

METHOD OF MADNESS

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FADE IN:

ON A VAST, RUINED CITYSCAPE

looking like the recent effect of an atomic bomb. Dozens of FIRE COLUMNS rise 200 feet into the air, spread out across the city. The sky -- ASH BLACK with smoke. A hellish vista.

JOHN (V.O.)

Welcome to Mercenia. The 21st century Sodom and Gomora.

(beat)

Four years ago, an act of terrorism destroyed the country's powerful regime. The government became weak and incompetent. They no longer control the cities, giving a mass opportunity to the criminal underworld...

MONTAGE - SERIES OF SHOTS - NIGHT

They reflect a variety of night activities in the city.

Bank robbers calmly exit a city bank, armed with guns and loaded with bags of loot.

At a street corner, a young woman is being raped. Twenty yards from this, a cop is mugging a businessman. Even though the cop can clearly hear the woman scream, he pays no attention.

JOHN (V.O.)

...The criminals control everything. Making their own laws. Even go as far as creating their own law enforcement agencies...

In a down-town city street, a heavy riot is underway. Crowds of civilians are running here and there in sheer panic. Some are hurling petrol bombs and bottles across the street, while the terrified ones run for cover.

JOHN (V.O.)

...And if you're not part of them, you might as well shoot yourself. 'Cause if you don't, somebody else will.

In a back-alley, a murder has just occurred. The killer coolly walks off the scene. Spots another potential victim and attacks. Then coolly walks off again.

Everywhere else, we see extortions, more rapes, robberies, murders, kidnapping.

NOTE: These crimes are freely occurring in the public eye and never in secrecy. And most importantly, there aren't any law enforcers or police present. The ones that are, are part of the crime.

JOHN (V.O.)

But then again, there are those of us who feel the need to live in a peaceful world. A world without corruption or violence.

(beat)

Although we're very few, we were gonna tear everything down.

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

DETECTIVE JOHN CROSS (30s), stands before a headstone: JOAN CROSS 1981-2003.

JOHN

Hey sis. Here I am again, ready to work. We did a great job last month, taming those Armenians.

(beat)

Now I need your spirit again. Tonight we face probably our most dangerous adversary. The most important mission of my campaign. Let's hope by tomorrow the city spirit would be a lifted again.

John puts new flowers on the grave. Walks off.

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

A SWAT van is parked on a road next to the cemetery. Behind the van, a team of eight SWAT Agents are gearing up for war, strapping on weapons and body armour.

John Cross joins the team and is handed guns and armour. Fully strapped and loaded, they all get into the van.

INT. THE DUNE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

We FOLLOW a chubby MAN as he makes his way down a dim-lit corridor. He wears a dark suit. Briefcase in one hand.

The man turns a corner at the end of the hall and heads down --

A STAIRWELL

We are in the basement now. At the end of the hall is a steel door, manned by two BOUNCERS in long leather coats. And just beyond them, the faintest HINT OF MUSIC can be heard.

The chubby man greets the bouncers with a broad smile.

MAN

Hi there, gentlemen. I'm a regular.

BOUNCER #1

You got a membership?

The chubby man flips open his briefcase. It's full of cash. Stacks of \$100 dollar bills in a neat grid.

BOUNCER #2

Step this way.

The man steps toward Bouncer 2 who pulls a metal detection wand from his jacket and scans the chubby man from head to toe. Chubby man is clean.

BOUNCER #1

You can go in.

Bouncer 1 pulls open the steel door, letting the chubby man inside.

INT. THE DUNE - CASINO CLUB - NIGHT

We're in a massive strip club joint casino, catering exclusively to the mega rich and powerful. So exclusive it's underground. The place is elite, stunning, brightly-lit. The air thick with MUSIC.

The chubby man walks sharply through the casino, passing by crowded craps tables, spinning roulette wheels, blackjack tables, poker-faced players at poker tables. But gambling is not his interest tonight. It's --

THE MAIN ATTRACTIONS

Luscious STRIPPERS, doing a bump and grind on designated stages around the club, shaking bodies worthy of anyone's wet dream. Their attire? Nothing, save for a pair of panties to hide their modesty.

Chubby man walks over to two suit-clad executives standing nearby.

CHUBBY MAN
Hey, how much for a blow job?

EXECUTIVE #1
Excuse me?

CHUBBY MAN
From the strippers.

EXECUTIVE #1
One stripper is thirty grand.

CHUBBY
I have sixty.

EXECUTIVE #1
Then it's your lucky night.

They lead the chubby man away.

INT. THE DUNE - NICOLE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The room is large, furnished with exquisite simplicity.

Sitting behind a large Mahogany desk is NICOLE HORNE (50s), sharply dressed in a white satin suit. She's powerful, edgy, confident, possessing a regal air.

Beside Nicole stands her daughter, HANNA (20s), equally sharp and confident as her mother.

The only women in the room, Hanna and Nicole look more daunting than the four top executives sitting on sofas at one side of the office. Two of which include Hanna's cousin VINNIE BALDACCI (30s), and their advisor MICHAEL SANTANA (20s).

We've entered mid-converstation.

NICOLE
...So who's next on our list?

Michael flips through a manila folder.

MICHAEL

The... erm...
(find his page)
...the Chinese...

NICOLE

Who's the power?

MICHAEL

(scanning the page)
Li... Chung. Controls every
enterprise in Chinatown.

NICOLE

Can we buy him?

MICHAEL

Of course. They're no different to
all the cops we've already bought.

Nicole ponders for a moment, unsure.

NICOLE

What do you think, Vinnie?

VINNIE

I think we should be careful. We're
not dealing with cops or Russians
here. Li Chung is a very powerful
enforcer, especially with triad
supporting him.

Hanna airs her voice.

HANNA

We've heard the stories about the
triad. But personally I think it's
just for show. They haven't done
half the things we've done in this
city.

NICOLE

I think she's right, guys. Li Chung
owns Chinatown. We own the south
and west of Mercenia. That's more
gangsters than China-men.

VINNIE

You really wanna take this route?

NICOLE

How can we dominate the world if we have competition?

HANNA

You gotta see the big picture, Vinnie. This city is our Olympus. And we're the gods.

NICOLE

I absolutely agree.

(beat)

Michael, talk to whoever you have to. I want that town in my pocket.

MICHAEL

Sure, Mrs. Horne.

NICOLE

I'm a widow. Call me "Miss" Horne.

Michael nods sharply.

VINNIE

Nicole, think carefully about challenging the Chinese. We're strong, but --

NICOLE

Vinnie. We're cousins. At Easter and at Christmas. Not in my office.

VINNIE

(slightly offended)

Understood.

EXT. THE DUNE - NIGHT

The exterior is a sharp contrast to the interior. It's actually a run-down hotel. Dirty, old. Forgotten to the world.

The familiar SWAT van pulls into the alley beside the building. John Cross alights first -- followed by his entourage of SWAT Agents. The ones we met earlier.

These bunch are not like normal SWAT Agents. They are a close knit group, treating each with easy deference and affection. No ranks -- just disciplined commandos.

John directs them.

JOHN

C-4.

Quickly, four men disperse and take positions on different sides of the building -- planting C-4 charges:

ANTHONY (20s), Black, takes the entrance.

DANTE (30s), Mexican, takes the left side.

ZHAO (30s), Chinese, takes the roof, using a climbing harness.

ROD (20s), American, takes the right side.

The other four hold position twenty feet from the entrance, guns thrust before them.

John overlooks the poised team.

JOHN

This is it boys. Our jackpot. We going in smooth and focused! Keep a look out for Baldacci and Nicole. I don't want those cock-suckers getting away.

INT. THE DUNE - SURVEILLANCE ROOM - NIGHT

Banks of monitors display images from multitude of cameras looking down from above the casino floor. A few others display images of the building exterior.

The surveillance supervisor, CHRIS, watches the various monitors intently. Also with Chris are two other guards keeping a watchful eye.

Chris reacts as he notices a moving shadow on one of the exterior monitors.

CHRIS

What is that?

Suddenly the monitor goes dark. Then another. And another.

CHRIS

What the fuck...?

All the monitors are blacking out now -- and Chris is panicking -- while the two guards stand in confusion.

GUARD #1

Look!

Only one monitor remains -- from an exterior camera. Total silence as Chris and the guards study the image.

For a moment, there is nothing -- then John Cross steps into view, along with his SWAT team -- all looking into the camera.

CHRIS
Holy shit...

John raises a gun and FIRES at the camera. The monitor cuts to static. Chris grabs his walkie talkie.

CHRIS
Security! This is a code red alert!
We got trouble on the walls!

INT. NICOLE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The door bursts opens as a guard enters.

GUARD
We got trouble. Cops are here.

NICOLE
So?

GUARD
It's John Cross.

Sudden panic.

VINNIE
Shit.

NICOLE
Tell everyone to arm up!

INT. CASINO FLOOR - NIGHT

The music has shut off. It's no longer a club or casino, because suddenly everyone is packing weapons; we're talking the bikini-clad strippers, the casino staffs, the suited executives, the gamblers, the dice and card dealers, even those pretty-looking escorts.

Nicole emerges, strutting her way to the casino floor. Vinnie, Michael and Hanna at her heels.

NICOLE
Where are they?!

Chris rushes up to her.

CHRIS
They blinded us. They took out all
the wall cameras.

NICOLE
Gimme a gun.

Vinnie hands her a pistol. She looks around at the army.
Quiet a peculiar bunch.

NICOLE (CONT'D)
Listen up! We hold ourselves here!
There's only one way those bastards
can --

BAA-BOOOM!!! All walls of the casino EXPLODE inward as John
and his Agents stream in. They don't ask anyone to get to the
floor. They just start shooting. A combined ferocious
fusillade. Within seconds ten execs are dead. Others scatter
and hit the floor.

CHAOS ERUPTS

Both sides OPEN FIRE at each other across the room. Nine
against a hundred -- but it's John's team gaining the upper
hand as they unleash a flurry of GRENADES at their enemy.

VINNIE
Shit!

Vinnie, Hanna and Nicole dive away as a huge FIREBALL erupts
beside them. Another sends a horde of execs flying backwards,
slamming into walls.

Elsewhere, strippers and gamblers go down, withering under
the power of BULLETS and FIREBALLS.

The room is in chaos -- engulfed with BULLETS, FIRE, SMOKE,
and everything breakable.

JOHN
Pin them in!

As one, John and his eight Agents converge on their opponents
-- taking them out with deadly precision. All are perfect
marksmen.

John spots Vinnie trying to escape through a back door --

JOHN
Baldacci.

Machine gun raised, John SPRAYS the back door with bullets, forcing Vinnie back. Vinnie curses, blindly returns FIRE --

John spins away.

ELSEWHERE,

Coughing, Nicole crawls through the roiling smoke toward a nearby door. She's almost out when...

HANNA

Mom!

The wailing voice freezes Nicole. She looks back -- and sees Hanna in the eye of the firestorm. Nicole's face betrays her conflict. Her daughter -- but in a situation that could get both of them killed.

BULLETS SHRED the world around Hanna. Getting closer. She screams. Nicole thinks, makes a decision.

NICOLE

I'm sorry, baby. God will look after you.

