THE CONTRACT

(Based on 'The Marseille Contract')

By

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EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

We sweep across a cool dark desert, the moon bathing the area in its light, making the sand glow white. Super on screen:

AFGHANISTAN - HELMAND PROVINCE - TALIBAN CONTROLLED SECTOR.

A small makeshift town comes into view:

EXT. NAD ALI VILLAGE - LOYA MANDA DISTRICT - CONTINUOUS

People make their way through the dirt roads, as a light wind blows sand through the streets. ARMED PATROLS are scattered throughout the area, alert but *unconcerned* by...

TWO MEN MAKING THEIR WAY -- FACES HIDDEN BEHIND HEAD SCARVES.

They use the scarves to block the whirling sand, but in reality are hiding their *Western* features.

VENTURA (O.S.)
(filtered)
Arthur, Lancelot, sit rep?

The lead man taps the other and they retreat into the shadows of a building. Pulling down his scarf, into an earpiece...

DERAY
Merlin, going radio silent, entry in fifteen, will make contact again in...
(checks watch)
... eight minutes, mark.

JOHN DERAY: late-30s, tall, rugged, a rough beard that locals would find apt and eyes that are cunning, but also *risky*.

His partner in crime is MARTIN NEIL -- early-30s, stout and carries it well, also sporting a beard to blend in.

EXT. BASE CAMP - NIGHT

SUPER: U.S. MARINES FORCE RECON COMPANY -- 3 KLICKS EAST.

A detachment of soldiers, MTVR's, LAV's, up-armored Humvees sit quietly. We move into a...

INT. COMMAND TENT - CONTINUOUS

STEVEN VENTURA -- late-30s, clean cut, confident without being cocky, in plain clothes -- runs the OP. A SERGEANT nearby helps man the equipment.

VENTURA
(sets watch/into headset)
Affirmative, going dark. Over and out.

Behind Ventura, COLONEL BRENDAN COLE enters the tent: early-50s, brash, a commanding bully.

COLONEL COLE
How we looking?

VENTURA
We're a go.

Moving past Ventura, addressing the Sergeant, Cole gives Ventura his back... the action speaking volumes.

COLONEL COLE
First sign this operation is going south, you come get me and we roll and do this the hard way.

He turns to leave, but Ventura stands and walks up to him.

VENTURA
(good-natured)
Colonel, this mission is under Special Operations Command jurisdiction... *my* command.

EXT. NAD ALI VILLAGE - NIGHT

Deray and Neil approach a COMPOUND just down the road with a two story house at the center.

Three GUARDS are positioned at a door along the perimeter gate, next to a JEEP.

EXT. MU'IZZ'S HOUSE - PERIMETER GATE - NIGHT

The Guards spot Deray and Neil and sling AK-47's from shoulders into hands.

Deray and Neil continue to approach. Two of the Guards take a step forward, readying for a confrontation.

Deray and Neil remain silent, walking with confidence, when Guard #3, who was hanging back...

SHOOTS THE OTHER TWO IN THE BACK USING A .45 WITH A SILENCER.

Deray and Neil move quick, grabbing the bodies and dragging them to the gate as the third GUARD opens it for them.

INT. MU'IZZ'S HOUSE - COMPOUND - DAY

Stashing the bodies, Neil hands an ENVELOPE to Guard #3. Opening it, he flips through a thick wad of cash when...

DERAY SHOOTS HIM IN THE HEAD USING HIS OWN SILENCED .45.

NEIL
Goddamnit!

Deray takes the envelope back and tosses it to Neil.

DERAY
What was to stop him from taking the money and sounding the alarm?

No time to argue, they don the dead Guards' jackets and take the AK-47's to complete the ruse. Checking the pockets...

DERAY
I got the jeep keys.

As Deray moves out, Neil gives him a strained look.

INT. MU'IZZ'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

They enter quietly. Movement from the other room and Deray holds up a hand to hold. All clear, they head for the stairs.

INT. SECOND FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Two GUARDS sit at a door at the end of the hall playing Chor Voli, a local card game. Deray and Neil move toward them...

DERAY
Lo'ba.

SUBTITLE: Can I play?

Distracted by the question, Deray moves aside...

NEIL SHOOTING BOTH GUARDS WITH A SILENCED .45.

Putting an ear to the door, Deray hears... *a woman moaning*. With a nod to Neil they enter swiftly, guns at the ready...

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

MU'IZZ -- late 40s, scars on his chest and arms from many a battle -- is screwing a YOUNG GIRL forcefully.

Deray grabs the Young Girl and waves the .45 in her face for silence; she obliges while Neil CRACKS Mu'izz across the jaw, KNOCKING him out cold.

NEIL
Tie her up.

Deray shoots Neil a veiled glance... not what he hand in mind as he grips his .45. Neil picks up on the vibe and shoots him a hard stare.

Finally, grimacing, Deray rips the cord off a lamp and binds her. Neil slips a robe onto the naked Mu'izz.

NEIL
Ready?

Gagging the girl, Deray notes her scared eyes. He grabs a blanket and covers her naked body.

DERAY
Kool shai sa'ya'koon' be'khair.

SUBTITLE: *Everything is going to be okay*.

Two seconds ago he was ready to execute her, but now allays her fears; Deray is a study in contradiction.

Taking Mu'izz by the other arm he helps Neil. A quick peek out the door, the coast clear, he signals to move out.

INT. STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Moving fast to stay unnoticed, they slip out the back door:

EXT. MU'IZZ'S HOUSE - COMPOUND - CONTINUOUS

Hefting Mu'izz, they exit via the gate and commandeer the:

INT. JEEP - NIGHT

Placing Mu'izz in back, Deray pulls out the keys, jumps in and cranks the engine as Neil jumps into the passenger seat.

The engine WHINES, but doesn't turn over. Deray and Neil squirm. Deray tries again -- the engine ROARS.

Both men let out breaths they didn't realize they were holding as they drive off at a fast clip. Into earpiece...

NEIL
Merlin, package secure and en-route.

INT. COMMAND TENT - NIGHT

Ventura hears the good news and smiles.

VENTURA
(turning to Sergeant)
Inform the Colonel we'll be moving out in twenty minutes.

The Sergeant heads out the tent flap double quick.

INT. MU'IZZ'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

The YOUNG GIRL struggles to free herself and kicks the night stand, toppling a water glass that SHATTERS across the floor.

Scooting over she fingers a shard, cuts her bonds, and rips the gag out of her mouth...

YOUNG GIRL
Sa'ada! Sa'ada!

No need for a translation... she's sounding the *alarm*.

EXT. BASE CAMP - NIGHT

The detachment is ready to move out: trucks, jeeps, armor in standby mode. Ventura waits at the edge of the convoy with an impatient Colonel Cole at his side.

COLONEL COLE
Where are they?

Ventura turns and gives Cole a look... 'really?' The sound of an ENGINE in the distance nabs his attention back.

The jeep crests the dune and Ventura meets it as it arrives. Deray and Neil drag along Mu'izz, who's coming around.

VENTURA
Mr. Mu'izz, in sixteen hours and forty three minutes you will be incarcerated at Guantanamo Bay for crimes against the United States of America...

MU'IZZ
Only Allah can judge me.

VENTURA
That may be true... once you're *dead*.
(Mu'izz goes cold)
But in the here and now...
(leans in close)
...you're mine.

Stepping back, Ventura gives a nod for Deray and Neil to haul Mu'izz off to an ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIER.

Ventura follows, throwing Cole a mock salute; good to go.

COLONEL COLE
Okay, let's move it out!

The convoy starts to roll out, single file.

INT. HUMVEE - NIGHT - LATER

Colonel Cole is driving shotgun, leading the convoy. The night is suddenly ignited by stark white light...

ILLUMINATION FLARES.

COLONEL COLE
(eyes going wide)
Ambush!

MORTAR ROUNDS HIT THE CONVOY -- MACHINE GUN FIRE FOLLOWS.

Humvees are HIT and BLOWN off the road. An RPG round hits in front of the APC, forcing it to swerve and hit a sand bank.

Colonel Cole grabs the Sergeant by the collar...

COLONEL COLE
Call in an air strike, ASAP!

As he runs off to quarterback the battle...

SERGEANT
(grabbing radio)
Eagle's Nest, this is Blackjack,
requesting air strike, coordinates...

Meanwhile...

INT. APC - CONTINUOUS

Ventura, Deray, Neil and Mu'izz slowly recover from the crash, getting back to their feet.

VENTURA
Move!

Deray and Neil grab Mu'izz, and head for the door.

EXT. APC - CONTINUOUS

The area is a battlefield, SOLDIERS engaged in a fierce fire fight with Taliban forces closing in from the East.

Colonel Cole comes running down the line...

COLONEL COLE
Move! Take Mu'izz! We'll cover you!

VENTURA
Colonel... we need to pull back...

COLONEL COLE
You do your job... I'll do mine!

A MORTAR HITS -- THE GROUND AROUND THEM EXPLODING!

The dust settles as GUNFIRE echoes everywhere. A RINGING reverberates in Ventura's ears as he gets his senses back.

He spots Deray and Neil get back to their feet and rush to Mu'izz who's rolling around on the ground in pain. Getting back to his feet, Ventura stumbles over to them...

NEIL
Leg wound! He's not going anywhere!

Charging over the far dune are...

TALIBAN FIGHTERS -- FIRING WILDLY -- THE MARINES ENGAGE THEM.

Taking the scene in, Deray grimaces, the situation bad.

VENTURA
We go now... or never!

Then, without warning...

DERAY SHOOTS MU'IZZ IN THE HEAD.

Ventura and Neil are shell shocked. But before anything can be said...

COLONEL COLE (O.S.)
Drop that weapon!

A wounded Cole witnessed the slaying and has his .45 aimed right at Deray who...

AIMS HIS WEAPON AT COLE.

The fighting around them *intensifies*, making the situation that much more dire.

COLONEL COLE
You're not soldiers, you're murderers!

TALIBAN FIGHTERS STORM FORWARD.

Neil and Ventura pulls their GUNS, FIRING at the oncoming assault as Cole and Deray keep each other covered.

In the sky above the jet engines announce the arrival of...

TWO INBOUND F-15'S -- LAUNCHING BOMBS.

They hit their mark and kick up a FIRESTORM, wiping out the heart of the enemy forces.

Ventura and Neil are still FIRING on advancing Taliban fighters who are in the lines when the wind and dust kicked up from the bombs sweeps over them.

Seconds pass and the sand clears enough so we can see...

COLONEL COLE LYING DEAD -- A BULLET HOLE IN HIS CHEST.

SLAM CUT TO:

INT. DESERT MARINE BASE ALPHA - TENT - DAY

Neil is seated, the base visible through the tent mesh. TWO UNIFORMED OFFICERS, whose faces we never see, question him.

OFFICER #1
Lieutenant Deray shot and killed Colonel Cole.

NEIL
I couldn't see in the confusion.

INTERCUT WITH:

Ventura in the tent, being interviewed by same two OFFICERS.

OFFICER #2
What are the whereabouts of Lieutenant Deray now?

VENTURA
MIA.

An audible guffaw can be heard from the other Officer.

INTERCUT WITH:

OFFICER #1
The Marines have differing accounts of what took place.

NEIL
You mean the Marines who were in the middle of a firefight, at night, while bombs were dropping around them?
(sighing)
What they saw is debatable.

INTERCUT WITH:

Ventura and Neil are now seated together.

OFFICER #2
You're dismissed.

Before they can exit the tent.

OFFICER #1
(casual)
Off the record, would he have any reason to shoot Cole?

No reply from either Ventura or Neil as they continue along.

OVER BLACK -- SUPER: TEN YEARS LATER

EXT. MACAU - NIGHT

SUPER: MACAU - PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

From the air, we are introduced to a dazzling city, the new world and old living in harmony.

Quick cuts of: The Governor's House, Penha Hill, The Macau Tower, A-Ma Temple, Senado Square. Each locale beautiful in its own right, exotic and historic.

Street signs are in Chinese as well as Portuguese, Macau once a colony of Portugal, its influences still enduring.

But the centerpiece of the city are its... CASINOS.

Thirty three of them, including the largest in the world, and each open twenty fours hours a day, taking 600 billion in bets annually. This is the only place in all of China where gambling is *legal*.

EXT. OFFICIAL BUILDING - DAY

Zero in on a gold placard beside the double glass doors:

UNITED STATES CONSULATE GENERAL OF MACAU.

INT. CONSULATE BUILDING - VENTURA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Ventura, his build less prominent than when he was a solider, flips through a file at his desk. Neil sits across from him: the beard gone, his tan faded, and his hair short, a far cry from his appearance all those years ago in the desert. Two more MEN are in the room: BROOKS and WEAVER.

Reaching into the file, Ventura pulls out a black and white surveillance photo, stands, and tacks it to a cork board.

VENTURA
Henry Brizard. Father Chinese, mother South African. Born in Hong Kong, raised in South Africa after the age of thirteen, educated at Yale. Owner of two of Macau's biggest Casinos, the Tao and the Forbidden, that we know of, and connected and funds one of the largest Super PAC's in the States. From the Chief Executive all the way down to the Chief of Police.
(cracks an eyebrow arch)
What'da we got?

Nobody pipes up, everybody actively staring into space.

VENTURA
(rhetorical)
Six months looking into this guy and we got nothing.

Ventura paces waiting for anybody to offer anything at all.

NEIL
I interviewed at least twenty people in Brizard's organization and didn't find a hint of impropriety. Even offered a subtle bride to those who seemed amiable, but they had nothing to say.

WEAVER
Sorry, boss, the man is squeaky clean. Honestly, I don't know why we should think otherwise.

VENTURA
If somebody in your neighborhood bought themselves a new Ferrari, what's the first thing you ask?

Weaver and Brooks are stumped. Neil, however, knows Ventura's short hand well and...

NEIL
'Hey, you rob a bank or something?'

A nod from Weaver and Brooks, getting the gist.

VENTURA
Success breeds suspicion.
(back to pics)
How about her, Brooks?

BROOKS
Lucienne Brizard, thirty years old, manages her father's businesses. Educated at Harvard Law and is...
(yearning)
34-24-34.

Neil and Weaver share a chuckle.

VENTURA
So nada, nada and nada.
(still staring at pic)
Let's pack it in and give Mr. Brizard a clean bill of health.

NEIL
Perfect timing, it's election time back home.

BROOKS
What's that have to do with anything?

VENTURA
A lot of politicians will be hitting up Mr. Brizard for campaign funds as soon as we give him the State Department's seal of approval.

BROOKS
There's one thing that bothers me.

NEIL
What's that?

BROOKS
He has a lot of security.
(points out bodyguards in pics)
What's he afraid of?

VENTURA
We just told you... politicians.

Everybody laughs. The phone rings, Brooks picking it up.

BROOKS
Consul Adams would like to see you.

Ventura sighs as he heads for the door, but stops a sec to survey his lounging men.

VENTURA
Do something will ya?

NEIL
Like what?

VENTURA
I don't know... dust.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

CONSUL ADAMS: 60s, suit and tie, a politician through and through, always genial... unless provoked, sticks his head out of his office impatiently.

ADAMS
Ah, there you are. It's time me and you had a talk.

VENTURA
That makes one of us.

Provoked, Adams' practiced smile fades.

ADAMS
I'm tired of you State Department boys operating under my roof without briefing me about why you're here.

VENTURA
(reaching into his pocket)
Tell you what, if you can grab this Macau Pataca from my hand before I close it, I'll tell you everything.

Ventura holds the local currency in his palm as Adams bristles at Ventura's games. Ventura snaps his hand shut.

VENTURA
Sorry, grasshopper.

He walks off, leaving a steaming Adams behind.

EXT. CONSULATE BUILDING - DAY

Ventura exits, Neil waiting at the bottom of the steps.

NEIL
Listen, since this whole Brizard fact finding affair is turning out to be a snipe hunt, I really need to get home.

VENTURA
Oh yeah, Mary is graduating High School. Go, go.
(wistful)
Where's the time go?

NEIL
(picking up on the vibe)
You and Claire speaking at all?

VENTURA
Via our lawyers.

Neil is unwilling to pry further and changes the subject as quick as decorum will allow...

NEIL
Well, I'll grab a flight out tomorrow morning.

VENTURA
I'm beat, gonna go curl up with the only man I've ever loved.

NEIL
Jim Beam.

VENTURA
Jack Daniels.

NEIL
I still have some chips left over from all the time we spent in Brizard's casinos looking for dirt. Might as well try my luck one last time. Wanna come?

VENTURA
(shaking his head: no)
It's no mistake the word luck rhymes with fucked.
(with a wink/shakes hands)
Give my best to the family. See you back in Bethesda.

Neil gives a mock salute as they part ways.

INT. LIQUOR STORE - DAY

Ventura enters and points to the shelf behind an OLD WOMAN at the counter.

VENTURA
Whiskey. That one, right there.

OLD WOMAN
Wei nin de lipin baozhuang.

