

THE 25<sup>th</sup> HOUR

by

David Benioff

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INDUSTRY ENTERTAINMENT

EXT. WEST SIDE HIGHWAY - NIGHT

A black dog sleeps on the shoulder of the highway, head between his paws, curled up next to the barricade that separates the north and southbound lanes.

Traffic rumbles past him: yellow cabs, blue police cruisers, white limousines with tinted glass and Jersey plates.

We hear the squeal of brakes. A black \*65 Ford Mustang, mint condition, pulls onto the shoulder, ten yards past the dog, and backs up. The dog raises its head.

Two men step out of the car. The driver, MONTY BROGAN, mid-twenties, is pale-skinned in the flickering light. A small silver crucifix hangs from a silver chain around his neck; his fingers are adorned with silver rings.

The passenger, KOSTYA NOVOTNY, a hulking man in his late thirties, blows his nose in his handkerchief.

It's a cold night. Monty wears a camel's hair overcoat, Kostya an old blue Soviet Navy coat.

MONTY

He's alive.

KOSTYA

(Ukrainian accent)

This dog, how do you call it?

MONTY

Pit bull. Must have lost somebody some money.

The dog stares at them and they stare at the dog.

KOSTYA

What do we do, Monty, we watch him rot?

..: ' ..... • ' ? - : • - •' MONTY " . • • " " " : : " " " " - •

I was thinking of shooting him.

KOSTYA

Shooting him? Are you sick in the head?

The dog continues to stare at them impassively, his face lit by the passing headlights. The pavement by his paws is littered with broken glass, twisted scraps of metal, black rubber from blown tires.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MONTY

They just left him here to die. They threw him out the window and kept driving.

A ship's horn sounds from the Hudson.

KOSTYA

Come, my friend, it is cold. Come, people wait for us.

MONTY

They're used to waiting.

Monty squats near the dog and inspects him. From this angle it is clear that the pit bull has been badly abused. One ear has been chewed to mince; his hide is scored with cigarette burns; flies crawl in his bloodied fur.

MONTY (CONT'D)

I think maybe his hip-

The dog pounces, jaws snapping, lunging for Monty's face.

Monty stumbles backwards. The dog, too badly injured to continue the attack, remains in his crouch, growling.

Monty sits on the pavement, shaking his head.

MONTY (CONT'D)

Christ.

(beat)

He's got some bite left.

KOSTYA

I think he does not want to play with you. Come, you want police to pull over? You want police looking through your car?

MONTY

Look what they did to him. Used him for a fucking ashtray.

Monty stands and dusts his palms on the seat of his pants.

MONTY (CONT'D)

Let's get him in the trunk.

KOSTYA

What?

(CONTINUED)

MONTY

There's a vet emergency room on the East Side. I like this guy.

KOSTYA

You like him? He tries to bite your face off. Look at him, he is meat. You want some dog, I buy you nice puppy tomorrow.

Monty is not listening. He walks back to his car, opens the trunk, pulls out a soiled green army blanket.

Kostya holds up his hands: *stop*.

KOSTYA (CONT'D)

Wait one minute, please. Please stop one minute? I do not go near pit bull. Monty? I do not go near pit bull.

Monty, carrying the army blanket, walks back toward the dog.

MONTY

This is a good dog. I can see it in his eyes. He's a tough little bastard.

KOSTYA

Sometimes I think you are very stupid man.

The dog has slumped back to the pavement. His breath, comes in shorts rasps and wheezes. But he never takes his eyes off the two men.

MONTY

We wait much longer, he'll be dead.

KOSTYA

One minute ago you want to shoot him.

MONTY.

That was a mercy thing. But he's not ready to go yet.

KOSTYA

Yes? He told you this?

Monty slowly circles behind the dog, holding the blanket the way a matador wields his cape.

MONTY

**Distract him.**

CONTINUED: (3)

4.

Kostya stares at his friend in disbelief. He looks down. A crumpled soda can lies by his feet. He kicks the can.

The dog's head pivots to follow the aluminum flash.

Monty hurls the blanket over the dog and spring forward, wrapping his arms around the dog's midsection. The dog growls, bites the wool, tries to break the blanket's neck.

Monty lurches toward the Mustang, struggling to retain his bearhug while the pit bull slithers in his grasp. As they stumble closer to the car the dog releases the blanket and snaps at Monty's throat.

Monty hurls the dog into the trunk and slams the lid. He returns to the driver's seat.

Kostya watches him in silence, stares at the sky for a few seconds, finally gets back in the car. The dog thrashes in the trunk.

INT. MUSTANG

Both men sit in silence as Monty revs the engine. Blood is beginning to leak from a bite on the right side of Monty's neck.

KOSTYA

What goes on in your little head?

Monty grins. He has no idea that he's bleeding.

MONTY

I got him, didn't I? Surprised you how  
—quick I was, huh?

Monty checks for traffic and pulls back onto the highway.

KOSTYA

Yes, you are so quick.

He points at the wound on Monty's neck, which has begun to flow faster.

KOSTYA (CONT'D)

Meanwhile, you are bleeding.

MONTY

That's the dog's blood.

KOSTYA

Oh? Because you have hole in your neck  
and blood is coining out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Monty lifts his hand to his neck and feels the blood.

MONTY

They'll stitch it up at the vet's.

KOSTYA

Rule number one: don't grab half-dead pit bulls. We have people waiting for us, people with money, and you go playing cowboy- no, dogboy- in middle of highway.

Monty laughs, his hand pressed to the side of his neck, blood leaking between his fingers.

KOSTYA (CONT'D)

Yes, ha ha. You're bad luck. You bring bad luck on me. Always everything that can go wrong, goes wrong. It is not just you and me when we go out, no, no, it is you, me, and Mister Doyle of Doyle's law.

Monty frowns.

MONTY

Doyle's law? You mean Murphy's law.

KOSTYA

Who's Murphy?

MONTY

Who's Doyle? Murphy's law: whatever can go wrong, will go wrong.

KOSTYA

Yes. Him.

EXT. EAST RIVER ESPLANADE - DAWN

TITLE CARD: *Four Years Later*

Monty sits on a park bench overlooking the East River. He stubs out his cigarette, pulls another from his pack, lights it.

The black pit bull, now healthy and well-fed, squats by Monty's side. It is winter: the dog's warm breath rises as white vapor.

Two tough-looking YOUNG MEN walk by, wearing hooded sweatshirts below their down parkas, one of them leading his spike-collared rottweiler.

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CONTINUED:

DOYLE (for the nameless pit bull has become Doyle) growls. Monty tugs on his leash and Doyle grunts and quiets down.

YOUNG MAN 1

What up, Monty.

Monty nods but doesn't say anything. He's studying the view. He stares at the green river, the steel bridges, the red tugboats, the stone lighthouse of Roosevelt Island.

Doyle barks and Monty turns. SIMON, a bone-thin man in his early thirties, approaches them. He wears rubber boots that rise to his knees and a dirty yellow down parka.

SIMON

Easy, Doyle, easy, buddy. What's up there, Monty?

Monty turns back to the river. Doyle barks again.

SIMON (CONT'D)

You want to tell the dog to relax? Hey there, Doyle. Good dog.

Doyle has extended the leash as far as Monty will allow. He sniffs suspiciously at Simon.

SIMON (CONT'D)

I don't think your dog likes me.

MONTY

Go away, Simon.

SIMON

I'm hungry here. Woke up an hour ago and I was hungry.

Nothing I can do about that. Go up to One Hundred and Tenth.

SIMON

One Hundred and Tenth? Come on, I'm good.

He reaches into his pocket and brings out a wad of five dollar bills held together by a rubber band.

MONTY

(angry)

Put that away.

Doyle snarls. Simon repockets the money.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

7.

SIMON

Okay, okay. I'm just saying, I'm not looking for a mercy pop.

/

MONTY

I'm over, man.

Simon points at a line of scabs that run along his throat.

SIMON

Cut myself shaving this morning— four times. Can't keep my hands steady. Come on, Monty, help me out. I can't go to Harlem. Look at me-- they'll eat me alive up there.

Monty finally stands and walks toward the man, closer and closer until their faces are inches apart.

MONTY

You need to leave me alone, friend. I told you, I'm out of business.

Doyle sniffs Simon's boots, then raises his head, snout climbing the man's leg. Simon dances a half-step, trying to keep away from the pit bull without provoking him.

SIMON

You worried about me narking you out? You know who I am.

MONTY

You're not listening to me. I got touched. Game over.

Simon blinks, tries to laugh, looks behind him, looks down at Doyle, rubs his nose with the back of his hand.

SIMON

Five years I've been coming to you. All right, all right, I'm leaving. There's no need to be nasty.

Monty and Doyle watch the man go; they begin walking in the opposite direction. They pass the concrete chessboards, the sandboxes, and pause for a moment by a basketball court.

Six TEENS play— with little skill— one last game before school. Monty shakes his head disdainfully, watching one player dribble at the top of the key.

MONTY

You got no left.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (3)

The player drives right and misses an open lay-up. Monty spits and continues walking, Doyle leading the way.

EXT. CAMPBELL-SAWYER HIGH SCHOOL - LATER

Monty looks up at the old private school, tucked away on a leafy street on the Upper East Side.

Two TENTH GRADE GIRLS look at Monty as they pass by. People are always looking at Monty.

Both girls take long final drags on their cigarettes before crushing them out and entering the school.

INT. CAMPBELL-SAWYER HIGH SCHOOL

Monty walks down a corridor of the school building, Doyle padding along beside him. STUDENTS, hurrying to their classes, stare at the dog and then at Monty.

The bells ring and within moments the corridor is empty. Monty stops before a row of framed photographs. He examines one photograph and smiles.

INSERT PHOTOGRAPH

The Campbell-Sawyer basketball team. The players stand in a semi-circle with their coaches. We move in closer on one face in particular: Monty, when he was sixteen, free and easy.

We move closer still and the black-and-white face begins to blur.

ADMINISTRATOR (O.S.)

..... ~~Excuse me~~, - sir, can I help you? .....

Monty, lost in a reverie, looks up. The ADMINISTRATOR, a tall, harried-looking woman in her mid-fifties, squints at him through her glasses.

MONTY

What?

ADMINISTRATOR

Can I help you with something?

MONTY

(smiling)

No, I don't think so.

ADMINISTRATOR

There are no dogs allowed on school grounds.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MONTY

Okay. ..

(pointing at the picture)  
I used to go here.

ADMINISTRATOR

I really have to ask you to remove the  
dog.

MONTY

(still looking at picture)  
Look at what a little punk I was.

The administrator bends forward and squints at the photo.

ADMINISTRATOR

I guess you weren't, the center.

MONTY

, Ha ha. Starting point guard. Started on  
varsity from my first game, freshman  
year. I still hold the all-time assist  
record.

ADMINISTRATOR

Mm, no, Marvin Ray broke the record last  
year.

Monty stares at her. She shrugs.

ADMINISTRATOR (CONT'D)

I coach the girl's team.

Monty turns back to the photo.

MONTY

•-- we\*Wēire undefeated that" year. . . . .

ADMINISTRATOR

Really?

MONTY

Until I got kicked off the team. After  
that, they fell apart. Do you know where  
Jakob Elinsky is?

ADMINISTRATOR

Probably in his classroom. Room 301.

MONTY

Thanks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

He leads Doyle away, but stops after a few feet and turns back.

MONTY (CONT'D)  
Marvin Ray?

.ADMINISTRATOR  
Mm hm.

MONTY  
You're sure?

ADMINISTRATOR  
I was there when he broke the record.

Monty nods and continues on his way. The administrator watches man and dog walk down the long corridor.

.INT. CAMPBELL-SAWYER CLASSROOM

JAKOB ELINSKY stands at the blackboard, facing three rows of uninspired teenage faces. He wears a tweed jacket that seems a few sizes too large, with chalk stains on the sleeves.

Jakob is the same age as Monty but he seems younger. There is something adolescent in his slouch, in the way he chews his lip.

One of his students, MARY D'ANNUNZIO (17), stands at her desk, reading from a poetry textbook. Her eyes drown in pools of painted shadow, her hair is dyed black, tattooed roses garland her wrist.

MARY  
(reading)  
"Let us roll all our strength and all  
Our sweetness up into one ball,  
And tear pur pleasures with rough strife,  
Through the iron gates of life."

Jakob watches her. We don't know the Campbell-Sawyer dress code, but we can guess that she's violating it. We can also guess that Jakob is watching her a little too avidly.

Her pierced navel is visible below her Donnas tee-shirt.

MARY (CONT'D)  
(reading)  
"Thus, though we cannot make our sun  
Stand still, yet we will make him run."

Mary shrugs and sits down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAKOB

Good, good, excellent reading. Um, okay, so. What do people think? What's going on here?

Nobody says anything. Jakob nods.

JAKOB (CONT'D)

Okay...

LUKE, a sullen-looking student with a shaved head and a failed goatee, raises his hand.

JAKOB (CONT'D)

Luke?

LUKE

Can I go to the bathroom?

JAKOB

No. You went twenty minutes ago.

LUKE

I have a bladder infection.

JAKOB

The poem. The poem, folks. Hello?

MARY

It's not real deep or anything. The guy wants to get laid and he's telling her to give it up.

A few of the students titter half-heartedly.

A knock on the door releases Jakob from his hell. He goes to answer it and then "stops/" startled.

It's the type of door popular in school buildings> with a wire-reinforced glass panel at head height, allowing you to look into the classroom without disturbing anyone.

Doyle, tongue dangling from his mouth, stares back at Jakob through the panel.

MARY (CONT'D)

I didn't know your mother was coming today, Luke.

LUKE

Eat me.

Jakob opens the door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Monty stands there, holding up Doyle. Doyle scrambles out of his arms and jumps on Jakob, nearly knocking the teacher down, getting his dirty paws all over Jakob's jacket.

MONTY  
Easy, Doyle.

Doyle immediately calms down, squatting by Jakob's feet and staring up at the teacher.

JAKOB  
Hey- uh, what's going on?

Jakob seems awkward around Monty, nervous.

MONTY  
(looking at Doyle)  
Look at him. He loves you.

Jakob looks at Doyle, who wags the stump of his tail.

MONTY (CONT'D)  
He really loves you. So what are you doing?

Jakob turns to look at his class, who all stare at Monty and the dog. For the first time today, they're quiet.

JAKOB  
(to Monty)  
Teaching my class, I guess.

MONTY  
Cool.  
Hey, class.

A few students shyly wave.

MONTY (CONT'D)  
(to Jakob)  
Sorry to interrupt. Listen, change of plans. They're throwing me a goodbye party downtown. You and Frank get together somewhere and I'll come pick you up.

Jakob is a little flustered by this encounter, acutely aware that his class is watching.

JAKOB  
Okay.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Monty leans closer to Jakob.

MONTY  
(whispering)

I think the one with the belly button's  
checking me out.

Jakob turns and sees Mary staring at them. He quickly turns  
back to Monty, who is smiling at Mary. Jakob grabs the door  
knob.

JAKOB  
Okay, so I'll see you later?

Monty nods.

MONTY  
Tell Frank we'll meet up after midnight.

He leads Doyle away and Jakob closes the door, then turns to  
look at his silent class. The bell rings and all the students  
grab their bags.

INT. TEACHERS' LOUNGE - LATER

Jakob, alone in the room, sits on a sofa, his head in his  
hands. He looks up when he hears a knock on the door.

Mary D'Annunzio peeks in.

MARY  
You have a minute?

Jakob sits up straighter and smiles.

JAKOB  
Sure. Come in.

I thought no students were allowed in the  
teachers' lounge.

JAKOB  
I won't tell on you.

Mary walks into the room, looking around suspiciously. Jakob  
points at a chair.

JAKOB (CONT'D)  
Take a seat.

Mary sits.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAKOB (CONT'D)

So what's up?

MARY

Who was that guy who came to class?

JAKOB

Monty? An old friend of mine. He went here, too.

MARY

He doesn't look like you.

JAKOB

Actually, I have many friends who don't look like me.

MARY

No, I mean, he doesn't look like someone you'd be friends with.

JAKOB

We grew up together.

(beat)

So what can I do for you?

MARY

I want to know why I got a B+ on my story.

JAKOB

Okay, first of all-

MARY

Nobody else in this class can write. You know it, too. Don't start-

JAKOB

Don't worry about everyone else.

MARY

Vince Miskella writes a story about his grandmother dying and you give him an A? What is that, a charity A? Everyone's always writing about their grandmother dying. You know why? Not because it's so traumatic. Because it's a guaranteed A. And you're all sentimental, like, "Oh, Vince, that was very powerful, very moving." No it wasn't. You didn't care, I didn't care, nobody cared. That's what grandmothers do, they die.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Mary has worked herself into a lather and Jakob watches her admiringly.

