
Alright, this is the playback from that hour. It's banked in a digital library that's backed-up on a central computer within the mall mainframe system.

ON THE SCREEN we see the typical shoppers. Women poking through bras and panties. Nothing interesting. Then, we see MATT.

MATT
That's *me*. She's right next to me.

Behind him is KATIE. Matt moves away from her. He goes into a different section of the store. Katie is alone. She moves behind a few racks - she's doing nothing out of the ordinary. She's looking through bras.

DECKER
Where'd *you* go?

MATT
Saw this purse-snatcher...

ON THE SCREEN, the crowd moves outside the store. Commotion. Matt and the purse-snatcher. The view changes to the outside of the store.

MATT (CONT'D)
Why'd the angle change?

DECKER
Activity on the concourse. Probably your little UFC match with the purse-punk. Cameras *automatically* calibrate. They move off body language, motion. They actually recognize *faces*.

MATT
Faces?

DECKER
Yup. Welcome to the post 9-11 shopping experience. Camera banks the same face within a three minute timebox, and it sends an alert to us.

MATT
Why?

DECKER
Generally means someone is casing a joint. Hanging out too long. Scoping.

Katie moves out of the view of the first security camera.

MATT
She's out of view.

Decker presses some buttons. Brings up another angle.

DECKER
Hold on - not yet.

Katie's on screen again. Closer to the exit. She's checking her watch.

MATT
She's *waiting* for me. How long ago is this?

DECKER
10. 15 minutes ago.

On the screen, something weird happens. Matt sees it first on the monitor:

A TALL FIGURE. Male? Dark shirt. Obscured. Face hidden. As if the person knows exactly *how* far to stand away from the cameras. The guy is talking to Katie.

DECKER (CONT'D)
Who's that?

MATT
I don't know.

She leaves with him. Out of frame.

MATT (CONT'D)
Can you follow her?

Decker flicks a switch. The camera switches to A VIEW OF THE FIRST LEVEL CONCOURSE. Millions of people. Katie is swept up in the crowd. No sign of her. No sign of the guy.

MATT (CONT'D)
She's gone.

DECKER
You two have a fight?

MATT
No. *Yes*, but-

Decker cocks an eye at Matt.

DECKER
Mall closes at 10. I'm sure she'll turn up before then. You got someone else you can call?

8:14 PM

INT. MALL - FIRST CONCOURSE LEVEL - LATER

Closer to where Matt and Katie entered the mall initially. At the entryway. Matt's on his cell-phone. Unpleasant conversation.

Katie's Dad.

MATT
(into phone)
...Sir, I *just* want to know if she may have called you or Mrs. Rogers.
(Listening)
No, it's just that it's very busy here and maybe she had called to tell you we would be late or--
(listening)
Really? Well if that's *so* true why does Katie see *you* once a year, but she *lives* with me?

He hangs up. He almost throws the phone against the wall of a Sbarro. Steams. He checks the service bars on his cell. One bar. *Weak*. He steps outside the doors, to the south entrance.

EXT. PARKING LOT - LATER

Outside. Cold night air. People going home. People with families. Normal, everyday life goes on.

MATT's PHONE rings. Finally. The number reads KAT'S CELL. He snaps it up immediately.

MATT
KATIE?!

The voice on the end is <u>not</u> Katie. It's a male voice. It's deep. Intimidating. Raspy. It could be modulated. Digitized.

VOICE
(O/S)
You're going to call me *<u>Ace</u>***. And you're going to do everything I say, whether you like it or not. 'Ace' is God. God is 'Ace'.**

<u>ACE will always be O/S, unless otherwise noted</u>.

MATT
Where's Katie?!

ACE
You panic and Katie's dead. You yell and Katie's dead. You make a move and Katie's dead. You talk on the phone like you're talking to an old college buddy and you keep your cool. Does *this* make sense to you, Matt?

Matt looks around. He paces toward a corner, outside of the mall and seems to hide there. He can't speak. He can barely respond.

ACE (CONT'D)
We have Katie. She's alive. She's not hurt. She will *remain* that way as long as you do everything we say, does this make sense to you?

Matt sputters.

MATT
...Let me speak to her.

ACE
That's a fair request, Matt.

There's a pause.

KATIE
(O/S)
Matt...

MATT
KATIE!

KATIE
(O/S)
Matt, they're serious. I'm ok. They haven't hurt me. Matt, I didn't--

She's cut off. Ace is back on the line.

ACE
You happy, Matt? She's ok.

MATT
Jesus Christ, please don't do this...please...let her--

ACE
Stay calm. No scenes.

MATT
You hurt her--

Ace is impatient.

ACE
Yeah, yeah, yeah. *You'll kill me if harm one little hair on her cute little head*. I get it.

MATT
I will fucking *destroy* you if you--

ACE
--Watch the *language*, Matthew! We're all civilized people here!

MATT
What do you want?!

ACE
This isn't a blind date. *I'm doing the talking*.
(beat)
You're standing by the south parking lot, adjacent to the Home Depot across the street.

Matt spins around again. They can see him. Where?

MATT
You can see me.

ACE
Yes, I can see you Matt. I can always see you. So - no funny shit. If you do something that I don't like, then you will never see your fiancee again. I don't want you to do something that I don't like.

MATT
Don't. Hurt. Her.

Ace whistles.

ACE
Funny thing about kidnapping, Matt, is that it can *quickly* turn into a brutal rape and murder. Isn't that sad? Happens all the time. See it in the papers. On the TV. Tragedy really.
(beat)
It's your decision to make. Do you want this to *remain* a kidnapping, Matt?

MATT
I *will* kill you, I will--

Ace gets angry.

ACE
Let's get something straight, *you* do not threaten *me*!

Matt gets his voice down low. He stalks into the parking lot, getting away from the crowds. Gritting his teeth. Clenching his jaw. Silent, but *pissed*.

ACE (CONT'D)
DO YOU WANT THIS TO *REMAIN* A KIDNAPPING, MATT?!

MATT
Yes.

ACE
I want you to go to the cell phone store. 'Wireless World'. It's on the second concourse. In the mall. There's a gift from your lovely girlfriend behind the counter. Early Christmas present. For being such a loving, devoted boyfriend.
(beat)
You have four minutes.

MATT
Wait--

ACE
Happy shopping!

8:28 PM

INT. A DARKENED ROOM - THAT MOMENT

Can't quite tell where we are. Bare walls. Bare everything.

KATIE

On the floor. Bound. Gagged. Blindfolded. No chair. She's curled up in a corner.

A HEAVY DOOR opens. CR-EAK. Brightness floods in for a moment. It shuts. Brightness ends. Katie recoils. A FIGURE. Enters. Tall. Ski-masked with sunglasses on. Completely covered. The Figure crouches over her. Leans in close. Studying her. Gloved hands rudely pull Katie's gag out of her mouth.

KATIE
Please don't kill me.

Ski-Mask puts a finger to its lips.

KATIE (CONT'D)
My family - we have money. We can pay you. We can--

Ski-Mask just shakes its head.

KATIE (CONT'D)
--I never did anything to you.

INT. 'WIRELESS WORLD' - SECOND CONCOURSE LEVEL - LATER

8:32 PM

Matt, considerably shaken, hesitantly walks into the store. He has Katie's cell-phone clutched in his left hand. Closed. He angles his way past the crowds and gets to the front of the service counter. A man named 'CLAUDE' greets him.

CLAUDE
What can I do for you today, sir?

Matt chokes out his words.

MATT
Someone...left something for me here. My name's Matt Murphy.

CLAUDE
Of course.

Claude reaches under the counter, produces a tiny cell-phone. Matt pulls out his credit card.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)
No, no. Its already been *paid* for.

Matt grabs Claude's arm.

MATT
Who paid?

Claude steps back.

MATT (CONT'D)
Who paid?!

CLAUDE
She did, sir. With her Amex. She and her *brother*.

She was there. She was there and Matt *just* missed her.

MATT
(quickly)
She doesn't have a brother.

CLAUDE
Excuse me?

Matt checks himself. Swallows.

MATT
Nothing. Forget it.

Claude slides a Bluetooth earpiece across the counter.

CLAUDE
This was included. Have a nice--

Matt grabs the stuff and leaves.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)
--Day.

EXT. 'WIRELESS WORLD' - SECOND LEVEL - A MOMENT LATER

Matt pauses by the railing, looking out onto the first level concourse below. He dials a number in the phone, gets Ace immediately.

ACE
Ditch your old phone. Toss it in the garbage. You don't need it anymore.

Matt pulls out his old cell and - without even thinking - lobs it into the trash can next to him. Immediately the new cell phone rings. Matt picks it up.

'**ACE**' flashes in the read-out.

ACE (CONT'D)
Cute, huh? Programmed my name in already. Ok, now this is *our* phone. Like a hot-line. It's the bat-phone. Put the earpiece in your ear, put the phone in your left pants pocket. It rings, you answer. You dial me, I answer. Simple. The number's been cloned, so don't think you can trace it.

Matt slips the Bluetooth into his ear. He sheathes the tiny cell phone into his left pants pocket.

MATT
Now what?

ACE
Head to the food court. Sit down at the third table from the right, close to the nasty Thai chicken place. Look calm. Keep calm. Stay calm. You signal anyone. We'll see.

MATT
I'm doing whatever you want.

ACE
That's the spirit. Christmas spirit, right?

Matt moves across the food court. He spots the table in question.

MATT
Ok, got it.

Matt passes his hand underneath the table. Sure enough. A baseball-card-sized taped package. Removes it. Wrapped in dull paper and duct tape.

MATT (CONT'D)
Is this a bomb?

ACE
Do I sound like a *terrorist*, Matt? God is good. Allah is the light. *Fuuuuuck* that. You know how much money is in terrorism? <u>None</u>. It's bullshit. I'm not blowing myself up. I'm not blowing anyone else up. It ain't *lucrative*.

MATT
That what you want? <u>Money</u>? You're just a thief?

ACE
Oh, that's not nice. I'm more like the Ghost of Christmas Present. You know the one? With the hood? All scary. Teaches Scrooge a lesson.

MATT
That's <u>death</u>. Ghost of Christmas Present is Death.

ACE
That's right, Matt. I'm death. Take the package. Put it in your coat.

He slips it into his jacket.

MATT
How do I know me and Katie aren't *dead* when this is over?

ACE
You *don't*.

Matt scans the crowd around him. Searching for something. He sees hundreds of men. All on cell phones. Could one of these guys be Ace?

ACE (CONT'D)
Stop trying to look for me, Matt.

A MAN ON A CELL PHONE, in a black leather jacket walks past. Leather Jacket Man stares at Matt.

Matt almost says something.

LEATHER JACKET MAN
See something you like?

Different voice. Not Ace.

MATT
Sorry.

LEATHER JACKET MAN
Dick.

ACE
That's not me either.

Matt looks up to see -

A SECURITY CAMERA, it automatically tracks across the concourse. There's a dozen more like it located on the floor. He looks back down. Quickly.

MATT
What's next?

ACE
You need to go to the southeast wing. You're going to need to use the service elevator.
(beat)
Don't even *think* about hitting up the guards. You avoid them like the plague.

Matt blends into the crowd of shopping. Scanning faces, walking against the flow of traffic. He doesn't care.

INT. SOUTHEAST WING - FIRST CONCOURSE LEVEL - LATER

Matt passes by a pair of security guards. They're talking. Drinking coffee. Laughing. One of the name-tags read: 'VANCE'. The other is Marshall, who we've already met. Matt nods at them. Wishing he could say something. He rounds a corner, into a hallway marked 'SERVICE'. Not much here. Bathrooms. Water-fountains. At the end of the hall:

SERVICE ELEVATOR. MARKED: 'PERSONNEL ONLY'. Keypad.

Matt punches the button. Elevator opens.

ACE (CONT'D)
Hit '**B**'.

He hits 'B'. Doors begin to close.

INT. ELEVATOR - THAT MOMENT

Descending. Matt nervously shifts side to side.

MATT
Is she safe?

ACE
She's safe. She says you two are getting married. That's sweet. Tell me, can she wear white?

He's trying to get a reaction. Matt resists the urge to rip the earpiece out of his ear and smash it.

ACE (CONT'D)
Is Katie aware of who you are, Matt?