Grabbing the bottle, she starts gift wrapping it.

VENTURA
What? No. No giftwrap.

OLD WOMAN
(shooing Ventura's hand away)
Wei nin de lipin baozhuang.

She refuses to listen, continuing to wrap the bottle.

VENTURA
Just... fine...

He gives up with a sigh and waits as she finishes.

INT. FORBIDDEN CASINO - NIGHT

Neil sits at a Blackjack table among other gamblers.

DEALER
Twenty one! Booya!

The DEALER pays up as Neil downs his drink. He has a nice stack of chips in front of him, doing pretty well.

NEIL
Well, you gotta know when to hold 'em
and know when to fold 'em.

He stands, grabbing his chips, his cell ringing.

NEIL
Now? Were do you want to meet?

SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS embedded in the ceiling P.O.V.:

<u>BLACK & WHITE IMAGE OF NEIL -- THE IMAGE *ZOOMING* IN TIGHT</u>.

EXT. RED MARKET - NIGHT

A sprawling building of shops and vendors which gets its name from the red bricks used in its construction.

Neil meanders through the crowd and meets a nervous LAU YE: mid-30s, dressed in a suit and tie.

LAU
When we met, you implied...
(searching for right word)
...'reciprocation' in return for information. Was I wrong?

NEIL
No. You heard right.

Lau's gaze sweeps the ground as he sighs. Neil plays it cool, realizing he might have hooked a fish.

NEIL
Tell me what you want.

LAU
Safe passage out of Macau, a new identity, a new life in the States.

NEIL
Done.

No hesitation from Neil puts Lau at ease. Finally, he reaches into his pocket and pulls out a... <u>THUMB DRIVE</u>.

NEIL
What's on it?

LAU
Everything.

NEIL
I'll need to verify what's on here.

LAU
I'll contact you tomorrow at noon.

With that, he turns and walks off, leaving Neil staring at the drive, which he grips in a tight fist now.

INT. CONSULATE BUILDING - NIGHT

It's late, the staff having gone home for the night. Neil checks in with the GUARD at the front desk and enters.

INT. CONSULATE BUILDING - VENTURA'S OFFICES - CONTINUOUS

Neil takes a seat at his desk, puts on a night lamp, and loads the THUMB DRIVE onto his computer.

He studies the information on the screen as we hold on his face, his reaction telling us everything we need to know...

NEIL
Jesus.

His face goes cold as he continues to read...

NEIL
No...

Picking up the phone he thinks twice and puts down the receiver. Making a decision, he picks it back up and dials...

INT. VENTURA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The bottle of unwrapped Jack Daniels is on the table, half empty. Ventura's cell rings, but he's passed out on the bed.

INT. CONSULATE BUILDING - VENTURA'S OFFICES - CONTINUOUS

Getting Ventura's voicemail he SLAMS the phone down, something bugging him. Dialing, he gets Ventura's voicemail again, but this time...

NEIL
Steve, listen, one of Brizard's people I interviewed called me, Lau Ye, and gave me a thumb drive.
(shakes his head at screen/upset)
We need to talk.
(checks his watch)
I'm coming over to your place.

Pocketing the thumb drive, he exits...

EXT. CONSULATE BUILDING - NIGHT

Neil exits the building and tries to hail a cab, waving it down, then...

<u>HE'S RUN DOWN FROM BEHIND BY A CAR -- HEADLIGHTS OFF</u>.

An ASIAN MAN exits the car, roots around Neil's pockets, takes the gambling winnings and the THUMB DRIVE. Getting back in the car, he drives off.

Shocked Pedestrians gather around Neil's broken body.

INT. VENTURA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The BUZZER rings. Ventura doesn't move. KNOCKING starts. Finally, he stirs. The buzzer echoes again.

VENTURA
Coming!

He slips on his pants and opens the door to a solemn Brooks and Weaver. Ventura leans against the door...

BROOKS
We need to talk.

Heeding his peoples moods, Ventura steps aside and lets them in. Brooks and Weaver exchange distressing glances.

VENTURA
Well?

WEAVER
Neil is dead.

Silence, Ventura not sure he heard right.

BROOKS
It was a hit and run outside the Consulate. Initial reports say it was a robbery.

VENTURA
A robbery?

He’s unable to process what he’s hearing, his head still in a liquor fog. Walking over to the kitchen, he rummages loudly.

Weaver and Brooks share grievous sighs, knowing Ventura is taking the news very badly.

Popping some aspirin, Ventura turns on the faucet, leans over and gulps some water. Resting on the sink ledge with his eyes closed a sec, he splashes his face with some water.

Shutting off the sink, he returns, and starts to get dressed.

VENTURA
Who’s running the investigation?

BROOKS
A Police Captain Pang.

Grabbing keys and cell, shoving them into his pocket...

VENTURA
Let’s go.

EXT. MACAU POLICE STATION - DAY

Blue Honda police cruisers are parked out front of a modern steel and glass building.

INT. MACAU POLICE STATION - CONTINUOUS

Ventura, Brooks and Weaver are waiting in the lobby. CAPTAIN PANG appears: early-40s, trim and proper in his uniform.

CAPTAIN PANG
Mr. Ventura.

VENTURA
(shakes hands)
Yes. I wanted to inquire about Martin Neil, he was killed in a hit and run, he worked for me at the Consulate...

CAPTAIN PANG
I'm sorry, I'm no longer in charge of that investigation.

Ventura nods to inner sanctum of the station...

VENTURA
Well, can I talk to whoever is...

CAPTAIN PANG
No, you don't understand, it is no longer under our jurisdiction.

VENTURA
Whose jurisdiction is it under exactly?

CAPTAIN PANG
Colonel Vong.

VENTURA
(trying to hide surprise)
Thanks.

He turns on his heel to exit, but before he can go...

CAPTAIN PANG
Mr. Ventura.
(he turns back)
Some friendly advice... tread carefully.

Eyes squinting, Ventura reflects on the 'good will' of the warning, but lets it slide and continues along. Brooks and Weaver are caught flat footed, moving quick to catch up.

EXT. MACAU POLICE STATION - CONTINUOUS

Ventura marches down the street, Brooks and Weaver in tow.

BROOKS
What was that all about?

VENTURA
Macau is a Special Administrative Region, like Hong Kong, autonomous, but still a part of the People's Republic of China. The PRC maintains a token garrison here, five hundred men.
(sharp)
Colonel Vong is the garrison commander.

Brooks and Weaver share worried looks.

WEAVER
Why the hell's he investigating Neil's murder?

VENTURA
That's what we're gonna find out.

That doesn't bode well, Brooks and Weaver's worry notched into overdrive.

EXT. PRC GARRISON - DAY

Uniformed GUARDS stand outside the granite building, the Chinese flag fluttering above the main entrance.

INT. PRC GARRISON - COLONEL VONG'S OFFICE - DAY

COLONEL VONG stands behind his large oak desk to greet Ventura, Brooks and Weaver. Vong is late-40s, career military, a uniform without a crease in it and possesses a deceptively approachable way about him.

COLONEL VONG
Gentlemen.

VENTURA
Colonel. I'm Steven Ventura. This is Matt Brooks and Philip Weaver.

COLONEL VONG
Please, please sit.

Ventura and company sit as Vong settles in behind his desk.

COLONEL VONG
Before we start, I think it important to make clear, I know *who* you are.

VENTURA
Who am I?

COLONEL VONG
(irked by the deflection)
You work for the U.S. State Department.

Brooks and Weaver shrink a little in their seats. Ventura does no such thing, leaning forward, on the offensive.

VENTURA
Martin Neil was one of my people.

COLONEL VONG
My condolences on your loss.

VENTURA
Do you have any suspects?

COLONEL VONG
Mr. Neil had done well at the casino and was followed and attacked for his winnings. A robbery.

VENTURA
What drew you to that conclusion?

COLONEL VONG
(clearly:)
The money was not found on his person.
(beat)
I've arranged for his body to be released to the Consulate.

Ventura sighs, knowing that's a flimsy excuse and also knowing he's not going to get any *legitimate* answers.

VENTURA
(standing)
Thank you for your time.

He turns to leave with an eager Brooks and Weaver who are anxious to get out of there. But before they go...

VENTURA
Tell me, why did you take over this investigation? Why not the local police?

COLONEL VONG
Courtesy.

With that, Ventura and his men exit.

EXT. PRC GARRISON - DAY

Ventura exits in a huff, Brooks and Weaver seconds behind.

VENTURA
Neil wasn't the victim of a robbery gone bad. I don't buy it. No way.

Pulling out his cell to make a call, Ventura notices he has a *message*. He calls his voicemail and listens to...

NEIL (V.O.)
Steve, listen...

Hold on Ventura, his features becoming hard, learning...

THE TRUE REASON FOR NEIL'S MURDER.

Hanging up, Ventura is in a state of mild-shock.

VENTURA
Let's go.

He's on the move, a muddled Brooks and Weaver trailing.

INT. CITY MORGUE - DAY

Ventura, Brooks and Weaver take custody of Neil's body, the MEDICAL EXAMINER having them fill out paper work.

MEDICAL EXAMINER
And sign there, please.

Ventura obliges as the M.E. hands over a manila envelope.

MEDICAL EXAMINER
And... here are the deceased's effects.

Taking the envelope, Ventura digs through it, searching.

VENTURA
A thumb drive... did you find a thumb drive?

MEDICAL EXAMINER
Thumb drive? No...

VENTURA
Did the police?

MEDICAL EXAMINER
There was nothing in the report about a thumb drive.

Ventura's face twists with anger, his suspicions growing. Turning, he heads for the exit with Brooks and Weaver...

VENTURA
Brooks, arrange for Neil's body to be taken back to the states. Weaver, go to his place and get his belongings packed up.

WEAVER
Where are you going!?

No answer, Ventura barreling through the double doors, gone.

INT. FORBIDDEN CASINO - DAY

Ventura heads for one of the:

INT. CONVENTION HALLS - CONTINUOUS

A marquee reads SOUTH AFRICAN CARE PROJECT: FIGHTING POVERTY. The large CROWD has gathered to hear a speech by:

HENRY BRIZARD: late-50s, his Asian and South African traits are evident, his skin color bronze and his features Asian.

BRIZARD
(in middle of said speech)
...a great organization that fights the never ending war on poverty.

Ventura enters and hangs back at the rear of the assemblage.

BRIZARD
It's my great honor to bestow upon them this check for five million dollars.

A MODEL walks out hefting an oversized check. The crowd applauds as Ventura stakes out Brizard's security:

MEN in dark suits, earpieces, Asians, Russians, Africans, British... Brizard employing a melting pot it would seem.

He then spots on stage, clapping, a step behind Brizard:

LUCIENNE: late-20s, statuesque, long black hair, exhibting a fierce beauty.

The event over, the crowd starts to disperse and exit, that is except for Ventura who moves forward.

Fists flexing, is Ventura planning to attack?

Brizard's sharp Bodyguards spot Ventura the minute he made his move, close in, and block his way. Two more Bodyguards close ranks from behind; Ventura expertly corralled.

Stand off. Lucienne approaches...

VENTURA
I need to talk to your father.

LUCIENNE
And you are?

VENTURA
Steven Ventura. I'm with the U.S. Consulate.

LUCIENNE
Well, Mr. Ventura, if you call my father's office, they'll be happy to schedule an appointment.

She gives a nod and motions for the Bodyguards to follow her, situation averted. But before they go...

VENTURA
Can you give him a message?

Lucienne gives a curt nod, deeming that much possible.

VENTURA
Martin Neil was a friend.

Veilded *threat* made, Ventura turns and exits. Lucienne walks off, rejoining her father as they depart.

BRIZARD
What was that about?

LUCIENNE
Nothing.

Brizard gives his daughter a smile, wholly confident in her assessment, not needing to know more.

INT. CONSULATE BUILDING - HALLWAY - DAY

Ventura enters and makes his way down the hall. Adams appears and beelines right for him, blocking an irate Ventura's path.

ADAMS
I heard about the scene you made at the Forbidden with Henry Brizard...

VENTURA
Are you friends with him?

ADAMS
I... we're on friendly terms...

VENTURA
Then watch your back.

Stunning Adams with his venom, he bumps him as he moves past.

INT. CONSULATE BUILDING - VENTURA'S OFFICES - CONTINUOUS

Brooks sits, staring at the floor. Weaver smokes a cigarette near the window. Ventura storms in, his men snapping to.

VENTURA
I want to know every angle Neil was working, all the people he interviewed, especially somebody named Lau Ye.

WEAVER
What's this Lau got to do with anything?

VENTURA
(in no mood to be questioned)
He was the last one to see him alive.

Before any more questions can be asked, Ventura's desk phone starts ringing in the background. Trying to calm down, Ventura paces, contemplating his next move. Brooks moves over to the desk and answers the phone...

BROOKS
(cupping hand over receiver)
Steve. It's Neil's wife.

Dead silence. Taking the phone, Ventura's bearing deflates as Weaver and Brooks take the hint and exit into the hallway.

VENTURA
(into phone:)
Claire.
(listens/leans on window)
I... I have some bad news.

EXT. CONSULATE BUILDING - HALLWAYS - MOMENTS LATER

Brooks and Weaver are pacing, when Ventura finally appears.

VENTURA
I have to take Neil's body back home. I promised his wife.
(beat)
I'll be back in 36 hours.
(MORE)

VENTURA (CONT'D)
E-mail all of Neil's files to my cell and start looking through them as well.

BROOKS
For what?

VENTURA
Whatever got him killed.

Giving no more to go on, he marches off down the hall.

WEAVER
Who said he was killed!

No reply; a muddled Brooks and Weaver are left behind.

INT. PLANE - NIGHT

A subdued cabin, most people asleep, some reading, some watching a movie on phones, tablets and what not.

Ventura sits quietly, nursing a drink, lost in thought.

LITTLE BOY (10)
What are you so worried about, Mister?

In the seat next to him, Ventura spies the Little Boy.

VENTURA
What makes you think I'm worried?

LITTLE BOY
My father always stares at his 77 when he's really worried about something?

VENTURA
77...?
(puts two and two together)
7&7, right, right. Well, I do have a lot on my mind, but I'm not *worried*.

He catches himself, not really sure now. Leaning over to the Little Boy, making sure his sleeping Mother can't overhear...

VENTURA
Tell me, are you a good kid?

The Little Boy gives a serious nod playing off of Ventura's grave tone.

VENTURA
That's very important. Do you know why?

The Little Boy shakes his head: no, but wants to know.

VENTURA
Because it means you'll grow up to be a good man.
(sips his drink)
Which is never what you imagine it means.

EXT. WASHINGTON D.C. - DULLES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

The plane lands. Ventura escorts Neil's metal coffin as it's taken off the plane by two TARMAC PERSONNEL.

In the distance waits a sedan and HEARSE. Neil's devastated wife and daughter, CLAIRE and MARY, wait nearby.

As the coffin is loaded into the hearse, Ventura steps up to the grieving women.

VENTURA
I'm so sorry. I...

CLAIRE
Do you remember the day we got married?

VENTURA
I... yes.

CLAIRE
You were Neil's best man. I took you aside, remember?

The memory coming back to Ventura, his face crumbles.

CLAIRE
I told you that being best man was a lifetime position, that you had to make sure nothing ever happened to him, make sure he always came back to me...
(hugging Mary)
... to *us*.

Ventura is cut deeply.

VENTURA
I'll make it right, Claire.
(intent)
I'll fix this. I'll...

Claire and Mary shuffle off, unwilling to listen any more. They climb into the sedan and follow the departing hearse.

A black sedan pulls up and a suit and tie MAN approaches.

MAN
Mr. Ventura.
(he turns to him)
Jack Mozan at the State Department needs to speak to you.

VENTURA
I've got a plane to catch...

Two more suit and tie MEN exit the sedan, but these gents are much larger and certainly not to be trifled with. Falling in line, Ventura climbs into the sedan and they depart.

INT. HARRY S. TRUMAN BUILDING - DAY

Ventura is lead inside a plush office with a nice view of the Washington Monument in Constitution Gardens. Waiting is JACK MOZAN: late 60s, a political predator, sharp and keen.

MOZAN
Sit down, Steven.

Mozan heads to a bar in the corner and pours himself a drink.

VENTURA
Look, if this is about Consul Adams...

MOZAN
This has nothing to do with that blowhard.
(beat)
You're being recalled.

VENTURA
Recalled?

MOZAN
Your job was to look into Henry Brizard. What did you find?

VENTURA
Nothing. But...

MOZAN
Then your job is over. Your team in Macau have already been reassigned.

He takes a sip of his drink and sits, trying to put an end to the conversation. But Ventura isn't so easily deterred.

VENTURA
Brizard had Neil killed. This *changes* everything...

MOZAN
It does, it turns your simple fact finding mission into a colossal cluster fuck.

Ventura stiffens at the rebuke. Mozan leans in...

MOZAN
You've embarrassed us enough with this mess. Go home.