JAKOB  
What did your mother say when you got that?

Mary stares at him, not comprehending.

MARY  
What? When I got what?

JAKOB  
(pointing at her wrist)  
The tattoo.

MARY  
She said, "Where'd you get the money for that."

JAKOB  
Oh. And?

MARY  
And what did I say or where did I get the money?

JAKOB  
Well, what did you say, I guess.

MARY  
I said he did it for free.

JAKOB  
Oh. Did he?

MARY  
No. Why do you care so much?

JAKOB  
Just curious.

MARY  
So you're not going to change the grade?

JAKOB  
No, I'm not changing the grade. I'd be happy to discuss—

Mary yanks her bookbag off the floor and straps it on her shoulder.

(CONTINUED)



MARY

Great. That was a big waste of time.

JAKOB

Look, instead of worrying about the grade so much, let's talk about the actual--

MARY

(muttering)

Forget it.

She stomps out of the lounge, her black combat boots clomping on the corridor's linoleum floor.

Jakob shakes his head and looks up at the clock. 9:15. He reaches for the phone sitting on the coffee table.

INT. SHREVE ZIMMER INVESTMENT BANK - SAME TIME

FRANK SLATTERY, also in his mid-twenties, stares at the row of clocks on the far wall. Below each clock is a sign: Tokyo, Hong Kong, Frankfurt, London. The clock marked New York reads 9:15.

The trading floor is one giant room: rows of TRADERS seated before their computers, jabbering into their telephone headsets. No women- the place is loud and aggressive.

Slattery is built like a former college wrestler: thick-necked, broken-nosed, muscular, his hair retreating from his forehead, his eyes undercast with dark crescents.

One of his phones rings. He answers.

-----SEATTERY

Frank Slattery.

He listens for one second.

SLATTERY (CONT'D)

Can't talk right now. Employment number's coming out.

INT. TEACHERS' LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS

JAKOB

All right. Just wanted to let you know that Monty-

INT. SHREVE ZIMMER - CONTINUOUS

SLATTERY

I'll call you later.

(CONTINUED)

He hangs up the phone and returns his gaze to the computer screens in front of him. Clearly he's waiting for something and clearly he's anxious.

LICHTER (O.S.)  
Coming out with us later on?

Slattery looks up at his boss, ARI LICHTER, early forties, a plump, genial man.

SLATTERY  
Nah, I'm meeting some friends tonight.

LICHTER  
Big date?

The subject clearly makes Slattery uncomfortable.

SLATTERY  
More of a going-away party.

LICHTER  
Listen, the other thing, you're still holding onto all those contracts?

SLATTERY  
Why, you're nervous?

LICHTER  
I don't like it. The claims numbers have dropped three weeks straight.

SLATTERY  
And everybody's thinking, if claims have dropped, employment must be up.

LICHTER  
Everybody's thinking that because it's pretty much always true.

SLATTERY  
Not this time.

LICHTER  
Frank—

SLATTERY  
I've got a theory.

LICHTER  
Oh good, you've got a theory. Look, you're in awfully deep. You've got sixty million of the bank's money in there—

CONTINUED: (2)

SLATTERY  
A hundred million.

The news startles Lichter.

LICHTER  
A hundred million? Jesus, Frank.

SLATTERY  
They authorized me to a hundred million.

Other traders sitting nearby have begun watching this exchange, and Lichter is careful to keep his voice down.

LICHTER  
A week ago. They raised your limit a week ago, and you're already maxing out.

SLATTERY  
I'm telling you, we're in for a low number. One-forty, maybe one-thirty-five.

LICHTER  
Cut your stake in half, all right? You've been doing a great job, everyone knows that, but I'm still your boss and I'm telling you: sell those contracts.

Lichter grips Slattery's shoulder for a moment and then walks toward his office (a real office, with walls and a door), exchanging hellos with other traders on the floor.

PHELAN, fresh from college, walks down the row, handing fax sheets to all the traders. He hands a sheet to Slattery, who looks at it briefly before crumpling it.

PHELAN  
Sollie's looking for a high number. Two hundred and eighty thousand's their call.

SLATTERY  
Fuck Sollie.

PHELAN  
Fuck Salomon Brothers?

SLATTERY  
They're hedging their bets. They want everyone on their side of the fence.

PHELAN  
What's the big deal with the employment number, anyway?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Slattery doesn't want to discuss this right now.

SLATTERY

More jobs means fewer people looking for work, right? Which means it's harder to find the right people for a job, which means you got to raise wages to get them, which means inflation goes up— you following?

PHELAN

(not following)

Yeah.

Slattery frowns.

SLATTERY

You're wearing a striped shirt with a striped tie.

Phelan looks down at his tie.

PHELAN

Yeah? Is that bad?

SLATTERY

You look like a fucking optical illusion.

Go away.

Phelan walks away, nervously adjusting his tie.

MARCUSE peeks over the partition in front of Slattery. With his slicked-back hair, red suspenders, and obnoxious smirk, Marcuse looks like a man who owns the Gordon Gekko action figure.

- MARGUSE-

Better hop to, sonny boy.

Slattery says nothing, just stabs angrily at his keyboard.

MARCUSE (CONT'D)

I don't see you picking up the phone. Didn't Lichter just tell you to sell? Sounds like your allowance got cut off.

Slattery, nostrils flared, pretends to ignore the taunts.

MARCUSE (CONT'D)

You're not going to disobey a direct order, are you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Slattery rolls back in his wheeled office chair and stares at Marcuse.

SLATTERY

I don't come into your bedroom and tell you how to fuck your wife, do I?

Marcuse grins. He calls to another trader down the floor.

MARCUSE

Hey, Schultz, what are we looking at for the employment number?.

SCHULTZ

(yelling from his desk)  
Two-fifty, two-seventy, somewhere in there.

Marcuse sits down again, disappearing behind the partition. Slattery glowers at his desk. He picks up his phone and holds the receiver to his ear, never dialing a number.

Lichter calls to Slattery from his office door.

LICHTER

Slattery! We're good?

Slattery nods and gives a thumbs up. As soon as Lichter returns to his office, Slattery hangs up the phone.

Marcuse sticks his head above the partition again.

MARCUSE

Good thing you got rid of those  
- contracts.-Looks like a huge number on - ,«-•-•-»  
the way.

The trading floor suddenly- and eerily-^ goes quiet. Everyone's attention is fixed on the television monitors hanging from the ceilings. The monitors are muted; closed captioning files along the bottoms of the screens.

Each monitor is tuned to the same station, a financial network broadcasting the employment number's release. A REPORTER wearing a bowtie reads the statistics.

Slattery bows his head. He holds his hands in his lap and closes his eyes. For a long while the room is very quiet.

Then a commotion of shouts and groans riles the floor. Everyone is hollering at the same time, and we can only make out a few phrases.

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CONTINUED: (5)

TRADER 1 (O.S.)  
Stop out of that! Stop out!

TRADER 2 (O.S.)  
We're going for a ride!

Slattery looks up at the nearest monitor. A white number is emblazoned on a blue background: 138,112. Every monitor in the room flashes the same number.

Slattery stares at his computer screen. There it is again, displayed prominently in the largest window: 138, 112.

Slattery raises his eyebrows. He juggles the crumpled fax sheet a few times and then tosses it over the partition, where Marcuse is sitting.

MARCUSE (O.S.)  
Fuck you, Slattery.

Slattery grins and leans back in his chair, hands behind his head.

EXT. MONTY'S BUILDING - LATE AFTERNOON

A four-story walk-up on a quiet street in Yorkville. NATURELLE ROSARIO sits on the stoop steps, reading a book.

Naturelle, in her early twenties, has the lean body of a runner. It's cold outside but she doesn't seem to mind. When she sees Monty coming she closes the book and stands.

NATURELLE  
How long have you guys been walking? I  
woke up at seven and you were already  
gone.

Monty, digging in his pocket for his keys, kisses her for an answer. Naturelle closes her eyes and tries to embrace him but Monty abruptly ends the kiss and climbs the stairs.

Doyle wags the stump of his tail.

NATURELLE (CONT'D)  
How you doing, Mr. Doyle?

She bends down to scratch him behind his mangled ear.

MONTY  
Why you waiting down here?

NATURELLE  
I had my book. It was a beautiful day.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Monty smiles.

MONTY

Of course it was a beautiful day.

He holds the door open for her and Doyle.

INT. MONTY'S APARTMENT

Monty closes the apartment door behind Naturelle and Doyle, then locks it. There are five locks and a heavy steel deadbolt.

Despite the ominous security, it's a nice one-bedroom apartment, with hardwood floors and tall windows facing the brownstones across the street.

Black-and-white photographs line the walls: shots of the Manhattan skyline, of Bensonhurst, of Doyle. The largest photo, hanging above the sofa, is of Brogan's Bar.

Doyle curls up next to the radiator and quickly falls asleep. Monty sits on the sofa and flicks on the television with the remote.

WEATHERMAN

The first major storm of winter is heading our way-

Monty turns off the television. He stares at the dead screen. Naturelle comes out of the kitchen carrying a jar of honey and a spoon.

She hands the jar to Monty, who opens it for her. She sits beside him and begins eating the honey, watching him. He sees her watching.

MONTY

What?

NATURELLE

What are you thinking about?

MONTY

What am I thinking about?

He leans forward and unclips a hand-tooled leather holster from the back of his belt. A "B" for Brogan is tooled into the leather, stylized like the old Brooklyn Dodgers' logo.

A .40 caliber automatic, squat and black, rests in the holster. Monty drops the holster onto the coffee table and runs his fingers over the B. Naturelle stares at the gun.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MONTY (CONT'D)

I'm thinking I want to be like that girl from the X-Men, the one who can walk through walls.

He's still tracing the holster's "B" with his fingertips.

MONTY (CONT'D)

And if I can't do that, if I can't figure out how to walk through walls, I'm thinking one shot through the roof of the mouth, boom, problem solved.

Naturelle hits him on the shoulder.

NATURELLE

Don't joke about that.

MONTY

You think I'm joking?

NATURELLE

So what are we doing tonight? Before you shoot yourself.

Monty reclines, arms spread wide and resting on the sofa's back cushions.

MONTY

Uncle Blue's throwing me a party at Velvet.

NATURELLE

I thought it was over with him.

.....MONTY.....

Almost.

He watches her eat another spoonful of raw honey.

MONTY (CONT'D)

That's a nasty habit you have:

She leans forward and kisses him on the lips.

NATURELLE

Come take a bath with me.

MONTY

Not right now.

She caresses his jaw but Monty is distant, his mind elsewhere.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (2)

She sets the honey jar on the table and walks out of the living room. Monty listens to her in the bathroom, drawing the bathwater.

He listens to the sound of running water.

CUT TO:

INT. MONTY'S BATHROOM - SIX MONTHS AGO

Naturelle sits on Monty's lap in the narrow bathtub. He's massaging her shoulders. Music plays from a radio on the windowsill.

She is laughing at something he just said. He leans closer and kisses the back of her neck, behind her ears. She stretches back, lifting one leg out of the bath.

He runs his hand down her thigh and then stops, looking at the Puerto Rican flag tattooed on her ankle. She follows his gaze to the tattoo and then groans.

NATURELLE

Not this again.

MONTY

You were born in America, you lived in America your whole life, you've been to Puerto Rico twice, for vacation. What is that? I should get an Irish flag tattooed on my ass cause my grandparents are from there?

NATURELLE

You, don't have room on your ass for an Irish flag.

Monty dips his hands into the warm water, reaches below her, grabs her butt. Naturelle shrieks and Monty laughs.

MONTY

Between you and me the kids will be just right.

Loud pounding on the apartment door startles them. They stare at each other. Doyle barks from the other room.

Naturelle gets out of the tub, pulls on a bathrobe, and goes to answer the door. Monty waits, listening. He knows who it is. He stares out the bathroom's open window.

C ) INT. MONTY'S LIVING ROOM - STILL IN FLASHBACK

Monty, wearing sweatpants and no shirt, walks into the living room. Four D.E.A. AGENTS, all wearing D.E.A. windbreakers and shoulder holsters, wait for him.

Doyle, ears back, growls at the agents. Monty scratches Doyle's head and the dog relaxes a bit.

Naturelle, panicked, stares at Monty. She's still holding the apartment door open.

MONTY  
Close the door, baby.

She closes the door.

AGENT BRZOWSKI  
Montgomery Brogan?

MONTY  
Yeah.

Brzowski flips open a badge and hands a paper to Monty, who looks it over.

AGENT BRZOWSKI  
I'm Agent Brzowski with the Drug Enforcement Agency. We've got a warrant to search your apartment.

Brzowski walks over to the sofa and sits down. The other three agents stroll around the apartment. One looks out the window; one starts flipping through a magazine on the coffee table; one stares at a photograph on the wall.

AGENT CUNNINGHAM  
You take this picture?

MONTY  
Yeah.

AGENT CUNNINGHAM  
Nice picture.

When one of the agents steps too close to Doyle, the dog growls and the agent jumps back.

MONTY  
Easy, Doyle.

AGENT BRZOWSKI  
I don't see any tags on that dog.

(CONTINUED)

I )  
^11^^

CONTINUED:

MONTY

He's inside. He doesn't have to wear tags.

AGENT BRZOWSKI

He better stay calm or I'll have the pound come get him. I've seen too many men bit by these little bastards.

Monty whistles and Doyle stands and walks over to him. Monty crouches, one hand stroking Doyle's thick neck.

Naturelle, uncomfortable wearing only the bathrobe, begins heading back to the bedroom.

AGENT BRZOWSKI (CONT'D)

Ms. Rosario? That's your name, right? I need you to stay right here, ma'am.

He winks at her.

AGENT BRZOWSKI (CONT'D)

Can't have you sneaking around.

Naturelle leans against the wall, looking for a sign from Monty, who gives her none.

The agents don't seem to be searching very hard.

AGENT BRZOWSKI (CONT'D)

Hm.

He stares down at the sofa he's sitting on.

AGENT BRZOWSKI (CONT'D)

This sofa is not very comfortable.

Monty stares at the agent for a second and then exhales. He turns and looks carefully at Naturelle.

AGENT CUNNINGHAM

Maybe it's your posture. Posture's very important.

AGENT BRZOWSKI

No, it's this sofa. It's very uncomfortable. It's lumpy.

MONTY

Get it over with.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

AGENT BRZOWSKI

I just don't understand. It looks like such a nice sofa. How much did you pay for this sofa, Ms. Rosario?

Brzowski stands and looks down at the cushion. Monty is still staring at Naturelle, who meets his eye for a second and then quickly turns away.

AGENT BRZOWSKI (CONT'D)

Maybe it's the padding?

AGENT CUNNINGHAM

Could be the padding.

Brzowski picks up the center cushion, turns it in his hands, and unzips it.

AGENT BRZOWSKI

Probably the padding.

He pulls out handfuls of white fiber filling and lets them drift to the floor. Monty and Naturelle watch.

AGENT BRZOWSKI (CONT'D)

Yeah, there's something lumpy in here, Mr. Brogan. It's a good thing I found this, you know. It'll make your sofa much more comfortable to sit on.

The other agents laugh. Brzowski pulls out a package the size of a bottle of wine from the cushion, a bundle of plastic wrap and masking tape.

Brzowski raises his eyebrows in mock shock while the other agents poh and cluck\*\_\_\_\_\_

AGENT BRZOWSKI (CONT'D)

Mr. Brogan, I do believe you're fucked.

END FLASHBACK

INT. MONTY'S LIVING ROOM

Monty sits on the sofa, running his hand over the sofa cushion. Outside it's dark and Monty hasn't turned on the lights.

NATURELLE (O.S.)

Baby?

Monty looks up. Naturelle stands in the bathroom's doorway, wearing a bathrobe.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

For a moment they watch each other in silence. Then he stands, grabs the holster off the table, and clips it to the back of his belt.

NATURELLE (CONT'D)

Where you going?

MONTY

I got to meet my dad for dinner. I'll call you in a couple hours.

He kisses her quickly and turns to go, but then stops and looks at her.

MONTY (CONT'D)

Could you wear the silver dress tonight?

NATURELLE

You want me to?

He nods.

MONTY

I want to remember you in that dress.

He walks out of the apartment, leaving Naturelle alone in the dark living room.

EXT. MONTY'S BUILDING

Kostya sits on the top step of the stoop, sipping from a silver flask. A female JOGGER runs past and Kostya calls after her.

KOSTYA

... Hello, teeauti-f-uA-woman! ...

She doesn't look in his direction. He takes another swig from his flask.

A young MOTHER pushes a baby stroller past the stoop.

KOSTYA (CONT'D)

Hello, beautiful mother! Hello, little baby!