MATT
How do you know me? How do you know *us*?

ACE
There's those blind date questions again.

The elevator hits the bottom. Doors open. Revealing -

MAINTENANCE LEVEL.

The basement. Pipes. Wires. Power grids. A maze of narrow hallways and darkened corridors. Matt passes by ONE SECURITY CAMERA. Tracing him.

ACE (CONT'D)
A few feet ahead. Make a right. You're going to find a web of coaxial cables.

Matt strides forward.

AT THE CABLES

Matt pauses. Traces his hand over the covered wires.

MATT
I think this is it.

ACE
What color?

MATT
Purple.

ACE
Bingo. Take out the package. Open it.

He slips the taped package out of his jacket. Tears it. Inside - A SMALL ELECTRONIC DEVICE. Like a garage door remote. A small alligator clip attached to it. And a pair of scissors.

ACE (CONT'D)
Strip the wire. Attach the bypass to the exposed area.

MATT
They're gonna see me on the cameras.

ACE
Only camera is in the front. You're in dead space. Just a guy who got lost.
(beat)
Now, strip the wire good. The connection has to stay.

Matt drags the scissors down the length of the wire. Cuts the sheath. He takes the device, clips it to the naked wire. It beeps. Once.

MATT
Done.

ACE
Good. Now--

VANCE
(O/S)
HEY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING DOWN HERE?!

Matt spins around to see Vance, the security guard. Stalking toward him.

MATT
I got company.

ACE
Get rid of him.

MATT
What?!

ACE
You want to see Katie again? Get rid of him!!

VANCE
(stomping toward Matt)
This is a restricted area!

Matt holds up his hands.

MATT
Hey. I just came down here because I thought - my sister's kid. He got away from me.

VANCE
You tell *security* about missing kids.

MATT
I know. I know. But - I just didn't want her to bust my ass.

Vance scans the cables next to Matt. Sees the rigged device.

VANCE
The hell is this?

MATT
Huh?

VANCE
What are you doing to these wires here?

ACE
Get. Rid. Of. Him.

VANCE
I'm calling the police. Turn around.

ACE
MATT! I'M COUNTING ON YOU! YOU WANT KATIE TO DIE?! GET RID OF HIM!

Vance unfastens a pair of plastic handcuffs from his belt. Zip-ties.

VANCE
Turn around!

Matt can't let this happen.

VANCE (CONT'D)
You some kind of tough--

WHAM! Matt shoots a fist into Vance's face. Knocking him back. Vance shakes it off.

VANCE (CONT'D)
Son of a--

Vance SLAMS Matt against the wall. Throwing a punch into Matt's gut. Matt retaliates. A knee into Vance's side. Vance backs off. Matt throws another fist, then another, then another. Vance gets winded. Stumbles back. Grabs his walkie-talkie. Tries to radio for back-up. Matt pounces on him again. This time, Matt shrugs off his jacket and wraps it around Vance's face - blinding him.

Vance rips it off. Tosses it to the ground. Nose bloody. Mouth bleeding. He tosses his walkie-talkie to the ground.

VANCE (CONT'D)
Ok. Ok. Just you and me, asshole.

He rockets at Matt. Matt side-steps him. Gets Vance into a headlock and - BAM BAM BAM. Launches him into a series of cable boxes. SLAM! Vance, grasping at anything, grabs the cut above Matt's eye. Squeezes it.

MATT
ARGGHHH!

Matt grits his teeth and BOOM! Shoves a fist right into Vance's chin. The knock-out button. He goes down like a bowling ball, collapsing onto the concrete.

MATT (CONT'D)
I got him.

ACE
Tie him up. Hide him somewhere.

INT. MAINTENANCE LEVEL - STORAGE CLOSET - MOMENTS LATER

Matt rolls Vance's body into a tight storage closet. He's used the plastic zip-ties to bind Vance's hands and legs. He's ripped a piece of his jacket to stuff his mouth. Vance is awake. And pissed.

MATT
I know this is gonna sound pretty messed-up, but I'm *sorry*. I didn't want to hurt you.

Vance curses. It's muffled.

VANCE
MMMPHHH! MMMMPHHH!!

Matt shuts the door. CLANK.

INT. SERVICE HALLWAY - FIRST CONCOURSE LEVEL - BATHROOM

Matt washes his face, getting the blood off of himself. Running his bruised knuckles under the faucet. He winces. Ace chattering in his ear...

ACE
Wash it off. Get clean. Can't have you looking too strung-out yet, Matty. It arouses suspicion. Suspicion is not your friend today.
(beat)
You like that? Beating the shit out of that innocent man?

MATT
I did what you want. I want to see Katie.

ACE
You haven't *begun* to do what I want.

Sounds of papers being flipped. Ace whistles like he's on a porch. Reading something.

ACE (CONT'D)
Whoa *nelly*. Look at this. Matt James Murphy. Two years Danamora Correctional. Assault & battery.
(MORE)

ACE (CONT'D)
Attempted robbery. One year in. Two years suspended sentence. You bad boy. You're on *probation*. Danamora. That's a gladiator school. You get honeymooned by any AB's while you were inside?

MATT
How do you know all that?

ACE
Most of it is public record. Most of it. I Googled 'two-time loser' and your name came up.

MATT
This isn't about *me*.

ACE
Katie's got a thing for outlaws? I bet her Dad ain't too happy about that. We got a regular *Jesse James* here, don't we? How does a scumbag like you snag a fine piece of upscale Northside trim like Lil' Miss Katherine Rogers -- huh?

Matt looks at his face in the mirror. Gives 'himself' the finger. Mouths 'Fuck You'.

MATT
Let me talk to her.

ACE
I'm afraid that's not on the table.

MATT
Bullshit. I don't do one goddamn thing for you until I speak to Katie again.

ACE
Let's have a little fun *first*. Make it to Best Buy in *four* minutes, and I let you talk to Katie. Be more than *30* seconds late, and - I break her cute little neck. Next time you talk to her, it'll be through *tears* at a *wake*.

MATT
You're bluffing. You kill her, you kill *you*.

ACE
Poetic. Clock's ticking.

MATT
That's the other side of the mall!

ACE
Then you better hurry.

Ace clicks off. Matt sparks into action.

8:47 PM

INT. MALL - FIRST CONCOURSE LEVEL - A MOMENT LATER

The concourse is *packed* with shoppers. Baby carriages. Slow walkers. Old people. Packages. Promotional displays. Matt circles around the service hallway. Panicked. He spots -

A KIOSK MAP. 'Best Buy'. North wing. Third floor.

Far.

MATT
Shit.

MATT

Flies. He runs for Katie's life. Mall is *way* too crowded to pick up any kind of speed. He begins to improvise. He jumps benches. Clears the expanse of a decorative fountain.

Like a military obstacle course. Matt can't fail.

A one-mile dash.

Pumping his legs. Busting through bodies. People complain.

SHOPPER 1
Watch it buddy!

SHOPPER 2
Slow down!

SHOPPER 3
Asshole!

He climbs the escalator. Running up it. Speeds on. One eye on the watch. Two minutes. Two more levels.

Sweating.

Out of breath. He doesn't stop his pace. Jumping over THE 2009 MUSTANG BULLITT in the middle of the first-level concourse. He leaps it like 'Dukes Of Hazzard'.

LITTLE KID
(Off Matt, pumping fist)
Cool! Go! Go! Go!

INT. SECURITY OFFICES - THAT MOMENT

Decker and Marshall are watching the video feed. They see -

MATT

Running a relay race through his mall. Passing from one screen, to the other. Dashing. Speeding. Jumping hurdles.

DECKER
This guy is a lunatic. What's he doing?

MARSHALL
Qualifying for the Summer Games.

DECKER
(shaking head)
Get *Wilks* on this asshole. *You too*.
(beat)
Run him down.

Decker does a slow burn. Pours two fingers of scotch into his coffee. Drinks it without blinking.

ON THE SCREEN: Matt almost tackles a department store SANTA.

DECKER (CONT'D)
Ho-ho-ho.

INT. MALL - THIRD LEVEL CONCOURSE - THAT MOMENT

One minute to go. Matt's gonna be late. His legs are tired. Still, Matt rockets down the floor. He's agile and quick. Avoids running over pedestrians, although a few of the slower people almost have to *dive* out of the way.

A MOTORIZED SECURITY CART

rumbles out from one of the corridors. SCREEEECH. One of those small, boxy meter-maid type things that rent-a-cops are always tooling around in. Siren quietly flashing.

WILKS

is in the front seat. He 'guns' the car. Trying to intercept Matt. Pulling out right in front. WHAM! Matt goes jumping across the hood. BOOMP! Landing on the floor like he's stealing home. He winces.

WILKS
SIR! SIR?! YOU HAVE TO SLOW DOWN!

Wilks charges out of the cart. His hand angles down to A CAN OF MACE on his left hip.

Wilks' walkie-talkie chirps. He brings it up.

WILKS (CONT'D)
(into W/T)
Decker?

DECKER
(O/S, through W/T)
No mace! You'll gas the entire crowd!

Matt snaps back to his feet. Commotion around him. He dashes back into the holiday crush.

Wilks gives pursuit, but he's *pushed* back by the angry crowd of shoppers. Matt's much better at this type of thing than the burlier Wilks.

WILKS
Move! Move!

SHOPPER 4
Fuck you! It's Christmas!

WILKS
'*Fuck you, it's Christmas*'? Oh that's nice, real nice.

INT. BEST BUY - THAT MOMENT

8:51 PM

Matt, sweaty and limping, strolls into the Best Buy. Looking over his shoulder. Seeing if he lost Wilks. He's clear. For now. *Whew.* Ace immediately beeps into Matt's ear.

ACE
That was impressive. Pretend to shop. Blend in.

Matt drifts into a DVD section.

MATT
Where is she?

Someone else comes on the line.

KATIE
(on phone)
Matt?

MATT
Baby. Are you ok?

KATIE
Yeah.

MATT
Where are you? Where do they have you?

KATIE
...I can't tell.

MATT
Answer yes or no. Ok?

KATIE
Ok.

MATT
Do they have weapons?

KATIE
Yes.

MATT
How many? More than one? Less than four?

KATIE
I--

She's pulled away from the phone.

ACE
--We're on a 'Hi' and 'Bye' basis for now. You can't *do* anything. Not to me. Not to us. No planning. No strategy. And don't even *think* of double-crossing me or Katie comes back in *envelopes.* We're *smarter* than you. Does that make sense?

MATT
It makes sense.

ACE
Go to the music players. Mp3 players. Whatever you want to call 'em. Third aisle.

Matt strolls over to the music player section, when he sees -

WILKS

In the reflection of one of the security mirrors.

MATT
Security's here.

ACE
Be cool.

MATT
Guy's on my ass. He knows me.

ACE
I said, *be cool*. You want to pick up the second one from the back. The iPOD.

MATT
Why that one? *There's dozens here*.

ACE
<u>That one</u>. Pick it up.

Matt finds the iPOD. Reaches down. Counts the boxes. Picks it up.

ACE (CONT'D)
Now steal it.

MATT
I can buy it.

ACE
I *want* you to steal it, Matt. I got a straight-razor to your princess' cheek. *Steal* it.

Fuck it. Matt grabs the iPOD. Circles around the display case and heads toward the DVD's. He peers around the shelving. Sees Wilks and Marshall traversing the sales floor.

Matt tries to pull the SECURITY TAG off the iPOD player box. Then, he notices something -

MATT
I got eyes on me.

ACE
Damn right you do.

THE SECURITY CAMERAS

Trained right on him. He keeps moving. Heads toward the doors.

Matt circles around the DVD section. Tries to hide in TV'S & ELECTRONICS. Wilks walks right past him. Begins talking to an employee.

Matt shoves the iPOD into his pants. Out of view of the cameras. He heads toward the exit. Exposed for a moment.

He speed-walks toward the exit.

An employee spots him a moment later.

Matt hits the doors.

AN ALARM

Goes off.

BEEP-BEEP-BEEP-BEEP

Matt runs. Wilks and the other security guards take off after him. Matt gets a good lead.

He dashes around the third-floor elevator, making a bee-line for the escalator. Guards on his ass.