Withdrawing back to his desk, ignoring Ventura, the parley is evidently over. Ventura exits, slamming the door behind him.

INT. VENTURA'S STATESIDE APARTMENT - NIGHT

A Spartan living space, very unlived in. Ventura enters, throws down his keys, grabs a bottle of Jack Daniels and a dirty glass from the kitchen, and plops down on the couch.

Pouring himself a glass he takes a sip and then walks over to an empty built in book shelf with only a framed photograph:

VENTURA, HIS EX-WIFE AND TWO DAUGHTERS.

Using his sleeve he wipes the ample dust from the glass. Then, he roots around a drawer and pulls out a PHOTO ALBUM.

Sitting back down, he flips through pics of him and his family, his family and Neil's at birthday parties, at the beach, at Disneyland. Ventura smiles at the memories.

The next section are pics from Ventura's military days. Him and Neil in the Marines. On the next page is a pic of...

NEIL, *DERAY* AND HIM -- ARMS AROUND EACH OTHER.

Sipping his drink, he skims more pics of the Three Musketeers back in the day. Ventura grins recalling fond memories.

Looking off into space, he thinks hard thoughts, gulping down his drink, his face souring as he gazes at a pic of Neil.

He puts down the album and glass, and heads into the:

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lifting the rug up in the bedroom closet he opens a safe and flips through a stack of passports. Pocketing one, he slams the safe shut.

About to exit the apartment, he thinks twice. Peeking out the window, he spots the sedan with the two MEN from the airport.

Heading back inside, he climbs out a back window instead.

INT. DULLES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - NIGHT

Ventura approaches the ticket counter.

VENTURA
I need a ticket to Macau.

TICKET AGENT
Can I see your passport, please?

Digging in his coat, Ventura hands over his passport.

TICKET AGENT
Give me one second, *Mr. Lambert*.

INT. DULLES - BAR - NIGHT

Ventura sits at the bar nursing a whiskey, lost in thought. Taking out his cell he dials a number from memory.

VENTURA
(ringing/somebody picks up)
Emiel. It's Ventura. I need a favor. Off the grid.
(beat)
I need a location on somebody. John Deray, but I'm pretty sure he'll be using an alias. Thanks.

Hanging up, he gulps down his drink and motions for another.

EXT. MACAU - ESTABLISHING

Early morning, the city noises starting to rise into the air.

EXT. STREET - DAY

A long strip of storefronts with colorful hanging signs hawking a variety of wares stretches into the distance.

A cab pulls up to the curb and Ventura exits, weary as hell after the eighteen hour flight back to Macau. He heads into:

INT. LOW RENT HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

A place off the beaten path, away from prying eyes, but...

P.O.V. - FROM ACROSS THE STREET - *SOMEBODY WATCHING HIM*.

INT. HOTEL - ROOM - DAY

Ventura enters, throws his bag down and sits on the bed, exhausted after his trip. His cell rings and he picks up.

VENTURA
Yeah. Emiel, yeah, what'ya got?
(beat)
No, nothing, huh? You know what, it's okay. Probably better off you didn't find him. Thanks.

Hanging up, he undresses and hops in the shower.

EXT. HOTEL - DAY

Freshened up, Ventura starts walking down the block.

P.O.V. - BEHIND HIM -- *SOMEBODY FOLLOWING*.

Ventura stops at the corner, waiting to cross the street. The unknown pursuer closes... is Ventura about to be attacked?

DERAY (O.S.)
Looking for me?

Turning, Ventura is stunned to find standing behind him...

<u>JOHN DERAY</u>.

VENTURA
Jesus, John... you scared the shit out of me.

DERAY
(chuckling)
You scare easy these days, huh?

VENTURA
Guess so.

After an awkward moment of silence...

DERAY
What'da'ya say we grab a drink?

VENTURA
(little hesitant but then:)
Yeah. Sure.

As they walk, Ventura lobs a hesitant glance at Deray's back.

INT. BAR - DAY

Ventura and Deray are in a quiet corner with drinks.

VENTURA
How did you find me?

DERAY
People start asking about my aliases, I start asking about them, and here I am.

VENTURA
(little uncomfortable)
Been a while.

DERAY
After what happened in the desert, I never expected to see you again. *We agreed*.

Ventura and Deray swap veiled looks. There's more to the story here, but we'll have to wait to find what out exactly what it is. Letting sleeping dogs lie...

DERAY
How's the family?

VENTURA
I'm divorced. Claire got... custody of the kids.

Ventura drains his glass and Deray arches an eyebrow at the act, noting Ventura's state.

There's an edge to Deray that wasn't there before, something that gives off a definitive and uneasy chill.

VENTURA
Neil was killed.

Deray sighs heavily and grimaces...

DERAY
A shame.

VENTURA
I know who did it. But I can't touch him.

DERAY
You want revenge?

Ventura fidgets, the term spoken out in the open makes him uncomfortable, so he simply nods and in a low voice...

VENTURA
Yeah.

DERAY
You want to take out a *contract*.

Blanching at the declaration, Ventura sips his drink.

VENTURA
How much do you usually get for...

DERAY
Neil was a friend.

Ventura nods again, the implication clear: no charge.

DERAY
So, who are we resting in peace?

VENTURA
(making sure nobody is in earshot)
Henry Brizard.

DERAY
(eyes pinning)
From what I've heard, he's a business man who doesn't get his hands dirty.

VENTURA
He's responsible. Neil dug deep enough that it made people nervous all the way back to D.C., enough so to shut me down.
(somber)
Enough to get him killed.

DERAY
What did he find?

VENTURA
Don't know, but I'm going to retrieve whatever it was and to do that I need to track down one of Neil's contacts.

DERAY
How do you know they're not dead too?

VENTURA
I don't.

Ventura eyes are darting, fingers tap on the table top.

DERAY
You sure you're okay with this?

VENTURA
Yeah, yeah, I'm good.

DERAY
Before we finalize our *arrangement*... tell me something... why'd you come to me after all this time?

Ventura stares at Deray for a hard moment.

VENTURA
Like you said, Neil was a friend. I needed somebody I could trust.
(beat)
Another friend.

Accepting the reply, back to business...

DERAY
I'm going to get the lay of the land, I'm sure the man is dishearteningly well protected.

VENTURA
As well as connected. After it's done, getting out of the country won't be as easy as hoping a plane.

Deray stands and puts a cell phone on the table.

DERAY
It's clean.

VENTURA
You have a cover story that'll stand up to scrutiny?

DERAY
My whole live is a cover.

He holds up his glass...

DERAY
To old *friends*. To Neil.

VENTURA
(returning the gesture)
To Neil.

Deray finishes his drink in a gulp and heads for the exit. Ventura is about to say something but decides against it and simply watches Deray go, looking... *conflicted*.

INT. FORBIDDEN CASINO - NIGHT

Patrons stream in and out, business brisk.

Deray enters in his new cover persona and he looks *sharp*: expensive suit, Italian leather shoes, hair and beard trimmed European style. As he walks the casino floor, we notice that even his swagger differs. Scanning covertly he spots:

THE SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS IN THE CEILING.

UNIFORMED SECURITY GUARDS.

PLAIN CLOTHES SECURITY -- EARPIECES GIVING THEM AWAY.

PIT BOSSES -- GIVING HAND SIGNALS TO FLOOR MANAGERS.

He sits at a Blackjack table, settles in, and orders a drink.

EXT. FORBIDDEN CASINO - LATER THAT NIGHT

Deray exits the casino and spots a convoy of BLACK SUVS and a long LIMO pulling into the:

INT. FORBIDDEN CASINO - UNDERGROUND GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Acting casual, Deray heads for the garage to investigate. He spots the parked SUV's, TEN BODYGUARDS with MP5 MACHINE GUNS visible, hanging from straps under their blazers.

Brizard exits a private elevator with FIVE MORE BODYGUARDS.

DERAY
(under his breath)
Hello, Mr. Paranoid.

EXT. FORBIDDEN CASINO - CONTINUOUS

Deray exits the garage as the convoy moves out. He watches them pull into traffic at full speed. Up above, he spies a HELICOPTER following. Deray arches his eyebrows... sheesh!

INT. TAO CASINO - NIGHT

Ventura struts through Brizard's other casino, wearing a cap and sunglasses. He spots...

Lucienne Brizard walking across the casino floor with her personal bodyguard, TRANG: Asian, 6'2, bald, tatoos on his neck, a wall of a man who we recognize as...

<u>THE MAN WHO RAN OVER NEIL AND KILLED HIM</u>.

Ventura turns away, afraid of being spotted, but what he doesn't notice is...

P.O.V. - SURVEILLANCE CAMERA - B&W IMAGE OF VENTURA.

Ventura approaches a ROULETTE TABLE where a pretty ASIAN GIRL takes bets and spins the wheel.

Squeezing in close to her, Ventura places a bet.

ASIAN WOMAN
No more bets.

She spins the wheel and lets the ball loose, which cues Ventura, who never looks straight at her...

VENTURA
I'm looking for Lau Ye.

The Asian Girl gives Ventura a quick nervous glance and remains quiet at the ball continues to spin.

VENTURA
I know you're his mistress. He's in trouble. I want to help him.

The ball bounces around and finally...

ASIAN GIRL
I haven't seen him around.

The wheel stops turning and...

ASIAN GIRL
36 red... winner!

After handing out winnings, quickly...

ASIAN GIRL
Try the night clubs down at the Docas, he has friends there.
(beat)
Place your bets! Place your bets!

Getting what he needs, Ventura slips away.

EXT. TAO CASINO - NIGHT

Ventura exits and is immediately met by TWO POLICE OFFICERS.

POLICE OFFICER
Identification.

The OFFICERS flank Ventura, who's caught totally flat-footed.

POLICE OFFICER
I said identification.

VENTURA
Hold on, hold on.

Grimacing, Ventura hands over his passport. The Officer gives it a cursory look, clearly already set on a course of action:

POLICE OFFICER
Come with us.

VENTURA
What? Why?

They take him by the arms and...

A GUN IS SHOVED IN VENTURA'S SIDE.

POLICE OFFICER
Move.

His face falling, Ventura fathoms the trouble he's in. A POLICE CRUISER pulls up to the curb and Captain Pang, who Ventura talked to earlier at the Police Station about Neil's death, climbs out with two of *his* MEN.

CAPTAIN PANG
Wo ya ta cong zheli.

The two Officers holding Ventura hesitate.

CAPTAIN PANG
Xianzai!

Ventura is released and taken by Pang's men now.

VENTURA
Hold on, Captain Pang...

His plea ignored, Ventura is shoved into the cruiser quickly, the car swerving into traffic.

INT. POLICE CRUISER - CONTINUOUS

Ventura is nervous, his situation not improving. Then...

CAPTAIN PANG
You should be more careful, Mr. Ventura. Those two officers consider Mr. Brizard a benefactor.

Ventura is utterly confused. Pang turns in his seat...

CAPTAIN PANG
But lucky for you, not all of us are enticed by his... *charity*.

Realizing his ass has just been pulled out of the fire, Ventura lets out a sigh.

INT. STREET CORNER - LATER

The cruiser stops; Ventura released. Pang lowers his window:

CAPTAIN PANG
You were fortunate one of my people intercepted the radio call.

VENTURA
We should talk...

CAPTAIN PANG
I don't know what you're up to, Mr. Ventura, and I don't want to know.
(pointed)
Didn't I tell you to be careful?
(not waiting for a response)
Leave Macau before I find you dead in the street like your friend. Go or I'll arrest you for being here with a fraudulent passport and report you to your State Deparment.

Before Ventura can utter a response, the cruiser takes off.

EXT. HILLS ABOVE MACAU - NIGHT

P.O.V. VIA BINOCULARS: THE BRIZARD ESTATE

A walled compound with security walking the perimeter, a main gate, video surveillance, dogs, guard towers, the works.

Parked in front of the main house is the SUV and limo convoy from The Forbidden. Pull back to reveal, Deray lowering the binoculars and sighing heavily.

EXT. CAFE - DAY

Deray sips coffee at a table. A flustered Ventura arrives.

DERAY
What happened to you?

VENTURA
I was nosing around the Tao looking for Neil's informant, Lau, when I was arrested by Brizard's police patriots.

Instinctively, Deray's eyes start scanning. He stands.

DERAY
They had eyes on you once, they could again. Come on.

They start walking briskly, blending into the crowd.

DERAY
You're not a field man anymore. You have no place out here.

VENTURA
I know what I'm doing.

They cross the street and enter:

INT. ZHANG'S TEA HOUSE - DAY

Settling in a secluded booth, the WAITER approaches.

DERAY
Dragon Well for two.

The Waiter departs.

VENTURA
You have a plan yet?

DERAY
Brizard is a borderline recluse, doesn't leave his heavily fortified compound in the mountains often, and when he does, it's with a full contingent of bodyguards and air support.

VENTURA
Air support? Goddamn.

DERAY
Also, he employs the best. Ex-SAS, Spetzas, Mossad, Recces, PLA.

VENTURA
There's also Colonel Vong, head of the PRC garrison, who's on the take.

DERAY
He'll keep his distance. If the Chinese government found out about him and Brizard he'd be brought back to Beijing and put in front of a firing squad.
(MORE)

DERAY (CONT'D)
(beat)
Haven’t laid eyes on his daughter yet.

VENTURA
Lucienne. You can’t miss her, Brizard’s right hand.

DERAY
I’ll keep an eye out.

VENTURA
When can you make your move?

DERAY
Listen, extracting high value targets is what you, me and Neil did back in the day, but this guy is protected like nothing we ever came up against.

The Waiter brings the tea, the dialogue checked. Sipping his tea, Deray eyes Ventura, not touching his cup, antsy.

DERAY
I make you uncomfortable.

VENTURA
We’ve known each other a lot of years, but...

DERAY
(biting)
C*overed* for each other.

They stare each down, again referencing something we are not privy to yet. Moving on for now...

DERAY
You disapprove of my *profession*?

A strained look from Ventura attests: yes.

DERAY
I don’t have to make the hard calls like the old days.
(veiled jab at the past)
I simply *act*.

VENTURA
You’re what... a tool?

DERAY
An *instrument*.

Shaking his head, Ventura isn't buying into Deray's justification philosophy.

DERAY
You called me.

Ventura stifles, knowing he's right, and retreats to that conflicted mask of emotions again. Deray notices...

DERAY
Wondering if that was the right call now?
(Ventura is quiet: yes)
We can just walk away.

He sits up and puts down his tea cup, putting the call squarely on Ventura's shoulders. Finally...

VENTURA
No. This is for Neil.

Deray settles back in and picks his tea cup back up.

DERAY
See... like I said, I don't make the hard calls anymore.

That rationale only makes Ventura feel worse.

DERAY
Drink your tea.

Ventura smells the tea, doesn't like it, and puts it down.

INT. TAO CASINO - NIGHT

Deray is at the slots, more surveillance work, looking for a chink in the armor. He does a double-take as he spots Lucienne crossing the casino floor with Trang, her bodyguard.

TIME STANDS STILL AS DERAY STARES DIRECTLY AT LUCIENNE.

He's not being slick or unassuming... truly blown away by her. Lucienne out of sight, Deray comes back to his senses.

He looks around, self-conscious, realizing he totally broke cover like an amateur.

INT. TAO CASINO - HIGH STAKES ROOM - NIGHT

Lucienne is at a Texas Hold'em table with three other GENTLEMAN PLAYERS. Deray approaches...

DERAY
May I?

Everybody at the table nods, but Deray waits for Lucienne to approve. After Lucienne gives a slight nod, Deray finally sits, taking out his cash and laying it on the table.

DEALER
(counting the money)
Changing forty thousand pataca.

Chips are stacked in front of Deray. The Dealer snaps cards across the felt and everybody checks their hand.

LUCIENNE
Raise five thousand.

The three players at the table, besides Deray, muck their cards in turn.

DERAY
Call.

He puts his chips in and flashes Lucienne a smile, who is intrigued by this new *player*.

DEALER
Lady is showing possible flush to the ace. Gentlemen a possible high straight.

LUCIENNE
Raise two thousand.

She pushes chips forward. Deray studies her with a head tilt.

DERAY
From what I understand, poker is new to Macau.

Lucienne simply stares at Deray, gauging him, debating whether or not to engage with this stranger. Finally...

LUCIENNE
True, it didn’t show up in the casinos here until about five years ago.

DERAY
Which makes me wonder how experienced a player you are. If you know the odds of catching that eight you need on the river?

Lucienne smiles and twirls her long hair between her fingers. Shooting her a smile back...

DERAY
Also, I wonder if playing with your hair like that is a tell? Do you only do that when you're winning?

LUCIENNE
Call and find out.

Taking out a cigar, Deray holds it up, asking if it's okay. Lucienne nods: sure. After lighting the stogie, Deray pushes his chips in and...

DERAY
Call.

The river comes down and it's the eight. Lucienne flips her hole cards, having the flush.