And she's out the door. Hanna, crying her eyes out, is silenced by a headshot.

Vinnie SEES, and is horrified.

VINNIE

Hanna!!!

Screaming, he BLASTS his guns in a rage.

Two SWAT Agents drop -- riddled.

A third takes a bullet in his leg. His automatic blazing, he takes another bullet in the forearm. The chest. The shoulder.

JOHN

Fall back!!

As the SWAT Agents heave back --

John leaps onto a table, FIRING in multiple directions. Casino staffs are hit. Again. Again. Again.

More execs fall beside them. They're are dropping like flies.

And with the SWAT still BLASTING away, the casino gang begin to scatter -- dropping dead or escaping through doors.

John signals his Agents to spread out.

INT. STAIRWELL - LEVEL 1 - NIGHT

A horde of suits race up the stairs, FIRING their pistols and machine guns as the SWAT Agents emerge.

DANTE

Grenade!

Zhao FIRES an M-16 GRENADE LAUNCHER up the staircase.

BOOOM! A huge FIREBALL erupts behind the fleeing suits. Half drop ten feet to their death. Others cling to the crumbling railing -- and force themselves upward.

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Vinnie and a few strippers are making their getaway down the hall.

A few yards behind them, the door EXPLODES open as John comes flying through it.

Suddenly Vinnie twists, FIRING -- driving John back. When his gun CLICKS empty, John pursues, BLASTING. Vinnie dives away.

John races forward -- almost upon Vinnie when --

A stripper emerges from the shadows -- ROCKET LAUNCHER in hand. John's eyes go wide.

JOHN

Fuck.

He turns and runs for the doorway as --

-PLUNK! The launcher coughs out a massive heat-seeking warhead, and --

BA-BOOM! EXPLODES -- the doorway and everything around it bursts into flames -- but John has made it through.

The commando babe tries to help up Vinnie -- who pushes her off angrily.

INT. CASINO FLOOR - NIGHT

John rises from amidst the rubbles, dazed. He looks up and through the RISING FLAMES sees...

Vinnie -- standing -- raising a gun at him --
John raises his own gun. The moment is frozen.
Their eyes lock, each to the other's.

Vinnie FIRES --

John shifts. The .45 Caliber bullet rockets past his ear and he's already squeezing his own trigger as...

JOHN'S POV: THROUGH FLAMES

Vinnie's gone. Vanished.

BACK TO SCENE

John lowers his gun, annoyed, but impressed. His SWAT team arrive.

DANTE
John, you okay?

John's still staring through the flames.

JOHN
Yeah. We'll have another
opportunity.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE DUNE - MOMENTS LATER

John and his team are tending to their dead. Around them are other corpses. A complete massacre.

JOHN
(as he closes a dead
Agent's eyes)
Three years and we've never lost
anyone. Tonight we lost three.

DEREK, the eldest of the team, puts a comforting hand on John's shoulder.

DEREK
That's the price we pay for been
heroes.

ZHAO

And it's a damn good price. Tonight we faced a hundred, and we took out nearly all of them.

(indicates the dead Agents)

Their death is not in vain.

ANTHONY

Over here, John! We got a live one!

(grins)

Should I stop him breathing?

JOHN

No.

John walks over. Stoops by the young exec, who's not dead, but bleeding his life away on the floor.

JOHN

I can call you an ambulance. Give you your life back. But first you must tell me where's Nicole's heading.

EXEC

I... don't...

JOHN

You're not gonna tell me?

EXEC

I... don't... know...

JOHN

(to Anthony)

He says he doesn't wanna live.

Anthony shoots the exec. Dead. John stands, addresses the team.

JOHN

Listen guys. Let's take the night off. Use some time honour our friends.

(beat)

Visit your parents, drink, have sex... whatever. We'll meet at the warehouse tomorrow.

The team nod and head out. John pauses for another moment before leaving.

EXT. JOHN'S HOME - NIGHT

John pulls into the driveway. He sits, gathering his thoughts.

INT. JOHN'S HOME - NIGHT

John enters and sees his wife MICHELLE (20s), attractive, coming down the stairs in her nightgown.

JOHN

Hey.

She's pleasantly surprised to see him.

MICHELLE

John, what are you doing here?

JOHN

Decided to take the night off.

Stepping down, Michelle hugs him tight and they kiss.

MICHELLE

I've missed you so much.

JOHN

I've missed you more.

(looks around)

What are you doing up?

MICHELLE

I couldn't sleep. And I heard the door. Thought I'd see what's happening.

(examines him)

How come you're here? Did something happen?

John hesitates for a moment, then:

JOHN

I lost three men tonight. David, Sean, Bret... so I thought we should all have the night off.

MICHELLE

(horrified)

Jesus... I'm so sorry.

JOHN

I should have expect it. I mean I
wasn't just fighting anybody.

(beat)

This was Nicole Horne. A bitch with
titanium balls.

MICHELLE

Are the boys okay?

JOHN

They're handling it pretty well.

Michelle takes his hand.

MICHELLE

Come into the kitchen. I'll make
you some tea.

They cross the hall into --

THE KITCHEN

John sits at the table as Michelle puts on the kettle. A
moment later, she joins him.

MICHELLE

What will you do now?

JOHN

The only thing I can do. Move on.
Get on with the mission.

MICHELLE

What about the boys?

JOHN

They're stronger than you can
imagine. Even more focused than I
am.

MICHELLE

That should give you courage.

JOHN

It does.

JOHN

(after a beat)

How's Rachael?

MICHELLE

She's doing well. She misses you.

JOHN

You don't know how much I miss her.
It's what keeps me alive out there.
Both of you.

MICHELLE

-- And your sister of course.

JOHN

She gives me a different type of
strength. Something I think I'm
going to need more of.

Michelle takes his hands in her's.

MICHELLE

Not to discourage you, John, but
shouldn't you leave this thing for
a while? Things are only going to
get more dangerous from now on.

JOHN

That's why I have to end it. As
soon as possible.

Michelle's a little hurt by the answer. But she smiles
bravely.

MICHELLE

I guess I should be glad my
husband's a hero.

JOHN

Heroes die. That's not something a
wife should have to live with.

MICHELLE

But I don't have a choice.

JOHN

I'm sorry...

MICHELLE

No, don't be. What you're doing is
amazing. And I'm very proud of you.

(smiles)

This city needs at least one good
cop to make things right. And if
that's you, I'd be happy to share.

JOHN

Are you sure?

Michelle smiles tenderly.

MICHELLE

As long as you come back to me in
one peace. I'll wait for you.

John moves to her and hugs her. Kisses her lips, long and
passionate. They hold each other tight.

INT. JOHN'S HOME - LATER - NIGHT

John heads down the hall. He pauses at a door and smiles at
what he sees.

His daughter RACHAEL (7), asleep in bed.

John moves in and draws the comforter over her. Kisses her
head softly. She stirs, pulls the blanket tighter.

John smiles -- watching the girl.

JOHN

Sweet dreams, sweetheart.

EXT. HORNE ESTATE - DAY

Nicole stands sullen on the veranda of a lush mansion,
staring out to a broad flower field below.

Vinnie emerges from the house and whispers something into
her ear. Nicole nods, and Vinnie heads back inside.

INT. HORNE MANSION - CONTINUOUS

Vinnie walks to the foyer where FBI Director PATRICK VALINO
(40s), is waiting, flanked by a dozen police officers.

As Valino and Vinnie start to confer, Nicole comes into the
foyer, marches straight to Valino and BOOTS him in the groin,
hard!

Valino doubles over, groaning, red-faced. A furious Nicole
screams at him.

NICOLE

Six fucking years, I've never had a
problem in this city! And one
night, I nearly lost everything!

Valino cannot stand. The pain excruciating. He responds through his agony.

VALINO

It... wasn't... my fault.

NICOLE

It wasn't your fault?! I was fucking ass raped yesterday!

VINNIE

She means it as a figure of speech.

NICOLE

Shut the fuck up, Vinnie!

(to Valino)

John Cross is one of your men, and he fucked me! No, correction -- he gang-raped me! My only daughter is dead!

VALINO

I've tried... to stop Cross before... but he's out of control. He castrated my son a month ago.

NICOLE

I will castrate your entire family, if you don't sort this out!

(to the police officers)

And you idiots! What the fuck I'm I paying you for?! I never pay John Cross, yet he showed me more balls than all of you put together.

OFFICER #1

We're sorry, Mrs. Horne.

NICOLE

You're sorry?

Nicole snaps. She yanks a gun from Vinnie's waist strap and PUTS a BULLET right in the middle of officer #1's forehead. Others are stunned. But no one dares says a word.

Nicole looks at Valino -- her rage barely abated her.

NICOLE

I want every information you have on John Cross! If I don't get it in two hours, I will kill all of you, I swear it!

Nicole drops Vinnie's gun and marches away.

INT. JOHN'S HOME - BEDROOM - DAY

John in bed with Michelle. Both are asleep.

The door creaks open as little Rachael pops her head inside. As soon she spots John, her eyes light up.

RACHAEL

Daddy!

She runs in and jumps on the bed, waking them both. Dad gets all the hugs and kisses.

RACHAEL

When did you come back?

JOHN

(getting his bearings)
I came back last night. You were sleeping.

RACHAEL

I've missed you so much.

MICHELLE

We all have.

John looks tenderly into his daughter's eyes.

JOHN

I've missed you more. More anything
in the world.

He kisses her forehead and they hug.

EXT. PARK - DAY

It's a beautiful day. John, hand-in-hand with his wife and daughter, take a stroll in the park. It's bustling. Other families play here and there.

Rachael, highly spirited, races off to a swing nearby. Michelle's all smiles as she watches her daughter.

MICHELLE

It's been a while since I've seen
her that happy.

JOHN

It hurts knowing that I'll be leaving her again.

MICHELLE

As long as she's in your heart, that's all that matters.

John stops and faces Michelle, smiles.

JOHN

You always say the right things.

MICHELLE

It's the truth. She might not see it now, but in time she'll know you chose the right path.

JOHN

You think so?

MICHELLE

If she's anything like me, she'll be very proud of you.

John hugs Michelle. They look to Rachael who plays in the distance.

EXT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - DAY

John's car pulls in... stopping next to a Land Rover. He steps out calmly, heading for the warehouse.

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

A storage facility, devoid of everything, save for a few chairs and a large table. John's SWAT team are there; Dante, Derek, Anthony, Zhao and Rod -- all sitting round the table. Sunlight streams in through the windows.

John enters. The men greet each other warmly, clasping hands. Then after a silent moment.

JOHN

Listen, I wanna say something. You guys did a wonderful job last night. We faced our greatest challenge, and we came out on top. And I can't be more proud to have you guys as my friends.

The men cheer.

DEREK
So how we gonna end it?

JOHN
I have a plan.

John lays out a map on the table. Everyone gathers round.

JOHN
Nicole controls two regions of Mercenia. We struck her in the east last night...

DEREK
So she'll head west.

JOHN
Exactly. To recruit an army. An army not even the Spartans can conquer. We have to find her before she can make that choice.

ZHAO
The west is a big place.

JOHN
But little Nicole has narrowed things for us. No doubt there'll be a funeral. And I'll bet my life, mummy dearest won't miss it.