ACE (CONT'D)
LOSE THE GUARDS!

When he spots - A FIRE ALARM.

MATT
Alright.

He hits it. Blows the fire alarm. Smashes the glass. Pulls down the lever. Sirens blare. Sprinklers begin raining down water on the third floor concourse. Shoppers duck for cover. Water slicks down the floor. People panic. Matt blends into the mob, bleeding into the crowd. Slipping and sliding.

Wilks and Marshall. Hot pursuit.

WILKS
MURPHY!

They got nightsticks in hand. Mace strapped to their legs. Ready to rock 'n roll. Dead-set on grabbing Matt.

ACE
You let those assholes catch you,
Katie's a dead woman!

Matt breaks through the crowd. Dodging around shoppers. Everyone curses at him. Wilks and Marshall right behind.

MARSHALL
Stop!

Matt can't seem to lose them. He runs to the side, toward the railing. He looks down. 100 feet below -

THE MALL FOUNTAIN.

Elaborate. Long. Like a swimming pool. He stops. Considers it.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)
Murphy! Stop!

Marshall and Wilks are almost there.

Matt swings his legs over the railing. Pivoting his body toward the edge. Eyeing the drop. He might survive it. Maybe not even get some broken bones. If he lands right...

WILKS
The hell is he doing?!

Other shoppers stop and stare. Like they're watching a stunt show. Matt positions himself. Takes one glance back over his shoulder and -

MARSHALL
Sir, don't-- !

- Jumps.

He *fallllllls* the distance.

Almost suspended for a moment. Dropping toward the -

FIRST FLOOR FOUNTAIN

Matt HITS the surface. SPLOOOOOOSH! Water jettisons out of the basin. Bad dive.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)
Holy shit, he *jumped!* The crazy sonuvabitch actually *jumped*!

The water in the fountain is still for a moment. Everyone thinking Matt hit his head. Broke his neck. Dead.

A HAND

Breaks the surface. Matt throws himself out of the pool. Lands on the floor of the main level.

Some people applaud.

WILKS AND MARSHALL

Glare down from above.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)
Amazing-Grace-How-Sweet-The-Sound. Shit fire and save matches. Guy's got nine lives!
(beat, Off Wilks)
You ever see someone do something like that?!

Wilks hits Marshall in the shoulder.

WILKS
No. Let's go!

MATT

scrambles away from the fountain, streaking into the crowd again.

INT. GLASS ELEVATOR - A MOMENT LATER

Matt, soaken wet, glides in with a cluster of confused shoppers. Hugs the back. Keeps the guards in full view. They're on the other side of the concourse. They don't see Matt.

Matt attempts to look normal amid the other shoppers.

Muzak drifts through the speakers. '*Jingle Bells*'.

LITTLE KID
(Off wet Matt)
You like that David Blaine guy or something?

MATT
Sure.

LITTLE KID
Where are the cameras?

MATT
All over.

Matt sees -

'BROOKSTONE'.

On the second floor. He hits the '2' button. BING!

INT.'BROOKSTONE' - A MOMENT LATER

A clutter of shoppers crowd the interior of the store. Matt breaks away, heads toward the rear.

ACE
Where are you?

Matt checks himself. Realizes something. Puts his hand to his ear.

ACE (CONT'D)
Matthew. Buddy. Where are you?!

MATT
I'm--

They can't see him here. For whatever reason, they don't have a view of him. *Why?*

MATT (CONT'D)
Look, I'm in the--

He thinks of something. *Lies*.

MATT (CONT'D)
--Stairwell. Hiding. I'm in the stairwell. Security's got cameras everywhere. They're hot on me.

ACE
You got the device?

MATT
Yeah.

ACE
Hold onto it. Stand by for more instructions.

Ace is gone. A HAND on Matt's shoulder. Matt jumps.

WADE
(O/S)
You must really like me.

Matt grabs Wade by the shoulders.

WADE (CONT'D)
Hey--!

MATT
--You got a break room?

WADE
I just *took* my break!

MATT
They kidnapped my girlfriend.

Wade freezes.

WADE
(aloud)
Going on break!

INT. 'BROOKSTONE' - BREAK ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A card table is set up in a back room and the air hangs with cigarette smoke. Matt and Wade are having a heated conversation.

WADE
Are you messing with me?

MATT
No. See this?

He holds up the new cell, with the same number over and over again on it. 'ACE'.

MATT (CONT'D)
This is him. This is how he talks to me.

WADE
They got your girl. So, where are *they?*

MATT
I think they're in the mall.

WADE
How do you know?

MATT
They're monitoring me through the security cameras. They're tapped in somehow. They can't hear me, but they can see me--
(beat)
(MORE)

MATT (CONT'D)
--Except here. They don't know when I'm here.

Wade sits down on the table.

WADE
Cameras are dead space in Brookstone. We turn 'em off ourselves. It messes with the electronics. Closed circuit feed makes our radios blare Spanish stations.
(beat)
You have to go to the cops.

MATT
Can't do that. They see cops, they'll kill her. I know it.

WADE
What do you want from me?

MATT
I'm not sure yet. But whatever's gonna happen, it's gonna happen before the mall closes.

WADE
That's less than an hour.

Matt looks at the many clocks in the Brookstone. They all say the same time:

9:14 PM

INT. A DARKENED ROOM - THAT MOMENT

Same darkened, nondescript room. Katie leans against a wall. Alone. Screams. Throat raw. She's probably been doing this for a while.

KATIE
HELPPPPP!! HELPPPP ME!!!!

A BANGING. On the other side of the wall. 'Shut the fuck up'. She does. Thinks. Struggles with her binds. Zip-ties. Nearly impossible to get out of. She tries though. Stands up in the corner of the room. Her wrists are sweaty, slick - she can almost slide out. It's tough though. Skin rubbed red. Almost bleeding.

KATIE (CONT'D)
Come on, come on.

A HEAVY DOOR OPENS. Brightness floods in again. Ski-Mask enters. Same get-up as earlier. Ski-mask. Sunglasses. Looks like an alien.

KATIE (CONT'D)
I have to go to the bathroom.

Ski Mask ambles over to her. Looks her in the eye.

KATIE (CONT'D)
You expect me to hold it? Why won't you say anything to me? Who are you?

She checks herself.

KATIE (CONT'D)
No. Wait. Don't tell me. I don't want to know. I don't.

Ski-Mask touches her face. Traces a gloved finger down Katie's cheek.

KATIE (CONT'D)
You've talked to Matt.

Ski-Mask nods.

KATIE (CONT'D)
Are you going to kill him?

Ski-Mask shrugs.

KATIE (CONT'D)
Are you going to kill me?

Ski-Mask shrugs again.

KATIE (CONT'D)
I get it. It's my call, right? Everything goes ok, we live? Is that the deal? That's why you're wearing a mask? That's why. Right?

Ski-Mask reaches into its pants. Katie panics for a moment.

A BUTTERFLY KNIFE.

Emerges. Sharpened and glinting, has been produced. Ski-Mask skillfully flicks it open. Katie goes wide-eyed. Tries to escape into the hard wall. Can't go any further. Trapped. The knife is pressed against her mouth. Delicately. Just enough to bring -

A TRICKLE OF BLOOD

Oozing from the corner of Katie's mouth. A shaving cut, basically.

A BANGING ON THE WALL. From outside. Someone else. 'Get back out here'. Ski-Mask retracts the blade. Backs away. Doesn't say a word.

KATIE (CONT'D)
Hey. *Asshole.*

Ski-Mask freezes.

KATIE (CONT'D)
You ever watch The Incredible Hulk? It's a good show. Watched it as a kid. Bill Bixby. He got pissed off. Turned into a monster. Kicked a lot of ass.

Ski-Mask is listening.

KATIE (CONT'D)
He used to say - 'Don't get me mad. You wouldn't like me when I'm mad'.

Ski-Mask turns around. Silently stares at Katie.

KATIE (CONT'D)
It's Matt. He's mad, you know. You got him *mad*. You wouldn't like him when he's mad.

Ski-Mask mulls this over. 'He' leaves.

INT. 'BROOKSTONE' - THAT MOMENT

Wade and Matt stay toward the back of the store. Wade keeps waving off his BOSS. They're looking at a COMPUTER SCREEN. Electronic blueprint of the mall floor plan. Wade guides the e-Tour of the mall with his mouse.

WADE
This is pretty much everything. Entire Montclair Mall website gives away the floor plan.

Matt points to the screen. Notices something. A highlighted wing.

MATT
What's this? This area.

WADE
Uh. West Concourse. Sports Authority. Starbucks. Pacific Sun. Bank.

MATT
Bank?

WADE
Well, not yet. Still under construction. Wells Fargo.

Back to the floor-plan. Matt's exploring on his own, until he sees: WILKS and MARSHALL pass by the front of the store. Hunting. He dodges away from the computer. Sidles up by some stereo equipment. Covers himself.

MATT
Shit.

WADE
Calvary's after you, huh?

MATT
Made me rip off an iPOD from Best Buy.

WADE
What are these guys? Sitting in a room jacking off to some dude shoplifting?

MATT
I don't know what it is. They've got some kind of...
(beat)
Purpose.

WADE
Why do you think *she's* still in the mall?

MATT
They grabbed her almost an hour ago. Holiday traffic chokes the roads. There's no way they can make distance that quick. No escape routes. Nothing fast enough. Cops can't get in, they can't get out.

WADE
You some kind of expert on getting away from cops?

Matt gives him a look.

MATT
Experts don't go to jail.

WADE
You were in jail?

Matt peers around the wall -- coast is clear. Guards moved away. Matt exhales.

MATT
I made some mistakes.

WADE
I saw it when you walked in. Recognized it. How long?

MATT
One year. Upstate. Armed robbery. Danamora.

WADE
This have something to do with that?

MATT
I hope not. She's paid enough for my past.

Wade gets it. Nods.

WADE
See this?

Wade rolls up his sleeve, exposing a fairly elaborate 'jailhouse' tat. Prison ink.

WADE (CONT'D)
For a while, no one would hire me. No one would trust me. No one would love me. But it changed. Because I got the opportunity to *change* it.

MATT
How many years up the fort?

Wade doesn't want to answer.

WADE
Enough. What matters for guys like us is who we are *now*. Not who we were *then*.

MATT
Yeah, but who am I *now*?

WADE
You're a guy who's gonna get his girlfriend back. And I'm gonna help you.

MATT
You believe me. Why?

WADE
Commission.

A SKATER KID

Enters the store. About 14, 15. Little punk. He looks around. Pulls out his skateboard, begins cruising down the aisles. Buzzing by people. Knocking shit off the shelves.

WADE (CONT'D)
(off Skater Kid)
Now, will you look at this happy horseshit?

Wade breaks away from Matt, who remains hidden. Ever-vigilant. The Skater Kid tries to avoid Wade.

WADE (CONT'D)
Hey! Punk! You can't do that in here!

Skater Kid cruises around a set of sleep machines. Almost runs right into them. Wade grabs the Skater Kid by the scruff of his neck. Pulls him back. Lifting him off the board.

WADE (CONT'D)
What's wrong with you?!

Skater Kid just laughs uproariously.

MATT

Emerges from the stereos, circles around to the middle of the store as he sees -

TWO *OTHER* SKATER KIDS

Stuffing clocks, speakers, and elaborate pens into their backpacks.

MATT
(off SKATER KIDS)
Wade!

Wade sees it.

WADE
Oh, *hell*, no!

Wade drops the first Skater Kid, and rushes after the *new* shoplifters. They're too quick. They roll out of the store.

WADE (CONT'D)
Little punks working in teams now!

At that, *Matt realizes something.*

WADE (CONT'D)
(off Matt)
You see that?! Get me all tied up and their buddies steal the shit.

MATT
Yeah. They caused a *distraction*.

Matt thinks.

MATT (CONT'D)
You think you can open up one of those cameras? See where the feed is going to?

Wade considers it. Grabs a TOOL-KIT off one of the Brookstone shelves. Opens it.

WADE
This thing *also* tells time.

MATT
Maybe we can find out where they're watching *from*.

Wade wipes his brow.

WADE
Possible. It would have to be some kinda coaxial signal splice. All the cameras are on the same network. I'd just need to look at *one*.