DEALER
The lady wins.

He pushes the pot to Lucienne.

LUCIENNE
(still twirling her hair)
Perhaps I just enjoy *playing* with myself.

One of the other players does a spit-take. Deray laughs and Lucienne shoots him a markedly friendly smile.

DEALER
Ante up, please.

Chips are thrown in the pot as Deray and Lucienne continue to steal glances at each other.

EXT. TAO CASINO - HIGH STAKES ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Deray exits, his cigar a nub, time passing, and surveys the casino.

LUCIENNE (O.S.)
How about I buy you a drink?
(Deray turns to her)
After all... I have all your money.

DERAY
Sure.

Starting to walk, Deray notices Trang right behind them. They head for the V.I.P. stairs and Deray's eyes light up.

HE'S IN.

INT. TAO CASINO - V.I.P. SECTION - CONTINUOUS

Deray and Lucienne take a private booth on the far wall.

LUCIENNE
(holding out a hand to shake)
Lucienne Brizard.

DERAY
Malcolm Collins.

LUCIENNE
Malcolm... a Gaelic name meaning...
(recalling)
...the follower of the dove.

Deray is impressed by the analysis. A WAITER brings a bottle of wine and pours two glasses.

LUCIENNE
Toponymy is a hobby. I think they reveal much about a person.

DERAY
Lucienne... light, I believe.

LUCIENNE
Latin, yes.

Lifting up his glass...

DERAY
To the light.

Lucienne takes her glass and CLINKS it with Deray's.

They drink, maintaining eye contact, both seeing something *intriguing* in one another.

EXT. TAO CASINO - NIGHT

Deray and Lucienne exit the casino laughing.

LUCIENNE
Thank you for a wonderful night.

DERAY
I'm sure you have many wonderful nights.

LUCIENNE
You'd be surprised. It's hard to find good company.

DERAY
Maybe we can do it again.

LUCIENNE
(coy)
Maybe.

Deray starts to walk off.

LUCIENNE
Tell me something.
(Deray turns around)
Did you let me win?

Deray simply smiles as he keeps walking. A beaming Lucienne watches him for a heartbeat before climbing into her car.

Trang closes the door behind her and then pins Deray's back with a sneer and a snort, not impressed.

EXT. VENTURA'S HOTEL - DAY

Ventura exits and waits to cross the street. Eyes wandering, he clocks a CAUCASIAN MAN window shopping. Doing a double-take, Ventura catches the reflection of the Man's eyes...

LOOKING RIGHT AT HIM.

Turning back around, Ventura knows trouble when he sees it.

He crosses against traffic, HORNS blaring. Over his shoulder, he spots two more CAUCASIAN MEN hopping out of a van, one of them talking into a mic in his sleeve: PROFESSIONALS. Scanning, Ventura moves quickly to the:

INT. VENETIAN MACAU - CASINO FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

550,000 square feet of gaming floor; an ocean of gambling for as far as the eye can see. A good place to get *lost*.

Ventura wades in, FIVE MEN now on his six. Hanging his blazer on a slot machine chair, he tries to throw the hounds off his scent. The FIVE MEN spread out as Ventura heads into the:

INT. VENETIAN MACAU - GIFT SHOP - CONTINUOUS

He moves through the racks of shirts and jackets fast.

INT. VENETIAN MACAU - CASINO FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

The FIVE MEN can see each other across the vast floor, each shaking their heads in turn: no sign of their mark.

As they retreat we find Ventura at a blackjack table wearing a newly purchased souvenir Venetian Windbreaker and cap.

VENTURA
Hit me.

The Dealer lays out a card... Ventura busts.

DEALER
Better luck next time, sir.

Not caring, Ventura peeks over his shoulder to make sure he's evaded the posse.

EXT. SAM BA SING TZIK (RUINS OF ST. PAUL) - DAY

The remains of a large Church, only the front facade still standing, sits atop a grand stone staircase.

Ventura walks around, making like a tourist. A MAN approaches him and Ventura, on edge, is ready to act but...

MAN
Can you take a picture of us, please?

He motions to his family behind him. Ventura relaxes, nods, takes the camera, and lines up the shot...

P.O.V. VIA LENS -- BEHIND THE FAMILY -- DERAY VISIBLE.

Clicking the pick, Ventura gives the camera back.

MAN
Thanks.

Ventura meets up with Deray who's eating something from a container. They walk, milling among the tourists.

DERAY
Asan Abiid.

VENTURA
Iranian terrorist. What about him?

DERAY
Guy walked up to him and asked if he'd take a picture of him and his wife. Asan hit the camera button and *boom*.
(Ventura gives a labored look)
(MORE)

DERAY (CONT'D)
Mossad.
(offering food container)
Curry fish ball?

VENTURA
Pass.

Deray notices that Ventura has a buzz cut under the cap he's wearing, thick dark sunglasses, and hasn't shaved.

DERAY
What's with the Uni-Bomber getup?

VENTURA
I spent the morning ditching five shadows.

DERAY
Brizard's people?

VENTURA
Mine.
(Deray is puzzled)
I was ordered to stand down and now I'm off the reservation. I threw them off the scent, bought a couple of plane tickets, made hotel reservations in four different countries, should buy me a couple of days.

DERAY
Whatever it is that Neil found out is sure causing somebody a lot of worry.

VENTURA
I want to bring it all down around Brizard before he gives up the ghost.

DERAY
Blood for blood, that's all it should be about.

VENTURA
And then some.

Deray stares at Ventura a moment.

DERAY
Didn't know you had it in you.

Ventura is momentarily stricken, realizing, neither did he.

DERAY
I'm *in*.

VENTURA
(snapped out of his reverie)
In?

DERAY
I started up a little something something with Lucienne Brizard.

Stopping dead in his tracks, a stupefied Ventura eyes Deray.

VENTURA
I thought you were looking for a way to infiltrate his organization, not his *family*.

DERAY
Brizard lives up in that compound of his in the hills and if he ventures out, he has an army in tow. I need a way in and she's it.

VENTURA
Taking a run at a man's only daughter is a complicated affair.

DERAY
She's a means to an end.

VENTURA
You know, fear is a good thing, it keeps a man sharp.

DERAY
Fear makes you hesitate when it's time to pull the trigger.

By the look on Ventura's face, he doesn't agree.

DERAY
I'll give you a call in a couple of hours.

As Deray walks off, Ventura slowly strolls through the church ruins, lost in thought. Taking out his cell, he dials...

VENTURA
Alix Foss, please.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. PARIS - FRANCE - ESTABLISHING

SUPER: GENERAL DIRECTORATE FOR EXTERNAL SECURITY

INT. ALIX FOSS OFFICE - DAY

Alix picks up the ringing phone on his desk...

VENTURA
Alix, it's Steven Ventura.

ALIX
Steven, been a while, Yemen I believe.

VENTURA
(with a smirk)
Never been there.

ALIX
Right. What can I do for you.

VENTURA
A favor.

ALIX
Full disclosure, we've had inquiries made about you.

VENTURA
From who?

ALIX
Mutual friends.

VENTURA
I understand. I won't ask you to do anything to jeopardize your welfare.

ALIX
Fair enough.

VENTURA
Can you do a background search on a John Deray? You'll find a couple of aliases that should be in the system.

ALIX
(writing name down)
How deep do you want me to dig?

VENTURA
I know basics, but what I need are the details between the lines.

ALIX
Can I reach you on this number?

VENTURA
Yes. Thanks, Alix. I owe you one.

ALIX
You owe me four now.

They hang up. Ventura takes a cursory look around, making sure nobody has eyes on him and takes off down the street.

INT. TAO CASINO - NIGHT

Deray walks the casino floor and makes sure the SURVEILLANCE CAMERA in the ceiling sees him. Sipping his drink, he turns, as if on display.

Sitting at the slots he plays. After a couple of rounds...

LUCIENNE (O.S.)
Playing hungry tigers?

Smirking, Deray has drawn out his prey. Spinning around in his seat, he takes in Lucienne.

Lucienne takes the coin from Deray's fingers and puts it in the slot machine, pushing the button.

LUCIENNE
It's what the locals call the slots.

The machine hits three cherries: winner and pays out.

LUCIENNE
I was wondering if I could take you up on your earlier offer?

Deray arches an eyebrow.

DERAY
Dinner?

LUCIENNE
I'll drive.

Deray hides a grin as she walks off, knowing he's hooked her.

EXT. TAO CASINO - NIGHT

Deray and Lucienne exit, Trang, her bodyguard in tow. She motions for the VALET to bring her car.

As the car is brought around, Deray gives it the once over...

DERAY
Very nice, a Ferrari GT 250 California Spyder.

They're about to get in, when Trang blocks the way.

LUCIENNE
Meet us at the resturant, Trang.

He doesn't move, eyeing Deray hard, and motions for Deray to raise his arms. Trang pats him down.

Turning to Lucienne, it's clear by his silent protest Trang's still not willing to leave her side.

Lucienne leans over and *whispers* in Trang's ear. Whatever she says does the trick. He opens the door for Deray.

INT. FERRARI GT 250 - CONTINUOUS

Lucienne climbs into the driver's seat as Deray settles in.

DERAY
What did you say to him?

LUCIENNE
That if you lay a hand on me, he has my permission to hurt you.

Giving Trang a look before they leave...

DERAY
Great.

The Ferrari zips into traffic. As he watches the car drive off, Trang calls over his car in order to follow.

EXT. MACAU STREETS - NIGHT

DERAY
He has feelings for you.

LUCIENNE
What better trait for one to have whose job is to put ***my*** life before theirs?

Deray gives a simple nod, the logic simple, if not a bit aloof. The Ferrari turns onto an on ramp for the:

EXT. PONTE DE AMIZADE - CONTINUOUS

The highway skirts the South China Sea, making for a scenic drive. Lucienne pops the clutch, shifts, and the Ferrari engine ROARS as they sprint through traffic.

Trang falls behind and SLAMS his hand on the steering wheel of his car as he takes out his cell and dials.

Deray peaks over at the gauge: 98 mph.

DERAY
Are you trying to scare me?

LUCIENNE
(tongue firmly in cheek)
I live in the fast lane... just want to see if you can keep up.

In answer to her conceit...

DERAY PLACES HIS HAND ATOP HERS ON THE SHIFT KNOB.

DERAY
Clutch.

Lucienne obliges as Deray pops it into fourth gear. *He keeps his hand on hers, Lucienne not minding*.

The Ferrari blazes down the road.

INT. AUX BEAUX ARTS - NIGHT

A resturant styled after a Paris brasserie circa 1930's. Deray and Lucienne are lead to a table by a WAITER.

Out of the corner of his eye, Deray spies...

TWO MEN HE'S SEEN BEFORE -- BRIZARD'S BODYGUARDS.

Lucienne is watched, whether she likes it or not.

LUCIENNE
This is my favorite resturant in Macau.

DERAY
It's old school.

LUCIENNE
I like to think I'm an old soul.

DERAY
So you believe in reincarnation?

LUCIENNE
I guess I do.

DERAY
I went to this psychic in the Moscow suburb of Vorobyevy Gorythe who locals swear by. Factory workers, teenagers, soldiers, even some politicians, a melting pot go to see her.

LUCIENNE
So, were you Alexander the Great, Ivan the Terrible, Genghis Khan in a past life?

DERAY
No, no... she said I was a farmer. Happily married with three kids.

LUCIENNE
(chuckling)
Really?

DERAY
Yes.

LUCIENNE
Do you think she was right?

DERAY
I'd like to think so. It sounds like it was a peaceful life. A life that was full of...

He stops short, the word *love* on the tip of his tongue, but instead...

DERAY
Something.

Lucienne smiles, knowing exactly what he was going to say, moved by his tender cover up.

LUCIENNE
I wonder who I was.

DERAY
China is a spiritual place, I'm sure you could find someone to do a reading.

LUCIENNE
No... they'll just tell me what I want to hear.

DERAY
Why's that?

LUCIENNE
My father is a business man, a casino magnate. A man of influence.

DERAY
So you're part of Macau's aristocracy?

LUCIENNE
Bureaucracy would be more accurate.
(beat)
Which means nobody would be honest. Nobody would tell me I was a farmer, even if I was.

DERAY
Because of your father's... *influence*?

Lucienne grimaces... exactly.

DERAY
Sounds like a lonely life.

LUCIENNE
Why would you say that?

DERAY
A beautiful women like you, I'd expect men to be fighting for a chance to take you to dinner. But, lowly ole me is lucky enough to have the honor.

LUCIENNE
You sell yourself short. There's nothing lowly about you, Malcolm.

DERAY
Well, I'm glad to hear you say that.

LUCIENNE
What do you do for a living, if I may ask?

DERAY
I'm the point man for a Romanian banking consortium. I'm in Macau to evaluate some pieces of land in Taipa we're interested in.

LUCIENNE
Maybe I can help, I know the ins and outs of Macau very well.

DERAY
Perhaps. I have to be careful, my clientele value their privacy.

The Waiter brings the wine and pours as Deray and Lucienne share a gaze across the table. Deray suddenly laughs gently.

LUCIENNE
What?

DERAY
You're not what I expected.

LUCIENNE
In a good way?

DERAY
In a very good way.

Deray's cell rings. He takes it out only long enough to hit ignore, not even glancing at the face, his eyes remaining on Lucienne... genuinely charmed by her.

There's something different about Deray's bearing, he's...

LET HIS GUARD DOWN.

EXT. DOCAS WATERFRONT - NIGHT

Ventura, cell to his ear, hangs up, Deray not answering.

The Docas is an area near the water replete with NIGHT CLUBS, BARS AND RESTAURANTS. Neon signs light up the dark attesting to the fact why Macau is called the Vegas of Asia.

Strolling through the crowd, Ventura enters the:

INT. KING FISH NIGHTCLUB - CONTINUOUS

A dancing throng moves to the pounding music as Ventura makes his way to the bar, gets a drink, and scans the club.

Eyes narrowing, Ventura thinks he spots...

LAU.

It was only for a split-second, Ventura unable to get a bead on him again. He wades into the crowd to start a search.

Finally, he gets eyes on him again, talking to two young ASIAN MEN. Ventura approaches...

VENTURA
Lau!

Seeing Ventura, Lau panics and books. Ventura tries to follow but the two Asians he was talking with block his path.

ASIAN MAN #1
Ni yao qu na bairen nan hai!

VENTURA
Get outta the way!

But they won't, buying time for Lau to escape. Ventura PUSHES through the two Men and runs outside:

EXT. KING FISH NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

No sign of Lau, Ventura curses under his breath. Then, the two Asians who slowed him up exit the club. He follows.

As the Asian Men walk down a quiet part of the waterfront...

VENTURA JUMPS THEM -- SLAMMING ONE INTO A WALL -- OUT COLD.

The other Man attacks, clocking Ventura across the jaw hard. Recovering, Ventura grabs the Man's arm and TWISTS.

ASIAN MAN #1
Rang wo zu!

VENTURA
You better speak English or I'm gonna have to break your arm.

ASIAN MAN #1
Okay! Okay! What'da you want!

VENTURA
Lau. Where is he?

ASIAN MAN #1
I don't know...

Ventura grabs a finger and dislocates it with a DULL SNAP, making the MAN CRY out in pain.

ASIAN MAN
Okay! Okay! He wants help getting smuggled out of the country. That's all I know, I swear.

Ventura SNAPS the finger back in place, making the MAN CRY out again. Ventura storms off realizing he has to find Lau fast before he disappears.

INT. AUX BEAUX ARTS RESTURANT - NIGHT

Lucienne's cell rings and she glances at it, the act telling, not enamored enough yet to let it slide as Deray did earlier.

LUCIENNE
Excuse me.
(she picks up)
Ni hao. (Listens) Hao.
(hanging up)
I'm sorry, I have to go.

DERAY
(sensing an opportunity:)
I could come with you.

Lucienne thinks about it a split-second, but...

LUCIENNE
I'll make it up to you.

She leans in, kisses Deray on the cheek, and whispers...

LUCIENNE
I promise.

With that, she goes. Deray sits back and realizes that Lucienne will only let *her* guard down to a point.

INT. DOCAS WATERFRONT - BAR - NIGHT

Ventura sits at one of the bars skirting the water, nursing a drink and his bruised jaw. His cell rings and he answers...

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. ALIX FOSS OFFICE - NIGHT

VENTURA (O.S.)
What'ya got for me?

ALIX
Not much. Deray is wanted for questioning in three countries with regards to murder investigations, a person of interest in another two, including here in Paris.

VENTURA
What do you know about that one?

ALIX
A murdered French banker who had ties to the Sudan, Somali pirate organizations, Chechen groups.
(looking over file)
From what I can make out from Interpol... he was making a big push into the Asian markets for an Albanian group, Macau especially, and somebody pushed back.

Ventura's face goes cold.

VENTURA
Does that report happen to mention Henry Brizard at all?

ALIX
No. Should it?

VENTURA
Thanks, Alix.