ZHAO
And the firepower?

JOHN
Zhao and Dante, you two will plant explosives beneath every limousine you find in that cemetery. The blast will trap Nicole and her guards. The four of us will then finish them with our bullets.

DEREK
What about me?

JOHN
You will be our sharpshooter. In case anyone feels lucky enough to escape.

DEREK
I like that.

JOHN
I knew you would.

ROD
So when is the funeral?

John whips out a photograph of "Michael Santana", slams it on the table.

JOHN
Michael Santana, one of Nicole's major advisors. This pussy will sell his own mother to avoid any pain. Find him.

INT. WAREHOUSE - LATER - DAY

John waits in a chair as Michael Santana is violently shoved inside by Derek and Dante. Cut and bruises fill the man's face -- clearly his been slapped around.

JOHN
Where'd you find him?

DEREK
In Horne-South brothel. Man was gettin' his dick shined.

JOHN
Excellent, 'cause that's the last time you'll ever use that dick, Mr. Santana.

John stands and hurls Michael up by the collar of his already torn suit. Spins him around and slams his back to the wall. John's eyes rage.

JOHN
Where's Nicole?!

Michael stammers fearfully.

MICHAEL
I-I-I--

John throws him across the room. Michael lands hard on the concrete floor. He's already starting to bleed.

JOHN
(to the team)
Strip him.

The SWAT team converge on Michael...

MOMENTS LATER

Michael Santana - stripped to his underpants and hanging upside down like a carcass -- stares at John, terrified.

Anthony, Derek, Dante, Rod and Zhao stand about the room, watching curiously.

John pulls a knife from his belt and begins to circle Michael.

JOHN
Where is Nicole?

MICHAEL
I... I... don't know. She took off when you attacked the club.

JOHN
And you conveniently stayed in town?

MICHAEL
Well I had... erm... business to attend to.

John stops and faces Michael.

JOHN
I'm wasting my breath here, ain't I?

MICHAEL
What, well, I'm not --

Michael suddenly drops as John cuts him loose. He is pleasantly surprised until --

JOHN
(to the team)
Get me the sledgehammer.

Michael's eyes widen. Derek crosses to one side of the wall and grabs the giant sledgehammer hanging there. Brings it to John. Michael looks at the weapon, horrified.

MICHAEL

What are you going to do with that?

John signals to the boys -- who grab Michael and pin him to the floor, flat on his back. They hold his arms and legs wide. Michael, sensing what is about to happen, trembles with fear.

MICHAEL

Please... I'm begging you... you can't do this... this is...

BAAM! John SLAMS the sledgehammer down hard -- denting the floor inches beside Michael's head. It's not a miss-hit, but a deliberate attempt to terrify Michael.

And it works because Michael has just shit his pants. He's not crying or whimpering, but he's so full of fear, it's as if his body is imploding.

John stoops beside him.

JOHN

I'm gonna ask you one question, Michael. And if you don't answer me correctly, I'm gonna do to you what I did to my boss's son.

(re: SWAT team)

Ask these guys. They'll tell you.

Michael's eyes shift toward the SWAT team.

DANTE

I'll talk if I were you. That kid he's talking about, John crushed his balls with that very same sledgehammer. That image still gives me nightmares.

DEREK

(to Michael)

Have you ever heard the scream of a man whose balls were smashed by a 70-pound iron sledgehammer?

ANTHONY

I never wanna hear it again.

Michael, sweating like a fiend, finally opens his mouth.

JOHN

Three weeks... from now.

The SWAT team grin. John indicates for them to release Michael, which they do.

JOHN

That gives us enough time to prepare.

INT. APARTMENT ROOM - NIGHT

There is a portable stereo on a small makeup table. MUSIC plays as...

NINA GRUER (20s), dresses, slipping into a skimpy red leather skirt. She is stunning, shapely, with unusual red hair that seems to match the skirt.

Done with that, she slips on a pair of red leather boots, also matching with the skirt. Her eyes glint.

Finally she rises, looks at herself in the mirror. The picture isn't complete and she adds a final touch -- red lipstick. Now it's apparent -- a 21st century femme fatale.

Nina smiles, satisfied. She turns and crosses to a single bed. A briefcase sits on top.

Nina flips open the briefcase. Inside is a DSR-1 SNIPER SYSTEM. Disassembled.

INT. BAR RAVENOUS - NIGHT

A blend of sophistication and depravity.

UP THE STAIRS

In a private lounge area, a group of suits sit around a circular table, drinking champagne and chain-smoking. Showing off babes that seem to have stepped out of Vogue magazine.

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Briefcase in hand, Nina scans the terrain. Focuses on one building just across the street -- Bar Ravenous.

Nina sets her briefcase on the ground. Flips it open. Starts to assemble the sniper system. Very quick work. A professional.

She takes her position, setting the rifle on a bipod. Takes aim at...

NINA'S POV THROUGH SCOPE:

The group of suits in the lounge area of Bar Ravenous. The rifle scope is adjusted... focusing... zooming... CLICKS in place.

INT. BAR RAVENOUS - NIGHT

The suits continue their banter. A few of them getting off with the models beside them. Really raunchy. Suddenly --

POW! POW! POW! The WINDOWS SHATTER as BULLETS destroy the lounge.

The group of suits and their models tries to flee -- but all are mowed down with perfect precision. Headshots and body-shots.

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

When it's set and done, Nina lowers her rifle. Gives a slight grin.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Another night. Nina makes her way down the quiet street. It's breezy. Eerie.

A sudden SCREAM stops her in her tracks. She looks around. No one in sight. Maybe it's the wind howling. She starts off again.

And right at that moment, hears another scream. Louder. More panicky. Someone's definitely around. And needs help.

Nina searches the streets...

NINA
Hello?!

The scream echoes a third time. Nina locates the source. It's coming from a nearby alley --

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

The victim is a NUN, pinned to the ground by two CRACKHEADS. Her face is bruised. Habit torn. She's visibly terrified.

Nina enters the alley. Sees the situation. She can't ignore this. She won't.

NINA

Hey!

The CRACKHEADS don't even flinch. They just continue their assault. Overpowering the terrified nun. Nina steps closer, calm, confident.

NINA (CONT'D)

(louder)

Hey!

Now the CRACKHEADS react, turning to Nina. Evil eyes.

NINA (CONT'D)

Get away from her!

Sure enough, they do -- until each pulls a knife. And start for Nina -- slow daunting strides.

CRACKHEAD #1

You say sumin' bitch?!

Even outnumbered, Nina holds her ground. She won't be bullied.

NINA

Just that you leave her alone.

CRACKHEAD #2

Why? You some sort of dike?

Nina's eyes darken.

NINA

I just don't like rapists. Simple.

CRACKHEAD #1

Well, fuck you, bitch! 'Cause I don't like interfering motherfuckers!

NINA

I guess that causes a problem.

CRACKHEAD #1

Here's what we goin' do. I'm gonna fuck you. And my boy here's gonna fuck that other bitch!

CRACKHEAD #2
 (grinning)
 Sound good to me.

They rush Nina. But she repels them. Quick as a ghost. It only takes two strikes, and the Crackheads are down. Unconscious.

Nina turns to the nun, who's collected herself in a corner, sobbing.

NINA
 Are you alright?

The nun looks at her. She's too frightened and shaken to speak.

NINA (CONT'D)
 Come on, I'll get you a --

SIRENS BLARE

behind Nina. She spins, startled. A police car suddenly in the alley.

Two OFFICERS get out from the cruiser. Pistols drawn --

OFFICER #1
 (to Nina)
 Hands in the air!

NINA
 Officers, I'm just helping out a lady here.

OFFICER #1
 I don't give a shit! Put your fucking hands in the air!

Nina shakes her head in disbelief, puts her hands up. The cops approach.

NINA
 Could you take care of the lady? She's hurt.

OFFICER #2
 Sure.

Officer #2 moves to the nun -- shoots her in the head. Point blank.

NINA

No!!

OFFICER #1

(slaps Nina)

Quiet, bitch! You're under arrest
for assault.

NINA

Assaulting who?

OFFICER #1

(indicates the beaten
thugs)

These dumb niggers.

He flicks out his cuffs as his partner joins him. Nina's eyes narrow.

NINA

Don't arrest me for that. Arrest me
for this --

Nina's palm snaps up and his nose explodes, blood erupting. Her leg kicks with the force of a wrecking ball and he flies back -- slamming into the cop cruiser, spider-webbing the windshield.

Officer #2 tries to shoot. The GUN is snatched, twisted and FIRED into his groin. As he SCREAMS, Nina shoots him in the head.

She goes to Officer #1, who's sitting up groggily from the bonnet of the car, dazed. Before he can recover, Nina puts six rounds into his chest.

She drops the gun. Walks away from the alley.

EXT. HORNE ENTERPRISE - NIGHT

A highrise in the middle of downtown.

INT. HORNE ENTERPRISE - TOP FLOOR - NIGHT

The world of corrupt business, 24 hours a day. Here and there COUNTERS in white shirts count and sort through stacks of boxes filled with cash. There's must be millions here.

Off to one side is an enormous printing press. Stacks of papers next to it. Some workers are readying the press for operation, loading link, etc.

Elsewhere, two ACCOUNTANTS transfer BALES OF \$100 DOLLAR BILLS from a walk-in safe to a dolly. In short, this is a money factory.

We FOLLOW Vinnie and a few enforcers as they move through the rooms heading to a door at the far end.

VINNIE
 (to the enforcers)
 Spread out. Make sure no one's
 stealing anything.

The enforcers spread out. Vinnie knocks on the door and enters.

INT. NICOLE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Nicole's on the phone. She beckons Vinnie to sit down, which he does.

NICOLE
 (on phone)
 Yeah, keep a look out. Tell me
 everything you find.

She hangs up.

VINNIE
 Everything alright?

NICOLE
 No. Michael's missing.

VINNIE
 Since when?

NICOLE
 I don't know, the lawyers haven't
 seen him since the casino.

VINNIE
 Probably fled the country. Won't
 put it past that coward.

NICOLE
 Even when we're in crisis?

VINNIE
 Especially when we're in crisis.

NICOLE

Hmmm. Still, I'd like to think one of my advisors won't just betray me and run.

VINNIE

I'll check at his addresses. Try and find some information.

NICOLE

Good. I've asked some of our officers to keep a look out as well.

(beat; changes subject)

What have you got for me?

VINNIE

Not good news. Our associates were murdered two night ago.

NICOLE

What?

VINNIE

Sanchez, Lazarro and Gruskov. Ripped to bits in their own bar.

Nicole's stunned.

NICOLE

John Cross?

VINNIE

No. This was a sniper. Nowhere near the building.

The news unsettles Nicole.

NICOLE

Maybe the Chinese...

VINNIE

It's possible. But I don't think sniping is their style.

NICOLE

Shit. We're falling apart like fucking cockroaches.

VINNIE

Perhaps we'll have luck on our side soon. I've sent out some assassins to those locations Valino gave us.

NICOLE
Cross's wife?

VINNIE
-- And his daughter.

NICOLE
Good. Don't send anyone to the
warehouse. I wanna be there myself.