MATT
Like you said, it's all about now.

Wade nods.

WADE
You got it.

Phone vibrates. Matt perks up. Sticks the earpiece in.

MATT
(into earpiece)
Yeah? *Ace*.

Wade gets excited. Points at Matt. '*Is that him*?'. Matt nods.

ACE
You're a bad-ass aren't you? Not scared of anything.

MATT
I'm scared of *you*. You got all the cards. I got nothing.

ACE
That's right. And I got one more card to play: *I need you to turn yourself in*. First security guard you see. Confess your ass off.

MATT
I'm on parole. They'll violate my ass back into the system.

ACE
It's your *girl's* life. You make the call. If you want her dead, you can walk away right now. Go home. Have some tea.

MATT
Alright.

ACE
How noble.

Ace cuts off. Matt turns to Wade.

WADE
What is it?

MATT
They want me to turn myself in. To mall security.

WADE
Now?

MATT
Now.

Wade nods.

WADE
Ok. I got your back. And--

MATT
And what?

WADE
You a gadget fan? Because I think I got something you might like.

9:24 PM

INT. 'CIRQUE' - THAT MOMENT

Claire, the diamond store girl from earlier, is eating lunch. Right now, the store is empty.

WILKS
(O/S)
Hey.

Claire is startled. Jumps.

CLAIRE
Jesus. Wilks. How'd you get in?

Wilks smiles. Jingles an ACCESS CARD.

WILKS
Code key. How is it here?

CLAIRE
Quiet. I think everyone ran out of money.

WILKS
Got a nut-job running around the mall. Ripped off some shit from Best Buy. You see him?

Wilks holds a -

MUGSHOT.

Poorly printed. Computer imagery. It's MATT. A few years younger, but it's Matt.

CLAIRE
...Oh.

WILKS
Recognize him?

CLAIRE
(off Wilks)
He was really sweet. He had a girlfriend.

WILKS
We need to keep our eyes peeled.

INT. SECURITY OFFICES - MINUTES LATER

Decker's presiding over the multitude of control consoles and video monitors. God of the mall. A tech-y BOARD OP mans the switchers.

DECKER
Bring up camera sixteen.

Camera Sixteen cruises in on 'Cirque' - the diamond store. Focusing on a pair of security guards. Armed.

DECKER (CONT'D)
Who's on Cirque?

BOARD OP
Wilks. His floor.

DECKER
How many inside?

BOARD OP
Two. Mills and Parker. Three is standard for Cirque, sir. Wilks says he's running parallels.

DECKER
Mills and Parker can't guard a pet store. Why is Wilks running a skeleton crew? Cirque's loaded with cash tonight. What's the standard Black Fri haul for them?

BOARD OP
Uh--

MARSHALL
(O/S)
--Two mil last year. Registers run fat. Real fat. Armoreds don't pick-up until 11 PM.

Decker turns around to see -

MARSHALL. He's dragging -

MATT

with him. Matt doesn't struggle. Doesn't protest.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)
Brought you a gift.

DECKER
No shit.

Marshall forces Matt against the wall.

MARSHALL
He gave himself up.

DECKER
Crisis of conscience?

MATT
(grunting)
Yeah, why not.

MARSHALL
Shut up.

Marshall rips a plastic zip-tie from his belt. Secures Matt's hands.

MATT
Ow! Watch it!

MARSHALL
Found this on him.

Marshall tosses the iPOD to Decker, who catches it.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)
Lifted it from Best Buy.

DECKER
(off Matt)
What the hell is wrong with you Murphy? Guy like you? Record. Pulling petty shit like this?

MATT
I can't help myself.

Decker shakes his head.

DECKER
Take him downstairs.

INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Marshall pulls/pushes Matt down a long, clean, white corridor.

MATT
How many guards you got working tonight?

MARSHALL
Hell you care?

MATT
Curious.

MARSHALL
Five. Revolving loops.

MATT
Five guards? You account for all of them all the time?

MARSHALL
Cameras do the work. It's a busy mall.

MATT
Who's shift boss?

MARSHALL
Wilks.

Matt nearly falls down the stairs as Marshall pushes him down, toward *another* level.

INT. DETENTION AREA - CONTINUOUS

Matt is shoved into a cramped, studio-sized space. A plastic 'cage' sits in the other side of the room. A desk on the other. Marshall laughs. He shoves Matt into the cage. Locks it.

MARSHALL
You're the oldest dude we've ever had to put in here.

MATT
Listen to me. Marshall.
Something's *not* right here tonight.

MARSHALL
You bet your ass.

Marshall turns around. As he exits -

VANCE

Enters. This is the security guard Matt beat the shit out of earlier. Face bruised. Lip swollen. Matt collapses a little bit. He's helpless.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)
(O/S)
He's all yours, Vance.

VANCE
(off Matt)
I'm gonna *enjoy* this.

MATT
At least untie my hands.

VANCE
This is gonna be *sweet*.

Vance ambles up to Matt and -

WHOOMP

Sucker-punches Matt right in the gut. Through the cage. Matt doubles over.

VANCE (CONT'D)
Annnnd one for the holidays.

WHAM!

Upper-cut. Into Matt's jaw. Matt is rocked back.

VANCE (CONT'D)
You make this too easy.

EXT. 'STARBUCKS' - THIRD CONCOURSE LEVEL - THAT MOMENT

Wade is talking to FRANCINE. A 'barista'. Behind the counter. Pretty. Young. Clad in oddly sexy Starbucks attire. Kinda heavy-set. But in a cute way. Clock above her head reads:

9:30 PM

WADE
I need your security camera.

FRANCINE
No way. Last week the boss caught me stealing muffins. Said he'd fire me, if he caught my ass messing around again.

WADE
Come on. It's for the mall.

FRANCINE
Don't they have *maintenance* for that?

WADE
Is this about Saturday?

FRANCINE
It's about the past year!

WADE
You're overreacting.

FRANCINE
You think I'm *fat*.

WADE
I don't think you're fat. I just think you're a whole lotta woman.

FRANCINE
This Saturday. We hang. *For real*.

WADE
I love you.

Dives in. Kisses her on the cheek.

FRANCINE
Such a dog.

Wade jets behind the counter. Removes a hugely complicated screwdriver device from his pants. He heads toward a -

SECURITY CAMERA

Mounted behind the coffee machines.

FRANCINE (CONT'D)
Don't break it!

WADE
Relax!

In a quick succession of moves, Wade detaches the mounting. Removes the security camera. Cradles it.

FRANCINE
You serious about Saturday?

Wade dashes away from the counter. Eager to bail.

WADE
<u>Call me</u>.

FRANCINE
You *call* me!

INT. A DARKENED ROOM - THAT MOMENT

Katie's alone in the dark, until -

A HAND

Grabs her by the hair. Pulls her up. She hears activity.

A BLINDFOLD

Forced around her eyes.

BLACK-OUT

She sees nothing. So do we. Noises though. Guns clicking. Footsteps. Movement.

MALE VOICE
(O/S)
We're moving.

INT. DETENTION AREA - THAT MOMENT

Matt is still locked in the cage. Vance guards the outside. Smoking. Whistling. Massaging his bruised knuckles which he damaged on Matt's hard-as-nails skull.

MATT
You have to let me out!

VANCE
I don't have to do that *at all*.

Matt looks at the ceiling of the detention area. No cameras.

MATT
There's no cameras here.

VANCE
You bet there's no cameras here. What goes on in the cage, stays in the cage. You want another beating, pretty-boy?

Matt breathes.

MATT
Listen to me, my girlfriend's been *kidnapped*.

VANCE
That's a fascinating story.

MATT
I'm telling the truth. Whatever these guys are doing, they're doing it *now*. And they're *using* me.

Vance stands up. Crosses to the cage. Adjusts his jaw.

VANCE
You loosened *two* of my teeth.

MATT
See a dentist.

Matt moves back to the bars. Grips them. Thrusts his face forward.

MATT (CONT'D)
C'mon. Hit me again. Bet you miss.

VANCE
Oh, I *won't* miss.

MATT
Then hit me, asshole. Right in the kisser. Give me a good one.

Vance cocks back his fist.

VANCE
You're just a glutton for punishment.

MATT
Bet you can't do it.

Matt doesn't move his face. A blatant target. Vance aims. Knuckles forward. He launches his arm, and -

ZZZZZZZZAP! MATT SHOVES THE KEYCHAIN TASER RIGHT INTO VANCE'S ARMPIT.

Vance freezes. 'What just happened'? Then drops to the ground. Incapacitated. Matt sticks the small taser back into his waistband. Bends down. Searches Vance's pockets for the keys to the cage. Finds them.

MATT (CONT'D)
(off Vance)
Told ya.

INT. SECURITY OFFICES - THAT MOMENT

Decker paces. Coffee and No-Doz. Anxious. Joined by Marshall.

MARSHALL
Why don't you take a break, man? You have a heart attack again, your wife'll never let you leave the house.

DECKER
She doesn't let me leave the house anyway.

MARSHALL
You weren't at poker night last week.

DECKER
Yeah. There was a scheduling conflict. Turns out poker night interferes with '*me and my wife arguing over poker night*'.

MARSHALL
You should get a divorce.

DECKER
No way. Third times the charm.

Decker checks his watch.

DECKER (CONT'D)
Less than a half-hour before close.

MARSHALL
So?

DECKER
So - besides our friend downstairs, I got no reports. No problems. Quietest Black Friday in human history.

His eyes - ever vigilant - scan the swarm of flickering security screens. Back. Forth. Back again.

MARSHALL
That's good. You go home tonight. Have some chicken soup. Some scotch. Get laid.

DECKER
Right. I wish.

Decker notices the iPOD on the counter. Flickering screen. Systematic, constant *beeping*.

DECKER (CONT'D)
This what he swiped?

It's on. Blinking. Off and on. Flashing.

MARSHALL
Yeah. But thing is busted anyway.

Decker hits the center button. Brings up the screen. A clock. But not a regular time-keeping clock.

A *countdown* clock.

:05

:04

Something *sparks* inside the device.

:03

DECKER
What the--

He drops it to the ground.

MARSHALL
What is it?

:01

DECKER
--GET DOWN!

BOOOOOOM!

It *explodes*. The iPOD blows up. A light, bursting *blast*. Flames shoot. Marshall takes the heat. Rears back. Screaming. He's burnt. Decker crashes down. Sheltering his face, as -

FIRE

Strikes up toward the ceiling. The Board Ops scramble off their posts. Chaos.

Decker scrambles over to a -

FIRE EXTINGUISHER

Grabs it. Uncorks. *Sprays*.

INT. DETENTION AREA - THAT MOMENT

Matt's out of the cage. Hears the blast upstairs. Rumbling. Then - *smoke*. He tears for the exit.

INT. SECURITY OFFICES - CONTINUOUS

Matt skids into the security hub. Flames remain. Marshall and Decker on the floor. Powder spray snows down. Gasping for air. Matt helps them up.

MATT
Everyone ok?!

MARSHALL

Grabs Matt's leg. His arm is burned. Fairly bad. Matt crosses over to him. He rips a piece of his own shirt. Creates a sling for Marshall.

MATT (CONT'D)
Someone get a paramedic!

DECKER
We got no one on site!

Matt helps Marshall onto a chair.

MATT
Hold on.

Matt winds a piece of cloth against Marshall's wound.

MATT (CONT'D)
What happened here?!

Decker sprays the rest of the command center with the extinguisher. Board Ops creep out from underneath their desks.

DECKER
That music player was rigged! The one that *you* brought in!

MATT
Rigged? What are you talking about?

At that - THE SECURITY MONITORS SHUT OFF.

Individually. One by one. Succession. Domino effect.

DECKER
NoNoNoNo.

MATT
What's happening?

DECKER
Losing surveillance! Main power shuts off in the case of a fire!

MATT
What about auxiliary?!

INT. MAINTENANCE LEVEL - THAT EXACT MOMENT

The basement. Service area. Behind the coaxial cables, behind the wiring, *exactly* where Matt was told to go earlier.

THE DEVICE

Attached to the main circuit line.

Clicks once. Beeps *twice*.

BOOM! IT EXPLODES INTO A FLASH OF BRILLIANT FLAME.