The mother doesn't look at him, but the two-year old GIRL, fascinated, stares at him.

KOSTYA (CONT'D)

(calling after mother)

You look like Julia Roberts. They tell you this, yes? Come back! I make you a new baby. I make you a boy!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Monty opens the front door. He stares down at Kostya.

MONTY  
What are you doing here?

KOSTYA  
So many beautiful women, this  
neighborhood. I like very much.

Kostya stands and grips Monty's arm.

KOSTYA (CONT'D)  
You are okay?

MONTY  
I'm having the time of my life.

KOSTYA  
Uncle Blue wants me talking with you. He  
wants you coming to Velvet tonight.

MONTY  
Yeah, three other people already told me.  
He's really dying to say goodbye, huh?

Kostya releases Monty's arm and nods sadly.

KOSTYA  
It seems.

MONTY  
What does he want?

KOSTYA  
I don't know.

MONTY : ".....".....  
You came all the way up here to tell me  
this? You heard of telephones?

KOSTYA  
Yes, I heard, but you don't return my  
calls. And Uncle wants to make sure.

MONTY  
I'll be there. I'm bringing Naturelle and  
some friends.

KOSTYA  
You bring her? Why?

MONTY  
Why wouldn't I?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Kostya shrugs.

KOSTYA

We have this conversation one time,  
remember? You get angry.

MONTY

Oh, Jesus. She didn't dime me out, man.

KOSTYA

No?

MONTY

Why would she?

Kostya shrugs again.

KOSTYA

Maybe her aunt is illegal alien.

MONTY

What if she is?

KOSTYA

Maybe the Federals threaten her.

Monty shakes his head and walks down the stairs.

MONTY

You're insane. She wouldn't do that.

KOSTYA

No? Did you ask her?

Monty--stares-up-at-Kostya for a few seconds before-walking--away.

Kostya stands at the top of the stoop. He feels something and raises his palms to the air. The snow has begun to fall.

He looks up into the sky. Something catches his eye- in one of the fourth floor windows, Naturelle is staring down at him.

Kostya watches her. She lets the curtain close. Kostya takes another slug from his flask.

INT. SUBWAY STATION

Monty waits for the 6 train. Two BOYS (12), wearing winter parkas and knit caps, crouch near the edge of the platform, pointing down at the tracks and laughing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MONTY

What's down there?

The boys point and Monty looks. We follow his gaze. We can't see anything at first, but then, as if our eyes were adjusting to the dark, we begin to pick out movement.

A gang of large RATS crawls through the tracks, nosing through balled-up paper bags, candy wrappers and orange peels.

BOY 1

These ones, they eat rat poison like chocolate.

The biggest rat of all sniffs around the base of an upright wax-paper coffee cup that sits just outside the third rail.

Monty reaches into the pocket of his camel's hair coat and pulls out a handful of change.

MONTY

Watch this.

He selects a quarter and— with a free throw motion as smooth as Hersey Hawkins's— tosses it into the empty cup, a ten-foot shot.

The big rat, startled, hustles into the alcove below the lip of the platform. The boys, impressed, whistle.

MONTY (CONT'D)

Here—

He offers his palmful of change.

MONTY (CONT'D)

Take a shot at it.

The boys look at each other for a moment before each takes a coin. They stare up at Monty. He nods at them.

MONTY (CONT'D)

Let's see what you got.

Boy 1 takes careful aim at the coffee cup. His shot is way off target, though— it pings off the tile on the far side of the tunnel.

MONTY (CONT'D)

Your release is too high. Look—

He mimics the boy's shooting motion.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (2)

MONTY (CONT'D)

See? You're letting go way up here, so  
it's floating on you. It's like— you  
play basketball?

BOY 1

No.

MONTY

Baseball?

BOY 1

No.

MONTY

No? What do you play?

BOY 1

Soccer.

MONTY

(disgusted)

Soccer? All right, forget it.

(turning to the other boy)

Your turn, little man.

Boy 2 toes the edge of the yellow danger line and practices  
his motion. When he finally releases the coin, it flashes  
through the air and drops neatly into the cup.

MONTY (CONT'D)

Thataboy!

He raises his fist and the boy taps knuckles, grinning  
happily.

BOY 1

You see that! You see that! Charlie got  
mad skills!

Charlie says nothing, just grins and hops around on one foot.

MONTY

Make a wish.

CHARLIE

I get a wish?

MONTY

Hell, yes. A shot like that deserves a  
wish.

Monty and Charlie stare at the coffee cup and concentrate.

INT. 6 TRAIN

Monty rests with his eyes closed as the train shudders through the tunnels.

TREY (O.S.)  
Monty? Monty Brogan?

Monty opens his eyes. TREY POWELL (27) stands above him, holding the bar and smiling down at Monty. A blonde, blandly handsome man, Trey looks like he might have rowed for Yale's crew. He wears a well-cut navy-blue suit. His wife, NANCY (26), stands beside him—equally blonde, equally bland.

MONTY  
(not recognizing them)  
Hey...

TREY  
Trey Powell! From Campbell-Sawyer!

MONTY  
(trying for enthusiasm)  
Oh, Trey. Hey. How you been?

TREY  
Excellent, excellent. Well, Goldman's got me locked away twenty hours a day, but other than that... I'm sorry, Nancy, this is Monty Brogan. Best basketball player ever to play for Campbell-Sawyer.

Monty stands and shakes her hand.

MONTY  
Nice to meet you. Here, take my seat.

NANCY  
No, no, please—

MONTY  
This is my stop. I got to catch the B train.

Trey claps Monty on the shoulder.

TREY  
Too bad, I wanted to catch up.

MONTY  
Yeah, well I'm sure I'll see you soon—

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TREY

Tenth reunion. It's coining up! I'm the alumni rep for our class, actually. We'll see you there, I hope? June fifteenth?

The train has pulled into the station and Monty moves toward the doors.

MONTY

Yeah, I hope so, definitely. Good seeing you.

Monty makes his escape and Trey watches him go.

NANCY

He went to Campbell-Sawyer?

TREY

Mm. Well, he was a scholarship kid. It didn't take, though. They threw him out junior year.

Through the subway car windows, they watch Monty jogging up the stairs.

NANCY

For what?

TREY

Selling drugs.

(beat)

You can take the kid out of Bensonhurst, but you can't take the Bensonhurst out of the kid.

EXT. BROGAN'S BAR - NIGHT

The snow is falling faster. We watch the flakes spin through a yellow cone of streetlight.

We see the bar from the street.. The name "Brogan's Bar & Grill" is written in gold script on the storefront window.

From the outside it looks like any other Bensonhurst bar, neon beer signs hanging in the window.

INT. BROGAN'S BAR

On the inside, though, it's clear that attention has been paid to every detail. Everything is right: the zinc bartop, the brass foot-rail, the antique mirrors behind the liquor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A BARTENDER wipes down the bartop with a rag and a spray-bottle. Two CUSTOMERS sit on stools and watch the basketball game on television.

Monty sits at a corner table with his father, JAMES BROGAN, fifty. Each man has a pint of Guinness. The older Brogan was clearly a fine-looking man in his day, but the years have been hard on him.

Monty points at the Tiffany-glass sconces on the wall.

MONTY

Where'd you find those?

MR. BROGAN

Estate sale in Sheepshead Bay. Old lady dies and her kids sell everything five days later. The china— she probably thought her great-grandkids would be eating off those plates.

MONTY

Maybe they didn't need any more plates.

MR. BROGAN

(wistfully)

It was beautiful china.

Monty leans back in his chair and surveys the place. Not that he hasn't seen the bar a thousand times— he's having a hard time looking directly at his father.

RUTH (60), a waitress with a face like a crumpled paper bag, arrives with the food: pork chops for the elder Brogan, a steak for Monty.

MONTY

Thanks, Ruth.

RUTH

Anytime, sweetie.

She rests her hand on Monty's shoulder for a moment.

RUTH (CONT'D)

I'll send you cookies every month. Peanut butter, right? Your favorite.

Monty smiles and nods. Ruth exchanges glances with Mr. Brogan before departing. Mr. Brogan breaks a bread roll and butters it. He stares at the buttered bread and leaves it on his plate.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MR. BROGAN  
So I talked to Sal-

MONTY  
Ah, come on, Dad.

MR. BROGAN  
See if he can help with anything.

MONTY  
Sal? The guy's been out of the picture  
for twenty years.

MR. BROGAN  
He might know some people in there.

MONTY  
The guy's three hundred years old. He  
sits around playing gin rummy all day.  
What's he going to do for me?

MR. BROGAN  
He still knows people.

MONTY  
Dad, would you please? I'll be all right.  
Just, please, don't get involved in this.  
(beat)  
Okay?

MR. BROGAN  
You're still going to be a young man when  
you get out.

- Monty lets his fork drop and wipes his mouth with his napkin.

MR. BROGAN (CONT'D)  
I know you don't think so. But listen to  
me. You keep your head down in there.  
Don't start any trouble.

MONTY  
Jesus. Enough.

Both men stare at the uneaten food on their plates.

MR. BROGAN  
This should never have happened.

Monty raps the tabletop with his knuckles.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MONTY

Dad? I fucked up. Okay? What else can I tell you? I fucked up.

INT. BROGAN'S BATHROOM - LATER

Monty stands in the cramped bathroom, staring into the mirror. Someone has scrawled "Fuck you" in magic marker on the wall above the mirror.

CUT TO:

INT. DEA DIVISION OFFICE, INTERROGATION ROOM ~ MORNING

Monty stares into the mirror covering one wall of the room.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Two agents stare back at him through the one-way glass.

INT. DEA DIVISION OFFICE, INTERROGATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Monty sits at the table and waits. Agent Brzowski walks in, followed by Agent Cunningham. Brzowski leaves the door ajar for a moment.

Monty looks through the door and sees Naturelle leaving another room, escorted by two agents. She makes eye contact with Monty. Brzowski shuts the door. He smiles at Monty.

AGENT BRZOWSKI

Good looking girl you got there.

Monty glares at him. Brzowski pretends to shiver.

**AGENT BRZOWSKI (CONT'D)**

Ooh, that's a scary look. Yikes. You see the look he gave me?

Cunningham laughs. Both agents take seats at the table.

AGENT BRZOWSKI (CONT'D)

Naturelle Rosario. What a name. You see the body on that girl?

Cunningham laughs again.

MONTY

You fucking touch her-

AGENT BRZOWSKI

No, no, you've got it all wrong. She fucking touched you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Monty is silent for a few seconds. When he does speak, his tone is very quiet and deliberate— he is trying to restrain his temper.

MONTY

You're lying to me.

AGENT BRZOWSKI

Am I? That's sweet, you really trust her. All I know is, she's walking away. We just signed her release. Bye bye, Naturelle.

AGENT CUNNINGHAM

She's probably having a big party tonight.

AGENT BRZOWSKI

Sure, why not? Big celebration. She's got that whole big apartment to herself now.

AGENT CUNNINGHAM

She's a smart girl. You on the other hand...

AGENT BRZOWSKI

You're supposed to be smart. Got yourself a scholarship to a fancy private school, huh? Not bad for a kid from Bensonhurst.

AGENT CUNNINGHAM

And then you get yourself thrown out for dealing. Pretty dumb, buddy.

"~—.....—'—AGENT" BRZOWSKI

You know what happens to pretty boys like you in prison?

AGENT CUNNINGHAM

Oh, they are gonna love you.

AGENT BRZOWSKI

But it's not too late, Brogan. First felony offense, we can offer you a nice deal. You just gotta be smart. So why don't you tell us about your friend Uncle Blue.

MONTY

(to Cunningham)

Can I ask you a question?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

AGENT CUNNINGHAM

Sure.

Cunningham and Brzowski lean forward, eager to hear Monty name the names.

MONTY

When you've got your dick up his ass, is he still talking all the time?

Cunningham and Brzowski sit back.

MONTY (CONT'D)

Cause it seems to me he never shuts up, and I'm just wondering, is that annoying, you're fucking the guy up the ass and he never shuts up?

CUT TO:

INT. BROGAN'S BATHROOM

Monty still stares at the mirror. He wets his thumb and tries to rub out the magic marker "Fuck you". Someone knocks on the door. Monty rubs harder. It's not coming out.

VZ7

Another knock.

MONTY

Yeah, all right.

INT. BROGAN'S BAR

Monty returns to the table, sits, drinks some Guinness.

MONTY

Let me ask you a question.

MR. BROGAN

Okay.

MONTY

What do you think of Naturelle?

MR. BROGAN

She's a good girl. Your mother would have liked her.

MONTY

Do you trust her?

(CONTINUED)

Q



MR. BROGAN

Do *I* trust her? Why do J have to trust her?

MONTY

Do you think I can trust her?

MR. BROGAN

Where you going with this?

MONTY

I've been hearing weird things.

(beat)

Some people are saying she dimed me out.

MR. BROGAN

(incredulous)

Why would she do that?

MONTY

I don't know. Maybe the Feds got to her somehow. Blackmailed her.

MR. BROGAN

The girl loves you/ Monty. I can't believe she would betray you.

MONTY

Everything's gotten so strange, Dad. I wake up some mornings and it takes me a minute to remember who I am, you know? Where I'm going.

Mr. Brogan looks down at his plate and nods.

MONTY (CONT'D)

Most of the people I'm with, I look at them and I think, these are my friends?

(beat)

The only ones I trust these days are you and the guys I grew up with— Frank, Jake.

MR. BROGAN

I miss those boys.

MONTY

And Naturelle... Jesus. I can't get it out of my head.

MR. BROGAN

It doesn't really matter now, does it?

(CONTINUED)

VL

CONTINUED: (2)

Monty stares at his father, blue eyes unblinking.

MONTY  
It matters to me.

Monty checks his watch.

MONTY (CONT'D)  
I should get going.

MR. BROGAN  
Okay. I'll see you in the morning.

Mr. Brogan removes his wallet from the inside pocket of his jacket.

MONTY  
The morning? What for? I'm taking a bus up there.

MR. BROGAN  
Forget the bus. I'll drive you. It'll take half as long.

Monty frowns, backing his chair away from the table.

MONTY  
No thanks. I'd rather say goodbye here.

Mr. Brogan pulls a small photograph from his wallet and hands it to his son.

MR. BROGAN  
Take this. They'll let you keep it.

Monty holds the picture carefully.

INSERT PHOTO

James Brogan, twenty years younger, his arm around his beautiful wife. The six-year-old Montgomery Brogan stands in front of them, wearing yellow pajamas and a red plastic fireman's helmet, staring at the floor.

MR. BROGAN (CONT'D)  
When you were a little kid you used to sleep in that fireman's helmet. Your mother-

MONTY  
(still looking at photo)  
Don't, Dad. Not now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Monty carefully inserts the photo into his own wallet, kisses his father's forehead, and walks away.

James Brogan stares at the empty chair where Monty had sat.

INT. ELEUTHERIA GREEK RESTAURANT - NIGHT

UNCLE BLUE, SENKA VALGHOBOK, and VICTOR GEDNY sit on the private balcony that overlooks the restaurant's main room.

The place is furnished in classic Outer Borough Greek fashion: whitewashed walls, clay-tiled floors, posters of the Parthenon at dawn and Santorini at sunset.

Uncle Blue owns the place. He's a fierce-looking man with a thick black beard, powerful hands, and no tolerance for incompetence. It's hard to determine his age— anywhere from forty to sixty.

Valghobek, his lieutenant, looks at first glance like an overweight suburban dad. But on closer inspection there is something absolutely mirthless in his smile, a meanness around his eyes. He's in his late forties.

Gedny, mid-thirties, Uncle Blue's lawyer, wears a shiny suit, a gold bracelet, and a deep, artificial-looking tan.

Gedny busily eats his shrimp and feta while the other two watch him. Gedny gestures toward the windows.

GEDNY

Starting to snow.

UNCLE BLUE

You met with Brogan this morning. . . .

Uncle Blue's accent, like his age, is difficult to pin down. He could be Afghani or Iranian or Turkish.

GEDNY

I did, yeah. . .

Gedny reaches for his wine, takes a sip. . . .

UNCLE BLUE

And?

GEDNY

He's not loving life right now, obviously. I don't know. He's hard to read.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

UNCLE BLUE

I know he is. I don't like that.

GEDNY

Listen, one hundred percent certain, the kid didn't flip. They would not be sending him to Otisville if he flipped.

Uncle Blue and Valghobek exchange glances. It's clear they don't have much respect for the lawyer.

UNCLE BLUE

We're talking about human behavior, Mr. Gedny. Nothing is one hundred percent certain.

VALGHOBEK

Don't assume they're idiots.

GEDNY

That's just it. They're not idiots. No way in hell the kid's still walking around out here if he flipped Federal. Second he goes he's gone, right? If he's their star witness, they'd have disappeared him.