Vinnie smiles, pouring himself a glass of a wine.

EXT. SKYSCRAPER - DAY

The downtown office of Ellison, a fashion magazine publishing
company.

An SUV pulls up at the curb. Two grim-faced MEN in suits get
out and head for the revolving doors.

INT. ELLISON LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

The men enter, calmly passing through the METAL DETECTOR
which begins to WAIL immediately.

A SECURITY GUARD moves over toward the men, raising his metal
detection wand.

GUARD
Would you please remove any
metallic items you are carrying:
keys, loose change --

The men simultaneously throw open their jackets, revealing
guns, strapped to their body.

GUARD
Shit --

Guard's about to raise the alarm but Man 1 grabs his arm.

MAN #1
Nicole Horne sent us.

The guard relaxes, relieved.

GUARD
Who you looking for?

MAN #2
Michelle Cross.

GUARD
Gimme a sec.

The guard walks to a female receptionist nearby. He exchanges a few words with her, then returns to the men.

GUARD
Third floor.

The hitmen move quickly -- heading for the elevator.

INT. ELLISON BUILDING - THIRD FLOOR - DAY

PING. Elevator door opens. The hitmen step out, drawing their weapons --

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Bystanders are shot dead. People race out of their offices, reacting to the gunfire. Among them -- Michelle Cross.

The hitmen see her. They share a look, and --

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! They shoot Michelle, colleagues and all.

INT. JUNIOR SCHOOL - DAY

It's mid-day and the playground is bustling.

That same SUV pulls up outside the gates. The same hitmen step out, make their way into the school.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - BACK YARD SHOOTING RANGE - DAY

John practices -- impressively getting headshots on the cardboard targets.

Derek steps beside him. He shouts so that John can hear.

DEREK
Didn't think you needed that.

JOHN
Everybody gets rusty.

DEREK
Not you, John.

John HOLDS his FIRE.

JOHN
I guess I'm just taking my mind off things.

DEREK
Shooting guns won't take your mind off anything.

JOHN
So what do you suggest?

DEREK
How much you got on you?

JOHN
About... \$500 dollars. Why?

DEREK
That'll do. Come.

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

Anthony, Dante, Zhoa and Rod are seated around the table, smoking cigars and playing poker. Dante has all the cash winnings in front of him. The others look glum.

ANTHONY
This ain't fair, Dante. How the hell you managing to rake all our money?

Dante giggles.

ROD
You cheating?

DANTE
Do I look like a cheater? I'm just motherfucking clever.

Just then, John and Derek enter.

DEREK
You got room for two more?

DANTE
Yeah, right after I take Rod's money.

John and Derek join the game.

JOHN
Who's winning?

DEREK
I'm \$800 dollars up.
(re: Anthony and Zhao)
These two wimps have chickened out.

JOHN
You guys are just letting him take
your money?

DANTE
I'll take your money too, John.

John is buoyed up.

JOHN
You really think you can?

DANTE
Bring all the dollars you got. You
too, Derek.

John and Derek take out their wallets and put wads of cash on
the table.

DEREK
You any good, John?

JOHN
Like you won't believe.

DEREK
You better take my money then.
Double it.

He passes his wad of cash to John.

DANTE
I'm gonna make you pay for ganging
up on me.

The others laugh.

DANTE (CONT'D)
So come on, Rod, stop sweating.
Just fold.

Reluctantly, Rod folds. Dante takes the man's cash, laughing.

DANTE
Your turn, John.

JOHN
Deal the cards, Derek.

Derek picks up the cards, shuffles them quickly, then starts dealing Dante and John.

A CELLULAR BEEPS. John reacts, taking out his phone, He checks the display -- which reads "Michelle calling". John answers.

JOHN
Hey, sweetheart.

WOMAN (V.O.)
No, Mr. Cross. That bitch is
dead...

John freezes, unnerved.

JOHN
What?

WOMAN (V.O.)
...And that other one you call a
daughter? Her neck snapped like a
twig.

JOHN
Who the fuck is this?

The team watch John curiously as he speaks.

WOMAN (V.O.)
You don't recognize my voice, Mr.
Cross? I would have thought you
knew everything about me.
Destroying my club must have taking
a lot of research.

John's world suddenly crumbles -- listening that the stern,
callous voice that can only belong to one person --

JOHN
-- Nicole...?

NICOLE
In the flesh, you son-of-a-bitch.
Thought I wouldn't find you?

John shuts his eyes -- his whole world now shattered.

JOHN
Where's my wife?

NICOLE (V.O.)

You might wanna turn on the news.
The last time I saw her, her
carcass was dropping twenty storeys
from the ElliSon building. And your
daughter... well, I'll send you a
coffin.

John loses it.

JOHN

You bitch!!!

He topples the table, sending the money, cards and chips
spilling to the floor. The SWAT team are shocked.

DEREK

John, what are you going?!

As John fumes, Nicole giggles on the other of the end.

JOHN

I'm gonna to kill you. I'm gonna to
find you, and I'm gonna to rip your
head right from your neck.

CUT TO:

EXT. HILLSIDE - INDUSTRIAL RESIDENCE - DAY

Nicole stands at the edge of a hilltop near the industrial
residence, watching John's warehouse through binoculars.

NICOLE

That might be quite impossible, Mr.
Cross. Especially when I'm outside
your warehouse...

She picks up an RPG-7 lying at her feet.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

...with a rocket launcher.

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

John's eyes are wide. Suddenly to his team --

JOHN

Get out, now!!

The men are hesitant, confused.

ANTHONY
John, what's happening, man?

JOHN
Nicole's outside with a rocket
launcher! Get out now!

DEREK
Jesus, how the fuck she --

JOHN
-- Derek, this ain't the time to
talk. We have to get out of here.

John is serious. Derek nods his understanding.

DEREK
Come on boys, let's pack up and go!

As they move, John FREEZES -- alert by something.

DEREK
John, what is it?

John holds out his hand, signalling silence to the team.

EXT. HILLSIDE - INDUSTRIAL RESIDENCE - DAY

RPG-7 on her shoulder, Nicole fires up the launcher --

PPHEEW. The rocket ejects, spewing out a sheet of flame as
it sails for the warehouse...

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

John somehow knows what's coming and --

JOHN
Forget the items! Run!!!

All turn and run as --

KA-BOOOM! The WINDOW PANES SHATTER and the rocket crashes
through. Everyone dives away -- but a second too late.

BA-BOOOM-BOOOM! A blinding WHITE LIGHT engulfs the screen...

EXT. HILLSIDE - INDUSTRIAL RESIDENCE - DAY

Nicole watches with pleasure as the entire warehouse structure is blown to smithereens.

NICOLE
(lowering the launcher)
Goodbye, Mr. Cross.

She turns and heads across the hill to a waiting car.

INT. WAREHOUSE - RUINS - DAY

Nothing more than a pile of rubbles. Fogged with smoke and dust.

But something moves from within -- a burnt out sofa -- it is tipped over to reveal -- John -- alive. The sofa had saved him. But he is in agony. A big gash across his mid-section.

Reflexively, he wrenches. In severe pain. Groaning. Coughing. He tries to get up. Can't. He screams.

A FEW FEET AWAY

Something else moves. Buried under a pile of woods, Derek emerges -- SCREAMING in pain -- his face wet with blood. He reaches inside his pocket and takes out a cellular. Gingerly dials 911 --

DEREK
We need an... ambulance. This is
an... emergency...

As Derek waits to be connected, he spots John across him, writhing in pain.

DEREK
(shouts)
John?! You okay?!

JOHN
(shouts back)
No!

DEREK
But you're alive, right?!

JOHN
Barely!

Derek looks around him, scanning for others. In his POV, we see Zhao and Dante, unmoving, trapped under a pile of glass. Then Anthony and Rod, equally inert.

DEREK

Shit.

Finally, a VOICE comes on the other end of the phone.

DEREK

I need an ambulance...! People are dying here...!

WOMAN (V.O.)

What's your location?

The phone drops from Derek's hand as he suddenly passes out.

WOMAN (V.O.)

Hello? Hello, are you there, sir?

From his position, John can hear the woman's voice on the cellular. But is alarmed when Derek doesn't respond to it.

JOHN

Derek?

(beat)

Derek!

(beat)

Dereek!!

INT. HOSPITAL WARD - DAY

Medical monitors beep, keeping track of the vital signs of -- John, who lies in a bed in the middle of a small medical ward.

He is asleep, recovering.

A doctor enters ward and walks over to the X-rays hanging by John's bed. He takes down a few notes, then looks at John.

DOCTOR

Mr. Cross, you seem to have healed pretty nicely.

John comes to, eyes fluttering open. He looks toward the doctor.

JOHN

Where... where I'm I?

DOCTOR
Don't talk, Mr. Cross. Just rest.

John ignores him. He's sitting up, and it must hurt like hell, but he absorbs the pain. Manages to stand. He looks at his mid-section. It's bandaged.

JOHN
How long have I been here?

DOCTOR
Two weeks.

JOHN
(to himself)
"Two weeks".
(to the doctor)
Where are my friends?

DOCTOR
Aside from you, we only found one other person alive -- Dante.

JOHN
What?

DOCTOR
We couldn't help the rest of them.

JOHN
No...

John's knees give and he sinks to the floor, devastated. The doctor tries to help him up but John pushes him away.

JOHN
Are you sure only one made it?!

DOCTOR
Yes.

John's face tightens, fury rushing through him. With great effort, he rises to his feet. Grimaces.

JOHN
Let me see Dante.

DOCTOR
Mr. Cross, you need to --

JOHN
-- I wanna see him now!

INT. ANOTHER WARD - DAY

Dante lies in a bed, face and body swathed in gauze. Tubes and hoses are plugged into every orifice.

John stares at the body... he can't believe it.

JOHN

How... how in less than a week can everything go wrong? I had... I had everything planned and now...

Suddenly enraged, John starts trashing the place, toppling equipment and tables, making a real scene. Security guards storm in, batons drawn --

DOCTOR

(to the guards)

No, wait. He's just angry. Give him a moment.

The guards give each other bewildered looks, then hold back.

DOCTOR

It's all right, John. Just relax.

John finally calms, taking several deep breaths.

DOCTOR

Are you all right, John?

JOHN

What's today's date, doctor?

DOCTOR

It's the sixth of May today.

JOHN

Four days...

DOCTOR

What?

JOHN

Nothing.

Seeing that John is now relaxed, the guards secure their weapons and leave.

JOHN
Listen, doctor. Dante's the only
friend I've got left. Look after
him. Make sure he wakes up.

DOCTOR
We'll try our best.

JOHN
You better.

John starts to leave.

DOCTOR
Where are you going?

JOHN
I'm discharging myself.

DOCTOR
But you're not --

John's already gone.

INT. JOHN'S HOME - DAY

The place is dim. John enters, turning on the lights. He hangs up his coat and walks into --

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

John wanders through, clutching his mid-section, still in considerable pain. A family picture on the T.V catches his attention; John, Michelle and Rachael, hugging each other, happy smiles.

Beside it is another picture; John and his 8-member SWAT team, then beside that one, John and another younger woman; could be his sister "Joan Cross".

John grits his teeth, angry, bitter as he stares at all photos. He's whole world in front of him, but none of them are alive.