INT. 'CIRQUE' - DIAMOND STORE - THAT MOMENT

Claire is helping a group of customers pick out a wedding ring, when -

THE POWER DIES

CLAIRE
What the hell?

Claire goes over to the counter computer. The security 'grid' for the perimeter begins going off-line. Unit by unit.

Counter.

Display.

Vault.

Blinking alarm lights suddenly go *black*.

The customers panic. Dash out.

INT. MONTCLAIR MALL - THAT MOMENT

The whole mall. Pitched into blackness.

First Level Concourse.

Second Level Concourse.

Third Level Concourse.

The lights go out.

Last digital read out on the mall clock reads -

9:40 PM

And then, *that dies too*.

Blackout. Store by store. Floor by floor. Corridor by corridor. *Off*. *Off*. *Off*. Darkness. Power failure.

People shopping are taken by surprise. Panic.

Everything goes *midnight*.

The only lights are red-tinged emergency beacons from the FIRE EXIT signs, they spray a dim, maroon-lit shine.

And then the screaming starts...

INT. SECURITY OFFICES - THAT MOMENT

Decker feels it happen. Emergency lights kick on in the offices. A few dim, flickering bulbs. Shadows reign.

DECKER
Power's cut. Completely cut. No auxiliary. No emergency. *No alarms*.

MATT
This is Ace.

DECKER
This is *you*! Vance caught you in the maintenance sector! What were you doing down there, Murphy!?

MATT
No. You got it wrong.

Decker moves over to the security desk. His hand edging under the table.

DECKER
What do you want? Money?

MATT
THIS ISN'T ABOUT ME, DECKER!

SCREAMS

Outside. A crowded mall pitched into chaos.

MATT (CONT'D)
You hear that? *That's* what they want!

Decker GRABS for a -

GLOCK 9

Under the table. Loaded. Decker snaps it up. Swings it. Aiming for Matt. Pointed. Aimed. Ready to rock.

Matt holds up his hands.

DECKER
Hit the floor.

MATT
Please.

DECKER
HIT THE FLOOR!

Decker advances. Matt reacts. He's quick. Quicker than Decker. He throws an elbow into Decker's arm. Knocks the Glock loose. Matt grabs it. Grips it. Swings it back. Aims. Focuses. Gun is on Decker now. Situation reversed.

MATT
I don't want to do this!

Decker's hands go up.

DECKER
Cops'll be here any second.

MATT
Will they?! I don't think so! You see the roads out there? We're on our own!

Matt backs away. Keeps the Glock trained on Decker and Marshall.

MATT (CONT'D)
I'm not holding you hostage!

DECKER
Says the guy with the gun pointed at me.

Matt thinks.

MATT
Alright. Kiss the floor and count to ten.

Decker's confused.

DECKER
Thought you weren't keeping us hostage?!

MATT
It's complicated.

Matt cocks back the hammer on the Glock.

MATT (CONT'D)
DO IT!

They do. Decker and Marshall kiss the floor. Matt backs away.

MATT (CONT'D)
Hold it. Hold it.

Matt exits. Gone. Decker and Marshall aren't stupid. They leap off the floor, snapping into action.

INT. CORRIDOR - A MOMENT LATER

Matt tears down the hallway. Heading back toward the heart of the mall. He shoves the Glock into the waistband of his pants. Knowing he may need it.

INT. MAIN FLOOR - FIRST LEVEL CONCOURSE - CONTINUOUS

Dark. Insane. A bunch of confused, angry, scared shoppers. Everyone wants to leave. Emergency lights throw a weird red-orange glow on the interior.

Shoppers rush. Cry. Slam into each other.

No one gives a shit about anything, except *leaving*.

Matt finds himself in the middle of a mini-riot. He can barely figure out which way is up. Pushed from the left, the right, forward, backward.

He heads for a set of stairs, aiming for the second level. Walking against the crowd. A raging human river.

He comes across -

'ADVENTURE INC.'

Outdoors-themed store. Hiking equipment. Matt spots -

FLASHLIGHTS.

In the window display. Doors are locked. Matt considers it for a second, then -

SMASH!

Bashes out the glass with the butt of the Glock. Creating a hole. Shoppers scream around him. He ignores it. Reaches in, grabs a flashlight. Clicks it on.

INT. 'CIRQUE' - DIAMOND STORE - THAT MOMENT

Customers flee outside. WILKS rushes in. Mace drawn. Mag-lite in his left hand. In charge.

CLAIRE
(off Wilks)
The hell is going on here? What happened to the power?!

WILKS
Claire. It's ok. We are in control.

INT. 'BROOKSTONE' - THAT MOMENT

Wade's got the SECURITY CAMERA dissected out on the check-out counter. Store is empty. Lights are out. No customers. Wade's got a BATTERY-OPERATED DESK LAMP illuminating his work.

MATT
(O/S)
What do you got for me?

Wade jumps. Taken by surprise. Turns around to see -

MATT

Slipping in through the door.

WADE
About time. Check this out...

Wade grabs a one-inch, ordinary looking circuit board out of the 'brain' of the dislodged security camera. Hands it to Matt. Matt fingers it. Has no idea what this means. Thing looks like a small battery.

MATT
I don't get it.

Tosses it back to Wade. Catches it. Holds it up.

WADE
Frequency splitter. Found this in a camera over at Starbucks. You can guarantee they got this in who-knows-how-many others across the mall.

MATT
What's it doing?

WADE
Re-directs a signal. Normally it's a physical plug. Wires. Shit like that. *But* - this - is *wireless*. Whoever put this in the security camera, is splitting the signal somewhere else. To another screen.

MATT
Where?

WADE
Could be anywhere...cell phone, computer, hand-held TV. Here's the fun part...

MATT
This isn't *fun*.

WADE
Figure of speech. The signal can't travel more than a half-mile. It's Radio Shack tech. It ain't some elaborate CIA nonsense. It's like a remote control car. The signal feed...it's not far away.

MATT
Signal's within the mall.

WADE
You're right.

MATT
You trust security here?

WADE
I'm a black man in the modern world, you think I trust rent-a-cops? Racial profiling pieces of shit. The half of them that aren't out of the joint, are just plain pissed-off in general. Security. Cops with a record.
(beat)
Fuck the police.

Matt thinks. Remembers something.

MATT
What place in the mall doesn't have cameras?

Wade shrugs.

WADE
Places still under construction?

MATT
You said they got a bank here.

WADE
Yeah. West wing.

Matt pushes off the wall. Tucks the Glock into his pants. He grabs Wade by the shoulder. Pulls him in. Close.

MATT
I want you outta here. Hit the parking lot. Follow the crowd. Talk to the cops. You're the only person who *believes* me right now.

WADE
What're these guys doing? There's no place in this mall to hit, except--

Matt's eyes go wide.

MATT
--Cirque.

WADE
Cirque. The diamond store?

MATT
It's what *I'd* do. Vault's full. Security's scaled back. Because of *me*.

WADE
Diamond store's a huge haul.

Matt nods.

MATT
They hit it before the mall closes. They don't need me anymore. After that, Katie's dead.

He checks the time on the Brookstone clock.

9:45

MATT (CONT'D)
She's got 15 minutes to live.

EXT. MALL - FIRST CONCOURSE LEVEL - THAT MOMENT

Decker, along with Marshall and several other guards, troop out of the security offices. Armed with mace and flashlights. A task force. Trying to maintain order.

Some of the guards help a few of the exiting shoppers, others dash for the stairs.

DECKER
Find him!

GLASS-BREAKING. Various shoppers are looting their respective asses off. Regular civilians are smashing store-fronts, dashing through security check-points, running with various clothes, electronics, colognes clutched in their arms.

DECKER (CONT'D)
GET THIS MALL UNDER CONTROL NOW!

Decker GRABS a LOOTER by the arm. Stops him. Halts. Looter is a YOUNG MAN with an arm full of HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL DVD's.

DECKER (CONT'D)
(off Looter)
What are you even going to *do* with that?!

SHOUTS. SCREAMS. Decker lets the Young Man go.

DECKER (CONT'D)
Secure these storefronts!

SIRENS

Wailing in the distance.

EXT. PARKING LOT - THAT MOMENT

AS the mall is evacuated, everyone tries to leave the lot at the same time. Bad idea. No one can get out. Or in.

POLICE LIGHTS

Far away. Bottle-necked on the freeway. The mall is blocked off. All exits choked. Traffic thick.

Montclair Mall is, for the moment, *isolated.*

INT. MALL - SECOND LEVEL CONCOURSE - THAT MOMENT

Matt has broken away from the bulk of the crowd. Flashlight blazing in front of him. Quiet. West wing of the mall is clearing out. More room to move. Matt keeps the Glock hidden in his waistband. Staying close to the wall. He spots:

THE BANK

Wade was *right*. It's mid-construction. Wells Fargo. Boarded up windows. Makeshift entrance. No money here, just construction equipment. He eases past the boards, slipping inside.

INT. BANK - CONTINUOUS

Small teller windows. Empty ATMs. Wide floor. Structure looks like it's a few weeks from being finished.

NOISE.

Nearby. Matt stiffens. Grabs wall again. Steps lightly. Someone's here. Close by. He tries not to breathe, moves toward

THE VAULT

Large steel door. Cracked open a few inches. A shadow moves. He slips the Glock from his waistband. Swallows. He pushes forward. Circling around the edge of the vault door, finding -

A trio of LAPTOPS. Streaming video. Wireless. Duffel bags. Blanket. Pillow. Something that could have been a gag, and -

KATIE'S PURSE

On the floor. He jets over to it. Picks it up. Blood.

MATT
No.

A SHADOW

Behind him. Something clicks. He's not fast enough, as -

A SILENCED GUNSHOT

Bites into his arm. Crimson sprays. Matt hammers himself against the vault wall. Leaving a slug-trail of red. He looks up to see -

A MASKED MAN

Sunglasses and ski-mask. Flashlight. Silenced .45 trained on Matt. Masked Man steps forward.

MASKED MAN
Don't move.

Matt's still got momentum. He throws his body into Masked Man's. Throwing a punch with his good arm. Masked Man drops the gun. Matt rocks a fist into his face. Catching him dead across. Masked Man struggles. Shoves a thumb into Matt's bullet wound. Matt screams. He grabs Masked Man's ski-mask. Rips it off to reveal -

TATTOOED MAN.

<u>The purse-snatcher from earlier</u>. The *punk.*

Matt registers shock for a moment.

MATT
You.

TATTOOED MAN
Yeah, me.

Tattooed Man breaks away. Tries to scramble for the gun again. Matt leaps on him. Wrestling.

A NIGHT-STICK

Is suddenly *wrapped* around Matt's neck. Pulling him off Tattooed Man. Matt has no choice. He rears back. Yanks at the night-stick as it crushes his trachea. Oxygen leaves him.

He *kicks, kicks, kicks*. Eventually, he breaks free - falls to the vault floor, gasping for air.

Tattooed Man gets a running start at Matt and - BAM - kicks him right in the stomach. Matt rolls over to see -

LESLEY

<u>His ex-girlfriend</u>.

MATT
Lesley.

LESLEY
Welcome to the Thunderdome.

She's got the night-stick in hand. Black clothes. Dressed *identically* like Tattooed Man. Who is *actually* named -

JAKE
I wanna mess this guy up, Les!

LESLEY
Jake. Take it easy. You ain't taking him down.

WHUMP! Matt launches a fist into Jake's chin. Jake rears back. Scrambles with his gun. '*Fuck this, I'm going to kill him*'.

LESLEY (CONT'D)
Jake! Be cool!

She actually levels her gun at Jake. Jake backs off. Relents. Matt's in shock. He fights to choke out words - still clutching his damaged throat.

LESLEY (CONT'D)
It's not personal, Matt. It's about money.

Lesley pulls a walkie-talkie out of her outfit. Chirps it. Talks into it.

LESLEY (CONT'D)
(into W/T)
Yeah, he's at the bank. We got him. What do you want to do?

She listens. Smiles. Eyeballs Matt.

LESLEY (CONT'D)
(into W/T)
Got it. Over.

Clicks off. Lesley watches Matt.

MATT
Katie...

LESLEY
Sweet Katie. She's alive, you do what we say.

MATT
Why me?