Gedny forks another shrimp and eats it.

GEDNY (CONT'D)

(mouth full)

He's kept his mouth shut.

VALGHOBEK

So far.

GEDNY

He's a smart kid. He knows what's good for him.

UNCLE BLUE

He's soft. He won't last long in there.

GEDNY

He'll have to. Fed mandatory, that means one day off per month of good behavior. Even if he's a fucking choirboy, he's in there seven years.

UNCLE BLUE

(to Valghobek)

He's coming tonight?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Valghobek nods.

GEDNY

Where to? Throwing him a goodbye party at VelVet?

UNCLE BLUE

You won't be there, Mr. Gedny.

GEDNY

What do I have to do to rate one of those VelVet parties? Aside from getting locked up for seven years.

UNCLE BLUE

Win more trials.

Gedny laughs but quickly notices that Uncle Blue and Valghobek are not amused.

GEDNY

Listen, they found six hundred and fifty g's in your boy's sofa cushion. They got every white junkie on the East Side saying Brogan's the sell. Game over.

Uncle Blue and Valghobek say nothing. Gedny licks his lips.

GEDNY (CONT'D)

It's U.S. Code. There's nothing to argue. Who do I argue with, the fucking grid? It's seventy-eight to ninety-seven months, automatic. I kept him out of stepback\* kept him in the world for a few extra months-

UNCLE BLUE

The judge kept him out of stepback. Why? If he's not talking with the Federals, how come he's still on the street?

Gedny shrugs.

GEDNY

It's pretty common for non-violent offenders. He's a white boy with no record and his father put up his bar as the bail bond. They're not worried about him jumping.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

UNCLE BLUE

They know more than you think. If Brogan's telling the truth, he was touched. The DEA went straight to his sofa. They knew exactly where it was.

GEDNY

Someone dined him out. You know who?

Uncle Blue and Valghobek watch the lawyer, impassive and silent.

GEDNY (CONT'D)

None of my business.

UNCLE BLUE

Correct.

EXT. MULBERRY STREET - NIGHT

Monty walks down the snow-covered street, hands in the pockets of his camel's hair coat. He watches everything intently: the passersby, the cars swerving through the slush, the stores and restaurants.

EXT. CLOTHING BOUTIQUE

He stops in front of a fashionable shop. Beyond the plate glass window, bald mannequins wear the latest styles.

CUT TO:

EXT. CLOTHING BOUTIQUE - FLASHBACK (TWO YEARS EARLIER)

Monty and Naturelle, hand in hand, stare through the window at the elegantly attired mannequins. The shop appears to be closed for the night.

NATURELLE

This is my favorite store.

MONTY

I know. Let's go in.

NATURELLE

It's closed.

MONTY

Not for you it's not.

He raps on the window. A SALES CLERK (25) walks over to the window, peers out and sees Monty. He goes to the door, unlocks it, holds it open for Naturelle and Monty.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Naturelle stares at Monty, who smiles and beckons for her to enter. She raises her eyebrows and goes in. Monty nods to the clerk as he enters the store.

MONTY (CONT'D)  
How you doing?

CLERK  
Pretty good, Monty, how you been?

INT. CLOTHING BOUTIQUE

Naturelle and Monty have the shop to themselves. She walks around, inspecting the blouses, the pants, the jackets and handbags. Monty watches her.

NATURELLE  
Everything here is so expensive.

MONTY  
Don't worry about that. It's your birthday.

The clerk emerges from the back room.

CLERK  
We got some of the new stuff in from Italy this morning. You want to take a look?

INT. BACK ROOM

The new clothes are still wrapped in plastic. Naturelle pokes around, touching the fabrics, examining the cuts. The clerk touches her arm\* .. --

CLERK  
Here, check out this dress. It's the best thing they've made in years.

He tears the plastic wrap off a dress hanging in the corner of the room. It really is a gorgeous dress, sleek and silver, looking almost liquid under the fluorescent lights.

Naturelle holds the hanger to her chest and looks at herself in a full-length mirror leaning against one wall. She turns to Monty and smiles.

CUT TO:

EXT. CLOTHING BOUTIQUE WINDOW - NIGHT

Monty, still remembering, stares through the window. His reflection stares back at him.

INT. SLATTERY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Slattery opens the door and Jakob hurries in, his Yankees hat (which he wears for the rest of the night) and coat dusted with snow.

SLATTERY

It's really coming down, huh?

Slattery lives in a Young Man with Money without Woman Apartment. The television set in the living room is so large that the weatherman startles Jakob.

The living room itself is bigger than many Manhattan apartments, but it's empty except for the television, an old sofa, a coffee table, a Persian rug (still rolled) under the windows, and a shiny red electric guitar in the corner.

Slattery returns to the sofa, bottle of beer in hand, while Jakob remains standing, brushing the snow from his coat.

JAKOB

(indicating guitar)

You taking lessons?

SLATTERY

You think I have time for guitar lessons?  
It's nice though, huh?

JAKOB

Yeah, it's nice.

SLATTERY

I like that color red. Have you checked out the TV yet? Big, right?

JAKOB

Very big.

On television, the weatherman blabs on about the coming storm.

WEATHERMAN

...for the New York metropolitan area, and I'll tell you what, Carol, it could be a doozy. Expect anywhere from six to ten inches of snow.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

JAKOB

Do you think real human beings use the word "doozy"?

SLATTERY

Ten inches of snow!

JAKOB

Maybe we'll have a snow day tomorrow.

SLATTERY

We should go skiing this weekend. I bought some racing skis. Six hundred bucks for a pair of fucking skis.

JAKOB

I don't know how to ski.

SLATTERY

Well so what. Neither do I. But ten inches!

(beat)

You gonna stand all night? You're making me nervous.

Jakob sits beside Slattery and stares unhappily at the huge television. When the screen goes blank before a commercial, he sees his own face reflected in the glass.

JAKOB

Frank?

SLATTERY

Yeah?

JAKOB

Are you ready for this?

Slattery changes channels.

SLATTERY

For what?

JAKOB

For tonight.

SLATTERY

What's there to be ready for?

-JAKOB

What do we say to him? He's going to be living in a cell for seven years.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: <2) .....

JAKOB (CONT'D)

It's like visiting a friend in the hospital with cancer. What do we say?

SLATTERY

We don't say anything. We get him drunk and go wherever he wants to go.

JAKOB

I don't even know why he invited me.

SLATTERY

What are you talking about?

JAKOB

We hardly ever see each other these days. You and I are his friends from the past.

SLATTERY

His friends from the present haven't done him much good.

They're quiet for a time, staring at the huge television.

JAKOB

I can't believe he'll be gone for seven years. Someone turns him in and boom, goodbye.

SLATTERY

It's the best thing that ever happened to him.

The comment startles Jakob.

JAKOB

What does that mean?

SLATTERY

It means if he didn't get arrested, he wouldn't be alive in seven years. They'd find him under the Manhattan Bridge with two bullets in his head.

Jakob thinks about this for a second before picking up a framed photograph from the coffee table.

INSERT PICTURE

Slattery, Jakob and Monty at age sixteen, mugging for the camera.

JAKOB

God, we were little punks, huh?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Slattery grunts. Jakob continues to stare at the photograph.

CUT TO:

INT. CAMPBELL-SAWYER CAFETERIA - FLASHBACK

The three boys, age sixteen, sit at a table with their trays of food. They wear the school uniform: blazers with the Campbell-Sawyer crest, loosely knotted ties.

Young Slattery picks up a strand of limp spaghetti from his plate.

YOUNG SLATTERY

Watch this.

He sticks one end up one nostril while his friends stare at him.

Slattery snorts and then blows his nose. Monty and Jakob back away in disgust. Slattery sticks a finger into his other nostril and pulls down the end of the spaghetti strand.

One end of the spaghetti strand now dangles from each nostril. He pulls on each end, a little this way, a little that way.

YOUNG SLATTERY (CONT'D)

It's called brain flossing.

YOUNG MONTY

This is why you're still a virgin.

YOUNG SLATTERY

I'm not a virgin.

Two classmates, TREY and MASON, come over to their table. Both are blonde, WASPy, and lazily elegant.

TREY

That's attractive, Slattery.

MASON

Very classy. Here they are, the three Lords of the Outer Boroughs.

Slattery glares at them, the spaghetti still dangling from his nose.

YOUNG SLATTERY

Fuck you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TREY

Ooh, good comeback. Come on, we expect our scholarship boys to be a little quicker than that.

YOUNG SLATTERY

(clenching his fists)

You want to see how quick I am?

MASON

All right, all right, take it easy. What are you boys up to this weekend?

YOUNG JAKOB

We've got that *Paradise Lost* paper due Monday.

Trey rolls his eyes.

TREY

Monty, you coming to my party?

YOUNG MONTY

I don't know, maybe.

**TREY**

It's gonna be a rager.

YOUNG SLATTERY

A Park Avenue rager? You're gonna sit around drinking tea?

Slattery drinks from his milk carton, letting his pinkie finger dangle in imitation of an aristocrat drinking tea.

.....TREY.....

Smoking tea, more like. I'm buying half an ounce in the Meadow later on.

Mason mimics smoking a J.

MASON

Two hundred bucks, going up in smoke.

1

YOUNG MONTY

Two hundred bucks for half an ounce?

TREY

Why, how much does it cost you?

Monty shrugs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

YOUNG MONTY

I could get it for seventy.

Trey pulls out his calfskin wallet and selects a crisp hundred dollar bill. He hands it to Monty.

TREY

You get it, you can keep the change.

Trey and Mason amble away. Monty snaps the bill between his fingers. Jakob looks at Monty skeptically.

YOUNG JAKOB

Since when are you the big player?

YOUNG MONTY

(gesturing at Trey and Mason)  
They were born with money, right? Okay, fair enough. I was born with sway.

YOUNG JAKOB

What's sway?

Monty leans toward the next table over, where four GEEKISH STUDENTS are poring over their textbooks.

YOUNG MONTY

Hey, Julian. How's that math homework treating you?

JULIAN, a pale, pudgy boy with an odd resemblance to Alfred Hitchcock, grins at Monty and shrugs. He's clearly flattered by Monty's attention; his three friends stare at Monty.

JULIAN

Piece of cake. Want to borrow it?

YOUNG MONTY

Just to make sure you didn't screw it up.

Julian laughs and hands Monty a sheet of graph paper covered with geometric proofs.

JULIAN

Try not to copy my name this time.

YOUNG MONTY

Ha ha.

Monty smiles at Jakob and flutters the graph paper.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

YOUNG MONTY (CONT'D)

Sway.

(beat)

Hey, Frank, you eating that? Cause I'm  
still hungry.

He grabs for the spaghetti strand dangling from Slattery's  
nose. Slattery defends himself with a butter knife.

CUT TO:

INT. SLATTERY'S APARTMENT

Jakob returns the photograph to the coffee table.

JAKOB

Lords of the Outer Boroughs. Remember  
that?

Slattery stands and stretches. He looks tired.

SLATTERY

You want to help me with this rug? It's  
been sitting here for a month.

JAKOB

Where do you want it?

SLATTERY

Over here.

They carry the rolled rug to the center of the room and tear  
off the plastic wrap.

JAKOB

What's he planning to do with Doyle?

SLATTERY

Doyle? I don't know. Give him to  
Naturelle?

Slattery balls up the plastic wrap and tosses it into the  
corner. They begin unrolling the rug.

JAKOB

They should at least let him take his dog  
with him. Maybe it wouldn't be so lonely.

Slattery cocks an eyebrow and stares at Jakob.

SLATTERY

You can't take your dog to prison with  
you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAKOB

I'm just saying it would be nice if you could.

They look down at the unrolled rug.

SLATTERY

That looks pretty good^

JAKOB

Monty's tough. I think he'll be okay.

Slattery starts shaking his head and Jakob hurriedly continues.

JAKOB (CONT'D)

If it was me, I'd never last a day. But Monty's different.

SLATTERY

(dismissively)

You don't get it. Here, let's move it closer to the sofa.

They lift the rug and shift it a few feet.

JAKOB

So explain it to me.

SLATTERY

You want the simple version? People who look like Monty don't do well in prison.

JAKOB

You're talking about... It can't be as bad as people say. I mean, it's a Federal prison. I'm sure they're pretty careful-

Slattery starts to laugh.

SLATTERY

Man, you talk exactly like a guy who never left school.

Jakob has no comeback for this. He simmers.

SLATTERY (CONT'D)

Monty's got three choices, and none of them are good. One, he can run. Get on a train going to wherever and hope they never catch up to him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JAKOB

He won't do that. His dad's bar-

SLATTERY

I'm not saying what he will do, I'm saying what his choices are. Number two-

Slattery makes a gun with his thumb and index finger and points it at his temple. Jakob's eyes go wide.

JAKOB

Kill himself? Not a chance. No way. What's the third choice?

SLATTERY

The third choice?

Slattery thinks about it for a minute.

SLATTERY (CONT'D)

The third choice is he goes to prison.

JAKOB

That's what's going to happen. He'll go and he'll make it through.

SLATTERY

Maybe. But no matter what, it's bye-bye Monty.

JAKOB

What does that mean?

Slattery raises his thumb.

SLATTERY

If he runs, he's gone. And he won't be coming home.

He raises his index finger.

SLATTERY (CONT'D)

If he pulls the trigger, he's gone. They'll keep the casket closed.

He raises his middle finger.

SLATTERY (COM" D)

If they lock him away, he's gone. You'll never see him again.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (3)

JAKOB

I'll see him again. I'll visit him up there and I'll see him when he gets out.

SLATTERY

I wouldn't bet on it. You think you're still gonna be friends? You think you'll kick back with a couple beers and reminisce? Forget it, Jake. It's over after tonight.

INT. MONTY'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Naturelle, wearing the sleek, shimmering silver dress, enters the kitchen. She's looking for something.

She finds her keys by the cutting board, and then stops for a moment, looking at the carving knife atop the clean cutting board.

CUT TO:

INT. MONTY'S KITCHEN - ONE YEAR EARLIER

Naturelle, wearing shorts and a t-shirt, slices onions while music plays on the stereo. We hear the apartment door open and close, and then Monty comes into the kitchen.

Naturelle continues slicing onions, Monty walks over to her and embraces her from behind. He kisses her neck, her ears.

NATURELLE

You have a good day?

MONTY

Mm hm.

NATURELLE

Do anything special?

MONTY

Nope.

NATURELLE

Anyone call for me when I was out?

MONTY

Nah.

NATURELLE

Nobody?

Monty begins to get worried.

(CONTINUED)

•CONTINUED:

MONTY

Um. . . I don't-

Naturelle wheels around and Monty has to jump back to avoid getting gutted by the carving knife.

NATURELLE

Like, for example, my mother didn't call?

MONTY

Oh, shit. Shit, I'm sorry. I completely-

Naturelle stabs the air to emphasize her point.

NATURELLE

This is the third time this month, Montgomery. What's your problem, you're illiterate? You can't write down a message on a piece of paper?

MONTY

I meant to.<sup>y</sup> I just-

NATURELLE

You meant to? You meant to?

MONTY

Could you put the knife away?

NATURELLE

I'll put the knife away. You want me to put the knife away?

MONTY

(smiling)

Okay-

NATURELLE

This is funny?

Monty steps back and Naturelle advances on him with the knife. She's kidding, basically, but it's hard to tell.

NATURELLE (CONT'D)

You think this is funny? I'll carve your heart out, you shit.

Monty laughs. Doyle has walked into the kitchen and now stands behind Monty, staring up curiously at the two humans.

MONTY

You're gonna carve my heart out?

• (CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Naturelle waves the knife at him and Monty takes another step backward, trips over Doyle, and lands hard on his back. He begins to laugh hysterically.

NATURELLE

Keep laughing.

She kicks him in the ribs, not very hard, and Monty howls with laughter. Doyle, a little confused, licks Monty's face.

NATURELLE (CONT'D)

Yeah, keep laughing, you fuck. I'll carve your heart out and feed it to Doyle.

She continues kicking while Monty laughs and Doyle, mystified, begins to bark, and finally Naturelle starts laughing too.

Monty grabs her wrist and pulls her down on top of him. She drops the knife to the side and bites Monty, hard, on the lips.

CUTTO:

INT. MONTY'S KITCHEN - PRESENT

Naturelle, in her silver dress, stares at the carving knife. Doyle pads in behind her, panting. Naturelle turns and looks down at his blunt, expectant face.

NATURELLE

You ready for this?

INT. VELVET NIGHTCLUB - MANAGER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

LUIS VOLANDES has decorated his office walls with signed photographs of various low-rung celebrities.

Volahdes, a potbellied man in his late thirties, with a mane of curly black hair, sits behind his desk, listening to Kostya, who shadowboxes, ringed fists flashing.