Hanging up, paying for his drink, Ventura hurries off.

EXT. MANDARIN ORIENTAL HOTEL - NIGHT

A gleaming glass building, every room with a view of the bay.

INT. MANDARIN ORIENTAL HOTEL - ROOM - NIGHT

Ventura is searching the room: a quick look through the desk, closet, end tables and he comes up empty.

Standing on a chair, he pops open the AIR CONDITIONING VENT. A string is tied to the inside lip. Pulling on it, he finds a LEATHER PORTFOLIO on the other end.

Unzipping it, Ventura finds: multiple passports with Deray's aliases, Swiss and Cayman Islands bank books, and pictures: a young Deray with his MOTHER, a six year old smiling Deray in a baseball uniform and...

<u>DERAY, VENTURA & NEIL IN MARINE UNIFORMS WAY BACK WHEN</u>.

A grin creases Ventura's lips at the find. A keen eye should notice it's the same pic Ventura has in his album back home.

EXT. MANDARIN ORIENTAL HOTEL - NIGHT

Deray pulls up in his car, hands the keys to the Valet, and heads inside.

INT. MANDARIN ORIENTAL HOTEL - ROOM - NIGHT

Ventura is replacing the portfolio where he found it inside the vent, when he hears the door lock... CLICK.

Pushing the chair back, Ventura waits to confront Deray.

The door opens and closes, a figure walks in, but doesn't put on the light, instead using a flashlight.

Ventura realizes too late...

IT'S NOT DERAY.

Spotted in the beam of light, Ventura jumps the INTRUDER and they struggle.

Falling over the bed, they KNOCK over the lamp and roll onto the floor. Getting to his feet, Ventura...

CHARGES THE INTRUDER AND SLAMS HIM AGAINST THE WALL.

About to deliver a punch, Ventura's leg is KICKED out from under him and he's GUT KICKED hard.

A SHOT ACROSS THE JAW AND VENTURA IS DAZED -- ON HIS BACK.

The Intruder takes out a .45, aims at Ventura's head, when...

SLAM! -- FROM BEHIND -- DERAY TACKLES THE INTRUDER.

His .45 flies across the room, but he's just as deadly without the weapon as he ATTACKS Deray barehanded.

THEY ENGAGE IN A FLURRY OF PUNCHES, KICKS AND COUNTER MOVES.

The Intruder pulls a KNIFE. Deray squares off with him DODGING slashes and thrusts.

Keeping his eyes on the Intruder, Deray picks up a magazine off the desk in the corner and rolls it up *tight*.

DERAY USES THE MAGAZINE AS A MAKESHIFT BLACKJACK -- DEFLECTING THE BLADE AND BELTING THE INTRUDER IN THE FACE.

Landing a CHOP to the throat, Deray drops the Intruder to his knees, and shoves a knee under his jaw with a CRACK, KNOCKING him out cold.

Ventura is coming around, Deray helping him to the bed, his senses slowly returning.

VENTURA
Who is he?

DERAY
Brizard's man.

VENTURA
He was here to kill you.

DERAY
No. He was probably here to learn more about me...
(giving Ventura knowing gaze)
...*like you were*.

Caught, Ventura doesn't try to deny it, and instead *attacks*.

VENTURA
Did you kill a French banker three months ago?

Deray pins Ventura with a look, knowing exactly where he's going with the question.

DERAY
It was a contract.

VENTURA
For Brizard?

DERAY
(shrugs)
I only deal with brokers.

Deray paces, not happy with this impromptu grilling, then decides to open up to his old friend and explain...

DERAY
After Afghanistan, I was looking over my shoulder for quite sometime. But after a while I realized, there was no one there and it hit me: What now? I had nothing and nobody. A choice I made for us...

His somber tone affects Ventura, catching on to the fact that Deray was very *alone*.

DERAY
I met a guy in Ireland. Ex-British Army. He introduced me to my current line of work.
(beat)
It was that or keep running, I didn't have much choice, opportunities were scarce for me back in those days.
(MORE)

DERAY (CONT'D)
(beat)
I work for a lot of people.

Ventura stares at the dead body with disdain and steps onto the balcony to clear his head. Deray checks the Intruder, makes sure he's still out, and picks up his gun.

EXT. MANDARIN ORIENTAL HOTEL - BALCONY - CONTINUOUS

Deray joins Ventura and soaks in the magnificent view, the sights and sounds of Macau.

VENTURA
(gesturing back to body)
This is a cluster fuck, we're blown.

DERAY
I expected this much.

Ventura is confused.

DERAY
I start seeing Lucienne, Henry Brizard's flesh and blood, the man is going to be suspicious. Obviously...

He gestures to the body inside, Ventura not following.

DERAY
He has a name, an alias, but that's not going to be good enough to fool a man like Brizard. There *<u>has</u>* to be something more for him to find.

VENTURA
(getting the gist)
John Deray.

DERAY
A man with a past who was afraid to tell his daughter who he really was. He'll confront me, ask my intentions, and that'll be my opening.

The logic is sound, even though Ventura clearly still has issues with Deray working for Brizard in the past.

VENTURA
I'm curious, for the right price, would you have taken the contract on Neil?

Anger flares in Deray's eyes, but he manages to keep cool.

DERAY
Fuck you, Steven.

He turns to get away from Ventura, tired of being attacked.

VENTURA
What about him?

Walking over to the Intruder, Deray grabs a pillow, puts it to his head and...

SHOOTS HIM WITH HIS OWN GUN.

VENTURA
Goddamn it!

DERAY
He saw us together. He tells Brizard, we're both as good as dead.

VENTURA
But..! Jesus, John!

Ventura storms out of the room. Deray shakes his head at the display as he throws the gun on the body and starts wrapping it in the bed comforter.

EXT. MANDARIN ORIENTAL HOTEL - NIGHT

Ventura exits the lobby, massaging his swollen jaw, and starts walking. Down the block, he stops, gazes back at the Mandarin Oriental, and takes in a deep breath of thought.

His face a twisted mass of emotions, he keeps walking.

EXT. BRIZARD ESTATE - NIGHT

A palatial house and grounds situated atop a hill on the outskirts of Macau with a breathtaking view of the city.

Lucienne's car arrives and parks. At the far end of the driveway she spots a sedan, the waiting driver a PRC SOLIDER.

INT. MAIN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Lucienne enters and makes her way through the foyer...

BRIZARD (O.S.)
Late night?

He stands in the doorway to the study. Behind him, Colonel Vong is seated with a brandy in hand.

LUCIENNE
Keeping tabs?

BRIZARD
Always.

LUCIENNE
(peeking over his shoulder)
Colonel Vong. Again.

BRIZARD
Making demands.

LUCIENNE
Greedy for a communist, isn't he?

She starts to walk off with a smirk, but...

BRIZARD
His name's not Malcolm Collins.

Turning, Lucienne eyes her father with patient silence.

BRIZARD
It's an alias, one of many actually.

LUCIENNE
I know.

Brizard gives his little girl a questioning grin.

LUCIENNE
What are you doing, Lucienne?

Lucienne doesn't answer right away, definitely conflicted by her feelings for Deray.

LUCIENNE
I can take care of him if it comes to that?

BRIZARD
He's dangerous.

LUCIENNE
Have I ever let you down before?

BRIZARD
Don't let your feelings get in the way of the *truth*.

Imparting his wisdom, Brizard heads back into the Study.

INT. GRAND LISBAO CASINO - NIGHT

The SPORTS BOOK SECTION of the casino is wall to wall flat screens displaying sporting events from around the world.

Nestled in a plush leather chairs is Ventura watching Monday Night Football. Somebody sits one seat over... Deray.

DERAY
(watching game)
Don’t tell me you’re still a Browns fan.

VENTURA
You grow up a Browns fan, you’re always a Browns fan... unfortunately.

DERAY
How’s your search going for this informer Neil spoke to?

VENTURA
Good news is he’s alive. Bad news is, he’s trying to get out of the country.

DERAY
You know Brizard’s bound to be looking for him too, better get to him first.

VENTURA
Thanks for the tip.

DERAY
Hey, since you’re on the outs with...

VENTURA
(knowing where he’s going:)
I transferred your fee out of the slush account earlier, it’s safe and sound in your bank account.

Deray nods: good. Ventura bites his tongue for a sec, but decides to ask what’s on his mind...

VENTURA
What did you do with the body at the hotel?

DERAY
You really want to know?

On second thought, Ventura drops it.

DERAY
Lucienne is cautious. Too cautious.

VENTURA
You think she suspects you in some way?

DERAY
I'm sure she has her suspicions.

VENTURA
If that's so, why hasn't she put a bullet in your head?

DERAY
In a way, Lucienne is as much a recluse as her father.
(beat)
She's lonely.

VENTURA
Poor girl.

Deray shoots Ventura a sneer for his dig at Lucienne.

DERAY
It's going to take too long to win her trust, which means the odds of being discovered become greater.
(beat)
We're gonna have to put on a show.

Now it's Ventura who turns to Deray, not liking the sound of that one damn bit.

EXT. SUN YAT SEN PARK - DAY

A seventeen acre park that counts among its amazing features an aviary, Victorian greenhouse, the Feng Shui Forest and...

The flower gardens, which Deray and Lucienne are strolling through. Trang keeps pace behind them.

Lucienne is distracted, Deray picking up on it.

DERAY
You're quiet.

LUCIENNE
Sorry. Just have some things on my mind.

DERAY
My ear is available.

She stares at Deray, obviously debating if she should.

LUCIENNE
Not now.

They keep walking in silence, Lucienne shooting a veiled glance at Deray when...

SHE TAKES DERAY'S HAND IN HERS.

He's a little surprised at first, but then smiles warmly at the gesture.

Not pleased by the show of affection is Trang, eyes burning.

EXT. MACAU STREETS - DAY

A CAB pulls up to the curb.

INT. CAB - CONTINUOUS

Ventura leans forward to the driver and hands him some cash.

VENTURA
Wait here.

Taking the money, the driver nods an okay. Ventura exits with a brown shopping bag in hand and enters:

INT. BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

He struts through the lobby and exits back onto the street via a door at the other end of the building, plainly up to something.

EXT. FLOWER GARDENS - FAR SIDE - DAY

Lucienne and Deray are meandering quietly when Lucienne stops and spins on Deray. After biting her lip a second longer...

LUCIENNE
There's something I have to ask you.

This is hard for her and Deray can see that.

LUCIENNE
Be honest.

Her tone has a hint of warning in it. However, before she can say anything further, Deray's eyes go wide and he...

PUSHES HER TO THE GROUND - GUNFIRE BURSTING AROUND THEM.

The GUNMAN is already on the run; wearing a mask and armed with a .45 AUTOMATIC. People SCREAM and run for cover as...

TRANG RETURNS FIRE.

DERAY
(to Lucienne)
Stay down!

He shields her with his body. Lucienne notices blood...

LUCIENNE
You're hit!

Deray ignores the wound. Trang is on the run, chasing the attacker.

EXT. AVIARY - CONTINUOUS

Birds fly free, squealing and squawking, as the attacker ducks behind a tree and takes off his mask. It's...

VENTURA.

He ditches the coat, mask and gun in a trash can and exits the other side of the Aviary. Trang can be seen in the foreground still searching for his target.

EXT. BUILDING - DAY

Ventura exits the building. The cab driver is leaning against the hood, smoking. As Ventura climbs into the backseat.

Putting out the butt, the driver hops back in and drives off.

EXT. FLOWER GARDENS - DAY

Deray helps Lucienne to her feet.

DERAY
Are you okay?

LUCIENNE
I'm not the one who's been shot.

Checking the wound...

DERAY
They were aiming for you.

Trang returns...

LUCIENNE
Did you find him?

A shake of the head, Trang ashamed of his failure.

DERAY
Let’s get her out of here.

They double-time it down the path, Deray and Trang to either side of Lucienne, shielding her from any further harm.

INT. KIANG WU HOSPITAL - TRAUMA BAY - DAY

Deray’s arm is stitched up by a DOCTOR as Lucienne looks on.

DOCTOR
I’m going to give you a prescription for antibiotics.

The Doctor exits as Deray slips his shirt back on. Lucienne approaches and buttons it for him, a solemn moment, touching.

Deray flashes her a smile and Lucienne serves up a strained grin, something heavy still weighing on her.

DERAY
Back at the park, you were about to ask me something.

Lucienne breaks eye contact, unable to pose her question while staring right at Deray.

LUCIENNE
Who are you?

Deray sighs softly, milking the moment for maximum effect...

DERAY
John Deray.
(beat)
But you knew that already, didn’t you?

LUCIENNE
When I found out you weren’t who you said you were, I almost did something, very rash, very... *final*.
(pins him with a hard look)
You took a contract.

DERAY
On your father.

Lucienne breaks away, pacing, upset, *conflicted*.

LUCIENNE
Who?

DERAY
Russian syndicate.

LUCIENNE
You've had ample time to take your shot... why didn't you?

DERAY
You almost didn't something rash when you found out who I really was... why didn't you?

She leans in, hesitant. Deray does the same, also hesitant... both finding it hard to let their guard down.

THEY SHARE A TENDER KISS THAT QUICKLY TURNS *PASSIONATE*.

Their bodies relax as they let go and embrace the moment, their attraction putting suspicions to rest... for now.

The curtain parts and Trang breaks up the episode.

Deray and Lucienne stare at each other deeply, both realizing there's most definitely something between them.

LUCIENNE
There's a party tonight at my father's estate. I want you to come with me.

She departs. Before Trang follows he gives Deray a look, a very specific one... *jealously*.

Deray is in a stupor, touching his lips, smiling to himself.

EXT. KIANG WU HOSPITAL - DAY

Deray exits, walks down the block, and dials his cell.

INT. NOODLE BAR - DAY

Ventura grabs a bite to eat as he scrolls through Neil's files on his phone, reading Lau Ye's dossier, a pic embedded on screen. Ventura's cell rings; picking up...

VENTURA
Tell me it was worth it?

DERAY
I'm having dinner tonight at the Brizard estate.

VENTURA
The wolf is in fold.

DERAY
It's only a matter of time now till I get my shot. Get out of Macau, I can handle it from here.

VENTURA
Not yet, I got a lead on Lau after flipping through Neil's reports. Gonna check it out.

DERAY
Watch your back, remember, Brizard's people are following the same trail.

He hangs up. Meanwhile, Deray seems to be very... *conflicted*.

EXT. BRIZARD ESTATE - NIGHT

Deray drives up to the main gate where SECURITY is waiting.

DERAY
John Deray.

Using his real name now, the SECURITY people check the guest list and open the gate:

EXT. MAIN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Deray pulls up the circular drive where a line of high-end autos are parked, a separate section for limos. Parking and exiting his car, Deray buttons his blazer and enters:

INT. MAIN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A BUTLER leads him into a grand foyer.

GUESTS mill about, drinking, cavorting, and gossiping. This is the upper crust of Macau society and they know it.

A WAITER brings a tray and offers Deray champagne. He takes a glass, sips, and makes a sour face; not his drink of choice.

LUCIENNE (O.S.)
You made it.

Deray turns to find Lucienne dressed in a stunning black and red gown. He soaks her in, fighting to keep his jaw from dropping to the floor. Lucienne sashays over. They kiss.

DERAY
You look beautiful.

She flashes a smile and Deray can't help but shoot one back.

LUCIENNE
Come, let me introduce you to my father.

Deray sneaks in a deep breath... meeting the mark at last.

EXT. MAIN HOUSE - PATIO - CONTINUOUS

The back of the house affords a breathtaking view of Macau. Mingling groups of Guests are spread about.

LUCIENNE
Father.

Extricating himself from a conversation, Brizard approaches.

LUCIENNE
I'd like you to meet John Deray.

She uses his real name for the first time and Deray can't help but be struck by a small involuntarily flinch; *exposed*.

DERAY
An amazing place you have here.

BRIZARD
It used to be all woodlands. I was hiking one day and found this view and built the estate around it.

DERAY
It's peaceful.

BRIZARD
For you to lay eyes upon it means you've made an impression, Mr. Deray.

Deray is caught off guard by the statement.

BRIZARD
Lucienne doesn't bring *anybody* here.

DERAY
(a quick look to Lucienne)
I happen to think she's something special as well, sir.

A smile from Lucienne.

BRIZARD
(holding up his glass)
That makes two of us.
(his cell rings/moving off)
(MORE)

BRIZARD (CONT'D)
Enjoy yourself, everybody here is relatively harmless.

Deray winces, wondering if that quip was meant for him.

BRIZARD
If you'll excuse me.

He breaks off and heads over to a group of people...

DERAY
I think *I* failed to make an impression.

LUCIENNE
That he spoke to you at all speaks volumes.

Mugging, Deray stands corrected. The Waiter brings Deray's drink on a tray which he takes.

LUCIENNE
Let's mingle.