LESLEY
It wasn't supposed to be *you*, Matt. It was supposed to be the asshole in the parking lot.

MATT
Who?

LESLEY
The guy you almost scrapped with. Hot head. Stole his parking space.

FLASHBACK:

Matt getting into the altercation with the <u>Football Hero</u> in the parking lot.

LESLEY (CONT'D)
(V/O)
Charlie Mills. Family man. We watched him for a few weeks. Back and forth. In the mall. We had him all picked out...but some of us weren't sure if he would...play the game. We were gonna grab his <u>wife</u>.

Lesley and Jake, in a van, a few yards away. Watching, as Jake argues with Football Hero.

LESLEY (CONT'D)
(V/O)
But I recognized <u>you</u>. I knew you had a record. I knew it would work better. I also knew you would do anything and everything for your girl.
(beat)
You were always a good boyfriend.

SECURITY CAMERAS

Swiveling on axis. Scanning the mall.

MATT runs down the concourse. Attracting attention. Making a scene. The cameras automatically calibrate to him, toward the activity. Leaving -

CIRQUE, the diamond store, out of view of the surveillance.

LESLEY
We had to cause a distraction. We case the store, eventually those cameras would pick out our faces. We needed one day. A few hours. We knew some of the sec codes, but not everything - not enough to get in and out as quickly as we wanted. With those cameras keeping an eye on you, no one was keeping an eye on us.
(beat)
Decker's system. It's foolproof. Almost. Unless those cameras are occupied.

LESLEY AND JAKE

Posing as a married couple. Casing 'Cirque'. Evaluating everything. The vault. The counter. The registers.

LESLEY (CONT'D)
At mall close, sec cameras and time-lock alarms revert to a separate power source. We had to get this done by mall close. TEN PM.

END FLASHBACK:

LESLEY

Circles around Matt.

LESLEY (CONT'D)
We *just* made it.

MATT
You have someone on the inside. Only way that works.

LESLEY
The man behind the curtain, right?

She glances at one of the lap-tops. Time reads:

9:52 PM

LESLEY (CONT'D)
Time's a-wastin'.

MATT

Tries to stand up. Jake maneuvers around him. Gun right at his back.

JAKE
No fast moves, tough guy.

MATT
Who's *Ace*?

LESLEY
There's no *one* Ace, Matt. We're all 'Ace'.

Lesley pulls a small black box from her pocket. Holds it up to her mouth. Speaks through it. 'Ace' comes through. A voice modulator.

LESLEY (CONT'D)
(in 'Ace's voice)
Does this make sense to you?

MATT
I cleaned up my life, why couldn't you?

She winks. Oozes over to Matt. Runs her hand down the front of his pants. Kisses his cheek.

LESLEY
You know what your problem was Matt? You never took the opportunities when they presented themselves. I *took* those opportunities.

EXT. 'CIRQUE' - DIAMOND STORE - THAT MOMENT

Wilks secures the perimeter. Claire stands around nervously.

CLAIRE
Are you gonna tell me what's happening?

He waves her off.

WILKS
I have to take care of something on the other side of the mall.

CLAIRE
You can't leave! There's a million in cash here and no security! No lights! No alarms!

WILKS
You got two armed guards right inside--

Wilks points to TWO OLD SECURITY GUARDS - 'MILLS' AND 'PARKER' standing inside the store. Ancient.

CLAIRE
--They're *decrepit*.

WILKS
Seasoned.

He taps Claire on the shoulder. It lingers.

WILKS (CONT'D)
Everything's gonna be all right.

He smiles. It doesn't make Claire feel better.

INT. MALL - SECOND CONCOURSE LEVEL - THAT MOMENT

Empty now. Most of the shoppers are evacuated from the mall. Jake, Lesley, and Matt (at gunpoint) speed-walk down the middle of the concourse. Silence. Like a ghost town.

MATT
That's what this is all about? A stupid robbery?

LESLEY
It's about an *exceptional* robbery.

MATT
I want to see Katie.

WILKS

Steps out from the shadows. Pulling on a ski-mask. He's carrying three, large, hockey-sized duffel bags. He slides them toward Jake and Lesley.

WILKS
Katie's alive, Matt.

MATT
Wilks.

WILKS
We've got five minutes. Exit and entry. Right now.

He winks at Lesley.

WILKS (CONT'D)
Hey baby.

LESLEY
Hey baby.

MATT
You got some lousy taste in men, Lesley.

She jabs her .45 in Matt's kidneys. He winces. *Ow.*

LESLEY
You used to be cute.

Wilks sidles to Matt. Arm around him. Like old buddies.

WILKS
Matt, Matt, Matt. You've got some bad taste in *women*. Although, different time - different place, me and Katie could have been friends. *Good* friends.

Jake points the gun at Matt.

JAKE
What are we doing with *him*?

Wilks shoves Matt back.

WILKS
(smiling)
Make sure they see his face.

MATT
Where is she, Wilks?!

WILKS
She's alive. You be a good boy, now.

Wilks pulls a .45 From his duffel. Tosses it to Matt. He catches it. What the?

WILKS (CONT'D)
Don't get *too* excited. It ain't loaded. Play the game, Matt - and everyone walks away with what they want.

MATT
You're making me rob the diamond store?

WILKS
You're *helping* us rob it.

INT. 'CIRQUE' - THAT MOMENT

Claire paces. Mills and Parker lazily smoke cigarettes. She's on her cell-phone.

CLAIRE
(into cell)
Mom? Yeah? I don't know - it's a bomb scare or something--

She glances at the clock above her head. Time reads:

9:57

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
--I’m outta here soon anyway.

THE DOOR

Opens.

Claire’s worst nightmare: THREE ARMED PEOPLE enter through the front. WILKS, JAKE, LESLEY are masked.

Matt...*isn’t*. *His* face is exposed.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Oh my god.

She drops the phone.

WILKS
EVERYONE ON THE FLOOR!

The guards spin toward the gunmen. They don’t hit the ground quick enough. Wilks flicks out his Glock.

BLAM-BLAM!

Wilks hits MILLS in the knee.

MATT
You *don’t* have to do that!

PARKER, the second old guard, struggles with his weapon. Can’t get it out of his holster. Wilks levels on him.

WILKS
Be nice, grandpa. Hug the ground.

Parker obeys. Splays out on the floor.

WILKS (CONT’D)
You move, you die.

PARKER
Please. I have a family.

WILKS
We all got families.

MATT
(off Wilks)
No one’s gotta die today!

Wilks turns to Matt.

WILKS
Shut up! This ain’t a democracy!

Matt and Claire trade eyes. She’s scared.

CLAIRE
(off Matt)
I thought - I thought you were engaged?!

He scopes her nametag.

MATT
Claire. Stay on the ground. These people won't hurt you if you do what they say. *Please.*

CLAIRE
I don't understand - why are you doing this to me?!

MATT
Claire. Please. STAY ON THE GROUND!

He's got no choice. Matt swings the empty gun over to her. She squeaks and drops behind the counter. Lesley locks the door behind her. Pulls down the iron grate.

LESLEY
Two minutes!

WILKS
Decker's doing parallels looking for our friend. Hit the vault!

Jake takes the vault door. Knows the code. Punches it in. Vault opens. Inside, a plethora of drawers - full of expensive cut diamonds, cash. Jake unzips the duffel. Begins loading up.

Lesley jumps the counter. Aiming down at Claire.

LESLEY
Open the drawers!

Lesley cocks the .45. Claire jumps up.

MATT
Claire. Do it!

CLAIRE
I'm doing it! I'm doing it!

Claire does it. The registers swing open. Thousands of dollars of cash.

LESLEY
Helloooo Black Friday.

Jake exits the vault. Duffel loaded with cash.

JAKE
We're sure as *shit* in the black now.

Wilks checks his watch.

WILKS
Two minutes!

Matt looks down to see:

PARKER

Reaching for his gun. Parker sees Matt scope him. Matt shakes his head.

MATT
(pleading, off Parker)
Don’t do it.

Parker draws. Gets a bead on Wilks. Wilks is quick. He slips his Glock.

Wilks pivots around and -

BLAM-BLAM!

Injects two rounds into Parker.

MATT (CONT'D)
NO!

Wilks prepares to fire again. Matt grabs his arm. Pulls the gun away. Jake sees this and -

JAKE

Swings his piece up. BLAM! Misses. Tries to get a line on Matt. Fires. BLAM! A bullet grazes Matt’s leg. Matt and Wilks slam each other against the wall.

LESLEY
We don’t have time for this shit!
Grad the bags and go!

Wilks bashes Matt across the head. Blood jets into Matt’s eye.

WILKS
Bad move, Slick.

PARKER

Aims up. Squeezes his revolver. Hits -

WILKS

Right in the *thigh*. Wilks rears back. Matt gets the gun out of Wilks’ hand. Wrestles it free.

MATT
CLAIRE! GET OUTTA HERE!

Claire, crying, circles around the counter - she heads for the door.

MATT (CONT'D)
GO! GET HELP!

Matt and Wilks struggle. Wilks outmatches Matt. Throws him into the glass counter, which -

SHATTERS

Matt gets his ass cut up. Wilks grabs him by the collar.

WILKS
You had to make this hard, didn't you?!

Jake dashes after Claire. Grabbing her before she's out the door. Pulling her by the hair. She screams. Jake throws her to the ground.

LESLEY
One minute!

Matt picks himself off of the glass. Bleeding. Wilks eyes him again. Aims. Kicks Matt in the side.

WHAM! WHAM! Matt spits blood.

Wilks, Lesley, and Jake gather the loot together. Organizing the money into separate duffel bags. Practiced. Disciplined. They've gone through these drills before. Knowing exactly what to do.

WILKS
Let's haul it! Split up!

They step over the bodies of the guards. Matt attempts to stand. He's pulled from behind, along with Claire.

Wilks eyeballs Matt.

WILKS (CONT'D)
Make the bitch get on her knees.

Wilks motions to Claire.

WILKS (CONT'D)
Make her get on her knees!

Matt looks at Claire. She pleads to him - silently.

MATT
Claire...

Matt looks into Claire's eyes. He stares at her.

Mouthing. Silently: '*On two*' She mouths back '*On two?*'

MATT (CONT'D)
Claire. Do what they say.

'*On two.*'

Claire gets on her knees. Wilks levels his gun at her head. She gets a look at A FLAMING DICE TATTOO ON THE UNDERSIDE OF HIS WRIST.

WILKS
You ever kill anyone, Murphy?

MATT
No.

WILKS
You're about to.

MATT
I believe that. *One*.

Matt snatches A HANDFUL OF BROKEN GLASS from the counter and SMASHES it against Wilks' face.

MATT (CONT'D)
TWO!

Wilks' rears back, firing into the ceiling. Claire twists her body away from Wilks.

Matt *grabs* Claire and ROLLS into -

<u>THE VAULT</u>

They slam the door behind them as -

WILKS AND JAKE

Blast gunfire at the steel door. Ricochets.

JAKE
We can't get in there! Time-locks are set! What now?!

WILKS
It doesn't matter now! Let's move! *Move!!* By the time the cops find them, they'll run out of air.

The time stamp on the vault clock reads:

10:00

INT. DIAMOND VAULT - THAT MOMENT

Claire crawls to the other side of the vault.

MATT
I'm not with them. It's--

CLAIRE
--Why is this happening?

MATT
Because they're a bunch of greedy desperate assholes who don't give a shit about anyone.

CLAIRE
I don't want to die.

MATT
No one's gonna die today.

Claire doesn't answer.

MATT (CONT'D)
Claire, do you trust me?

CLAIRE
I don't know.

A BEEPING.

Suddenly, the vault door opens - with a pneumatic WHOOSH, to reveal -

WADE

At the control keyboard.

MATT
Wade!

CLAIRE
Oh my god, thank you!

Matt and Claire pop up like Christmas morning. They rush to the opening. Matt grabs Wade.

MATT
How the--

WADE
--I hacked the vault code. If someone wanted to rob this shit, they should have asked *me*.

Wade points to the SECURITY GUARDS, bleeding - on the ground.

MATT
I called the paramedics for *them*.

MATT (CONT'D)
You see where they went?

WADE
Who's *they*?

MATT
Wilks.