VOLANDES

You move pretty well for a fat man. So tell me about this party tonight.

Kostya throws a left-right-left combination.

KOSTYA

Uncle Blue wants the VIP room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: .. - - .

VOLANDES

All right, that's what he wants. It's his place. If someone had asked, I'd have said do this party some other night. Tonight's gonna be insane. This DJ we've got playing, he's like Jesus these days. Every high school kid in the five boroughs is gonna be at my door.

Kostya frowns at the smaller man.

KOSTYA

Monty goes to prison tomorrow. You want we have party tomorrow night?

VOLANDES

(holding up his hands)

Hey, I like Monty. He's a good kid. Okay, any special requests for this party?

Volandes taps the side of his nose. Kostya shakes his head.

KOSTYA

None of that. For his last night, we get him a girl.

VOLANDES

What does he like?

Kostya smiles.

KOSTYA

Monty? He likes everything. Get him a pretty girl. And don't be cheap.

The office door opens. Uncle Blue and Valghobek walk in. Volandes quickly stands.

VOLANDES

Hey. I didn't- we weren't expecting you.

UNCLE BLUE

(to Kostya)

What time is Monty coming tonight?

KOSTYA

One, two, who knows? Monty will be late for his own funeral.

UNCLE BLUE

(grim)

No, he won't. Bring him here at three.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KOSTYA

Sure.

UNCLE BLUE

You hear me? Three o'clock.

VOLANDES

You want me to, uh-

UNCLE BLUE

From midnight on, I want you somewhere else. Nobody comes down here, you got that?

INT. BUG BAR - NIGHT

Slattery and Jakob sit on bar stools. Slattery sips from a glass of whiskey; Jakob nurses a bottle of beer.

The Bug Bar gets its name from the exotic insects in glass jars behind the bar. A television above the bar shows the entertainment news.

A VETERAN in an army jacket practices trick shots on the pool table, JODY, the young, zaftig bartender, runs a rag over the bartop.

JODY

How you doing, Frank? You want another one?

SLATTERY

Thanks.

She pours his bourbon.

JODY

How about you, honey?

JAKOB

No, I'm fine.

Jody walks away. Slattery and Jakob examine her tush.

JAKOB (CONT'D)

One of the guys at school, this biology teacher, Terry- did you ever meet Terry?

SLATTERY

(still watching tush)

No.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAKOB

Anyway, he really likes this girl. In a sort of—

SLATTERY

A girl? What do you mean, a student?

JAKOB

A student, yeah. A junior. What's weird is, I mean this girl is *sixteen*. Maybe seventeen, I don't know. She's not really pretty— not in the usual way, but she's— I don't know, she's got something.

SLATTERY

Uh-huh.

JAKOB

I told him— I told Terry he ought to just forget about it, put her out of his mind, but he's— he's kind of obsessing. It's a little scary, the way he talks about it. He's like, ^Five years from now, she'll be almost out of college. And I'll be thirty-one. Nothing wrong with that.'

Slattery sips from his whiskey. He still hasn't looked at Jakob.

SLATTERY

You haven't fucked her yet, have you?

Jakob's eyes go wide.

JAKOB

See, wait a second. If you were listening to me you'd know I was talking about Terry. The biology teacher? *Terry*?

Slattery turns and appraises Jakob.

SLATTERY

You haven't fucked her, right?

Jakob starts to protest and Slattery raises his eyebrows.

JAKOB

No.

SLATTERY

Good. That would be a mistake.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Jakob angrily picks at the label of his beer bottle.

JAKOB

I'm not a pervert or anything.

Slattery drains his whiskey. He tries to catch Jody's eye, but she's staring at someone who just walked into the bar.

Slattery and Jakob see Monty in the mirror. For a moment neither of them moves.

Then both of them force cheerful expressions onto their faces. They rise and each embraces Monty in turn.

MONTY

You been here long?

JAKOB

Oh, we got here early.

MONTY

Uncle Blue's throwing me a party at VelVet. We ought to head over there.

JAKOB

Whose Uncle is he?

MONTY

Huh? Nah, it's a nickname. His real name's like Ankeybusim or something, but no one can pronounce it.

Monty surveys the sawdust-covered floor, the country music-play-ing--j-u-keboxy-the-glass jars of ~~hops~~ . . .

MONTY (CONT'D)

What is this place?

JAKOB

Frank wants to be a redneck. He comes here and whistles Dixie while he's peeing.

Jody lines up three shot-glasses of whiskey.

JODY

It's nasty outside. You fellas gotta warm up before you head out.

SLATTERY

Thanks, Jody.

Jody smiles at Monty.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3) \_\_\_\_\_

JODY

Y'all ought to come by on Sunday for the Super Bowl. We're setting up a big screen. I have a second cousin playing for the Packers.

Slattery rubs the calluses on his palm and Jakob stares at the floor. Jody laughs at their morose reaction.

JODY (CONT'D)

You don't have to come! I was just saying.

Monty raises his glass and Slattery and Jakob grab their glasses and raise them too.

MONTY

Fuck Sunday.

He drinks. Slattery and Jakob hesitate and then follow suit.

EXT. VELVET - NIGHT

Monty steps out of a taxi, followed by Slattery and Jakob. A roiling MOB occupies half the block, crowding in front of the entrance to the dance club.

Most are teenagers. They clot together in groups of fours and fives, smoking cigarettes and stomping their feet to keep warm. Almost none are dressed for the snow.

MONTY

The whole city came out to say goodbye.

SLATTERY

«Jto-u'^ve»got a lot of yo'ng fan.s. I- think=\_\_\_\_\_ we're the oldest ones here.

MONTY

Wait a second.

Monty slips through the maze of boys and girls. The kids look at him as he walks by.

Monty makes his way to the velvet ropes. KHARI GREENE, a pillar of a man wearing the exact same camel's hair coat as Monty, stands by the door, checking names off a clipboard.

Two pale scars run in parallel lines down Khari's left cheek.

MONTY (CONT'D)

Nice coat, you bastard.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

Khari looks up from his clipboard and smiles. He offers his hand and they shake.

KHARI

It's the man. The man has arrived.  
Wearing my coat.

MONTY

I gotta tell you, buddy, it looks better  
on me.

Khari skeptically fingers the sleeve of Monty's coat.

KHARI

Yeah, well, I hope you got some seven-  
year mothballs for that coat.

Monty hesitates and then laughs. Khari puts his arm around Monty's shoulders.

KHARI (CONT'D)

You doing all right?

MONTY

Just trying not to think, you know?  
(gesturing at the crowd)  
What's with all the kids?

KHARI

The legendary DJ Dusk is spinning wax  
tonight. My homeboy from Hollis. Boy's  
seventeen years old. Seventeen! But damn,  
he gets the girlies moving. Don't worry  
about the crowds. They got the YIP set jup  
for y'all.

MONTY

I've got my people waiting. You want me  
to bring them through here?

KHARI

Take ^em to the avenue entrance. I'll get  
the door opened.

MONTY

Thanks, man.

KHARI

You got it. When you going in?

MONTY

Bus leaves at nine a.m.

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CONTINUED: (2)

KHARI  
Otisville right?

Monty nods.

KHARI (CONT'D)  
Uncle got any people in there?

MONTY  
No one worth knowing.

KHARI  
The Federals, they run a nice place. Lot nicer than Sta^e.

MONTY  
I'm a lucky kid.

KHARI  
Luck of the Irish, right?

MONTY  
Luck of the Irish.

Khari grips Monty's shoulder.

KHARI  
Listen up. Don't lose your temper until it's time to lose your temper. You hear?

MONTY  
All right. I'll see you around the way.

They shake hands and Monty signals for Slattery and Jakob to follow him. Monty slides through the crowd; Slattery bulls through\* lik-& a--f--ullback blocking for--his speedier--teammate.

Jakob walks with a high degree of self-consciousness, nervously dodging around the various obstacles. He passes one stoned girl who stands with her head back, catching snowflakes in her mouth.

MARY  
Hey! Elinsky! Mr. Elinsky! Hey!

Jakob freezes. Her hand catches his sleeve and he is forced to turn around, forced to stare into the unnaturally bright eyes of Mary D'Annunzio.

She wears dark denim jeans, a fake raccoon fur coat, and no hat. Her wet black hair snakes across her forehead and neck. Black trails of eye shadow stain her cheeks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MARY (CONT'D)

Ha! It's Elinsky!

JAKOB

Oh.

MARY

What are you doing here? God, I didn't know you ever left the school! I thought you had a bed down in the boiler room or something.

JAKOB

Mary D'Annunzio.

MARY

Mary <sup>W</sup>B+ " D'Annunzio, that's me.

She sees the look on his face and quickly continues.

MARY (CONT'D)

I'm kidding. It's not a big deal.

JAKOB

I've got to go. I'm here with friends.

MARY

The guy who came to class today, right? He knows people, huh? What do you think, could he get us in?

JAKOB

Uh, I don't—

MARY

They're not letting anyone in right now. They say it's too crowded already.

(increasingly hyper)

I have to get in there. I have to! You're a fan of Dusk?

JAKOB

Sure.

MARY

He's the absolute truth, right? He is so truth. I can't believe you're into Dusk! No offense, I mean, but I thought you were more into flutes or—

JAKOB

I think Dusk is very good. But I like his earlier stuff better.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4) . . .

MARY  
His earlier stuff?

MONTY (O.S.)  
Jake, what are you doing?

Monty has circled back and now motions for Jakob to hurry.

MONTY (CONT'D)  
I've got someone holding the door for us.

MARY  
Hey! You're the guy with the dog.

Monty recognizes her from the classroom.

MONTY  
It's past your bedtime, isn't it?

Mary clutches Jakob's arm and rests her head on his chest.

MARY  
I'm with Jake. We're lovers.

Jakob closes his eyes. Monty grins.

MONTY  
Is that right? I didn't realize you two  
were lovers. Well, come on, plenty of  
room inside.

MARY  
Wait... I've got three friends with me.

MONTY  
Girls? .....

MARY  
No.

MONTY  
Are you retarded?

He turns and leads them around the corner.

MARY  
Better one than none, I guess.

Jakob disengages himself from Mary. She beams at him. They follow Monty to the side door and disappear inside.

INT. VELVET - MOMENTS LATER

Monty walks up the back staircase (marked *Club Employees Only*). Mary follows him. Jakob's in the rear. He still looks stunned.

MARY  
(to Monty)  
So how do you know Jake?

MONTY  
We went to school together.

MARY  
You went to Campbell-Sawyer? You don't seem the type.

MONTY  
They didn't think so, either.

MARY  
I hate that place. Elinsk- Jake's okay, but mostly-

JAKOB  
Look, Monty, she's seventeen. We can't take her in here.

MONTY  
Why not? We're already in.

MARY  
I've got ID.

MONTY  
What did you say your name was? Mary  
D'Annunzio?

D'Annunzio.

MONTY  
What do you think of Mr. Elinsky?

MARY  
He's all right. He acts like a little old man sometimes.

JAKOB  
Now listen-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MONTY

That's true, he does. I think tonight should be a big night for Mr. Elinsky. I think we should make sure Mr. Elinsky has fun for once.

Monty pushes open the door at the stop of the staircase. The noise rushes in, overwhelmingly loud, the bass vibrating in our bones.

Mary opens her mouth and speaks, but we might not be able to hear it over the music.

MARY

Truth.

INT. VELVET VIP ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Monty leads Jakob and Mary into the VIP room. Naturelle is already there, speaking with Slattery.

The walls of the VIP room are covered with crushed red velvet. The couches are upholstered in red velvet, the small bar in the corner is draped with red velvet, the carpet is red faux velvet.

DJ Dusk's music pours from speakers bolted into the corners. His beats are impossible to sit still for, incorporating elements of bossa nova, techno, hip hop, and jazz.

Slattery has a hard time keeping his eyes off Naturelle. His gaze tends to slide her way, and his desire for her is apparent to everyone.

Naturelle smiles when she sees Monty and goes to him. She looks beautiful in the silver dress... She hugs him. Monty stands awkwardly in her embrace.

When she realizes he's not returning the hug, she quickly releases him. He's watching her carefully. She sees Jakob and smiles at him.

NATURELLE

Hey, Jake.

She hugs Jakob. Mary has not stopped dancing since first hearing Dusk's mix.

NATURELLE (CONT'D)

(looking at Mary)

Is this your friend?

(CONTINUED)

KJ

CONTINUED:

JAKOB

No...

MARY

I'm his lover, Mary.

Naturelle arches one eyebrow.

NATURELLE

Okay. I'm Naturelle.

MARY

I've seen pictures of this room. The Smashing Pumpkins were in here.

She turns and examines Monty more closely.

MARY (CONT'D)

Who are you? Are you somebody famous?

MONTY

Do us a favor, D'Annunzio. Don't talk too much.

Mary grins, tears off her fake fur coat, and hides it underneath a sofa. She wears a white tank-top with Tweety Bird emblazoned on the front. Tweety Bird looks scared.

DAPHNE, a young waitress in a green dress, comes over with a tray of champagne flutes. Naturelle kisses Daphne on the cheek and the two women exchange greetings. Everyone takes a glass.

MONTY (CONT'D)

(raising his glass~)

Champagne for my real friends, real pain for my sham friends.

Everyone takes a sip except for Mary, who guzzles hers in one giant gulp, then belches and wipes her mouth with the back of her hand. Jakob stares at her, horrified.

MARY

Anyone want to go dance?

Naturelle glances at Monty.

MONTY

Do what you want to do.

Jakob and Slattery hear the coldness in Monty's voice and are surprised by it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Mary grabs Naturelle's hand and leads her out the door.

SLATTERY  
(to Daphne)  
You have any whiskey?

DAPHNE  
What kind do you want? I'll call down for  
some.

SLATTERY  
Nah, don't bother, I'll get it.

He nods at Monty and Jakob.

SLATTERY (CONT'D)  
Back in a minute.

Daphne sets a champagne bottle in an ice bucket on the table,  
then retreats to the small bar in the corner of the room.

Monty sits on the red velvet sofa and Jakob lies down next to  
him, covering his eyes with his arm.

JAKOB  
I can't believe you brought my student in  
here.

MONTY  
She's cute, buddy. She talks too much but  
she's cute.

JAKOB  
You're going to get me fired. Do you  
realize that? She'll tell her friends,  
and they'll tell their friends-

MONTY  
So what, so you ran into her at a dance  
club. You haven't done anything wrong,  
have you? Not yet.

JAKOB  
Not yet? What does that mean?

MONTY  
You want this girl, don't you?

JAKOB  
Shit, Monty, she's seventeen! She's my  
student. I can't touch her.

{CONTINUED}



CONTINUED: (3)

MONTY

I would. She's got that look. I like little girls with tattoos.

Jakob groans and rubs his hand over his face.

MONTY (CONT'D)

It's good seeing you, man. I guess we've kind of gone our separate ways.

Jakob sits up.

JAKOB

Yeah.

MONTY

It's too bad. You're smarter than the people I know these days.

Monty pours more champagne for Jakob and himself, then raises his glass.

MONTY (CONT'D)

Make me a toast.

Jakob is startled by the request.

JAKOB

You want me to make a toast?

MONTY

Yeah. Come on, I won't be seeing you for a while. Say something nice.

Jakob stares at the tiny bubbles rising in his glass.

JAKOB

Um...

MONTY

All right. Here's to Doyle.

JAKOB

To Doyle.

They touch glasses and drink.

MONTY

He's your dog now.

JAKOB

What?

<CONTINUED>

CONTINUED: (4) .....

MONTY

He needs a home. And he loves you.

JAKOB

Yeah, but... I don't know. You've seen the size of my apartment.

MONTY

Poor Doyle, he'll live in a small apartment. Hey, he's a tough dog. He'll survive.

JAKOB

What about Nat?

MONTY

She's moving in with her mom. Woman hates him. And Doyle hates Frank. And my Dad's allergic.

JAKOB

The thing is—

Monty takes another sip and then holds the champagne flute up to the light.

MONTY

Cristal. They went all out for me, huh? I'm lucky to work for such caring people.

JAKOB

One more glass of this and I'm officially drunk.

MONTY

Listen, this is important to me.. Doyle is important to me. You understand that?

JAKOB

Yeah, of course.

MONTY

Doyle's the toughest guy I know. He was lying there off the highway when I found him, waiting to die. He knew he was going to die. And he didn't make a sound. The best thing I ever did, my whole life, was rescue that black little son-of-a-bitch. Every day he's had since then is because of me. Every time he runs through the park, that's me. Every bone he chews—because of me. I saved him.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

MONTY (CONT'D).

And it's different from what you'd expect, right? I saved him but I'm the one that's grateful. Because I see him running around, I hear him barking, and there he is, the best thing I ever did, in the flesh.