He moves to the T.V and picks up the picture of himself, Rachael and Michelle. John stares at it for a long moment, soaking in the images, the memories. Then he CRACKS the frame, takes out the photo and pockets it.

He crosses to a cupboard nearby, takes out a phone directories book and starts flicking through it...

In a moment he finds his page.

JOHN
Li Chung.

John shuts the book.

EXT. CHINATOWN - STREET - NIGHT

We're somewhere in the midst of Chinatown. Bright signs everything.

John walks slowly down the street. The citizens are hanging out, young and old Asians, some in flash suits, others in custom attire. And very notably -- all are armed.

John quickly becomes the centre of attention. All eyes are watching him closely. Find some among the suited men, who begin to load their weapons, cocking them. Ready to fight.

An alien in a different world, John continues on, holding his chest slightly. Doesn't even look at the crowd watching him. He's heading straight for the restaurant at the end of the street.

EXT. LI CHUNG RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Heavily guarded. Even more so when John arrives.

JOHN
Hello, gentlemen.

The guards regard John grimly.

GUARD #1
You're a long way from home.

JOHN
I know. That's why I have to come in.

GUARD #1
Do you have business here?

JOHN
Not yet, but hopefully soon.

GUARD #1
If you do not have business here, then you cannot enter.

JOHN
I've just come to see Li Chung.

All the guards react -- instantly drawing weapons. Even those young and old citizens have surrounded John, pointing their guns at him. But John just smiles. All too predictable.

JOHN
Now how could I possibly harm Mr. Chung with all the guns pointing at me?

GUARD #1
That is the idea. Now leave before we kill you.

JOHN
I can't. I've come too far.

Guard #1 cocks his gun.

GUARD #1
I will not ask you again.

WOMAN (O.S.)
Hey, what's going on here?

The guards turn. Nina Gruer stands behind them in front of the restaurant door.

GUARD #1
There is a man here who wishes to see Mr. Chung.

NINA
And you want to shoot him?

GUARD #1
He is not one of us.

NINA
Neither I'm I. But I'm still alive.
(beat)
Where is he?

GUARD #1
(gestures)
Over there.

Nina walks forward, stops as she sees... John.

NINA
Search him.

GUARD #1 steps toward John and pats him down, and in the process takes out John's wallet. The guard checks it, and is stunned.

GUARD #1
John Cross!

NINA
John Cross? The John Cross? The John Cross that killed two hundred Armenians with just eight men.

JOHN
Nine, including me.

GUARD #1
Also heard he sent Nicole Horne's army packing.

NINA
You're quite a legend, John Cross. Have you come to kill Li Chung?

JOHN
If I wanted him dead, he'd be dead already. I just need his help.

Nina stares at John for a moment, studying him... reading him. Finally she nods.

NINA
Come.

The crowd part way as John follows Nina into the restaurant.

INT. LI CHUNG RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A bright, upscale bar and restaurant that is packed with GANGSTERS, BEAUTIFUL WAITRESSES and CIVILIANS. Nina leads John toward the rear of the bar.

JOHN
Why did you help me back there?

NINA
You weren't shooting at anyone. I don't see why they should shoot you.

JOHN
You're a kind gangster.

NINA
I'm not a gangster. And I'm not
that kind.

Nina pushes through a back door into --

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Nina walks down the hall, John following. She stops at a door labelled "PRIVATE OFFICE". Knocks. We hear a buzzer and then Nina opens the door.

INT. LI CHUNG'S OFFICE - DAY

A group of armed TRIADS surround LI CHUNG (40s), who sits behind a large desk, watching something on his laptop computer. He looks up as Nina and John enter.

NINA
This is John Cross. He wants to see
you.

Li Chung shuts his laptop.

LI CHUNG
The John Cross. The famous John
Cross. Should I be worried?

JOHN
Not yet. But for now, I need your
help with something.

LI CHUNG
Take a sit.

John takes a sit across Li Chung. Nina sits another chair in one corner of the room. Everyone else remain standing.

LI CHUNG
What can I do for you?

JOHN
I'm going after Nicole in three
days. And I need a team. A strong
team who can shoot guns and kick
ass.

LI CHUNG
What about your men, Mr. Cross?

JOHN
They're dead.

All react with surprise.

LI CHUNG
I'm not sure if to take that as
good news or bad news.

JOHN
Take it how you want. But right now
I'm offering you an opportunity for
us to eliminate a common enemy.

LI CHUNG
And you think we need you to take
down Nicole Horne?

JOHN
I think you need something.
Otherwise why would you be sitting
here, hiding behind your desk while
Nicole Horne is out there
recruiting the toughest mercenaries
of modern times.
(beat)
The only thing you need aside from
me is God. And God ain't gonna help
ya.

NINA
He has a point. With all the
connections Nicole and Baldacci
have, we won't stand a chance.

Li Chung considers for a few moments. Finally --

LI CHUNG
(to John)
What can you do?

JOHN
I can lead your team. The way I led
my men. And we can strike Nicole
before her army can come together.

NINA
How soon?

JOHN
Three days...

LI CHUNG
Three days? That's...

JOHN
Listen. Nicole has a funeral in
three day. Her daughter's funeral.
We take her then.

NINA
What about the offence?

JOHN
Nicole's been extra guarded because
of what I did to her. But now she
thinks I'm dead, so that guard will
be down... just. We can take her.

Nina and Li Chung share a look.

LI CHUNG
And you have a plan for this
ambush?

JOHN
Yes, I do.

LI CHUNG
(after a beat)
Okay. Let's do it.

EXT. HORNE MANSION - DAY

A Mercedes pulls up in the compound. Nicole and Vinnie get
out and head inside.

INT. HORNE MANSION - DAY

A MAID frantically rushes up to Nicole as she walks into the
foyer with Vinnie.

MAID
She hasn't stop crying since you
left. I didn't know what to do.

NICOLE
(to Vinnie)
Give me a knife.

Vinnie flicks out a switchblade and hands it to her. Nicole
takes off upstairs, stops in front of a large double oak
door. Pushes into --

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Large. Simple. Tidy. We hear a faint sobbing as Nicole marches straight to the source -- a large wardrobe standing at the rear of the room. She opens it to reveal --

RACHAEL,

John Cross's daughter, alive, sitting on floor, crying. Her hands and feet are bounded with ropes. Hair is dishevelled, tangled. She stares at Nicole and her blade, terrified.

NICOLE

I hear you've been making trouble.

INT. HORNE MANSION - DOWNSTAIRS - DAY

Vinnie waits in the foyer, helping himself to a bowl of grapes. He turns at a sound. Nicole is coming down the stairs, very tense.

VINNIE

Is she dead?

NICOLE

I couldn't do it.

VINNIE

What?

NICOLE

She had this funny eyes. It reminded me of Hanna when she was young.

VINNIE

You're going soft in your old age.

Nicole motions to the DINING ROOM. Vinnie follows.

VINNIE (CONT'D)

Maybe I should do it.

NICOLE

No. She's too young to die.

VINNIE

That's never bothered you before?

NICOLE

And it doesn't. It just doesn't feel right killing her now. Not when Hanna funeral is so near.

VINNIE

So what you gonna do? You can't keep her here.

NICOLE

I'll send her to an orphanage. Someone'll probably kill her there.

DING! DONG! The doorbell rings.

MAID (O.S.)

(calls out)

I'll get, Mrs. Horne.

NICOLE

It's "Miss Horne", you bitch!

Vinnie laughs.

VINNIE

But you're still married.

NICOLE

Not when the son-of-a-bitch is dead.

The maid comes to the dinning room.

MAID

It's Officer Valino, Ms. Horne.

Nicole pulls a chair and sits. Vinnie does the same.

NICOLE

Let him in.

The maid leaves for a few moments -- then Valino enters, face tight, hopping with the aide of a wooden staff. Clearly the man is still in great agony. He's accompanied by a few officers.

Vinnie cannot help but chuckle at the sight of Valino. Nicole does her best to keep a straight face.

NICOLE

How are you, Officer Valino? I hope your wife was pleased with my work.

Valino frowns.

VALINO

We found Michael Santana. Hung to a tree in the south desert.

Valino chucks some photos on the table -- featuring Michael Santana, stripped butt naked, hanging upside down a tree. Vinnie is shocked. But Nicole's expressionless.

NICOLE

How long has he been there?

VALINO

Maybe days, maybe weeks, who cares? The fact is, he's dead.

NICOLE

You keep talking like that, so will you.

Valino swallows hard. Nicole packs up the photo.

NICOLE

At least he had fun.

VALINO

You're not gonna do anything about it?

NICOLE

This picture's got John Cross written all over it. But he's dead now. So go home and have some champagne. We can live in peace.

Valino nods to his officers, and as they turn to leave...

NICOLE

By the way...

Valino halts.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

My daughter's funeral is in two days. Get me all the guards and FBI Agents you can. I don't want any paparazzi snooping about.

Valino, eyes forever narrow as he looks at Nicole, hops out with his officers.

VINNIE

That man will forever hate you.

Nicole starts looking through Michael's dead photos again. She seems affected.

NICOLE
I can live with hate.
(beat)
It's funerals I can't stand.

VINNIE
You're gonna have to. Everyone's
gonna be there. Even those long
lost grannies we haven't seen for
thirty years.

Nicole casts her eyes down -- there's sadness in her eyes.

VINNIE (CONT'D)
It's okay to be sad and emotional.
You might be the devil incarnate,
but you're still human.

Nicole looks at Vinnie, forces a smile.

NICOLE
Do me a favour. Check in the local
books. See if you can an orphanage.

VINNIE
I'll get right to it.

Vinnie stands and leaves the room.

INT. LI CHUNG'S MANSION - SERIES OF SHOTS - DAY

Li Chung shows John around his lavish and exquisite pad; gym, lounge, dining room, weaponry, living room, garden...

MONTAGE END

as they come to an outside veranda where just ahead is a large ORIENTAL COMPOUND. A group of MARTIAL ARTS STUDENTS are training.

LI CHUNG
Together with the triad, you can
have their services.

JOHN
No disrespect, but bullets are
faster than fists and kicks.

LI CHUNG
They can do a lot more than kung-
fu. They have skills in archery.

JOHN
That'll definitely be different.

Li Chung looks John over.

LI CHUNG
You might want to get yourself in
shape as well.

JOHN
I'll get right to it.

BEGIN MONTAGE (RAPID, QUICK-CUT IMAGES)

EXT. BEACHSIDE - DAY - MONTAGE

In the morning sunlight, John jugs along the beachside.

INT. LI CHUNG'S MANSION - DAY - MONTAGE

John exercises in the gym.

EXT. LI CHUNG'S MANSION - COMPOUND - DAY - MONTAGE

John trains with the martial students. Nina, hanging by the
veranda, watches with interest.

INT. LI CHUNG'S MANSION - NIGHT - MONTAGE

John loads ammunition into different weapons.

INT. SHOOTING RANGE - NIGHT - MONTAGE

John practices. His eyes darkening with every blast.

INT. LI CHUNG'S MANSION - NIGHT - ENDING MONTAGE

Back in the gym -- John exercising. Pull up and dips. He
moves like a machine. No change in rhythm.