WADE
The security guard? No. Mall's empty, chief. No one here except us. Completely evacuated. They sealed it down.

MATT
I gotta find Katie. She's still alive.

Wade stops him.

WADE
How do you *know*?

MATT
Because *I'm* still alive.

Matt eyes Claire. Claire looks back at Matt.

MATT (CONT'D)
Take care of her.

WADE
You got it, man.

Matt dashes off. Wade turns to Claire.

WADE (CONT'D)
I'm Wade. Brookstone.

He helps her up.

CLAIRE
Claire. *Cirque*.

WADE
You're beautiful.

She blushes. Hugs him. He's taken aback.

INT. MALL/FIRST LEVEL CONCOURSE - THAT MOMENT

Matt runs down the length of the concourse. Nearly blind. He stops for a moment, to check the 'floor map' at one of the direction kiosks.

Too dark. No flashlight.

He spots -

THE MUSTANG

Jogs over to it. Reaches into the dashboard and -

FLICKS ON THE HEADLIGHTS. Brightness. Illumination.

Revealing -

WILKS

Gun in hand. Aimed at Matt. No mask. Wilks is fully in his security guard uniform. His 'costume'.

WILKS
How the hell did you get out?!

Matt puts his arms up.

MATT
Where's Katie?!

WILKS
I'm taking you in. I'm a security guard, Matt. It's my job.

MATT
Where is she, *Wilks*!?

WILKS
Safe. As long as *you* confess.

MATT
Confess to what?

WILKS
Shooting those guards. Attempted robbery.

MATT
I do the time. Katie lives. That the gag?

WILKS
Something like that. It would have been easier if you weren't double-crossing us.

MATT
I did everything you said.

Wilks pulls a pair of handcuffs from his back pocket. Tosses it to Matt. They clatter across the floor.

WILKS
No, you didn't. Put 'em on.

MATT
None of this is gonna hold up, *Wilks.*

WILKS
Maybe. But me and my friends are real good at disappearing. And *you're* the one with the criminal record. Not me.
(beat)
I'm the long arm of the law.

MATT
You're a rent-a-cop who just ripped off two million dollars.

Matt bends over. Reaches for the cuffs.

WILKS
What do you care, Murphy? You're used to being locked up.

MATT
Not anymore.

Wilks smiles.

WILKS
Gotta admit. I was starting to like you.

MATT
Gotta admit. *Lesley is the biggest whore this side of Hoboken.*

This *pisses* Wilks off. He stalks forward and racks Matt across the face with the butt of the .45. WHACK! Matt's face jettisons red.

DECKER
(O/S)
WILKS!

DECKER AND MARSHALL

Flashlights in hand. .45 barrels gripped.

Decker keeps the gun trained on both Wilks, and Matt. Wilks holds out his hands.

DECKER (CONT'D)
Wilks - what's going on here?

WILKS
I got the suspect. Matt Murphy.

DECKER
That's not what *she* says...

Decker and Marshall step away to reveal -

CLAIRE

Shaken. She looks at Wilks. Looks at Matt.

DECKER (CONT'D)
(off Claire)
You recognize them?

Claire nods.

WILKS
Claire. Come on. It's me.

He motions to Matt.

WILKS (CONT'D)
Murphy robbed the store! Remember? I showed you the mugshot. The guy's bad news! The guys a criminal!

MATT
Don't listen to him!

She looks at Wilks. Looks at Matt.

CLAIRE
I'm not--

Wilks' hand extends beyond his sleeve - for a moment. Claire spots: THE FLAMING DICE TATTOO.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
It was Wilks.

Wilks laughs for a minute. Calm.

WILKS
Now, come on - this is just--

Wilks swings the gun up at Decker and Marshall.

BANG-BANG!

He fires at Decker. Nailing Decker in the side. Marshall grabs Claire, takes cover. Covers her. Claire screams.

MARSHALL
(calling out)
Mall's locked down, Wilks. Gates are secure! There's no getting out!

Decker drags himself behind a Dippin' Dots stand. Trying to find shelter. Wilks fires his gun again. BLAM-BLAM!

Wilks throws himself into the front seat of the -

2009 MUSTANG

He flips down the visor. KEYS fall into his lap. He starts up the car. Rumbling to life. When -

MATT

Throws himself through the window. Punching. Hitting. Trying to land a good shot at Wilks' face. Wilks hammers back. He can't aim the gun, but he tries to fight Matt off. As -

MATT
WHERE'S KATIE?!!

WILKS
YOU'LL NEVER KNOW!

WILKS HITS THE ACCELERATOR ON THE MUSTANG.

THE MUSTANG

Roars down the middle of the mall concourse. Matt grips onto the side of the car. The tires screech across the tiles, sending off plumes of burnt-rubber, and exhaust fumes throughout the mall.

DECKER AND MARSHALL

Stand up. Marshall helps Claire to his feet.

WADE

Catches up to them. Claire runs to him. Grabs him. He cradles her. Holds her.

WADE
(off Decker)
You want Wilks! You want that scumbag *Wilks*!

Decker nods. Cups his wound. Leans into Marshall.

DECKER
Get the cops ready outside. Get them in here. I want this perimeter sealed! Now!

INT. MALL - FIRST LEVEL CONCOURSE - THAT MOMENT

THE MUSTANG

Hooks a right, tearing ass down the west concourse - past the bank. Past Starbucks. Past the movie theater. Past 'The Gap'. Matt holds on for dear life - pulling himself onto the roof. Trying to make it into the front seat.

WILKS

Reloads his .45 With one hand. Fires above him. Into the roof. BLAM-BLAM-BLAM!

THE BULLETS

Tear through the metal. Narrowly missing Matt's body. He twists himself, trying to avoid the bullets. He almost falls off the roof of the Mustang but -

Grips on. Grabbing the underneath of the passenger-side door. Matt tries to swing his body down. Can't. The car is going too fast.

WILKS

Pounds the accelerator harder. 55-60-65-70. Breaking the speed limit in the middle of the mall.

Wilks hooks a HARD RIGHT into -

THE SPORTS AUTHORITY

Athletic store.

The Mustang SMASHES right through the plate-glass windows into the middle of the department store. BOOOOSH! Hitting mannequins, clothes racks, cash registers, sales displays. Sports equipment. Basketballs. Footballs. Bats. Lacrosse sticks. Weight racks. Pilates ads.

The Mustang cuts a swath of destruction through the middle of the aisles.

THE AIR BAG

Deploys. Hitting Wilks right in the face with a burst of steam. The Mustang careens wildly, fish-tailing into a retaining wall.

Stalling out. Steam rises from the hood. Wilks exits. Dazed. He recovers. Shakes it off.

A NOISE.

Behind him.

WILKS
That you, Matt?

Wilks slides out the .45 from his waistband. Poised. No sounds but the tinkling of broken glass and the ghosting smoke from the hood of the Mustang.

A shadow.

Footsteps on shattered shards.

Emergency lighting in The Sports Authority glows. Wilks scans the dark places.

WILKS (CONT'D)
You just wanna drag this out, don’t you?

MATT
(O/S)
No.

WHOOMP! Matt slams Wilks from the side, pinning him to the floor of the store. Wilks is stronger. He blasts Matt across the face with the butt of the gun.

Scrambles away.

WILKS
She's dead, Matt! You're too late!

BLAM-BLAM! Wilks jacks off two more rounds. The bullets bite into the wall behind Matt's head. Matt drops to the ground.

WILKS (CONT'D)
She called *my* name when she died.

Matt dodges behind another aisle of sports equipment.

Matt spots a WEIGHT SET. Attached to a rack, right over his shoulder. Hand weights. Barbells.

WILKS (CONT'D)
You're not gonna save the day.

Wilks gets closer. .45 gripped. Tensed. He's a trained shot. Looking for the good angle.

WHAM!

Matt slams a BARBELL right into Wilks' mid-section. Wilks eats it. Curses blood. He spins around. Seeing Matt. Swings up the .45. Fires. Matt drops the barbell. Dodges the bullet.

WILKS

Jumps after him. Checks the clip in his gun.

Empty. *Shit*. But spots -

A CROSSBOW. On display. He greedily snatches it. Tenses the shuttle. Racks back the lead arrow. Aims. *Armed.*

WILKS (CONT'D)
Come on out, Matt. No one's gonna miss a punk-ass ex-con like you.

Matt's inches away. He can see Wilks' feet. Matt tries to back off, tries to advance behind him, but --

KNOCKS A CLUSTER OF BASKETBALLS

Onto the floor. Wilks spins toward it. Scopes Matt and -

THWIP!

THE ARROW

Traces through the air, cutting into Matt's left arm. He falls. A jet of blood spills across the linoleum.

WILKS (CONT'D)
Never had *one* lesson!

He tosses the crossbow away. Leaps onto Matt. They roll into another display, into a -

HOME GYMNASIUM SET

Wilks forces Matt onto a weight bench. Pounds him. Matt can't quite defend. Wilks is stronger.

WILKS (CONT'D)
This what you want? You want pain?

Wilks slams Matt in the groin with one well-placed knee. Grabs Matt by the scruff of his neck, drags him under a -

LAT PULL MACHINE.

Forces Matt's head underneath the weights.

WILKS (CONT'D)
You know what I do to punks?!

Wilks pulls the weight up. Aiming to pancake Matt's skull. Matt thrashes.

WILKS (CONT'D)
Stay still!

The weight quivers above Matt's face. Wilks is gonna drop it on him.

SHOUTS

From outside. The other security guards. Wilks panics. Matt takes the opportunity, rockets a fist at Wilks' jaw, and ROLLS AWAY -

Just as -

THE WEIGHT

Comes crashing down behind him.

Wilks shakes it off. His WALKIE-TALKIE blares.

JAKE
(O/S, through W/T)
WILKS? WHERE ARE YOU?! WE GOT THE VAN! WE'RE LEAVING! EAST PARKING LOT!

He snatches it up. Speaks into it.

WILKS
(into W/T)
I'm coming.

With one last surge of adrenaline, Wilks KICKS Matt right in the ribs. Hard.

WILKS (CONT'D)
That make sense to you?
(beat)
Punk.

Wilks dashes out of The Sports Authority, leaving Matt - bleeding - on the ground. Matt can't get up. Grimacing. Broken ribs. Losing blood.

He groans. Attempts a push-up off the floor.

FLASHLIGHTS

Play across the walls as Matt stands. More voices. Cops.

COP 1
(O/S)
They went in here! He's armed!

Matt glances at -

THE MUSTANG

Resting in the corner. Two armed Cops run into the store. Spotting Matt. They draw down on him. Once again, they got the wrong guy.

COP 1 (CONT'D)
Freeze! Don't you move!

COP 2
Freeze, kid! Freeze!

Matt doesn't listen. He sprints across the store and JUMPS into-

THE MUSTANG. Slamming the door. Keys still in the ignition.

It won't start. He grinds the engine.

MATT
Come on, come on!

BANG! BANG! Bullets tear into the hull of the car. And then-

VROOOOOOOM! It starts up. Matt jams it into reverse. He rams the stick.

A PAIR OF COPS

Dive out of the way, as -

The Mustang blasts back onto the main floor of the mall, burning rubber, scraping axel...

...SCREECHING BACKWARD.

EXT. MALL - EAST PARKING LOT - MINUTES LATER

A WHITE FORD ECONOLINE VAN

Shoots around the corner. Just as -

WILKS

Bursts out of the east wing entrance. He slams through a pair of double doors and flags the van down. It squeals to a halt. Jake's at the wheel. Lesley in passenger.

JAKE
What happened?!

LESLEY
You're all over the scanner!

WILKS
I had to improvise!

Jake pops the lock on the back. Wilks circles around. He hops into the storage area.

INT. VAN - THAT MOMENT

Katie is bound and gagged in the back. *Alive*. She sees Wilks enter. Begins struggling again.

KATIE
MMMPH! MMMPH!

WILKS
Your boyfriend is a real pain in the ass.
(Off Jake)
Go! Take the interstate! Now!

EXT. PARKING LOT - THAT MOMENT

The van roars off.

INT. MALL/FIRST LEVEL CONCOURSE - THAT MOMENT

Matt guns The Mustang down the length of the mall. COPS swarm around the perimeter. They're taking shots at the grill, at the tires. Matt keeps his head down. Fires the engine. Exhaust spits.