(beat)

I'm not going to let the pound have him. Doyle's the ugliest fucking dog in the five boroughs. Who's gonna adopt him? And I'm telling you now, I will not let a vet stick a needle in him and end him. I saved his life, right? I'm responsible for him. I didn't go through all that just so some vet can put him to sleep. If it comes to that, I'll do it myself. I'll put a bullet in his ear tonight. So I'm asking you, Jake— for me, as a favor for me, and it's a big favor but I'm asking you— will you take him? Will you take him home with you?

Jakob is quiet, rubbing his palms over the red velvet sofa cushions.

JAKOB

You know what? It would be an honor.

MONTY

I was hoping you'd say that. I really was.

JAKOB

After that speech, Jesus Christ, how could I refuse?

Slattery returns with a glass of whiskey. He sits next to his friends and sighs.

SLATTERY

There's some talent here tonight.

Monty raps Slattery's knee.

MONTY

What do you think, Jake's girl's looking pretty good, huh?

SLATTERY

Who, the little one? Who is she?

JAKOB

She's my student. MY STUDENT.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

The lights go off. The room is completely dark.

When the lights come on again, a few seconds later, Monty is crouching in front of the sofa, his .40 caliber automatic in his hand.

Kostya stands just inside the doorway of the room, hands on the light switch.

KOSTYA

The party begins without me?

MONTY

I should have shot you, you fat Russian fuck.

Kostya ambles over to the sofa, wagging his finger.

KOSTYA

Ukrainian. Fat Ukrainian fuck.

He bear hugs Monty and kisses both his cheeks.

KOSTYA (CONT'D)

Montgomery, my friend! You have been here long? And you open champagne without me? Frank, hello Frank!

SLATTERY

Hey, Konstantine. How are you?

KOSTYA

Kostya, please, Kostya. I am good, yes. I will be better when our friend comes back to us.

(to Jakob) \_\_\_\_\_  
Hello! It is Jason, yes?

JAKOB

Jakob.

KOSTYA

(to Monty)

The champagne is good?

(elbowing Slattery and winking)

I have nice girl for you, Monty. Very nice.

MONTY

I'm really not in the mood for that.

---

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

KOSTYA

Ah, when you see her, you will be in mood. I pick her out special for you.

MONTY

The last girl you picked out special had three teeth.

KOSTYA

(laughing loudly)

Funny you should say that.

Everyone waits for the rest. When it becomes obvious that Kostya will not provide the rest—

MONTY

Why is it funny I should say that?

KOSTYA

It was funny, what you said.

Monty looks at Slattery for a second.

MONTY

Wait, when you say, "Funny you should say that," it's like saying, "That reminds me of this other funny story."

KOSTYA

No, no, I am saying what you say was funny. **"Funny you** should say that." You see? It was funny, the thing you said.

Nobody speaks for a moment.

KOSTYA (CONT'D)

Come, you want to meet her?

MONTY

I don't think so. Naturelle's dancing downstairs.

KOSTYA

So we go quick, we go right now. You must see this girl.

MONTY

You have someone nice for my friends?

SLATTERY

Not for me. Thanks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (8)

JAKOB

Yeah, I'm-

Monty puts his hand on Slattery's arm.

MONTY

Come down there with me. I need to talk to you.

SLATTERY

That's not my style, Monty. I really-

MONTY

No, that's cool. I just want to ask you something.

JAKOB

Do you want me to stay here?

MONTY

You've got to stay here. Who's gonna look after Mary D'Agostino when she gets back?

JAKOB

Should I tell Nat you're downstairs having sex with a prostitute?

KOSTYA

(horrified)

No, don't tell her that!

Monty grins and punches Jakob's arm.

MONTY

Tell her whatever you want. But don't take off. We'll go back to my place after the party and get Doyle.

Monty, Slattery and Kostya leave the room. Jakob sits alone, rubbing his arm.

INT. CATWALK - MOMENTS LATER

The three men stand on a glass-enclosed catwalk overlooking the dance floor. The place is so crowded and dark that the dancers look like one strange beast, thrashing and swaying to the beat.

DJ DUSK, the teen prodigy from Queens, mans his turntables from a riser above the dance floor. He stands in the eye of a spotlight, deftly flipping needles onto spinning records.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The music is loud, even behind the glass, but not loud enough to overwhelm conversation.

MONTY  
(to Kostya)  
Where we going, the White Room?

KOSTYA  
Yes, White Room.

MONTY  
I'll meet you down there. I need to talk with Frank about something.

Kostya leans closer to Monty and speaks quietly.

KOSTYA  
After the girl, Uncle Blue wants word with you. Okay?

Monty nods. Kostya grins and slaps Monty's shoulder.

KOSTYA (CONT'D)  
She is waiting!

Kostya walks down the staircase that leads from the catwalk to the dance floor and disappears into the crowd. For a while neither Monty nor Slattery speaks.

Then Slattery looks at Monty and notices his eyes are closed.

SLATTERY  
You all right?

Monty opens his eyes.

MONTY  
They knock out your teeth the first night. You know why? So you can give them head all night long and they don't have to worry about biting.

SLATTERY  
Come on. None of that's gonna happen.

MONTY  
How the fuck do you know it's not gonna happen?

Two broad-shouldered HOODLUMS in expensive suits saunter down the catwalk. They stop to embrace Monty.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HOODLUM 1

My ace deuce.

MONTY

Hey, fellas.

HOODLUM 2

Bid's tomorrow, huh?

MONTY

Yeah.

HOODLUM 2

Nothing but a catnap. Be good, brother.

The hoods nod at Slattery and walk away. Monty presses his forehead against the window.

MONTY

Believe me, Frank, I've studied this. I've looked at the options. Seven years, man. Seven years.

SLATTERY

Thirty-four is still young. You and me, we'll start something up. A bar, maybe. Two Irish kids from Brooklyn, how could we not have a bar? Green beer for St. Paddy's Day, free hot dogs for Monday Night Football. Think about it. Old fashioned jukebox sitting in the corner-

MONTY

I hate green beer on St. Paddy's Day.

SLATTERY

"Yeah: Well, m'et o o ."

MONTY

But it's a nice thought, man. I don't see it happening, but it's a nice thought.

SLATTERY

Have I ever broken a promise to you? Have I ever once in my life broken a promise to you? Have I ever said I would be somewhere and not shown up?

MONTY

No.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED: (3)

SLATTERY

When you get out, I will be there. You hear me? I will be there.

Monty finally turns and looks at Slattery.

MONTY

But you won't be there tomorrow.

(beat)

Cute little white boy like me, how long am I gonna last?

(beat)

I need a favor from you.

SLATTERY

Anything.

MONTY

Not here. Stick around, okay? We'll go uptown in a couple hours.

Monty points to the dancers below. We can see Mary dancing wildly on a platform.

MONTY (CONT'D)

Our friend Jake has picked himself a winner.

INT. VELVET VIP ROOM - LATER

The room is beginning to crowd with Monty's friends and acquaintances. Jakob sits alone on the sofa, sipping champagne. He clearly recognizes no one.

The men speak loudly, holding their champagne flutes in ringed fists. Lean women stand in clusters, heads bowed together. We hear snippets of banter in four different languages.

Jakob dips his head against the sofa's velvet armrest. He's clearly exhausted. He begins slipping into sleep.

Mary walks into the room. The men standing nearby turn to look at her, then whisper to each other and laugh. Mary sees Jakob curled up on the sofa and dances over to him.

She pulls off his Yankees cap and puts it on her own head, where it sits, crookedly. She climbs on top of him, her knees straddling his chest, and bends close to whisper in his ear.

MARY

Jakey... Jakey...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED, :

She runs her fingernail down his side. Jakob, half-sleeping, smiles and caresses her hand. Then his eyes pop open. He jerks upright and Mary slides off him.

JAKOB

Whoa, what are you doing? What are you doing?

Mary, now standing and slightly swaying, laughs.

MARY

Don't panic. Nobody here gives a shit.

JAKOB

I give a shit. Do you know what happens if somebody sees me— us— like that?

Mary sits on the far side of the sofa, knees primly clasped together, exaggerating the role of good girl.

MARY

Beg your pardon, Mr. Elinsky.

JAKOB

Are you drunk?

MARY

Uh huh. And I had some E before.

JAKOB

Jesus.

He tries to rub the sleep out of his eyes.

JAKOB (CONT'D)

We call it X in this country.

MARY

Naturelle's cool as shit. She knows everyone who works here. I love that name, right? Naturelle? One hundred percent Naturelle! All Naturelle flavors!

Jakob cannot help stealing a peek at Mary's chest. Tweety Bird stares back, alarmed.

MARY (CONT'D)

So what's up with her boyfriend? Monty? It's like he owns this place.

(CONTINUED)

JAKOB

Listen, Mary, do you think it would be possible to avoid talking about this at school? This whole night?

MARY

You think it would be possible to give me an A for the term?

Jakob's mouth falls open.

JAKOB

Tell me you're joking.

MARY

I'm joking. That's what I love about you, Elinsky.

Jakob says nothing for a moment, but he can't resist.

JAKOB

What?

MARY

Huh?

Mary is watching three women dancing in the middle of the room, their purses flung down on the floor between them.

JAKOB

What's what you love about me?

Mary turns to look at him again, but it's clear she's not really following the conversation.

JAKOB (CONT'D)

Never mind.

MARY

Hello? Elinsky? Do you think I'm weird?

JAKOB

No. I don't think you're weird.

MARY

You're coming to see *Hamlet* next week, right?

JAKOB

Of course. You're Ophelia?

MARY

Fuck Ophelia. Laertes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JAKOB

Laertes?

MARY

You want to see my death scene?

She springs up from the sofa and takes three steps back, then begins staggering toward Jakob, hands folded over her gut, covering her invisible sword wound.

MARY (CONT'D)

Exchange forgiveness with me, noble  
Hamlet: Mine and my father's death come  
not upon thee, nor thine on me!

She collapses onto the red sofa and lies there, quivering for a moment before going still.

A group of men smoking cigars in the corner claps loudly.

Jakob stares down at the prone Mary. He cannot help noticing the stretch of pale skin between the dark denim of her waistband and the white cotton of her tank top.

Mary sits up and brushes some stray hairs under the Yankees cap.

MARY (CONT'D)

It's better with the fake blood.

JAKOB

No, it was very good.

MARY

Ms. Taylor says I'm the best dier she's ever had. Did you see *Romeo and Juliet* last year? I was Mercutio. That was the greatest death of all time.

JAKOB

I was there.

MARY

You know what I really want to be? A stuntwoman. Except I'm afraid of heights. You think they'd hire a stuntwoman who was afraid of heights?

JAKOB

Are you allowed to stay out this late? On a school night?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

MARY

You think my mother gives a shit? Anyway/  
did you see all the snow outside? It's a  
snow day for sure.

JAKOB

I need to go to sleep.

Mary lies back on the sofa and kicks her feet in the air. She begins a bicycling motion, her hands behind her head.

MARY

Can't sleep yet. He's turning it on.

Jakob looks at her slender pale ankles. He covers his eyes. Mary rolls off the sofa.

MARY (CONT'D)

Is there a bathroom in here?

Jakob points.

JAKOB

Over there, I think.

Mary winks at him and makes her way across the room. En route she grabs a champagne flute off Daphne's platter and chugs it. She replaces the glass and slips into the bathroom.

Jakob watches her go. He watches the bathroom door close behind her. He stands, a bit unsteadily. He's been drinking all night. He weaves his way to the bathroom door.

He waits. Eventually Mary opens the door. She looks up at Jakob, her eyes as wide as Tweety Bird's.

MARY

You need to pee?

JAKOB

No.

He presses forward, backing her up, and closes the door behind him.

INT. VIP BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

The bathroom is blue-walled and lit by a single blue bulb.

MARY

Hi?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Her teeth glow in the blue light. Jakob grabs her by the shoulders and kisses her hard on the mouth. His hands begin to move down from her shoulders-

-and then, abruptly, Jakob pulls back. He stares at Mary, who stares at the floor. She looks stunned, the Yankees cap sitting crookedly on her head.

Jakob stumbles backward. He tries to say something but can't get the words out.

He turns and rams through the bathroom door.

INT. VELVET VIP ROOM - CONTINUOUS

He shoves past cigar smokers and dancing women. He runs from the VIP room.

The partiers watch him go and then turn to look at the bathroom, a drop of blue in the overwhelming redness of the VIP room.

Mary stands in the blue light, still looking at the floor.

INT. WHITE ROOM - LATER

The White Room got its name for obvious reasons. Everything is white: the shag carpet, the walls, the overstuffed furniture.

Monty sits on a large white bean bag in a corner of the room. He holds a champagne bottle in one hand, and takes occasional sips.

MARGUERITE, a beautiful prostitute in her early twenties, kneels in front of Monty, her hands on his thighs.

Monty passes her the bottle and she takes a long draught, never taking her eyes off him. She hands back the bottle and unzips his fly, taking her time with everything.

Monty leans back and closes his eyes. We watch him like this for a few seconds, and then we

CUT TO:

EXT. CARL SCHURZ PARK PLAYGROUND - AFTERNOON

Springtime. Monty sits on a park bench. This is several years ago, and he looks younger, less exhausted.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He is watching two high school girls on the swings. One blonde- LINDSAY JAMISON- and one brunette- a younger Naturelle.

Both girls wear the uniform of their private school: white blouses embroidered with the school's initials and green plaid skirts over black tights.

Both girls are smoking. But while Lindsay keeps the cigarette clenched in one hand as she swings higher, Naturelle continues taking reckless drags., the crook of her elbow holding the chain lightly as she soars skyward.

Monty stands and approaches the swings. The girls pretend not to notice him.

MONTY

Hey!

The girls keep swinging.

MONTY (CONT'D)

Could I bum a smoke?

NATURELLE

What?

MONTY

A smoke.

NATURELLE

This is my last one.

Lindsay brakes with her feet and stares at Monty.

LINDSAY

I've met you before, haven't I?

Monty nods slowly. It's obvious he doesn't recognize her, but he doesn't want to be rude.

MONTY

Yeah, you look familiar.

Naturelle has stopped swinging now. Lindsay jumps off her swing.

LINDSAY

I know who you are. Come on, Nat, we've got practice.

MONTY

You know who I am? Who am I?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Lindsay picks up her bookbag and strides quickly away, looking back once or twice to see if Naturelle is following.

Naturelle is not following.

MONTY (CONT'D)

So you're Natalie?

NATURELLE

Naturelle.

MONTY

Really? Naturelle. I like that. Naturelle. So what's your friend's problem?

NATURELLE

You're the one that got thrown out of Campbell-Sawyer, right?

MONTY

Yeah, well, lots of people got thrown out of Campbell-Sawyer. How come you didn't follow Blondie to practice?

NATURELLE

I want to finish my cigarette.

He smiles and sits on the swing next to her. He tries swinging a little.

MONTY

I never really got the hang of these things.

" " NATURELLE

It's all in the legs.

She starts swinging again and he watches her, her long black hair falling beneath her, her legs straight and then bent, straight and then bent.

CUT TO:

INT. WHITE ROOM

Monty's eyes are still closed. Now he opens them. His hands are in Marguerite's hair, but now they drop by his side.

Finally he taps Marguerite on the shoulders. She backs away from him, looking up at his face for a moment before blinking and licking her lips.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

MONTY

It's my fault. You're very beautiful.

He hands her the bottle again and she takes a long sip.

MARGUERITE

(Colombian accent)

You are very handsome. Are you an actor?

Monty zips his fly.

MONTY

Yeah. I'm a star.

INT. CLUB ROOM - LATER

The club room is decorated to look like the library of an English country manor: dark wood paneling, bookshelves stacked with leather-bound books, flickering sconce lights.

Slattery sits on a stool at the bar, rolling a glass of whiskey between his palms. His eyes are red, from crying or exhaustion or both.

Naturelle walks into the room and spots Slattery. She goes over to him and squeezes the back of his neck before sitting on the neighboring stool. He sits up straight and smiles.

NATURELLE

Why are you all alone?

SLATTERY

I couldn't sit in that goddamn red room anymore. I don't know anyone in there.  
These are Monty's friends?—

NATURELLE

I guess so. They're around a lot, anyway

Slattery drains his whiskey. He signals for another and the bartender pours it. He's clearly getting drunk, though Slattery is a man who can handle his liquor. He checks his watch.

SLATTERY

I'm supposed to be at work in a couple hours. Christ, I can't even imagine working today. You just gave me the flu, okay? I'm calling in sick.

NATURELLE

I wish Monty could call in sick. Have you seen him around?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SLATTERY

He's probably saying goodbye to everyone.