NINA

Thought you might need some liquid
after all that training.

John turns. Nina stands in the doorway, bottle of water in
hand. John breaks his exercise and takes the bottle, drinks.

NINA

I used to think you were a giant.
All those stories made you seem so
larger than life.

John gives back the bottle of water.

JOHN

Are you disappointed?

NINA

No. Quite impressed actually.
(beat)
You're just a regular who decided
to raise hell upon evil. Takes a
lot of guts.

JOHN

Everybody seems to forget. I was
part of a 9-man team. We did all
the work together. We were nothing
without each other.

NINA

What happened to them?

JOHN

(returning to his
exercise)
Nicole Horne happened. All my
campaigns had been so successful I
thought facing Nicole would just be
a breeze. I underestimated her.

NINA

I'm sorry.

John stops his exercise.

JOHN

I've made it my mission to make it
up to everybody that I've lost in
this campaign.

NINA

I'm sure they will watch over you.

JOHN
 I pray so.
 (beat)
 So what's your story?

NINA
 What?

JOHN
 You don't look Chinese, yet these
 people treat you like a queen.

NINA
 (teasing)
 Don't I look like a queen?

John smiles.

JOHN
 If I wasn't married, I'll answer
 that.

NINA
 I grew up here with Li Chung and
 his students. They took me in as
 one of their own.

JOHN
 So you're very close Li Chung.

NINA
 You could say that.

Beat.

JOHN
 What about you real parents?

A little hesitation, then...

NINA
 That's a discussion for another
 day. Now I gotta go.

She turns and leaves the gym. John watches her, puzzled.

INT. LI CHUNG'S MANSION - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Li Chung plays chess with one of his young proteges. John
 wanders in.

LI CHUNG
Hey, John. Come and join us.

JOHN
Chess is for two.

LI CHUNG
Then I will play you.
(re: protege)
I'm already tired of beating this
young man.

Li Chung gestures the protege to leave. John takes the young man's place.

LI CHUNG
Are you any good?

JOHN
I've played a bit.

They begin. John makes a move. Instantly Li Chung counters his move. John furls his brow in thought.

JOHN
The girl -- the red-haired --
what's her story?

Li Chung forms a grin.

LI CHUNG
You like her.

JOHN
I didn't say that. I'm just getting
to know the people I'm gonna be
working with.

John makes another move. Again Li Chung counters him.

LI CHUNG
I haven't seen you talk to the
other men.

JOHN
I'll talk to them later. Who is
she?

LI CHUNG
Have you asked her?

JOHN
What's with all the secrecy?

LI CHUNG

Nina does not like to talk about her past. And I wish to respect that.

JOHN

You're more close to her than the others.

LI CHUNG

Yes. Nina and I have a lot in common. We respect each other.

JOHN

How cute.

Li Chung smiles.

LI CHUNG

One thing I will tell you, Mr. Cross, is that you keep her very close. She is the biggest weapon you will have on this mission.

As John takes in the statement, Li Chung moves his queen.

LI CHUNG

Check mate.

INT. LI CHUNG'S MANSION - NINA'S LAIR - NIGHT

Nina writhes uncomfortably in bed, sheathed in sweat, having an unpleasant dream.

NINA

No... please... don't... don't shoot... mom...! Dad..!

The THUNDERING ROUNDS of a machine gun and Nina bolts from bed, screaming.

John bursts into the room and calms her.

JOHN

Hey, it's okay. Nina, it's okay. You were just having a bad dream. It's okay. Relax.

Eyes wide, she looks at him, looks around her... realizes she's safe.

JOHN
Just breath.

She starts to take a deep, everything-is-okay breath.

INT. LI CHUNG'S MANSION - JOHN'S LAIR - NIGHT

John sits on the floor, staring at his family photograph. The one he picked up from his house.

There's a KNOCK on the door. John continues to stare at the photo in his hand, doesn't answer.

A silent beat.

There's another KNOCK. John finally takes his eyes off the photo.

JOHN
Who is it?

NINA (O.S.)
It's Nina.

JOHN
It's opened.

Nina opens the door and enters.

NINA
You're not sleeping.

JOHN
I don't sleep. It keeps me focused.

Nina sees the picture in his hand.

NINA
Are those...?

JOHN
My wife and daughter. Just like my friends, they lost their lives because of my campaign.

Nina sits on the floor beside him, looks at the photo.

NINA
They're pretty. Not like me, but they're pretty.

John laughs. Beat.

NINA (CONT'D)

If you're gonna be a hero, John, you have to learn to accept sacrifices. It's all part of the job.

JOHN

Yeah. And the beauty is making sure you fulfil your goal. Make the world a better place.

NINA

In your situation, it's Mercenia.

They share a smile.

NINA

I wanted to thank you for earlier. You know...

JOHN

I have nightmares too. It's nothing to be ashamed of.

NINA

I've tried to block mine away so many times, but it just gets worse.

JOHN

Maybe you shouldn't try to block it.

NINA

It's too...

John looks at her -- the sadness in her eyes.

JOHN

What is it?

NINA

I was ten years-old when my parents died. My father worked as one of Nicole's enforcers. He loved it for a while, but then it got to him. He couldn't take the life anymore... the killing... hurting people. He wanted out but Nicole won't let him. She came after his family...

(beat)

I was in bed when they came.

(MORE)

NINA (cont'd)

I heard the noise and I hid, but I could hear everybody else screaming. I had two brothers and a sister. They were all killed.

JOHN

How'd you know it was Nicole?

NINA

She was there. That evil voice, yelling orders... swearing. It's why I came to Li Chung. I've been training here since so that I'll get the opportunity to kill Nicole and Baldacci.

JOHN

I heard about the gangsters you killed. Those were some of Nicole's top associates...

NINA

They were idiots... anybody could have killed them. But Nicole's a lot more guarded than they are. She's a lot more vigilante.

JOHN

That won't matter. They're all going to hell tomorrow.

John pockets his photo.

INT. LI CHUNG'S MANSION - FOYER - DAY

John and Li Chung's gang assemble in the large foyer, armed to the teeth like marines.

JOHN

Is everybody ready?

There's a loud CHEER.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

A funeral is taking place. Rows of mourners are gathered together for the memorial service of "Hanna Horne".

In the front line are Nicole and Vinnie, been consoled by friends and family -- though Nicole is stoic, face devoid of emotion.

A MINISTER stands beside the grave.

MINISTER

As we say farewell to our beloved child, Hanna Horne, we are reminded of her youth, her kindness and cheerfulness of spirit...

Away from the service are a horde of armed guards and tactical FBI squad, covering every inch of the cemetery.

MINISTER (CONT'D)

As our loved one enters eternal life, let us remember that love, too, is eternal, that although we have lost Hanna, our love and thoughts for her will never be lost...

EXT. CEMETERY - ROADSIDE - DAY

Disguised like the FBI Agents, a few of Li Chung's men begin planting explosives under the trunks of the several limousines parked on the roadside. Each plant is covertly done and takes a mere second.

Job done, the men simply walk away, throwing off their FBI disguises.

EXT. ROOFTOP ACROSS THE STREET - DAY

Nina takes her position -- sniper-rifle already set up. She looks through the scope, watching Nicole and Vinnie as they pretend to care about Hanna Horne.

BELOW THE BUILDING

John and a few other Chinese men in suits take their positions, hiding behind a black sedan. The plan is set and moving like clockwork. They wait.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

The crowd listen somberly as the priest continues.

PRIEST

...Into your hands we commend her spirit. May she rest in peace. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The casket is lowered into the ground. Vinnie and Nicole approach the grave, Nicole looking quite uncomfortable now.

NICOLE

Can we hurry this thing up?

Beside her, a man lifts a shovel-full of dirt and tosses it onto the casket. It lands with an ECHOING finality.

Nicole makes the sad effort to put rose on the grave.

NICOLE

Goodbye, darling.

VINNIE

Let's go.

She takes Vinnie's elbow and they start off. Other people are leaving too.

ACROSS THE STREET,

The men who planted the explosives join John -- taking positions behind another car.

John pulls a detonator from his jacket, thumb on the trigger button --

JOHN

(to the men)

Ready?

They nod.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Walking to her limo, Nicole suddenly halts. She becomes still and attentive, as if sensing danger. She looks around... her gaze settling on something across the road.

NICOLE'S POV

A black sedan, sixty yards across the road. The exact same one John and the Chinese men are covering behind. Though there is no sign of life or any peculiarity around the car or others, something about it troubles Nicole.

VINNIE

What is it?

NICOLE

How many Agents do we have here?

VINNIE
About two dozens. Why?

NICOLE
Very carefully, look over there...
up on that roof across the street.

Vinnie does. Sees a figure through the glow of a sniper scope.

VINNIE
Fuck.

NICOLE
Just don't move. Follow me slowly.

EXT. ROOFTOP ACROSS THE STREET - DAY

Through the scope of her rifle, Nina watches Nicole and Vinnie as they do a u-turn and start off in the opposite direction of the parked limos.

NINA
Shit. They made us.

She grabs a walkie talkie.

NINA
John, they made us. Move now!

BELOW THE BUILDING

John on walkie talkie to Nina.

JOHN
How's that possible?!

NINA
I think they saw my scope.

JOHN
Shit!
(to the men)
Let's go!

All step from behind the cars as John pushes the detonator --

BOOOM!--BOOOM!--BOOOM!--BOOOM...!

Eight cars EXPLODE consecutively, hurled 30 feet into the air as FIREBALLS erupt beneath them.

All guards and FBI Agents close to the blasts ignite like match heads. Vehicles and buildings are burning, people screaming.

JOHN

Move in!

John and the Chinese men dash toward the cemetery, FIRING as they run --

WORLD WAR III ERUPTS;

Guards and FBI Agents in the cemetery return FIRE --

John's team are driven back. Forced to take cover behind the burning cars. But that doesn't hold them back -- and they continue to shoot, even through the haze of smoke. All grim-faced and determined.

For the next 90 seconds we hear nothing but VIOLENT GUNFIRE as both sides try to decimate each other.

BULLETS SHRED every part of the road and cemetery. More cars and buildings are destroyed. Their Windows SHATTERING under the impact of a thousand bullets. The attacks are so devastating, it looks like the streets of Baghdad.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

People fall here and there -- BULLETS hitting them from all directions. They seem unsure where to turn.

ACROSS THE ROAD

John and his team take advantage and race closer to the cemetery -- FIRING with unrelenting brutality; GRENADE LAUNCHERS and MACHINE GUNS.

FIREBALLS erupt amidst Nicole's mob -- devouring dozens. Their painful SCREAMS echo in the air.

EXT. BUILDING ROOFTOP - DAY

Nina, eyes glazed with contempt, starts taking out the enemy troops -- with cool, deadly precision. One by one Agents and guards drop. Even innocent mourners are dying beside them.

Those that can, scatter and race away. But they never get far in the hands of Nina's rifle.

EXT. CEMETERY

Nicole scrambles off toward a hillside. Vinnie, alongside her, is shooting people.

Suddenly Nicole stops, sensing something behind her. She turns --

JOHN CROSS

strides up the hill into the cemetery, stepping through a rising flame... like a phoenix rising from the ashes.