He's aiming for -

THE EAST WING EXIT.

DECKER

Steps in front. Hands up. Hoping to halt the Mustang.

DECKER
MURPHY! YOU DON'T WANT TO DO THIS!
LET THE AUTHORITIES--

Matt's not stopping.

DECKER (CONT'D)
--*SHIT*!

Decker DIVES to the side as the Mustang *screams* past. Decker tucks and rolls next to a Foot Locker. He huffs. Exhausted. Recovers. Screams out orders...

DECKER (CONT'D)
(to other officers)
Follow him! Follow that car!

THE MUSTANG

Accelerates. The exit comes up quick. Matt ducks his head. Prepares for impact.

Glass doors just feet away and -

CRASSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSH!

THE MUSTANG--

EXT. MALL/EAST PARKING LOT - THAT EXACT MOMENT

--*BURSTS* THROUGH THE ENTRANCE IN A SHOWER OF GLASS.

SCREEEEEEEEEEEECH!

The Mustang peels out. Matt's got no time to check if he's ok. Windshield shattered. Engine puking smoke. Glass everywhere. The Mustang is a mess at this point. He revs the engine anyway, spotting -

A WHITE VAN

Heading for the interstate off ramp.

MATT
Katie.

Guns it. On the chase.

EXT. INTERSTATE - THAT MOMENT

The van takes a detour. Cops closed off most of the road.

The van hits the service road.

INT. VAN - THAT MOMENT

Jake drives. Pinning the red. Ignoring most traffic laws.

JAKE
We switch cars at Philly still, right?

Wilks pokes his head in from the back.

WILKS
We just gotta *get* there.

JAKE
What happened?

WILKS
He's been *playing* us. He was playing us the *whole* time.

Wilks looks at Lesley. Dead serious. Grim reaper.

WILKS (CONT'D)
(off Lesley)
Do the girl. We don't need her.

LESLEY
Do her?

WILKS
Kill her.
(beat)
I promised you.

Lesley smiles. Unbuckles her seat-belt. Moves to the back.

INT. VAN/BACK - CONTINUOUS

Katie is scared. *Real* scared. Her eyes betray everything. Lesley squats down in front of her. Pulls a Glock from her pants.

LESLEY
I don't normally shoot guns. So I might get this wrong. Might hit part of your skull. Leave you deaf. Disabled. Disfigured. That would suck, huh?

Katie writhes, struggles. Spits out her gag. Gasps for air.

KATIE
Go to hell.

LESLEY
Sweetie. *Don't.*

Lesley grins. And then -

WHAM!

Something hits the side of the van. Lesley rolls away. Losing the gun. Whacking her head on the side. Bleeding.

Katie takes the advantage. She finds a rusty part of the van. Rubs her binds against it. Quickly.

WHAM!

That impact again. Lesley can't regain her ground. Katie is slowly severing her ropes. Seconds away from being free...

EXT. INTERSTATE - THAT MOMENT

Matt's at the wheel of the Mustang. Parallel to the van. He twists the steering wheel. Trying to run the van into the median. WHAM!

INT. MUSTANG - THAT MOMENT

Matt keeps one eye on Jake. He guns the engine.

JAKE

Goes for a gun. Bringing up a loaded Glock. Tries to aim at Matt. FIRES. Hits the hood of the Mustang.

BLACK STEAM

Rises from the hood.

The temp gauge in the Mustang drops. Matt tries to maintain the speed. It's too hard.

He looks in the rearview.

COPS

Dozens of them. The calvary. Coming up close.

MATT
Alright.

He looks in the back-seat. Sees -

A BASEBALL BAT

A remnant from the Mustang's trip through The Sports Authority. He grabs it. Brings it into the front seat and -

SHOVES IT INTO THE ACCELERATOR PEDAL. Leverages it against the seat. Cruise control.

Matt undoes his belt. Ties it to the steering wheel. Adheres it to the stick-shift. And -

Leaves the front seat of the car.

EXT. MUSTANG - THAT MOMENT

Matt crawls out of the passenger side seat, as -

THE MUSTANG

SMASHES into the side of the van again. But this time -

MATT GRABS AHOLD OF THE VAN. Grips it. Holds on. Jake drops the gun on the highway. It falls harmlessly to the high-speed asphalt.

MATT

Throws a PUNCH into Jake's face. Knocking him out.

THE VAN

Spins out of control on the interstate.

INT. VAN/BACK - THAT EXACT MOMENT

Katie leaps onto Lesley. Tackling her. Lesley tries to fight back, but -

KATIE ROCKS A PUNCH INTO LESLEY'S FACE. Breaking her nose. Crimson geyser. Lesley screams.

LESLEY
I'LL KILL YOU, BITCH!

Lesley counters. Nails Katie across the jaw. Katie recovers. Tackles Lesley again, as -

THE VAN DOORS OPEN

Exposing the highway behind them. Lesley almost gets Katie in a death-grip. Pinning her to the floor of the van, but -

KATIE SHOVES A LEG INTO LESLEY'S STOMACH.

Lesley breaks free of Katie, rolls down the length of the van and -

ONTO THE HIGHWAY.

Flops like a rag-doll.

Where she's promptly <u>run over</u> by a police car.

KATIE
(off Lesley's death)
Yeah, *we should get together sometime*.

INT. VAN/FRONT - THAT MOMENT

Matt pulls himself *into* the cab of the van, as -

THE MUSTANG

Leaves the highway and -

SMASH!

Crashes into the median.

JAKE

Tries to fend off Matt as he climbs into the front, but -

BLAM!

Jake's neck *explodes* into a shower of blood, because -

WILKS

Is firing his .45 wildly in the cab of the van. He *hit* Jake.

Jake gurgles out his last non-words. The next few bullets bite into the roof above Matt's head. He avoids them.

The van is wild. The driver's dead.

THE VAN

Careens off an exit, toward -

TREES

Matt sees it first. Throws himself out of the front seat. Wilks sees it too late. Tries to find cover. As -

EXT. VAN - THAT EXACT MOMENT

CRRRRRRRRREEEEEASSSSSSSSSSSSSSHHHHH!

THE VAN SLAMS ITSELF INTO A BODY OF TREES ON THE INTERSTATE.

Flipping over.

INT. VAN - THAT MOMENT

Matt's alive. Crawling toward the back of the upside-down van. He drags himself over to

KATIE

Who is dazed, but ok. He grabs her. Holds her. Hugs her. Kisses her.

MATT
I love you.

She smiles. Matt smells something. Liquid dripping from above. Flammable liquid.

MATT (CONT'D)
Gas. Leaking. C'mon. We gotta get outta here.

He pulls her up. But -

WILKS

Lunges at him from behind. Still alive. Pulling him back. Katie gets away.

KATIE
MATT!

MATT
GET OUTTA HERE KATIE! GO!

She panics. She can't leave him.

Matt and Wilks wrestle to the ground. Each one wanting to kill the other. Wilks chokes him.

MATT (CONT'D)
GO! *Katie*, GO!

Katie scrambles out. Heading out the back doors. Toward the outside. Out the bay. Into the night air.

SIRENS

Blare. Cops are pulling up. Emergency vehicles. Paramedics. But -

Matt and Wilks are scrapping it out in the damaged van.

WILKS
You had to make this so difficult!

Matt's out-matched. Wilks is stronger. Angry. Pounding away. He throws Matt against the side of the van.

WILKS (CONT'D)
All you had to do was follow *instructions!*

Wilks grabs Matt by the face. Forces it to the ground. Wilks wants to crush his skull.

MATT
You got - *the wrong guy for that*.

Matt kicks up. Separates Wilks from his body. Matt scrambles to the front of the van cab. His eyes are tearing from the leaking gas. Wilks is covered in it. Matt gets an idea. He spots...

<u>THE CIGARETTE LIGHTER</u>.

He pushes it *in* with his thumb. It clicks in.

WILKS

Rails at Matt again. Trying to pin him down. Raining fists. Wilks is the bigger, stronger opponent. Wilks is a problem.

WILKS
YOU THINK YOU'RE SO SPECIAL!

Matt swivels up. Gets an arm free. Launches it into Wilks' face. Blowing him back. Matt eyes the cigarette lighter. Still depressed.

Wilks recovers. Picks himself up.

WILKS (CONT'D)
But you're *not!* You're just like me.

Wilks gets Matt by the hair. Matt twists - WHAM - unloads a foot into Wilks' face.

MATT
Not quite.

Breaking Wilks' nose. Wilks rears back. *Gurgling*.

Matt heads for the window. Trying to get free of the van. Looks back at Wilks -

Scent of gas wafts through the air. Matt eyes the still-punched cigarette lighter.

MATT (CONT'D)
(off Wilks)
Hey Wilks. I told you I'd kill you. *Does that make sense to you?*

Matt HURLS himself out of the van, as -

THE CIGARETTE LIGHTER

Clicks out. CLICK! And -

EXT. VAN - THAT MOMENT

BOOOOOOOOOM!

The van bursts into a fury of flame and fire. An instant ball of heat rises out of the interior and licks out into the air.

MATT

Makes it clear, into the arms of -

KATIE.

Whom he collapses with...finally.

KATIE
(breathless)
We don't have to see my parents this weekend.

She kisses him. Hard. Harder. *It doesn't stop.* These two will kiss forever.

EXT. INTERSTATE - MUCH LATER

Matt and Katie are sitting on a stretcher. Bandaged. Styrofoam cups of tea in hand. Holding each other. Not talking. They don't need to. They're alive. Together.

DECKER

Approaches Matt. His arm in a sling. He locks eyes with Matt and Katie.

DECKER
I either owe you an apology, or a lawsuit.

MATT
Apology's cheaper.

DECKER
Maybe it is.

They shake hands.

DECKER (CONT'D)
Cops say Wilks' prints match some heinous shit going all the way back to '84.

MATT
He had *prints*? How'd he become a security guard?

DECKER
His name's *not* Wilks. His whole identity was faked. Sometimes people aren't who you think they are...
(beat)
...People like you.

MATT
I'm used to it.

DECKER
Nah. Hell with that. I got a daughter about your girl's age--

He looks at Katie.

DECKER (CONT'D)
--I'd do anything for her too.

MATT
I didn't mean to wreck your mall.

DECKER
It's not *my* mall. I didn't even hire that asshole. Thing is, I got an opening. Sec detail. Head of floor security. The last employee--

Decker eyes the flaming van. Wilks inside. Charred.

DECKER (CONT'D)
--Is a *chestnut* roasting on an open fire.

MATT
Do I gotta work Black Friday?

DECKER
Hey, *I'm* not working Black Friday anymore. You in?

MATT
I'm in.

EXT. INTERSTATE - LATER

Matt and Katie are walking away from the sirens. From the cops. From the questions. Trying to get some quiet. A stroll...

A CAR pulls up. Matt and Katie freeze for a moment.

WADE

At the wheel. CLAIRE next to him the passenger seat.

WADE
Wanna get some pizza, kids? Figured you can use it...after all the violence and destruction...and stuff...

CLAIRE
We're going your way.

Katie's taken aback.

KATIE
(off Matt)
The *massage* chair guy?

MATT
Yup. The massage chair guy.

KATIE
And the diamond girl.

MATT
And the diamond girl.

Matt and Katie get in the backseat.

CLAIRE
(off Katie)
You know, there *is* a payment plan for that ring.

WADE
(off Claire)
Baby, don't pressure 'em.

Wade drives. Matt and Katie recline back in the car. Katie puts her head on his shoulder. At rest. For once. Comfort. *Safety*.

KATIE

Looks up at Matt.

KATIE
So, what now?

MATT
I think we'll 'make it'.

Matt smiles. He reaches into his pocket and pulls out -

THE 'OCEAN SOUL' DIAMOND.

KATIE
Where'd you get that?

MATT
I *borrowed* it.

KATIE
You're giving it back.

MATT
Ok. But - let's just pretend. Just for tonight.

She kisses him.

KATIE
Just for tonight.

Outside, it begins to snow. Light snowflakes dot the landscape. Falling softly on Wade's car.

From somewhere, somehow, 'Silver Bells' drifts over the night air.

FADE OUT.

THE END