NATURELLE

Can you do me a favor?

SLATTERY

What's that?

Slattery catches himself looking at Naturelle's cleavage and looks away.

NATURELLE

Keep an eye on Monty tonight, would you?  
Try to stick with him.

SLATTERY

What's wrong?

NATURELLE

He's just acting really strange. You  
don't think he's acting strange?

SLATTERY

He's going to prison in a few hours, Nat.  
How do you want him to act?

NATURELLE

I want him to act like he's scared.

SLATTERY

He is scared.

NATURELLE

I don't want him to hurt himself. Will  
you watch him for me? \_\_\_\_\_

Slattery nods. For a while they are quiet.

NATURELLE (CONT'D)

I don't think he wants me here.

SLATTERY

That's not true. He's just—

NATURELLE

You see the way he looks at me these  
days. It's like he doesn't trust me.

SLATTERY

Why wouldn't he trust you?

Naturelle is quiet for a moment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

NATURELLE

I'm going uptown. When you see him, tell him I'm waiting for him back home, okay?

She stands and smooths out the wrinkles in her silver dress. Again, Slattery has to turn away from the sight of her.

SLATTERY

This is all so stupid. It's so stupid. He's got so much going on, he's so smart, and what does he do? He throws it all away. And here I am, his friend- I mean, right? I'm his oldest friend?

NATURELLE

He loves you, Frank. You know that.

SLATTERY

His oldest friend, and what do I do to stop it? Nothing, never a word. When he started selling pot to kids in Campbell-Sawyer, did I say anything? When everyone's talking about buying from Monty, the whole school, and I knew they were going to nail him, *knew* it, did I say a word? The last ten years I watch him get deeper and deeper, and these friends of his, these fucks you wouldn't want petting your dog, did I say, "Careful now, Monty, better get out of this." No. Nothing, not a word. His best friend. Goddamn, Naturelle, I'm his best friend and I just sat there and watched him ruin his life. And you did, too. Both of us... all of us, we just sat there and let him.

Naturelle runs a fingernail down her forearm and inspects the faint white trail.

NATURELLE

Keep an eye on him, okay?

Slattery watches her walk away. A moment later Jakob hurries in, sweating and frantic.

JAKOB

I've been looking all over for you. Can we get out of here?

SLATTERY

We've got to wait for Monty. What's the matter?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JAKOB  
I kissed her.

SLATTERY  
Who?

JAKOB  
Mary D'Annunzio. I kissed her.

Slattery grins.

SLATTERY  
Yeah?

JAKOB  
I kissed my student. My seventeen year  
old high school student.  
(beat)  
They'll fire me.

SLATTERY  
Jake.

JAKOB  
Yeah?

Slattery hands him the glass of whiskey.

SLATTERY  
Have a drink.

INT. BASEMENT HALLWAY - LATER

Monty and Kostya walk slowly down the corridor that leads to  
the manager's office.

KOSTYA  
So? You like her?

MONTY  
She's very nice.

KOSTYA  
Does she have three teeth? Eh? No, I  
think she has many teeth. I think you  
like her.

MONTY  
I said so, didn't I?

KOSTYA  
Very nice.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They stop outside the office and knock on the steel-plated door. MUSTAFAYEV, a balding man smoking a cigarette, opens the door and closes it behind him. He nods. Monty and Kostya pull out their guns and hand them to him. Checking the safeties, he shoves the guns under his belt and, cigarette clenched between his teeth, carefully pats both men down.

When Mustafayev finishes searching them he raps on the door and it opens again. He gestures, and Monty and Kostya enter.

INT. VELVET MANAGER'S OFFICE— CONTINUOUS

Mustafayev follows them inside, hands their guns to one of the ZAKHAROV twins, and goes back outside, closing the door.

The twins are Russian redheads who speak very little English. Their faces are blunted and pitiless.

Uncle Blue sits behind Volandes' desk, reading the paper. Valghobek sits on a corner of the desk.

The twin with the guns places them carefully in front of Uncle Blue, then returns to stand by his brother, both of them standing behind Monty and Kostya.

DJ Dusk's music can barely be heard down here, the thump of bass and drum sounding like distant bombshells.

Uncle Blue folds his paper neatly and sets it aside.

UNCLE BLUE

Montgomery. How is the party?

MONTY

It's all right. Thanks for setting it up.

UNCLE BLUE

The first time I went to prison I was fourteen years old, a skinny little boy. Very afraid. By the time I came out I had my beard. I was a grown man. I went back to my hometown, I found my mother, I kissed her. And she screamed.

(smiling)

She did not recognize me. I have been in three different prisons, Montgomery, in three different countries. You know what I learned?

Monty shakes his head and waits.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

UNCLE BLUE (COM" D)

I learned that prison is not a good place to be.

KOSTYA

(laughing)

I knew that before I went.

VALGHOBEK

Nobody's talking to you. Keep your mouth shut.

UNCLE BLUE

Seven years is a long time. Some men would do anything to avoid seven years in prison.

Monty waits.

VALGHOBEK

Your father's a hardworking man. Where's his bar? In Bay Ridge? 86th Street and 6th Avenue, am I right?

MONTY

Yes.

VALGHOBEK

At least he has a short commute. He can practically walk to work. Where does he live, 17th Avenue? And what was the cross-- street? 81st? 8002 17th Avenue. Is that right? The first floor. That must be noisy, living on the first floor. But he doesn't walk to work, does he? He drives. --A 1987 Honda. Should-I tell you how many miles he has on the car?

Monty stares at the floor.

UNCLE BLUE

Your father, I like your father. A hard-working man. He has had bad luck, some very bad luck. Everyone in the neighborhood loved your mother. You remember her, Senka?

VALGHOBEK

Sure. She was a beautiful woman. A real sweetheart.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

UNCLE BLUE

I want to help your father. I could use a man like that, a hard-working man, a man I could trust. I could take care of your father. Do you understand what I mean, Montgomery?

MONTY

You don't need to do this. I never said a word to anyone. You don't need to bring him into it.

UNCLE BLUE

I asked you a question, Montgomery.

MONTY

I understand exactly what you mean.

UNCLE BLUE

I have a good job for your father. We'll help him with the money he owes.

Uncle Blue turns Monty's gun in his hands. He checks the slide's action. He ejects the magazine, peers at the top cartridge, slaps the magazine back into the pistol's butt.

UNCLE BLUE (CONT'D)

Good weapon. Accurate?

Monty nods.

UNCLE BLUE (CONT'D)

Polymer frame, very good, easy to clean. And reliable? No jams?

Monty shakes his head. He turns around for a moment. The Zakharov twins are staring at him. Monty turns back. Uncle Blue smiles.

UNCLE BLUE (CONT'D)

Have you ever fired it? At someone, I mean.

MONTY

No.

UNCLE BLUE

No. Good. It is a toy for you. Not toy, prop. A prop for you. Like an actor. Am I wrong? With the gun you feel more... dangerous?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Monty turns again. The Zakharov twins have their automatics out. Monty, getting desperate, turns back to Uncle Blue.

MONTY

I never said a word to anyone. They came after me to get to you. I know it, you know it. They don't care about me. But I never said a word.

Uncle Blue makes a gesture and the Zakharovs, frighteningly fast, spring forward, slamming Kostya to the floor and holding their pistols to his skull.

UNCLE BLUE

I believe you, Montgomery. When you get there, figure out who is who. Find a man nobody is protecting, a man without people. And beat him until his eyes bleed.

Monty stares at Kostya, who whimpers on the ground, blood dripping from his nose.

UNCLE BLUE (CONT'D)

Let them think you are a little bit crazy, but respectful, too, respectful of the right men.

KOSTYA

Monty-

One of the Zakharovs kicks Kostya in the ribs.

UNCLE BLUE

You're a good-looking boy, it won't be easy for you. But remember, I was-- fourteen when I first went. And I survived.

(beat)

We do what we have to do to survive.

KOSTYA

Monty... please, Monty...

UNCLE BLUE

So now we have this other problem.

VALGHOBK

How many people knew you kept the stuff inside your sofa cushion? Eh? Your girlfriend, Kostya, who else?

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (4)

MONTY

I—

UNCLE BLUE

Kostya dimed you out, little brother. He made a call and stole seven years from your life.

VALGHOBEEK

They put the clamps on him, and instead of being a man about it, taking the time himself, he sold you out.

Uncle Blue hands Valghobek Monty's pistol. Valghobek walks over to Monty and offers it to him.

MONTY

I don't want it.

UNCLE BLUE

It's yours. You know how to use it?

Valghobek holds the pistol by the barrel, a small smile on his face, until Monty grabs it from him.

MONTY

I know how to use it.

UNCLE BLUE

Good. This man does not deserve to live. He betrayed you, he betrayed me. He stole from you. He stole seven years from you. End him.

"One of the Zakharovs grins at Monty and taps the back of Kostya's skull with his pistol's muzzle."

ZAKHAROV

Right here. Boom!

The Zakharovs back away and Monty crouches down beside his former friend. Kostya struggles to turn his head, to make eye contact with Monty.

KOSTYA

Monty—

MONTY

Don't talk.

KOSTYA

No, no, wait, Monty, wait, please listen. I had no choice. I—

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

Monty flicks off the safety and presses the muzzle against Kostya's skull.

Everyone in the room is quiet, watching.

The only sound is DJ Dusk's mix, an accelerating industrial heartbeat.

VALGHOBEEK

Do it.

Kostya weeps, softly, his big body shuddering.

Uncle Blue, face impassive behind his heavy beard, watches carefully.

ZAKHAROV

He is cockroach. Kill him.

Monty's face is very close to Kostya's.

MONTY

(quietly)

You were my friend.

KOSTYA

Monty—

Monty closes his eyes.

When he opens his eyes, he flicks the safety back on. He stands.

He tosses the gun to Uncle Blue, who catches it and frowns.

MONTY,

It doesn't matter to me. Not a goddamn thing matters to me, except this: if you hurt my father, I'll kill you both.

The Zakharov twins grab Monty and hold him. Monty doesn't struggle; he and Uncle Blue stare at each other.

Uncle Blue drums the desktop with his fingers. Everyone waits. A glass of water on the table trembles from the distant bass.

Finally Uncle Blue nods at Valghobek, who opens the office door. The twins release Monty. Everyone (except for Kostya, who is face down on the floor) watches him.

Monty walks out of the room, never looking back.

EXT. 14TH STREET - LATER

Monty trudges down the sidewalk, followed by Slattery and Jakob. The snow continues to fall, and lies thickly drifted on the crookedly-parked cars, on the parking meters, on the spears of the church gate they pass.

They reach the Union Square subway station and walk down the stairs, disappearing from our view.

CLOSE ON FOOTPRINTS IN THE SNOW

We slowly follow their path backward. In the yellow shine of the streetlights the footprints fill with snow, until finally (the camera still moving backward) they disappear.

INT. UNION SQUARE SUBWAY STATION

Monty, Frank, and Jakob sit with their backs against the "'corrugated shutters of a closed newspaper stand.

An OLD MAN, wearing a garbage bag with a hole cut out for his head, leans against a blue I-beam that helps support the ceiling. He holds a small radio to his ear; we can hear fragments of Puerto Rican Jibaro music.

Jakob chews on his fingernails. He cranes his neck to look down the subway tunnel- still no train in sight. He looks at Monty.

JAKOB

What time is it?

But Monty is not present, he is elsewhere, lost in whatever fêvèfiè occuplès" his mind. Slattery's eyes are closed; he seems to be sleeping.

JAKOB {CONT'D}

Monty?

Monty looks up, dazed.

MONTY

What?

JAKOB

Do you know what time it is?

Another long pause.

MONTY

It's getting late.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The lights of the train come around the bend in the tunnel.

INT. 4 TRAIN - LATER

The three men sit side by side as the train shudders through the darkness. Slattery seems to be sleeping again. Jakob stares at his reflected face in the far window.

Monty pulls out his wallet and finds the photograph that his father gave him earlier in the night.

INSERT PHOTO

Monty in his fireman's helmet, standing before his parents.

EXT. MONTY'S BUILDING- NIGHT

Monty, Slattery and Jakob wade through the snow to the stoop steps.

INT. MONTY'S BUILDING

They climb the narrow staircase, their footfalls echoing off the tiled walls.

INT. MONTY'S APARTMENT

They enter the apartment. Doyle is excited to see them; he pants and spins in little circles, sniffing at their boots.

Jakob and Slattery fall onto the sofa and lie there like corpses.

Monty opens the bedroom door, steps inside, and closes it behind him.

INT- MONTY'S BEDROOM

Naturelle sleeps on her side, facing the window. Monty kneels beside her and takes her hand. Her eyes open. She smiles for a second and then quickly sits up.

NATURELLE

What time is it?

Both of them turn to look at the digital clock on the nightstand.

MONTY

I've got an hour left. Listen-

Naturelle waits as Monty stares down at the bed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MONTY (CONT'D)

I was wrong. About you, about-

She runs her hand through his hair.

NATURELLE

It doesn't matter right now.

MONTY

It matters to me.

(beat)

I don't want you to hate me.

NATURELLE

How could I ever hate you?

MONTY

Jesus, Nat, I blew it. I really blew it.

He stands.

NATURELLE

Stay with me, baby. We have another hour.

MONTY

There's one last thing I gotta do.

Naturelle doesn't like the sound of this remark. She leans forward and takes his wrist.

NATURELLE

Hey. Don't go anywhere. Stay here with me.

MONTY

Just one last thing.

He kisses her again, a last fierce kiss, and heads for the door.

INT. MONTY'S LIVING ROOM

Monty grabs the leash off the back of the apartment door and clips it to Doyle's collar.

MONTY

Let me take one more walk with Doyle.

Slattery and Jakob nod. Both are exhausted.

EXT. EAST END AVENUE ~ LATER

The snow has finally stopped falling.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The parked cars lining the avenue look like scoops of vanilla ice cream, glistening below the streetlights. The awnings of the buildings, fringed with icicles, creak beneath the weight of the snow.

Doyle, off his leash, charges down the middle of the avenue, carving a trail through the foot-deep powder, a drop of ink rolling down a blank page.

Monty follows behind, twirling circles with the leash. Slattery and Jakob bring up the rear, slogging through the snow like weary soldiers.

The only vehicle on the road is a snow plow half a mile south, its yellow lights flashing.

EXT. CARL SCHURZ PARK

They cross into the park, past the fenced-in gingko trees, climbing the stairs that lead to the esplanade.

Doyle spies a squirrel and chases after it, but the squirrel is quicker, makes it to a red maple and scrambles up the trunk to safety.

Doyle squats at the foot of the tree, staring sadly up through the branches.

EXT. EAST RIVER ESPLANADE

Across the river is Queens, and Queens before sunrise is beautiful: red antennae lights winking to warn pilots; the Pepsi sign glowing in neon script over the bottling plant; white clouds rising from the smokestacks like genies.

Behind Queens the sky is beginning to brighten.

Jakob brushes snow off the iron balustrade, leans against it and stares into the river. A string of yellow lights quivers beneath the waters, reflections from the Queensboro Bridge.

A red tugboat chugs south.

MONTY

It would be good to work a tugboat. Be out on the river all day.

He turns to face Jakob.

MONTY (CONT'D)

So what do you think? You ready for Mr. Doyle?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jakob looks at Doyle, who is rolling on his back in the snow, kicking his feet in the air like a puppy.

JAKOB

He likes the snow.

Monty whistles for Doyle and the dog jumps to his feet and runs over, wagging the stump of his tail, his muzzle dusted with snow.

MONTY

I need a favor, Frank.

SLATTERY

Anything.

Monty refastens the leash onto the dog's collar and ties the cord around a baluster, knotting it twice, checking to make sure it's secure.

MONTY

I'm not going in there like this. The minute they get a look at me, I'm gone.

Monty straightens up and looks directly into Slattery's eyes.

MONTY (CONT'D)

Make me ugly.

Slattery looks dumbfounded. He turns to glance at Jakob, who is equally confused.

Monty clears the snow off the nearest bench, unbuttons his camel's hair coat, and lays it down.

MONTY (CONT'D)

You just said you'd do anything. So this is what I need.

SLATTERY

I can't do that. What are you thinking, I give you a black eye and people won't fuck with you? It won't change anything.

Monty steps closer.

MONTY

You think I deserve it, don't you?

Slattery holds his hands up and backs away.

SLATTERY

I can't hit you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MONTY

I think you can. I think you want to, a little bit. I think you've wanted to for years.

SLATTERY

I'm not doing it.

Monty steps closer again.

MONTY

You want to. Come on, Frank, you're afraid?

SLATTERY

Listen-

MONTY

What are you afraid of, Frank? That I'll hit back? You're afraid I'll hit back? That would be embarrassing, huh, big tough guy like you getting his ass kicked?