Heading back inside, Deray sips his drink with anxious eyes, out of his element, more at home in the shadows.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Ventura enters the building and climbs the stairs.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY NIGHT

Finding a door, Ventura puts his ear up against it and listens. Pulling a gun from his pocket, he KNOCKS.

VOICE (INSIDE)
Shui zai nali?

Hearing the voice, Ventura rears back his foot and...

<u>KICKS THE DOOR IN</u>.

INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The ASIAN MAN inside is STRUCK by the door and FALLS back. Ventura enters quickly, SLAMMING the door behind him and shoving his gun in the MAN'S face, who freezes.

VENTURA
Lau Ye. Where can I find him?

ASIAN MAN
I... I don't know.

VENTURA
You introduced him to his wife who died of cancer last year.

The Asian Man is stunned by Ventura's pin-point knowledge.

VENTURA
You know.

ASIAN MAN
I... I don't.

Breaking eye contact, he remains loyal to his friend. Ventura grabs his chin and stares into his eyes.

VENTURA
Your eyes are dilated, you're stuttering... you're lying.

The Asian Man is scared but not enough to give up his friend despite the gun in his face, and Ventura knows it, sighing.

VENTURA
Give him a message. Martin Neil worked for me. I want to help him, but to do that, I need to know what he gave to my friend that got him killed. Understand?

A quick nod from the Asian Man; got it.

VENTURA
I'll be at the Macallan Whisky Bar every night. If he wants to get out of this alive, tell him to come find me.

With that, he stows his gun and exits.

INT. MAIN HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Deray and Lucienne are standing with a group of people, Lucienne piloting the conversation, everyone laughing. Deray puts a hand on Lucienne's elbow to excuse himself.

He moves over to the bar as Lucienne continues entertaining, and holds his glass up to the Bartender for a refill.

BRIZARD (O.S.)
Enjoying yourself?

Deray finds Brizard has snuck up beside him.

DERAY
I'm enjoying the company.

He eyes Lucienne and Brizard nods, understanding.

BRIZARD
I'd rather be alone, but, appearances must be maintained.
(hushed jest)
Ancient Chinese proverb says: A man with free liquor always has friends.

As he stares at his daughter across the room regaling the guests, who laugh.

BRIZARD
Lucienne is a lot like her mother, an excellent judge of character.

Deray nods, letting the telling assessment sink in. He also notices two Bodyguards standing close by, Brizard's judgement of Deray much more *cautious*.

Brizard tries to stifle a cough, taking out a handkerchief.

BRIZARD
Money can buy much, but unfortunately, not youth.

DERAY
Or wisdom.

Deray regards Brizard with curiosity; this is not the criminal mastermind he expected to meet, he's a gentle old man.

The Bartender brings over Deray's drink, breaking Brizard out of his reverie...

BRIZARD
Well... it was nice chatting with you.

He walks off with a grin.

LATER: the party is winding down and Deray and Lucienne approach Brizard saying good-byes to his guests.

Again, no offer of a hand to shake, just a smile.

LUCIENNE
I'll walk you out.

EXT. MAIN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Deray and Lucienne kiss, sharing a moment -- Brizard watching from a window. Deray heads to his car as Lucienne smiles and heads back inside. A waiting Trang opens the door for Deray.

TRANG
One of my people is missing. He was last seen at the Mandarin Oriental. Did you happen to notice anything... amiss?

It's clear he's inquiring about the man Deray killed.

DERAY
Sorry, no.
(about to get in his car)
Perhaps he stuck his nose where it didn't belong.

He gives Trang a knowing glare, the quip aimed squarely at him. Deray climbs in his car and speeds off.

INT. MAIN HOUSE - LIBRARY - NIGHT

Brizard is staring out the window, at Deray's car moving down the driveway and out the gate. Lucienne walks in behind him.

BRIZARD
You're falling in love.

Lucienne is snapped into silence.

BRIZARD
Don't bother to deny it, my dear.

LUCIENNE
What did you think of him?

BRIZARD
He has a past.

LUCIENNE
Don't *we* all?

Brizard gives a wry grin, her point clear and cutting.

BRIZARD
You know 'what' he is.
(beat)
Don't forget... especially those times you want to.

He walks off to rejoin Vong. Lucienne remains at the window thinking over her father's subtle *warning*.

EXT. MANDARIN ORIENTAL HOTEL - MORNING

Macau is born anew, sins of the night buried and forgotten.

Deray exits the hotel and starts walking when a SEDAN pulls up and two MEN exit, blocking his way; Brizard's Bodyguards.

MAN #1
Mr. Brizard would like a word.

He motions for the car, and Deray obliges him, getting in.

INT. BRIZARD ESTATE - DAY

The sedan pulls up the main drive and parks. Daytime now, Deray gets a good look at the security up close which is ample. The Bodyguards lead Deray inside and pat him down.

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

An expansive space that looks out over the ocean beyond. A glass desk and floor to ceiling windows give the impression that Brizard is sitting on the waves.

Not acknowledging Deray, Brizard remains engrossed in his computer screen. His demeanor is different, not like at the party, here, he's all business. A Bodyguard motions for Deray to sit.

BRIZARD
(reading from screen)
John Deray. Born Macon, Georgia. Served in the Marines, Special Operations Command, went MIA in 2001, since then has done *work* for various Latin American Cartels, Golden Triangle gangs, Romanian Clans...

DERAY
If you want me to stop seeing your daughter, I understand.

BRIZARD
She wouldn't.
(beat)
What kind of father would I be if I tried to deny her something she's searched so very long for?

DERAY
I'd never hurt her.

BRIZARD
I doubt you could.
(beat)
And I wouldn't let you.

His gives Deray a hard stare... putting a head on that point.

BRIZARD
Lucienne is very precious to me and if you want to be with my daughter, you have to live in her world... *my* world.

Deray gives a canny nod as Brizard makes it clear he's unwilling to let go of Lucienne to *any* man.

DERAY
I understand.

Brizard leans back and gauges Deray.

BRIZARD
Is there anything in your past, anything at all, that can come back to hurt *her*?

DERAY
No. Nothing.

BRIZARD
Don't lie to me.

Deray keeps eye contact with Brizard, knowing if he flinches now, he's done.

DERAY
She's safe. You have my word.

Brizard stares at Deray a moment longer, then...

BRIZARD
Thank you for coming in to talk.

He returns to his computer, meeting over. Deray leaves.

EXT. MAIN HOUSE - DAY

Deray exits and is met by Trang who walks him to the waiting sedan.

TRANG
Colonel Vong. The PRC Garrison commander.

DERAY
What about him?

TRANG
He's the one who tried to have Lucienne killed in the park.

Deray gives a sly sideways glance... knowing for a fact that's *not* true. Trang hands Deray a piece of paper.

DERAY
What's this?

BODYGUARD #1
Colonel Vong's exposed flank.

Staring at the paper, Deray knows *exactly* what he's being asked to do, but he doesn't take it right away.

DERAY
Lucienne tell you to give me this?

No answer from Trang.

DERAY
Brizard?

Still no answer, Trang simply holds out the paper. Finally, Deray takes it and Trang walks off without another word.

EXT. ROW HOUSE - NIGHT

Multi-colored row houses line the street. Colonel Vong's sedan is parked out front, the PRC SOLDIER DRIVER waiting at the wheel.

Vong exits a house, uniform jacket in hand, a WOMAN escorting him dressed in nothing but a slip. She gives him a kiss and he strides down the steps, scanning to make sure he's not seen on his tryst; the streets deserted.

The Soldier gets out of the car and opens the back door. Vong climbs in and waits for the Driver to shut the door.

COLONEL VONG
Rang women qu.

But the Driver doesn't react, doesn't make any move at all.

COLONEL VONG
Rang women shenme shi?!

Slumping over the door, the Driver has a KNIFE in the back of his neck. Standing behind him is...

DERAY.

GUN in hand, using the Driver's body as a silencer, he shoots through his belly, HITTING Vong in the head.

Deray puts the gun in the Driver's belt holster -- having used his own weapon to make the kill.

The job done, Deray slips off his gloves like a surgeon after an operation, and walks away clean.

INT. PUBLIC BATHROOM - NIGHT

Ventura is at the sink, shirt off, cleaning up, shaving with a disposable razor. He slips his shirt back on and exits.

EXT. MACAU STREETS - NIGHT

SIRENS wail as POLICE CRUISERS speed down the street. Ventura wonders what's going on.

EXT. TAP SEAC SQUARE - NIGHT

This is a popular area lined with historical architecture. Ventura finds Deray among the tourists.

More SIRENS in the distance catches Ventura's attention.

VENTURA
Something's going on, police are out in force.

DERAY
Colonel Vong was murdered.

Ventura puts two and two together damn quick.

VENTURA
Why?

DERAY
It was... *implied*.

VENTURA
Implied...? By who?

No answer from Deray, because he doesn't really know.

VENTURA
Not a word was said outright, but you murder someone.
(shaking head with disbelief)
This is why Brizard's never been touched... he manipulates.

DERAY
It was a test. I've put their suspicions to rest and now I have their trust.

VENTURA
And made us wanted men.

A simmering silence instills itself between them as a troupe of LION DANCERS in colorful costumes wow the crowd.

DERAY
You want to bring Brizard down, you want the man dead, that's the bottom line. This is now.

VENTURA
I didn't want anybody else to get hurt. I never agreed to that.

DERAY
The minute you picked up the phone to find me, you knew what you were doing.

About to deny it, Ventura stifles, knowing Deray is absolutely right.

Deray cuts through the Lion Dancers and disappears. Suspicion dances in Ventura's eyes as he decides to follow Deray.

EXT. CLUBE MILITAR - NIGHT

Deray and Lucienne are seated by the window, eating, drinking, laughing.

Pull back to reveal Ventura watching from across the street in the rain. He starts to walk off, but turns back, staring at Deray with uncertainty... wondering what's truly going on with him.

INT. MACALLAN WHISKY BAR - NIGHT

A classic old guard establishment with deep rich woods and a long mahogany bar. Ventura nurses a drink when somebody sits next to him.

LAU (O.S.)
Mr. Ventura.

Finally, Ventura untangles himself from his thoughts, and realizes who's sitting next to him.

LAU
I...

VENTURA
Not here.

Ventura eyes the patrons within earshot and is wary, erring on the side of caution.

VENTURA
Let’s go.

EXT. STREETS - CONTINUOUS

Ventura and Lau head down the block and head for:

INT. 2046 CLUB - CONTINUOUS

A karaoke club where groups sing and drink on numerous stages. Ventura heads for the HOSTESS and pulls out cash...

VENTURA
I need a private room.

The Hostess leads them to a:

INT. PRIVATE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ventura shuts the door. The room is sound proofed, the singing and carousing outside shushed, but visible through a smoked two way glass partition.

VENTURA
What was on the flash drive you gave Neil?

LAU
I have a target on my back! First, I want assurances...

VENTURA
First! Tell me what got my friend murdered?

Hesitating, Lau realizes he has no choice, digs in his pockets, and hands Ventura folded up PRINT OUTS.

VENTURA
What’s this?

LAU
I printed one file before I copied them onto a flash drive.

Taking them in hand, Ventura scans them carefully.

VENTURA
Brizard’s casinos are laundering money for the Triads, Yakuza, IRA, Hamas, I know that much...

LAU
Those prints outs don't show you the big picture.
(beat)
With the money the casinos take in and the money laundering it's billons in cash. Brizard can manipulate world interest rates, entire economies, crash markets wholesale, start a recession.

VENTURA
That's not possible you'd need access to the global index of cash reserves.

LAU
He does... and by hoarding it he can manipulate the dollar, yen, euro, all of it, the world economy.

Ventura is staggered by the true scope of Brizard's empire.

VENTURA
Can you get the entire file again...?

LAU
Are you crazy! She killed your friend for it and she's after me now!

VENTURA
She who?

LAU
Lucienne Brizard.

VENTURA
What about Henry Brizard...

LAU
The old man is just the ringmaster, Lucienne is the animal.

Ventura flips through the pages, taking it all in, when...

HIS EYES GO WIDE.

Staring out the two way glass, his expression becomes dark and guarded. He watches the Patrons beyond singing, lips moving, but *silent* in the sound proofed room.

LAU
So, how you planning to get me out of Macau safe...

VENTURA SPINS AROUND -- PULLS HIS GUN -- AND SHOOTS LAU.

One round to the chest -- Lau's face is frozen in utter shock as he collapses to the floor, the shot unheard.

Pocketing the print outs, Ventura exits back into the main club, someone singing La Roux's 'Bulletproof'; alas, not so for Lau. Head down, he escapes the soon-to-be crime scene.

EXT. CLUBE MILITAR - LATER

Deray and Lucienne.

DERAY
I'll drive.

LUCIENNE
Where we going?

DERAY
A surprise.

The Valet brings the car and they depart, Lucienne curious.

INT. MAN MO TEMPLE - NIGHT

Built in 1847, it's like stepping back in time. Red woods, gold accents, and a ceiling covered by bamboo lamps.

Deray and Lucienne walk slowly through the temple. A head nod from Deray points out an OLD MAN sitting behind an altar.

DERAY
He's a fortune teller.

Wonder dances in Lucienne's eyes.

DERAY
Don't worry, he'll be honest, he won't know who you are. He's blind.

Lucienne's curiosity is piqued. They sit before the BLIND FORTUNE TELLER who holds out a cup of bamboo sticks for Kau Cim fortune telling. Lucienne closes her eyes and shakes the cup while praying until a single stick falls out.

The Fortune Teller takes the stick, running his hand across it, reading an inscribed number with his fingers.

BLIND FORTUNE TELLER
Your heart has been blessed after a long journey, it sings with another heart that is true.

Lucienne and Deray look into each other's eyes, the reading having an abundance of meaning for both of them.

Handing the Fortune Teller some money, they stand and move to leave, both mute, pondering the reading.

Lucienne spins on Deray and they share an intense kiss.

EXT. BUS STATION - NIGHT

Ventura marches inside and makes a beeline for the:

INT. RESTROOMS - CONTINUOUS

Making sure the coast is clear, he takes out the PRINT OUTS he took from Lau, holds them over the sink, and...

SETS THEM AFLAME WITH A LIGHTER.

Dropping them into the sink, he watches them crumble to black and then runs the sink to wash away the ashes.

He then leans over and splashes his face with water, staring at himself in the mirror with dread and worry.

VENTURA
(under his breath/shaking his head)
Goddamnit Neil.

We're left wondering what exactly Neil found to have such an effect on Ventura.

EXT. MACAU MARINA - DAY

Lucienne and Deray pull up to the dock in the Spyder and park in front of a forty foot Yacht. As they exit the car...

LUCIENNE
What do you think?

DERAY
New money.

Shooting him a wry smirk, they board, the crew welcoming them aboard. Trang gives Deray his usual sneer of a greeting.

EXT. SOUTH CHINA SEA - DAY

The Yacht -- High Tide -- cuts through the water. On deck, Deray and Lucienne sip their drinks. Lucienne tilts her head back soaking up the sun.

DERAY
You're going to burn.

Picking up sun block from the table...

DERAY
May I?

Lucienne turns around and lies on her stomach. Deray unties her bikini top for full access to her back. He rubs in the lotion with soft strokes.

LUCIENNE
Have you ever been accused of being smooth?

DERAY
Only by my sixth grade teacher.
(Lucienne arches an eyebrow)
It's a long story.

Spotting a slew of YACHTS in the distance cutting through the water...

DERAY
What's going on over there?

LUCIENNE
The yearly Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club Race from Macau to Hong Kong.

Majestic yachts fill the horizon. Deray smiles, enjoying the spectacle.

DERAY
You don't participate?

LUCIENNE
My family owns casinos, it's in my DNA to only play games when the odds are in *my* favor.

Lucienne sits up and slips on a silk robe, Deray taking her in his arms. They kiss, the yacht race in the background framing the moment.

Lucienne walks off as Deray takes a sip of his drink and spots Trang on the upper deck spying on them.

Giving him a mock cheer with his drink, Deray gets Trang's goat, who storms off. Deray turns back to the yacht race.

EXT. SOUTH CHINA SEA - NEXT TO A SMALL ISLAND - DAY

The High Roller is docked. Lucienne returns to the deck.

LUCIENNE
Shall we?

DERAY
I thought we were having lunch?

Lucienne lets her silk robe fall to the deck.

LUCIENNE
We are.

Without further explanation, she dives over the side. Swimming, she turns back and yells up to Deray...

LUCIENNE
Coming?

Deray takes off his shirt and dives in as well, catching up.

EXT. SMALL ISLAND - CONTINUOUS

Lucienne and Deray swim to shore where a picnic lunch awaits. They plop down after the swim and relax on the private beach.

They open up the basket. Deray pops open a bottle of wine as Lucienne prepares the food...

LUCIENNE
Galinha à Africana, my specialty.

Handing her a glass of wine, they toast. Lucienne stares at the skyline of Macau across the water.

LUCIENNE
I've lived in Macau most of my life, can't think of calling anyplace else home. Where's that place for you?