Nicole is aghast, stunned to silence. Vinnie, beside her, freezes as he sees John. His mouth word "what the fuck?"

Before they can register what is happening, John has raised his pistols --

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!-

Nicole and Vinnie dive in separate directions. John races toward them -- but is halted by a FIREPOWER of FBI Agents.

John spins, takes out one. Spins again and takes out another. Then dives away as TEARGAS CANONS and GRENADES fly toward him.

They EXPLODE as John covers behind a tree!

Taking the opening, Nicole and Vinnie OPEN FIRE on John, SHREDDING the world around him; trees and grass!

JOHN
(to his team)
Bring the archers!!

EXT. CEMETERY - MAIN ROAD - DAY

A large truck pulls up in the midst of the destruction. The back doors fly open as a horde of martial arts student disembark, wielding bows and arrows.

ON NICOLE AND VINNIE

watching in disbelief as the archers march uphill toward them.

NICOLE
What the fuck is this, Shanghai?!

The archers halt, 100 yards from the guards and Agents. They kneel, notching arrows to their bows. Nicole's troops watch in awe...

NICOLE
 (to her team)
 Don't just stand there, you
 imbeciles! Kill them!

The troops open FIRE, taking down a few archers until --

A salvo of silver hornets are released. All Agents and guards within range drop.

VINNIE
 Let's go!

Nicole and Vinnie make haste to escape...

EXT. ROOFTOP ACROSS THE STREET - DAY

Nina, still FIRING away at some Agents, spots Nicole and Vinnie getting away. She tries to take a shot -- but her vision is blocked by the inferno surrounding the street.

NINA
 Fuck!

She tosses her rifle, whips out two pistols, and leaps off the edge of the rooftop.

Nina drops thirty-feet -- landing nicely on the rooftop of a truck, the one that brought the archers. She jumps from it and charges after Nicole and Vinnie.

Meanwhile...

EXT. CEMETERY - TREE SHADE - DAY

John has also spotted Nicole and Vinnie running. He shifts position and starts BLASTING at them --

BULLETS RAKE the grass beneath Vinnie's feet. He dives forward, taking Nicole down with him. They tumble down the hill.

John dives behind them, FIRING as he rolls down the hill. Some Chinese men try to follow, but they are forced back by FBI Agents, their machine guns SPRAYING OUT BULLETS --

NINA
Stand back!

The Chinese team retreat as Nina emerges, FIRING, twisting, rolling, taking out her opponents with machine-calm accuracy. She is world-class. And the triads are impressed.

EXT. SLOPE-SIDE - STREET - DAY

Nicole races in front of an S.U.V, which screeches to a sudden halt, narrowly just missing her by inches. The driver gets out to check on the woman.

DRIVER
Hey, are you alright?

Nicole boots him the groin. As he doubles over, she and Vinnie steal the man's car and belt away, Vinnie driving.

John, not far behind, steals his own car.

NINA
Hey! Don't you go without me.

John waits for Nina, who jumps in the passenger seat. They pursue.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

SCREECH! Vinnie and Nicole's stolen S.U.V flies into the busy city street. Cars swerve off the road to avoid collision. SCREECH! John's car slingshots around the corner -- right behind the S.U.V. They cut into the interstate.

EXT. INTERSTATE HIGHWAY - DAY

The chase is on. John and Vinnie weave through traffic, slashing past other cars, 100 miles per hour.

INT. S.U.V - DAY

Nicole makes a call on her cellular.

VALINO (V.O.)
Patrick Valino.

NICOLE
Hey, you son-of-a-bitch --

VALINO (V.O.)

Nicole?

NICOLE

Listen, you cock sucker! I'm on the interstate highway 5, heading east to riverside! John Cross is tailing me --!

VALINO

Cross is alive?

NICOLE

That's what I just said, you nim-wit! Get me every law enforcement you have in this region! I want this bastard off my ass now!

She hangs up.

EXT. INTERSTATE HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

John gains round, 120 miles per hour.

INT. JOHN'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Nina loads fresh clips into her pistols. She sticks her head out the window and FIRES --

Ahead, the S.U.V swerves, takes another lane. John follows.

EXT. INTERSTATE HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

Vinnie drops a gear and floors it. John punches the gas harder. Catches up to Vinnie. Nina FIRES out her window --

BULLETS hit the S.U.V's back window, CRACKING it! Vinnie and Nicole duck their heads.

NICOLE

Son-of-a-bitch!!

Vinnie pulls his gun.

VINNIE

Take this.

Nicole takes it and returns FIRE. John swerves to avoid the bullets --

JOHN
Bitch!

EXT. INTERSECTION - CONTINUOUS

John's car slices between a passing truck, right on Vinnie again, gaining incredibly.

Nicole unloads her clip into John's car -- to no avail. He's still right behind them.

NICOLE
Shit.

INT. S.U.V - CONTINUOUS

Nicole sticks her head back inside.

NICOLE
Give me another gun.

VINNIE
We're not gonna need it.

Through the rear-view mirror, Vinnie can see several police cruisers following behind John's car.

EXT. JOHN'S CAR - DAY

John sees it too. At least a dozen official cruisers, flying toward them at break-neck speed, SIREN WAILING!

John looks to Nina, who's loading more clips into her pistols.

JOHN
You got enough?

NINA
Yeah.

Four police cars swerve into their lane, cutting them off.

EXT. POLICE CARS - DAY

The Officers habouring all four cruisers raise their guns and empty their entire clips into John's car, pock-marking metals, shattering glass.

INT. JOHN'S CAR - DAY

John and Nina duck their heads as a hailstorm of debris and shrapnel whistle around the interior.

JOHN

Hang on!

John suddenly brakes hard, throwing the car into a 360-spin. The police cars beside them lurch forward and collide into oncoming traffic.

BOOOM! An EXPLOSION erupts amidst three of the police cars.

INT./EXT. JOHN'S CAR - DAY

The spinning car comes to a stop in the middle of the rush traffic.

JOHN

You okay?

NINA

Yeah.

Nina cocks her loaded pistols. She stands up through the sun roof, facing the other oncoming cop cruisers. The officers don't have time to react as --

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! Nina SPRAYS them with BULLETS!

The cop cars swerve, careening off the road. The ones behind are unable to stop in time and SMASH into the ones in front. The cars TUMBLE... FLIPPING... SMASHING into other cars which --

EXPLODE!!!

FIREBALLS engulf the highway, barricading the cop cars.

Nina ducks back into the car, calm and collected. John looks at her like "who the hell are you?"

NINA

My father was a soldier. I started shooting when I was ten.

JOHN

That explains a lot.

John puts the car into gear, resumes his pursuit on Nicole and Vinnie.

INT. VINNIE'S CAR - DAY

Vinnie's eyes are wide as he looks at the explosion through the rear-view mirror. Beside him, Nicole is unreadable. She sits, thinking.

A moment later, she picks up another cellular and dials.

INT. JOHN'S CAR - DAY

A cellular is ringing. John answer his phone.

JOHN

Hello?

INTERCUT WITH NICOLE:

NICOLE

Mr. Cross, why won't you just die?
I mean, someone drops a grenade in
Bagdad and a hundred people die, no
question. But I nail you with a
rocket, and you're still alive.

JOHN

That must really piss you off.

NICOLE

Yes it does. So maybe I'll go home
and take my anger out on somebody
else. Someone like your daughter.

JOHN

What?

NICOLE

That's right, Mr. Cross. She's
alive. As much as I wanted to, I
couldn't kill the little bitch.

JOHN

(incredulous)
Rachael's alive?

NICOLE

She won't be for long, if you don't
stop following me!

John slows down the car.

NINA
What are you doing?

JOHN
I'm stopping.

John pulls up on the hard shoulder.

Nicole sees this through the rear-view mirror.

NICOLE
Nice to see we come to an
understanding, Mr. Cross.

John steps out of the car.

JOHN
We've been here before, Nicole! No
more bullshit!

NICOLE
For once I agree with you.
(beat)
Let us meet.

Vinnie gives her a look.

JOHN
You wanna meet?

NICOLE
That's what I said. We'll meet on
mutual grounds. No weapons. No
bodyguards. No war. Just talk.

JOHN
And you can just talk?

NICOLE
This won't be about our war, John.
It'll be about your daughter. I'll
call you back to let you know
where.

She hangs up.

EXT. JOHN'S CAR - INTERSTATE HIGHWAY - DAY

Nina climbs out of the car.

NINA
What's going on?

JOHN
That was Nicole --

NINA
I figured that.

JOHN
She wants to meet.

NINA
What? And you're thinking about it?

JOHN
My daughter's alive.

Nina's astonished.

NINA
Are you sure?

JOHN
Nicole's a bitch, but that doesn't
sound like bullshit.

NINA
Fuck.
(beat)
What you gonna do?

JOHN
I'm gonna meet her.

Turning, he walks to the car. Nina follows.

NINA
I'm coming with you.

JOHN
(stops)
No. I'm going alone.

He gets in the car. Nina jumps in too.

NINA
Are you insane?

JOHN
I have to. It's what Nicole wants.

NINA
 Fuck what Nicole wants. She's
 probably trying to set you up.

JOHN
 Even if she is, I can't risk it. I
 have to go alone.

NINA
 No, John! I'm coming you. If not
 for anything else, at least to
 watch your back.

John is taken. He stares at Nina for a moment, then --

JOHN
 Okay.

He puts the car into gear and drives off.

INT. HORNE MANSION - DAY

Nicole enters in a murderous rage and starts destroying
 things.

NICOLE
 How the fuck is he still alive?!!

Vinnie now enters, but he hangs back by the door as Nicole
 rages.

NICOLE
 How?! I mean, I didn't miss! I hit
 that warehouse with a fucking
 rocket! A rocket! And he's still
 alive!

VINNIE
 Some people are just lucky I guess.

Nicole's eyes burn.

NICOLE
 Lucky? Vinnie, I will shoot you if
 you say another dumb fucking word.

VINNIE
 Why'd you agree to meet him if
 you're so mad?

NICOLE

I don't know why I said that, Vinnie! It just seemed like a good idea at the time! The only thing that'll get the son-of-a-bitch off our backs!

VINNIE

And now?

NICOLE

And now, I don't know! We're back to square one now that he's joined the Chinese.

VINNIE

I don't think it's total loss, Nicole.

NICOLE

What?

VINNIE

I didn't see any of Cross's SWAT team out there. Which means...

NICOLE

...They must have been killed...

VINNIE

Exactly. You killed them. So what if Cross survived? He's gonna be weak and vulnerable now.

NICOLE

Did he look vulnerable today? He's still got that fucking brain power to eliminate mafia kings.

VINNIE

But he trusts you. He thinks he's daughter is alive...

NICOLE

She is alive.

VINNIE

He doesn't know that, not really. That's where we can use this meeting of yours to an advantage.

Nicole sits down, liking the idea.

NICOLE
Keep talking.

As Vinnie sits across her...

EXT. LI CHUNG'S MANSION - LIVING ROOM - DAY

John stands, staring out the window at the front garden. Li Chung enters behind him.

LI CHUNG
Mr. Cross.

John turns.