JAKOB

Come on, this is crazy.

Monty points at Jakob.

MONTY

Who the fuck is talking to you?

SLATTERY

Forget it. Come on, forget all this. Let's get some breakfast.

MONTY

This works out pretty well for you, doesn't it? You're gonna take good care of Naturelle while I'm gone?

SLATTERY

What?

MONTY

You think I don't see you staring at her all the time? You've wanted to fuck her for years.

He shoves Slattery hard. Slattery's eyes narrow for a moment, but he shakes his head.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (3)

SLATTERY

All right. All right.

He turns stiffly and walks away.

JAKOB

Come on. Come on, Monty, what are you doing? Tell him you're kidding.

Monty pivots and punches Jakob hard on the cheek, the crack of gloved knuckle on bone echoing on the empty esplanade.

Jakob falls back against the balustrade, clutching his face.

JAKOB (CONT'D)

*Monty!*

Monty steps closer and punches Jakob again, this time in the gut, and Jakob sinks to his knees, gasping. He covers his face with his hands, to protect himself.

Slattery tackles Monty, pinning him to the ground.

For a moment everything is still. Doyle, leashed to the baluster, whines, unsure if his master is playing or fighting.

Jakob, stunned by the violence, watches. Slattery stares at Monty and Monty stares back. All of them in the snow, their breath coiling and rising into the sky.

Finally Slattery looks away, looks past the East River, past Queens. He clenches his eyes shut. When he opens them, we see the first tears forming.

Slattery grabs Monty's throat with his left hand and punches him in the face with his right, again and again and again.

Doyle howls. He tries to jump on Slattery but the leash keeps yanking him back. He strains forward, fangs bared, but his master is three feet too far.

Jakob touches his cheek and examines his fingers: no blood.

Doyle, barking madly, keeps jumping for Slattery, keeps being yanked back by the leash.

Jakob grabs hold of the balustrade and pulls himself to his feet.

JAKOB (CONT'D)

Frank... Frank!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

The blood puddles by Monty's head, melting through the snow and steaming in the air. Slattery, lost in his anger, his frustration, continues swinging.

Jakob stumbles over to Slattery and pushes him.

JAKOB (CONT'D)

Stop!

Slattery looks up, his face wet with tears, a webbing of saliva between his lips.

JAKOB (CONT'D)

Okay. Enough.

Jakob grabs the big man under the armpits and helps him rise. Slattery looks down at Monty, who is not moving.

SLATTERY

Oh Jesus.

Jakob crouches and turns Monty onto his stomach. Monty coughs, a thick ribbon of blood falling from his mouth.

Jakob scoops up a handful of snow and begins gently pressing it to Monty's brutalized face.

Doyle continues to bark, the collar digging into his throat as he struggles to reach his master.

Slattery watches, speechless, his bloodied hands by his side.

Finally Monty shakes his head clear of the snow and begins crawling forward.

~~JAKOB~~

Hold still for a minute. Hold still.

When Monty tries to stand his legs collapse beneath him. Jakob wraps his arms around him before he falls and lowers him to the snow.

JAKOB (CONT'D)

Don't try to move yet.

Monty pushes himself off the ground again and this time manages to keep his balance, though he sways like a drunk.

MONTY

(slurring)

It's okay.

<CONTINUED>

CONTINUED: <5)

Blood leaks from his nose, from his mouth, from a deep gash bisecting one eyebrow. The entire left side of his face is bright red, already swelling.

Slattery looks at him and moans, sits down heavily in the snow, his chin tucked against his chest, his right hand, slick with blood, covering his face.

SLATTERY

Oh Jesus.

JAKOB

Hospital.. We need to take you to the hospital.

MONTY

No.

He staggers toward them. Doyle is mewling now, stomping his paws, confused. Monty bends down unsteadily and scratches behind the dog's ear.

MONTY (CONT'D)

(to Doyle)

Be a good boy.

He walks over to Slattery, who sits in the snow, sobbing. Monty leans over and kisses his forehead.

MONTY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

Slattery rocks back and forth, hands over his face, his forehead marked with blood.

Monty turns to Jakob and touches his shoulder.

MONTY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Jake.

Jakob is stunned by what's happened in the last few minutes. He has no idea what to say.

JAKOB

Okay.

MONTY

Take care of my dog.

He grabs his coat from the park bench and walks away from them.

EXT. MONTY'S BUILDING - DAWN

Naturelle, in her down parka, sits on the stoop steps. She sees him when he's a block away, and we see him from that distance, limping through the snow.

Naturelle stands and breathes in deeply. She starts walking toward him but stops after a few steps. She can see his face now.

His eyes are so badly swollen that he doesn't notice her until he's almost upon her. When he does see her he smiles, and Naturelle has to look away for a moment.

He tries to say something but chokes, leans over, hands on his knees, and spits up blood.

Naturelle takes him by the hand and leads him up the steps.

INT. MONTY'S LIVING ROOM

He sits on the sofa while Naturelle dabs at his face with a wet washcloth. A bowl of soapy water sits beside her on the coffee table.

When she wrings the washcloth above the bowl, drops of blood fall into the water and bloom.

W- /

MONTY

I don't want you to visit.

His voice is rough and slurred, his split lip impeding his diction.

She opens a bottle of rubbing alcohol, wets a cotton ball, presses the cotton lightly against the gash in his forehead.

He shudders, his fingers gripping the edges of the sofa cushions.

MONTY (CONT'D)

I don't want you to see me up there.

Naturelle struggles mightily to keep herself together. She continues cleaning his wounds.

MONTY (CONT'D)

Why'd you stay with me?

(beat)

You should have left a long time ago.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NATURELLE  
(shaking her head)  
You idiot.

A knock on the door. Naturelle goes to answer it. We hear voices that sound very distant. Monty peers through his swollen eyelids at the man walking toward him.

CUT TO:

MONTY'S POV

The blurred figure of a man stands before him. The room is sunlight and shadows, all edges washed away;

The man's face is a pale oval that bends and splits when he speaks.

MR. BROGAN  
Who did this to you?

CUT TO:

Monty sitting on the sofa, staring up at his father.

MR. BROGAN (CONT'D)  
Who did this to you, Monty?

MONTY  
What time is it?

MR. BROGAN  
I'm bringing you to the hospital. We can tell--

MONTY  
No. I need to go.

He pushes himself upright. Naturelle comes in from the kitchen and hands him a glass of water. He takes it and drinks.

NATURELLE  
You have to go to the hospital, baby.

MONTY  
No.

Monty goes to his bedroom.

INT. MONTY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

He pulls an already packed suitcase from beneath the bed. He grabs the string of silver rosary beads from the bedside table.

He stares at the unmade bed for a few seconds before leaving.

INT. MONTY'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

He sets his suitcase by the front door.

MONTY

I'll say goodbye here.

He approaches his father but Mr. Brogan shakes his head.

MR. BROGAN

How you planning on getting to the Port Authority?

MONTY

Subway.

MR. BROGAN

You won't make it. Trains are barely running right now. I'll drive you to Otisville.

(beat)

Jesus, look what they did to you.

MONTY

I'll take a taxi.

NATURELLE

You won't be able to get one. Let him take you to the hospital.

MR. BROGAN

You don't trust my driving? I got chains on the tires and everything.

MONTY

I don't want it like this. Let me walk away, Dad. It's easier that way.

MR. BROGAN

What's easy about it? Easier? My God, you don't understand, do you? You don't have any idea.

He touches Monty's shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MR. BROGAN (CONT'D)

Let me drive you there. I need to see where it is anyway, for visits. Okay, buddy? Help me out.

Monty blinks and then nods.

MONTY

No hospitals.

Mr. Brogan kisses Naturelle on the cheek and she embraces the older man. When she lets go he walks to the front door, picks up the suitcase, and leaves the apartment.

Monty stands still, looking at Naturelle.

NATURELLE

Wait a second.

She goes to the kitchen and Monty rocks back and forth on his bootheels. When she returns she holds a plastic bag filled with ice cubes.

She makes him hold the bag against the side of his face. They don't move for a moment, her hand on top of his hand, the bag of ice pressed to his jaw.

MONTY

I want you to be happy.

She nods but says nothing, biting her lip, tears beginning to roll down her face.

MONTY (CONT'D)

Will you do that for me?

She nods again.

MONTY (CONT'D)

Okay?

She grabs him and holds him very hard, clutching him, sobbing into his neck.

MONTY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry for everything.

NATURELLE

No...

MONTY

For everything.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

He kisses her again and releases her, walks out the apartment door and closes it behind him.

INT. HALLWAY

Monty unknots the plastic bag and dumps the ice down the stairwell. The cubes glitter and disappear before clattering on the linoleum three floors below.

EXT. MONTY'S BUILDING

Mr. Brogan's car is double-parked. The roof of the old Honda is crowned with snow but the windshield and rear window have been swept clean.

INT. MR. BROGAN'S HONDA

Mr. Brogan opens the passenger door and Monty eases carefully into the seat, then leans over to unlock the driver's door.

After Mr. Brogan starts the engine, they wait for a moment for the windows to defrost.

MR. BROGAN

FDR is closed. I figured we'd go up  
First, take the Triborough, catch 87 up  
to Route 17, and then 211 takes us right  
into Otisville. Easy drive, except for  
the snow.

Monty says nothing, and Mr. Brogan studies his savaged face.

MR. BROGAN (CONT'D)

Jesus, look what they did to you. I'll  
tell you what, Monty, you're gonna be  
okay. It looks bad now, I know it, but  
when all the swelling goes down it's  
- gonna be okayr.....~.....~"\_\_\_\_\_

(beat)

They sure gave you a licking, though. How  
many were there?

MONTY

I don't know, Dad. A bunch of them.

MR. BROGAN

Well, give it a month and you'll be  
better looking than ever.

A fire truck rolls slowly past, chains on its massive tires.  
Monty and his father sit in silence, letting the engine warm.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

MONTY

You were right, Dad. It wasn't Naturelle.

Mr. Brogan shifts into drive.

MR. BROGAN

Of course it wasn't Naturelle.

EXT. EAST RIVER ESPLANADE - DAWN

Slattery sits on a park bench overlooking the river. It's the same bench Monty sat on the day before. Slattery is alone on the snow-covered esplanade.

His knuckles are covered with dried blood. His forehead is marked with blood.

He watches the sun rise over Queens.

EXT. EAST END AVENUE - DAWN

Jakob and Doyle walk south along the western edge of Carl Schurz Park. A SKIER, an attractive young woman in her mid-twenties, schusses toward them on cross-country skis.

She smiles at Jakob as she passes.

SKIER

Cool dog.

JAKOB

Thanks.

He turns and watches her glide down the hill toward 86th Street. He looks down at Doyle. Doyle looks ~~at hiff~~ at hiff: "TM....."

JAKOB (CONT'D)

Cool dog.

Jakob shakes his head and smiles, and they continue walking south.

INT. MR. BROGAN'S HONDA - MORNING

They drive up First Avenue. Monty looks out the window and watches the city roll by. It's his last look for a long time, and he wants to remember everything.

A WOMAN wearing a man's overcoat sprinkles salt in front of a shuttered butcher shop. Two YOUNG BOYS drag their sleds behind them, huffing and puffing with exaggerated fatigue.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A NEWSPAPER VENDOR sits on a blue milk crate, sipping coffee from a paper cup, while his CURLY-HAIRED SON snaps icicles from the kiosk's eaves.

A POLICE OFFICER, hands on his hips, stares under the opened hood of his cruiser, while his PARTNER leans against the driver's-side door and laughs into his walkie-talkie.

At a red light, Monty looks up at the city bus idling noisily alongside them. A LITTLE BOY in the backseat waves. Monty waves back.

The boy points at his window: letters have been finger-drawn on the frosted glass. T-O-M.

Monty smiles as well as he can and draws his own name on his own frosted window: M-O-N-

Before he can cross the T the bus pulls away.

They drive north.

MONTY

I always thought I'd make you proud of me.

Mr. Brogan turns to look at Monty and then turns back to the road.

MONTY (CONT'D)

I pictured it, you know? I pictured you sitting at the bar with all your friends, poker night, and you'd say, "Did I tell you what my boy's been up to?" And your friends would be like, "Goddamnit, Brogan, all you ever talk about-is your boy."

MR. BROGAN

Give me the word and I'll take a left turn.

MONTY

Left turn to where?

MR. BROGAN

Wherever you want. Take the GW Bridge and go west.

Monty stares at his father.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MR. BROGAN (CONT'D)

Get you stitched up somewhere and keep going. Find a nice little town--

MONTY

Dad.

MR. BROGAN

I'm saying if you want. If that's what you want, I'll do it.

Monty closes his eyes. We hear the tire chains rattling on the snow. We hear the old engine wheezing.

CLOSE on Monty's ravaged face, on his eyelids.

Mr. Brogan keeps talking and New York City melts away.

MR. BROGAN (COM" D)

We'll drive and keep driving.

CUT TO:

EXT. INTERSTATE HIGHWAY - DAY

As Mr. Brogan speaks, we watch the car driving west. The voice-over tracks with the images on the screen.

MR. BROGAN (V.O.)

Head out to the middle of nowhere.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - DAY

The car speeds along a desert highway now, past the pitchfork cacti and towering mesas.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

The car drives slowly down the main street of a one stoplight town.

MR. BROGAN (V.O.)

Find a nice little town.

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mr. Brogan parks in front of a small bar with an old-fashioned BAR sign in front. Mr. Brogan and Monty (his face unmarred) step out of the car.

CUT TO:

INT. TOWN BAR -- DAY

Mr. Brogan and Monty are sitting at a corner table. Mr. Brogan raises his glass of whiskey to Monty and both men drink.

MR. BROGAN (V.O.)

Find a bar, and I'll buy us drinks. I haven't had a drink in nineteen years, but I'll have one with you. And then I'll leave.

CUT TO:

Monty stands at the window of the bar, watching Mr. Brogan drive away.

MR. BROGAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I'll tell you don't ever write me, don't ever come visit. I'll tell you I believe in God's Kingdom and I believe I'll be with you again, and your mother. But not in this lifetime.

Monty approaches the BARTENDER, a powerfully-built older man (60). Monty speaks and the bartender listens carefully, but we don't hear the dialogue.

MR. BROGAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

You get a job somewhere, a job that pays cash, a boss who doesn't ask questions, and you make a new life, and you never come back.

CUT TO:

INT. TOWN BAR -- NIGHT

Monty works behind the bar on a crowded night. The bar PATRONS, a blue-collar rural crowd, are rowdy drinkers, but Monty works efficiently, quickly filling their orders.

CUT TO:

INT. HEAD SHOP - NIGHT

Monty, in the backroom of a seedy head shop, sits for a photograph in front of a black drop.

MR. BROGAN (V.O.)  
You find the right people and you get  
yourself papers, a driver's license.

EXT. TOWN BAR - DAY

Monty sits on the steps in back of the bar, looking out past the gravel lot toward the distant mountains.

MR. BROGAN (V.O.)  
And then you wait. People get caught when  
they come home. But you're never coming  
home.

EXT. BUS STATION - DAY

Monty, a few years older, waits as a Greyhound bus pulls into the station.

MR. BROGAN (V.O.)  
And maybe— and this is dangerous— but  
maybe after a couple years you send word  
to Naturelle.

Naturelle steps off the Greyhound bus. She sees Monty. They stare at each other, twenty feet apart.

Finally he goes to her, threading through the other travellers, the other waiting families. He takes her in his arms.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

In the cramped apartment above the bar where Monty works, Monty and Naturelle sit together, on a sofa, watching a small television. Naturelle is pregnant.

The ball is about to drop in Times Square.

MR. BROGAN (V.O.)  
You forget about New York. You can't come  
back. You can't call, you can't write.

INT. SMALL HOUSE - NIGHT

Monty, much older now, stands in front of his family, his grown CHILDREN and the little GRANDCHILDREN. Naturelle, equally aged, sits with one of the little girls on her lap.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MR. BROGAN (V.O.)

And maybe one day, years from now, long after I'm dead and gone, you gather your whole family together and you tell them the truth. Who you are and where you came from.

As Monty speaks his children exchange glances. They can't really believe what they're hearing, but they know their father is telling the truth.

MR. BROGAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

You tell them the whole thing. And then you ask them if they know how lucky they are to be there.

Monty looks at his family. He is awed by their existence, by the life he has created. He looks at Naturelle, still beautiful in old age, and she smiles back at him.

OLD MONTY

It all came so close to never happening.

INT. MR. BROGAN'S HONDA - MORNING

The sun shines through the windshield. Monty sleeps, his battered head resting against the window below his frost-spelt name: M-O-N-T-Y.

OLD MONTY (V.O.)

This life came so close to never happening.