DERAY
Haven't called a place home since Georgia, before I joined the army.

LUCIENNE
Do you still have family there?

DERAY
Never knew my father. My mother got sick when I was in high school. She died the day after I turned eighteen.
(beat)
She held on long enough to make sure I was old enough to take care of myself.

A moment of silence as Lucienne takes in the tale.

LUCIENNE
Any plans for the future?

Deray is taken aback by the heavy turn of the conversation.

DERAY
Honestly, I'm not sure.

LUCIENNE
Would a life *here,* with me, be something you'd find... agreeable?

She doesn't make eye contact, scared of the answer.

DERAY
Agreeable? I find it... *wonderful*.

Lucienne finally looks at Deray, happiness in her soft eyes.

LUCIENNE
We could be very happy.

DERAY
I'm already happy.

They kiss deeply, falling into each other's arms.

INT. MACAU AIRPORT - NIGHT

Ventura, looking worse for wear, sits at the bar sipping a double, on his cell phone.

VENTURA
Claire, I just want to talk to them for a minute. Please.
(waits/perks up)
There's my girls.
(beat)
What, I can't just call to hear your voices? It's... it's been too long.

He fingers a PLANE TICKET lying on the bar beside his drink.

VENTURA
I'm not avoiding you...
(getting defensive)
Did your mother tell you that?

Looking up, Ventura's face goes cold, seeing in the mirror behind the bar, sitting at a table behind him...

<u>NEIL AND LAU YE -- NEIL WAVING HIM OVER</u>.

Spinning quickly, Ventura sees two people at the table but, of course, not Neil or Lau. Turning back around...

VENTURA
Yeah, I'm still here. Listen, I'll call you guys as soon as I'm back in town. I promise. We'll do something.
(beat)
Anything you want. I love you.

He hangs up. After a couple of agonizing seconds of self condemnation he finishes his drink and walks off...

LEAVING THE TICKET BEHIND.

Marching through the airport, Ventura slows up, noticing...

TWO MEN SPYING HIM -- THEY WHISPER TO EACH OTHER.

Ventura knows immediately they're AGENTS from the States, still on the look out for him. He diverts and heads for:

EXT. ELEVATOR BANKS - CONTINUOUS

Ventura hits the button rapidly. The TWO MEN quicken their pace as the car arrives and Ventura gets in, doors closing.

The TWO MEN watch the floor indicator -- GARAGE LEVEL 3 -- as they call another car and follow.

EXT. GARAGE LEVEL 3 - CONTINUOUS

The elevator doors open, the TWO MEN about to exit when...

VENTURA ATTACKS!

He PUNCHES the lead MAN in the throat and TACKLES the other, all of them going down in a heap inside the car.

Ventura and the MAN struggle, an ugly brutal fight. The other MAN drops to his knees, grabbing his throat in pain.

Ventura is pummeled, in no shape for a fight these days. On his back now, seeing the other MAN recovering, Ventura KICKS him in the face hard, bloodying and KNOCKING him out cold.

MAN #1
You fucking piece of shit!

Enraged by the cheap shot, he SLAMS Ventura against the button panel and UNLOADS jabs into his gut as the car moves.

The elevator door opens and Ventura slips out, falling to his knees, crawling away.

EXT. GARAGE LEVEL 5 - CONTINUOUS

The MAN follows, about to KICK Ventura in the gut, but Ventura LEAPS up just in time, grabs the leg in mid-air, and RAMS him into a nearby parked car.

Ventura buys precious seconds to recover, doubled over, spitting blood.

Grabbing Ventura from behind, the MAN puts him in a choke hold. Ventura is on the verge of blacking out.

Having to act fast, Ventura spots a CAR driving through the parking garage. He PUSHES off...

SENDING HIMSELF AND THE MAN INTO IT'S PATH -- SLAM!

They roll over the hood of the car and SMASH the windshield. The car comes to a SCREECHING halt sending them both flying.

Pulling himself to his feet, spent, Ventura KICKS the MAN in the face while he's still on the ground.

VENTURA
Stay. The. Fuck. Down!

After a couple of more KICKS, Ventura almost collapses.

The car DRIVER is screaming bloody murder, but Ventura ignores them, pushes them out of the way, and steals the car.

EXT. BRIZARD ESTATE - NIGHT

Deray's car pulls up the drive. A SERVANT opens the door and helps Lucienne out as Deray comes around to say good night.

LUCIENNE
Come inside.

INT. MAIN HOUSE - LIBRARY - NIGHT

Brizard is standing next to an ornate stone fireplace that takes up an entire wall. Lucienne gives him a kiss. Turning, he gives Deray a ponderous stare...

BRIZARD
You have a violent history.

Deray is genuinely hurt, not liking where this is going.

BRIZARD
Lucienne trusts you, which means, I trust you and expect that you *trust* us.
(severe)
(MORE)

BRIZARD (CONT'D)
Who took the contract on my life? The truth.

Lucienne stands silent as her father asks the hard question.

DERAY
Steven Ventura.

Lucienne seems relived, making Deray wonder what would have happened it he'd lied. Brizard steps forward and ***shakes*** Deray's hand for the first time.

BRIZARD
As I told you before, Lucienne's judgement is without reproach, she lets no one into *our* life easily, especially her own. *She never has*.

Lucienne walks over and takes the baton from her father.

LUCIENNE
We want you to be a part of our family.

Deray is staggered by the sincerity of the offer. He understands now that the conversation earlier at the beach was meant to feel him out. Then...

BRIZARD
She loves you.

Blown away by the revelation, Deray pins Lucienne with a stare, who blushes at her father's blurting it out.

BRIZARD
And you love her.

Lucienne wears a hopeful gaze, praying Deray feels the same.

LUCIENNE
You've been wandering a long time, searching for something.
(hopeful)
A home.

There's a look of relief on Deray's face, overwhelmed by what he's found, but then he takes a step back, scared of being on the precipice of finally being... *happy*.

Lucienne steps forward and hugs him and he gives in.

INT. MAIN HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

Deray exits the library with Lucienne. She pulls him to the stairs with a silent look and bedroom eyes.

DERAY
I don't think your father will approve.

LUCIENNE
We have no secrets from each other.

INT. LUCIENNE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Entering, closing the door, Deray and Lucienne kiss passionately, and fall onto the bed in each other's arms.

LUCIENNE
I love you.

A moment passes between them.

DERAY
I love you.

This is the first time they've been entirely honest with each other. Kissing again, they revel in the moment of freedom.

INT. LUCIENNE'S ROOM - LATER

Deray lays in bed with Lucienne in his arms. He stares at her, moving a lock of hair from her face and smiles... *happy*.

Getting out of bed, Deray puts on his pants and strolls onto:

EXT. BALCONY - NIGHT

The moon is bright, illuminating the ocean beyond. Deray's cell rings in his pants. He digs it out: Ventura calling.

Instead of answering it, he rears back and...

<u>HURLS IT INTO THE OCEAN</u>.

EXT. MACAU STREETS - NIGHT

Ventura curses under his breath, hanging up the cell, Deray not answering. He walks into a:

INT. MACAU SLUMS - LOW RENT HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

VENTURA
I need a room for the night.

The Desk Clerk fusses around behind the counter, making Ventura suspicious, but at last places a room key before him.

Ventura heads up the stairs. Sure he's gone, the Clerk messes about behind the counter again, fingering a picture of...

VENTURA.

Grabbing the phone, the Clerk dials quickly.

INT. MAIN HOUSE - FOYER - DAY

Deray and Lucienne descend the stairs. Trang is waiting.

TRANG
(a tilt of the head/respect)
Mr. Deray.

He says the words with deference, but his tone leaves something to be desired. Deray and Lucienne exit:

EXT. MAIN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Lucienne and Deray head for her car, a Maybach, Trang opening the door for them. Two more Bodyguards join the troupe in a follow car.

LUCIENNE
By the end of the day you'll know everything you need to know.

DERAY
To do what?

LUCIENNE
I'm my father's right hand and from now on you will be his left.

Before getting into the car, Deray glimpses his reflection in the tinted windows of the limo and smiles...

LIKING WHAT HE SEES -- WHAT HE HAS BECOME.

QUICK CUTS:

Deray being introduced to a slew of people by Lucienne:

Lunch with BANKERS. Drinks with the CHIEF OF POLICE. A meeting with the PRC ADMINISTRATOR for the Macau Region.

Deray meets the facade of the Brizard empire. Then...

INT. TAO CASINO - NIGHT

Lucienne and Deray walk through a slew of security stations and take an elevator down to:

INT. VAULT LEVEL - CONTINUOUS

They enter the vault via a steel door three stories high. Deray looks around at the stacks of cash as he follows Lucienne to another:

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

DERAY
Where does this go?

LUCIENNE
The main vault.

DERAY
Weren't we just in the vault?

LUCIENNE
That was the coat room.

The door opens on a massive room...

<u>STACKED WITH CASH OF EVERY DENOMINATION</u>.

Deray is amazed, never seeing anything like it. There are large air ducts along the wall raining down money.

LUCIENNE
(pointing)
That money is being funneled in from the casinos via a secure vacuum tunnel. It's quick and efficient, and most importantly, reduces the number of hands it has to go through.
(points at stacks of cash)
The rest is what we launder for various corporations, governments and organizations.

DERAY
So, you take the world's blood money, wash it clean, and hoard it.

LUCIENNE
Money is money.

Deray reflects on the notion.

LUCIENNE
My father's true talent lies in using the substantial funds we amass to influence the world's economy.

DERAY
Cash is king.

Deray checks out the stacks of currency from around the world.

LUCIENNE
If we can amass just five percent of a country's currency, we can affect their economy depending on when or *if* we put it back into recirculation.

At the far corner, Deray sees some stacks of cash being shredded and turns to Lucienne with a curious expression.

LUCIENNE
Greek drachmas.
(pointed)
If the money doesn't exist to put into an economy, then the economy is that much more vulnerable to *our* interests.

Deray watches as what has to be millions being destroyed.

EXT. TAO CASINO - NIGHT

LUCIENNE
Let's hit the Tao, have a late dinner, then head home for a night cap.

DERAY
Whose 'home'?

LUCIENNE
Our home.

DERAY
I need to stop by my hotel and pick up my things.

LUCIENNE
Kenneth will drive you.

KENNETH, one of Lucienne's other Bodyguards, escorts Deray to the follow car as Trang escorts Lucienne to her Maybach.

EXT. MANDARIN ORIENTAL HOTEL - NIGHT

The car pulls up and Deray climbs out. Turning to Kenneth...

DERAY
I won't be long.

INT. MANDARIN ORIENTAL HOTEL - NIGHT

Deray steps inside an elevator, the doors closing when...

A HAND REACHES IN AND OPENS THEM -- VENTURA.

He steps inside and allows the doors to close.

VENTURA
I've been calling you all day. I thought something happened.

Noticing Ventura's bruised face, split lip...

DERAY
What happened to you?

VENTURA
I'm running out of time, the dogs are closing in on me. So?

DERAY
I'm being introduced to the entire operation, top to bottom.

VENTURA
How the hell did you manage that?

DERAY
Lucienne.

Taking half a breath, Ventura attempts to gauge exactly what that means, Deray being decidedly vague.

VENTURA
John, she's more dangerous than she lets on.

DERAY
I know.

Ventura reacts with silent worry to Deray's casual corroboration.

VENTURA
She's the one who had Neil killed.

DERAY
Honestly, I wonder if Brizard knows half of the things she does.

A suspicious Ventura pegs Deray...

VENTURA
Have you fallen for her?

Deray remains silent and fidgets, the answer clear.

VENTURA
Jesus.

The elevator arrives on the floor and the doors open. Deray exits fast, Ventura following.

EXT. MANDARIN ORIENTAL HOTEL - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

VENTURA
John.
(Deray turns back)
What are you doing?

DERAY
Why are you still here? You hired *me* to do a job.

VENTURA
I want to see it through to the end; see Brizard dead.

DERAY
You're a wanted man. You're living in the streets for God's sake. You're a State Department director arranging a hit.

VENTURA
You didn't answer my question.
(beat)
What are you doing?

Turning on a dime, Deray walks off, brushing off the inquiry.

VENTURA
Lucienne is just as guilty as her father, if not more so...

Turning on a dime, Deray SLAMS Ventura up against the wall.

DERAY
Stay away from her.

He means it. Threat delivered, Deray walks off.

INT. MANDARIN ORIENTAL HOTEL - ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Deray enters, takes off his jacket, lost in thought.

He retrieves his billfold hidden in the vent and gazes at the picture of himself, Neil and Ventura in the Marines.

His fist starts to close around it, to crush it, but he stops himself, and simply throws it onto the bed as he walks onto the balcony, his dilemma deep.

INT. TAO CASINO - RESTURANT - NIGHT

Lucienne and a quiet Deray are having dinner.

LUCIENNE
Is everything okay?

DERAY
Hmm... yes, yes. Just a little overwhelmed I guess.

LUCIENNE
Are you regretting anything?

Taking Lucienne's hand in his...

DERAY
Absolutely not.

He offers a warm smile. Lucienne returns the gesture, but not as sure, worried that Deray is not being completely honest.

Trang approaches, leans over, and whispers to Lucienne.

LUCIENNE
We need to go.

Before Deray can ask why, Lucienne is already on the move, a puzzled Deray following.

INT. MACAU COUNTY MORUGE - NIGHT

Lucienne, Deray and Trang wait as a DOCTOR, on their payroll, pulls a body from a drawer and lowers the sheet to reveal...

LAU YE.

DERAY
Who is he?

LUCIENNE
Lau Ye.

The name sparks with Deray who fights to suppress surprise.

LUCIENNE
He used to work for us, but decided to try and sell us out to Martin Neil.

Deray waits for more, knowing Lucienne is playing an angle.

LUCIENNE
Your *friend* Ventura killed him.

Deray's brow furrows, trying to fit the pieces together.

DERAY
Why?

LUCIENNE
Ventura was investigating us and had no clue about our operations and we wanted to keep it that way, so we paid him to make sure his investigation yielded... 'no results.'

It takes everything Deray has to keep his cool, starting to pace, anger building.

LUCIENNE
You didn't know.

Deray's silent stares confirms: he did not.

DERAY
I thought this was about Neil.

LUCIENNE
Looks like revenge took a back seat when it came time for your 'friend' to cover his own ass.

Deray stares at Lau's body, his eyes burning with rage at Ventura's handiwork. Trang's cell rings and he picks up, moves to Lucienne and whispers to her.

LUCIENNE
Ventura's been spotted in a hotel downtown.

DERAY
I'll take care of it.

Lucienne scrutinizes Deray after his quick decision.

EXT. MACAU COUNTY MORUGE - CONTINUOUS

Deray, Lucienne and Trang exit. Deray is about to move off...

LUCIENNE
John. We have people for this kind of thing. You don't have to do this.

DERAY
(disparaging)
He's *my* friend.

Deray's lost in thought, walking off with intent in his step.

INT. HOUSE - EVENING

Consul Adams comes home, putting down his keys and briefcase. He enters the...

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

...where Deray is seated, a silenced .45 in hand. Deray motions for a chair and Adams sits.

DERAY
Steven Ventura.

Adam's eyes go wide at the mention of the name.

DERAY
Uncle Sam has patriots in town looking for him. Why?

Hesitant, Adams quickly opens up after a quick glance at the gun in Deray's hand.

ADAMS
He's gone off script. On a grudge hunt or something.

Adams eyes dart nervously, clearly holding back.

DERAY
Ventura isn't a security threat. Going AWOL shouldn't create so much worry. So, I'll ask again... *why*?

ADAMS
A bank account in the Cayman Islands was discovered and there are a lot of questions about it. Would probably never have been uncovered if not for all this.

Deray stands to leave, but before he goes...

DERAY
I think it goes without saying that it's in your best interest to consider this conversation... *private*.

A scared nod form Adams confirms... hell yes. Deray exits.

EXT. SLUMS - LOW RENT HOTEL - DAY

Before he enters, Deray catches his reflection in the hotel window. This time, grimacing at his appearance.

INT. LOW RENT HOTEL - ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ventura is playing a game of solitaire and drinking from a plastic cup when... KNOCK, KNOCK.

He tweaks at the sound, doesn't say anything, grabs his jacket and moves to the window, planning his escape. Then...

DERAY (O.S.)
Steven. It's me.

A sigh of relief from Ventura as he opens the door for Deray. Ventura motions to a bottle of Jack Daniels on a rickety table with the opened package of plastic cups nearby.

VENTURA
Drink?

As Ventura pours the whiskey...

DERAY
You killed Lau Ye.

Freezing, Ventura doesn't turn around, his reaction making it impossible to deny anything now.

DERAY
Neil found out... didn't he?

Finally, Ventura turns to face Deray.

DERAY
Found out you were on the take. That Brizard paid you off to keep the status quo.

Ventura's guilt flecked eyes sweep the floor.

VENTURA
Neil was killed because he found out that Brizard uses the money from his casinos to manipulate currency rates and...

DERAY
I know.

Ventura is thrown for a loop, Deray knowing much these days.

VENTURA
I didn't. I was just supposed to make sure nothing came of the investigation. I had no idea Neil found out about my *arrangement*...

DERAY
Your arrangement?

VENTURA
I looked the other way...

DERAY
For a price. How many other times did you 'look the other way'? Socking away your cut in that Cayman Island account.

Ventura again is caught off guard by how much Deray knows.

VENTURA
When they killed Neil everything changed.

Deray lets out a dark chuckle, shaking his head.

DERAY
You lost your family, you're on the take, you murdered a man to cover it up... tell me, would you have killed Neil if he confronted you?

VENTURA
Fuck you, John! Don't you...!

DERAY
(vicious)
I sacrificed my life for you!

QUICK INTERCUTS TO THE DESERT ALL THOSE YEARS AGO:

The standoff between Deray and Colonel Cole.

DERAY
You had a family, everything to lose...

QUICK INTERCUT BACK TO THE DESERT:

Ventura, gun in hand...

VENTURA
John!

INT. LOW RENT HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

DERAY
...I covered for you...

QUICK INTERCUT BACK TO THE DESERT:

The Taliban Fighters storm forward, Ventura and Neil FIRING on them, F-15's dropping bombs, total chaos. Ventura swings his gun around too fast and...

SHOOTS COLONEL COLE BY ACCIDENT -- IT WAS NEVER DERAY.

INT. LOW RENT HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

DERAY
...and this is what you've become!

The truth is finally revealed.

VENTURA
Who are you to judge me! You murder people for a living!

He takes a SWING at Deray who BLOCKS the attack and RAMS his fist into Ventura's gut, dropping him to the floor.

DERAY OPENS HIS JACKET -- REVEALING HIS GUN -- ABOUT TO SHOOT VENTURA -- CAUGHT UP IN THE MOMENT -- FURIOUS.

VENTURA
I don't know what happened to me. I tried... I wanted to be a... good man.

Deray lets go of the gun, calms down, and closes his jacket before Ventura notices, allowing him to bare his soul.

DERAY
There are no good men left these days.

VENTURA
(turns back to Deray)
You gave up everything for me, for us, you were a good friend, and I threw it all away and Neil is dead.

Ventura climbs to his feet and pours himself a sloppy drink. Deray paces, debating whether to bare his soul as well...

DERAY
I'm in love with Lucienne.

A shocked Ventura is speechless, sitting on the edge of the bed, weighing the ramifications of Deray's confession.

DERAY
They've taken me in.

VENTURA
They?

DERAY
Lucienne and... Brizard.

Ventura's shock multiplies.

VENTURA
We might not be good men, but they're worse, they're manipulators.

Ventura paces the revelation hitting him like a hammer. He turns suddenly, pinning Deray with an inquiring squint.

VENTURA
How did you find out about Lau Ye?
(Deray stays mum)
Lucienne. You think that wasn't planned? That...
(horrible realization)
She sent you here to kill me.

Deray gives Ventura a cutting look, denying nothing.

VENTURA
They're manipulating you! Don't you see, first Vong, now me. You're her *instrument*.

Deray tweaks at Ventura using the term he referred to himself as earlier.

VENTURA
Jesus... do they know about me and you?

DERAY
I told them.

VENTURA
You what!?

DERAY
I proved to them they could trust me. It was...

VENTURA
Stop! Just stop with that line already!

He throws up his hands in exasperation, unwilling to listen to Deray's rationale any longer, tired of it.

VENTURA
(contrite)
What are you doing, John?

Pacing, Deray's thoughts are heavy. Ventura is anxious and a little on guard, not knowing what Deray might do.

DERAY
Brizard dies for what happened to Neil. Blood for blood. But Lucienne is off limits, she stays out of it, and never knows the part I played.

VENTURA
For Neil.

DERAY
For Neil.
(beat)
I want to take Lucienne and get away, a fresh start.

VENTURA
And the only way she'll do that is if daddy is six feet under.

DERAY
We have to shake things up, get Brizard nervous, get him out of that compound of his and off balance.

VENTURA
I'm listening.

DERAY
Domino effect. We shine a light on his operation and then we let the media be our attack dogs. We just have to push that first domino over.
(beat)
(MORE)

DERAY (CONT'D)
We use everything you got paid to cover up...
(Ventura grimaces)
...and what I know.

VENTURA
What are you going to tell them about me?

DERAY
That you weren't here. Which means we have to work fast.

Ventura nods, okay. A thought occurs to him...

VENTURA
If you want Lucienne to think you had no part in this, it can't be us who starts the dominos falling.

DERAY
I have a fall guy in mind.

VENTURA
And I know somebody who might be willing to listen.

A plan of action takes shape.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

We don't know where we are yet, coming in mid-conversation. Ventura sits in a chair in front of a desk.

VENTURA
Well?

Spin around to the other side of the desk to reveal...

CAPTAIN PANG.

CAPTAIN PANG
All I have to do is pick *him* up?

VENTURA
That's all, he doesn't have to talk. But people have to think... *he did*.

Pang's eyes drift, staring out the window, considering.

CAPTAIN PANG
I had a younger brother who was a musician. He played the piano so beautifully, it broke your heart.
(MORE)

CAPTAIN PANG (CONT'D)
(bitter)
He became involved with some of Brizard's people and one day just... vanished.
(pained)
To this day, we never found out what happened to him.

Turning, making direct eye contact with Ventura...

CAPTAIN PANG
When and where?

EXT. TAO CASINO - DAY

Lucienne's car arrives, Trang exits the driver's side, and opens her door. Then...

THREE POLICE CRUISERS SURROUND THEM.

Captain Pang and his men walk up to Lucienne and Trang.

LUCIENNE
What's the meaning of this, Captain?

With a nod, Pang orders his men to act and...

ARREST TRANG -- WHO RESISTS AND IS FORCIBLY HANDCUFFED.

LUCIENNE
Captain! I asked you a question!

But Pang offers no answers as he returns to his cruiser and departs with Trang, who gives Lucienne a forlorn look from the backseat as he's taken away.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Trang is locked in an interrogation cell. Pang meets with Ventura in the hallway, who hands over a piece of paper.

VENTURA
Here is Mr. Trang's statement about Henry Brizard's illegal enterprises.

CAPTAIN PANG
This won't stand up to scrutiny long. Trang won't sign it, he'll deny everything.

VENTURA
He can deny it all he wants in twenty four hours.
(MORE)

VENTURA (CONT'D)
Until then, I need you to keep him locked up so the damage can be done and Brizard put on the defensive.
(beat)
Besides, the statement is signed.

Pang flips to the end of the statement, his eyes going wide as he stares at Ventura.

CAPTAIN PANG
You'll be ruined.

VENTURA
I'm already ruined.

He walks off, leaving a dumbfounded Pang behind.

INT. BRIZARD'S OFFICE - DAY

At his desk, Brizard watches the news on the flat-screen.

REPORTER (ON TV)
... Henry Brizard has been implicated by a source within his own organization in a scheme using his casinos to manipulate several stock exchanges with rate fixing and currency manipulation. There are also questions about Mr. Brizard's relationship with Colonel Vong, the local PRC garrison commander, who was recently assassinated.

Lucienne and Deray enter the office.

LUCIENNE
These are only allegations, they can't prove anything.

BRIZARD
I'm not worried about the authorities. But the media won't be as kind. Especially in China.

Flustered by that fact, Lucienne paces.

LUCIENNE
(shaking her head)
Trang would never talk.

DERAY
He didn't, but it's meant to look that way.

All eyes turn to him.

DERAY
It's no secret Trang had feelings for you. From the outside, it looks like he was scorned and is striking back.

Lucienne catches on to Deray's reasoning...

LUCIENNE
Ventura.

DERAY
I turned on him and now he's coming at you from another direction.

Brizard turns to the window, shaking his head with disdain at their predicament. Lucienne turns to Deray.

LUCIENNE
Can we meet later?

Deray gives a nod, picking up she wants to be alone with her father. They kiss and he exits.

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

The doors close. Collapsing heavily against the wall, breathing hard, Deray's face is a mass of twisted emotions.

INT. BRIZARD'S OFFICE - DAY

Brizard is still staring out the window, Lucienne joining him. He shoots his daughter a look, telegraphing a thought...

LUCIENNE
There's more going on here than it seems.

BRIZARD
Ventura using you and John's relationship to make Trang look disloyal is clever. Too clever.

They swap suspicious looks.

EXT. HILL OF PENHA CHURCH - DAY

An ancient structure dating back to 1622.

INT. HILL OF PENHA CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Ventura enters, scans the pews, finds Deray, and sits beside him. They remain silent, both with a lot on their minds.

DERAY
You think God forgives all sins?

VENTURA
I hope so.

DERAY
Even betrayal?

That gets Ventura's attention, suddenly worried, desperate to keep Deray together, extremely worried about his state. Deray's cell rings and he picks up...

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. LUCIENNE'S CAR - DAY

She's driving the Spyder fast through traffic.

LUCIENNE
John, we've decided to go to South Africa until this mess blows over. Can you pick up my father and bring him to the airport?

DERAY
Of course.

LUCIENNE
I'm heading there now to prep the jet.

Ventura's interest is piqued as he overhears. Deray hangs up and contemplates. Ventura waits for it...

DERAY
Brizard and Lucienne are leaving the country. She wants me to pick up her father.

VENTURA
This is it.

DERAY
I'm going to need your help.

Taken aback by the request, Ventura fumbles.

VENTURA
I thought...

DERAY
I can't do this alone, Steven. I'm going to be outnumbered and outgunned.

Ventura debates a moment as Deray waits for his answer.

VENTURA
I'm in.

Deray stands and heads for the exit. Before Ventura follows, he throws a glance at the marble Christ on the cross behind the altar and does the sign of the cross.

EXT. BRIZARD ESTATE - NIGHT

Kenneth and two Bodyguards are stationed out front. Deray's car races up the drive. He exits and approaches Kenneth.

A moment later Brizard exits the house with a briefcase. The Bodyguards, Brizard and Deray mount two sedans and speed off.

INT. SEDAN - NIGHT

Brizard takes a last look at his home in the distance as they drive off.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

The sedan starts to slow down. A TRUCK is blocking the road ahead.

DERAY
(to Brizard)
Stay inside.

Deray exits and takes two of the Bodyguards in the lead sedan with him as Kenneth and the remaining two hang back with Brizard.

As they move around the truck, Deray slips the silencer on his .45. Out of sight...

HE SHOOTS THE TWO BODYGUARDS IN THE BACK.

INT. SEDAN - CONTINUOUS

Brizard waits as the headlights illuminate the dark road ahead and the truck.

Deray stays in the shadows, lines up his shot and...

SHOOTS OUT THE HEADLIGHTS.

Kenneth and the two remaining Bodyguards hunker down, OPENING FIRE, prepared to take on any approaching threat. But they're unprepared for the attack from the *rear*...

VENTURA OPENING FIRE WITH A MACHINE GUN -- CUTTING THEM DOWN.

The sedan's windows are SHATTERED as Brizard climbs out the other side and RUNS into the surrounding woods.

Slowly moving up, Ventura finds Brizard gone...

VENTURA
Shit!

He hustles into the woods after him.

EXT. WOODS - CONTINUOUS

Brizard stops, looks behind him and pulls out a .38 from his briefcase, gripping it awkwardly, not used to the feel.

Ventura moves through the woods, trying to load the machine gun, but it jams. Throwing it aside he pulls out a .45.

BOTH MEN ARE OUT OF THEIR ELEMENT.

Moving through the woods, Brizard hears a branch snap behind him. He turns, holding the GUN in front of him.

He tries to see if anybody's out there, straining. Spotting something move, he...

OPENS FIRE!

Three quick shots and Ventura is forced to DIVE for cover. Rolling to his knee, he returns FIRE.

Deray is moving through the woods slowly and hears the sounds of gunfire, moving toward it double-quick.

Ventura slowly makes his way when...

Brizard appears from behind a tree, having Ventura dead bang. Deray appears.

BRIZARD
John...

DERAY
Drop the gun.

Brizard stares at Deray...

POINTING HIS GUN AT HIM.

No choice, Brizard drops his gun. Ventura starts to reach down to pick his back up but...

DERAY
Leave it.

Ventura is baffled.

VENTURA
What are you doing, John?

DERAY'S GUN IS AIMED *BETWEEN* VENTURA AND BRIZARD.

Deray is literally on the fence.

BRIZARD
John, I accepted you into my family with open arms. *Lucienne loves you*.

VENTURA
I know you want to belong to something, John, but in this case...
(beat)
The price is your soul. Believe me. He already bought and paid for mine.

DERAY
(to Brizard)
I love your daughter.

HE SHOOTS BRIZARD.

An on edge Ventura jumps at the shot. Brizard falls into the dirt with a dull THUD. As the tension bleeds away...

DERAY
He'd never let Lucienne run off with me. Let her be just... *mine*.

It would seem that Lucienne inspires jealousy in many a man.

Ventura walks over to his gun, leaning over to pick it up.

VENTURA
Had me worried there for a...

DERAY
Leave it.

Deray *turns* his gun on Ventura, who freezes, thinking he was out of the woods, but apparently not.

DERAY
The State Department knows about your Cayman Island account.
(Ventura is speechless)
Domino effect.

Ventura glances around, realizing they're in the middle of nowhere. He closes his eyes as it hits him...

VENTURA
You set me up.

DERAY
All your secrets are out in the open...
they know you're corrupt now.
(beat)
I took a contract on the man
responsible for Neil's death.
(ominous)
And that's you.

HE SHOOTS VENTURA.

Deray stares at his *friend's* body then at the gun in his hand with disgust. He throws it away; a fresh start and walks off.

EXT. PRIVATE AIRFIELD - NIGHT

A G5 waits on the tarmac. Deray drives up and calms himself. Lucienne appears on the gangway, Deray exiting, and approaching her.

LUCIENNE
Where's my father?

DERAY
He's not coming.

LUCIENNE
What happened, John?

Deray hesitates.

LUCIENNE
What happened, John!?

DERAY
He's dead.

Lucienne's face crumbles.

DERAY
Ventura killed him and I killed
Ventura.

She starts to walk past him...

LUCIENNE
I have to go...

Deray grabs her by the arm.

DERAY
Go where?

She hesitates, off balance, her emotions in overdrive.

DERAY
Let’s leave. Right now... and start over.

Lucienne tries to break his hold, but Deray pulls her closer.

DERAY
There’s nothing for you back there anymore.

Eyes dropping to the ground, Lucienne is horribly conflicted.

DERAY
Let’s put it behind us. Your past, my past... all of it.
(beat)
All that matters right now is that I love you.

After a moment of dissension, Lucienne hugs Deray and doesn’t let go.

LUCIENNE
I love you.

Finally, they board the G5... *together*.

EXT. RUNWAY - DAY

The G5 takes off and streaks into the sky.

INT. G5 - CONTINUOUS

Deray and Lucienne are seated, both quiet. Deray looks out the window, hopeful, a new life waiting.

He turns to Lucienne seated across the aisle and reaches out, taking her hand in his. But she doesn’t turn to him, her gaze remaining fixed on the window.

LUCIENNE
I don’t think I can do this, John.

DERAY
You’ve led a lonely life.
(her head whiplashes on him)
You deserve more.

LUCIENNE
It's not that easy for me.

She unbuckles and stands...

LUCIENNE
I'm going to tell the pilot to turn back.

Deray unbuckles quickly and blocks her way.

DERAY
Give it time. Trust me, in the end, you'll realize it was the right thing to do. The *only* thing to do.

LUCIENNE
Out of my way.

DERAY
Lucienne, there'll be questions... for *both* of us.

LUCIENNE
I said... out of my way.

DERAY
No.

LUCIENNE
Who the hell do you think you are...?

Deray stands his ground. She turns in a huff, walks to the bar at the rear of the cabin, pours, and gulps down a drink. Her features are a mask of torment.

Sighing, shaking his head, Deray is desperate to smooth things over. He heads to the rear of the cabin...

DERAY
Lucienne.

Lucienne turns, walks right at Deray, and embraces him. Pulling their heads back, they stare at each other for a long moment.

Lucienne's expression is strained. Deray's... *hurt*.

DERAY
Why?

LUCIENNE
Family before... love.

The context of this exchange is unclear, until Deray steps back and reveals...

A BLOOD RED SPOT ON HIS SHIRT THAT'S GROWING.

Lucienne has *stabbed* him. We never see the weapon in her hand as she backs away.

Deray drops to his knees, laboring to lift his head to look at Lucienne.

DERAY
Did you... did you love me?

Lucienne nods... *yes*.

Deray falls onto his back, stares into space, and smiles knowing at least in the end he was loved -- ironic as that may be considering his assassin.

We pull back, Lucienne standing over Deray, tears starting to fall...

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END