LI CHUNG
What happened to our agreement? I gave you an army so you could kill Nicole -- now I hear you are going to meet with her on some personal arrangement.

JOHN
Yeah. I'm going to get my daughter back.

LI CHUNG
The daughter you thought was dead. Do you not think this is a setup?

JOHN
It really doesn't matter. Either way Nicole's gonna die.

John's cellular RINGS. He answers.

JOHN
(into phone)
John Cross.

NICOLE (V.O.)
Hello, Mr. Cross.

Li Chung excuses himself and leaves the room.

JOHN
You keep calling with my wife's phone.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. HORNE MANSION - NICOLE'S OFFICE - DAY

She looks the handset over.

NICOLE
Quite nice, isn't it? Portable.

John tenses.

JOHN
I wanna hear my daughter's voice.
Proof to me she's alive.

NICOLE
That's only fair I guess. Wait a
second.

ON JOHN

as he holds himself still. A moment later --

RACHAEL (V.O.)
Hello, daddy.

John melts at the voice.

JOHN
Rachael?

RACHAEL (V.O.)
Where have you been? Where's mommy?

JOHN
I'm coming to see you right now,
sweetheart. I'm coming to pick you
up. Just stay --

NICOLE (V.O.)
I think that's enough, Mr. Cross.

JOHN
Where do you wanna meet?

NICOLE (V.O.)
(after a beat)
There's an old park in the west of
the Mercenia. Meet me there at 2
p.m. And don't forget Mr. Cross --
no weapons. Just you alone.

JOHN
I got it.

He disconnects.

EXT. BUILDING ROOFTOP - DAY

John and Nina stand at the edge of rooftop overlooking a small park. They scan the terrain using binoculars.

NINA
You see anything?

JOHN'S POV THROUGH BINOCULARS:

scanning the empty park, he spots Nicole, sitting on a bench, alone. She's feeding some pigeons.

BACK TO SCENE

John lowers his binoculars.

JOHN
Yeah, she's there.

NINA
Not alone though. Two hundred yards east.

John looks through his binoculars again. In his POV, we see a line of black Mercedes parked on the road some distance outside the park.

NINA
I don't see any girl.

JOHN
If she's here, she'll be in one of those cars. You can set up here.

There is a duffel bag on the ground beside them. Nina opens the bag and brings out her sniper-rifle. Hands a pistol to John.

NINA
Be careful.

John nods and walks away.

EXT. PARK - DAY

ON NICOLE as she throws crumbs of bread to the surrounding pigeons.

JOHN

Make a move, and these pigeons will
be feeding on your brains.

Nicole freezes. John stands right behind her -- the muzzle
of his .45 automatic jammed tight to her skull.

NICOLE

You must be deaf, Mr. Cross. I said
no guns.

JOHN

I heard you perfectly...

John moves in front of Nicole, stoops and suspiciously runs a
hand up her stockings...

JOHN

...but you're such a demon...

He yanks out her hidden gun.

JOHN

...and I don't trust demons.

NICOLE

You shoot me and --

JOHN

-- Shut up!
(stands)
Where's my daughter?

Nicole hesitates.

JOHN

And don't stall me. 'Cause I can
happily send you to hell without
seeing her again.

NICOLE

If that were true, Mr. Cross, you
would have already shot me.

From the look on John's face, she's absolutely right.

NICOLE

Why don't you sit down? We'll talk
like I suggested.

John pauses for a moment before sitting beside her.

NICOLE

You should be glad I kept her alive
all this time.

JOHN

How alive can she be after the
things you've taken from her?

NICOLE

You've taken a lot more from me,
Mr. Cross. You see, wives come and
go. Even friends are replaceable.

(beat)

But I will never have another
daughter like Hanna. Neither will
you have ever another daughter like
Rachael, if I'd killed her.

John stares at Nicole, more gently than we would have believed
possible.

JOHN

What do you want?

NICOLE

If I give you your daughter back, I
want you to leave town. No, in
fact, I want you to leave the
country. I don't ever wanna hear
about you, or see you in my city
again.

John smiles.

JOHN

The only thing I can promise you,
Nicole -- is a quicker death. And
that's only for keeping my daughter
alive.

NICOLE

And if I kill her now.

JOHN

Won't make a difference now. I've
already cried for her.

The intensity in his eyes chills Nicole. She brings out a
phone (Michelle Cross's cellular). John snatches it from her
hand.

JOHN

Use your own.

Nicole smirks, then brings up another phone. Dials.

NICOLE
 (into phone)
 Plans have changed, Vinnie. Bring
 her in.
 (beat)
 Just do it!

Nicole disconnects. They wait there in silence. Watching passers-by move here and there.

EXT. ROOFTOP - DAY

Nina steadies her rifle scope, watching the road outside the pack.

Just then, Vinnie alights from one of the Mercedes. He opens the back door of the car and lets Rachael out. Then he leads her across the street toward the park.

Nina trails him with her rifle.

EXT. PARK - DAY

John and Nicole wait patiently. A long pause. Then:

NICOLE
 So, you've joined forces with Li
 Chung. Must be exciting.

JOHN
 Puts you out of luck, doesn't it?

NICOLE
 You do realize Chung will just be
 as bad as me. Maybe not now that he
 hasn't spread his wings yet. But
 we're the same. Greedy, callous,
 and damn right corrupt.

(beat)
 No matter how much you try or how
 many gangsters you kill, the
 damnation of this city is forever.
 There will be no paradise.

JOHN
 That's what you think. Before this
 day is over, I promise you, this
 city will laugh again. And children
 will walk the streets without fear.

Nicole looks at John intriguingly.

NICOLE
I'll be curious to see how you can
make that possible, Mr. Cross.

Vinnie arrives -- along with Rachael. She's neatly groomed,
fresh, tidy. Almost as if she'd never been kidnapped.

RACHAEL
Daddy!

JOHN
Baby?

They race to each other and embrace tightly. An emotional
reunion.

RACHAEL
Where have you been?

JOHN
Just around.

John releases her to look at her. He's surprised she looks so
well. He looks at Nicole -- who stands and joins Vinnie.

VINNIE
This ain't over, Cross. It's a good
thing you brought those guns.
Otherwise you'd be dead.

Vinnie and Nicole walk away. John turns back to his daughter.
Examines her all over.

JOHN
Did they hurt you?

Rachael shakes her head no.

RACHAEL
Where's mommy?

John can't speak. Tears form in his eyes as he stares at the
little girl. He hugs her again, tight.

EXT. ROOFTOP - DAY

Nina, seeing as there is no trouble, lowers her rifle.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

It's pouring with rain. John and Rachael stand before Joan Cross's headstone.

JOHN

A lot has happened these last few weeks. I lost Michelle, all my friends... I nearly lost my daughter. But it's not over yet. And today will be the day.

Rachael looks up at her father.

RACHAEL

Why are you sad, daddy?

John stares at the headstone for a moment longer before turning to Rachael. He stoops before the little girl, fighting emotion.

JOHN

Listen. Daddy's gonna go away again.

Rachael shakes her head.

RACHAEL

No, you can't. You can't go away.

JOHN

I'm sorry.

RACHAEL

No, no, no... you can't... you can't leave me again.

JOHN

I have to.

RACHAEL

No, daddy... please. Stay with me. Everything will be okay.

Tears are streaming down her face. John is equally teary, sad, tormented.

JOHN

I have to, Rachael.

RACHAEL

Why? Did I do something wrong?

JOHN
Sweetheart, it's not you. I just...

It's difficult, and he's trying to drill the words into her. But Rachael won't have it, until John's voice suddenly changes.

JOHN
Listen! I have to go! You're better off without me!

Rachael's startled, and a little shaken. She manages to control herself.

JOHN (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. I didn't mean to shout.

She's silent, just staring at him now, holding back her tears. John touches her face.

JOHN (CONT'D)
You have your mother's eyes.

RACHAEL
She said I have your eyes.

JOHN
Nah, it's definitely your mother's. You see they shine like diamonds. Mine don't.

They stare at each for a moment, then --

JOHN (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, Rachael. I wish I could have been a better father. But you will be safe.
(touches her chest)
And I will always be here.

He embraces her.

EXT. ORPHANAGE GATES - DAY

John's car pulls up out front.

INT. JOHN'S CAR - DAY

He sits, staring at the high walls and heavy gates of the facility. Rachael's beside him in the passenger seat, glumly staring out her window.

JOHN

I grew up here. When my parents died, my grandmother couldn't look after us alone, so she brought me and my sister to live here.

(beat; scans the area)

It's a beautiful place. And from the look of things, it hasn't changed much.

(beat)

We met a lot of good people here. You know my friends; Derek, Dante, Anthony, Zhao, Rod... we all met here.

He looks at Rachael, who's still looking out her window.

JOHN

You'll like it here. I promise.

John beeps the horn. A moment and then a shutter opens at eye level. An old WATCHMAN steps from his booth. He smiles and waves at the little girl in the car. Rachael averts her eyes.

The watchman comes to John's window.

WATCHMAN

New student?

JOHN

Yeah.

WATCHMAN

Doesn't look too happy.

JOHN

Neither would you if your only parent was leaving you.

The watchman stares at John.

WATCHMAN

You're her father?

JOHN

I am.

WATCHMAN

Why would you be leaving her?

JOHN

Can't let her stay in my world.

The watchman seems to understand -- and he nods at John. He crosses to the gates and pulls them open. John drives in toward a rambling, ivy-clad building set in spacious grounds.

EXT. ORPHANAGE - COURTYARD - DAY

John parks, gets out of the car. He looks around, appraising the lay of the land.

JOHN
Still as big as I remember.

John's name is called. An elderly grey-haired nun, SISTER MARY, walks over from the entrance. John goes to meet her. They hug.

SISTER MARY
Nice to see you again, John. It's been quite a while.

JOHN
Likewise, Sister Mary.

They release each other.

SISTER MARY
Where is she?

John goes to the car and lets Rachael out. Sister Mary comes to meet the girl. She bends, offers a handshake.

SISTER MARY
Hello, Rachael. I'm Sister Mary. I looked after your father once. Would you like me to look after you?

Rachael looks to her father meekly -- hoping at this very moment, he'll change his mind. But he just says:

JOHN
Go. Sister Mary will after you.

All hope vanished, Rachael turns to Sister Mary, smiles as tears form in her eyes. Sister Mary takes her hand.

SISTER MARY
You will make plenty of friends here.

Then she looks at John.

SISTER MARY
God be with you, John. I hope you
find peace.

With that, Sister Mary leads Rachael away. John watches them go, his eyes sad, glinting with tears.

INT. LI CHUNG'S MANSION - COMPOUND

John stands in the veranda, staring out to the compound. Nina steps beside him.

NINA
When did you get back?

JOHN
A few hours ago.

NINA
Where's Rachael? I haven't seen her
around.

JOHN
She's not here.
(beat)
I gave her up to orphanage.

NINA
What?

John faces Nina, saddened.

JOHN
I have two choices. I can either
abandon this whole quest and leave
Nicole alone... or I can finish
what I started. Keep all the
promises I made my loved ones.

NINA
But you can still do that. And be
with your daughter.

JOHN
I'm not gonna survive this war. I
have no illusions about that.
That's why...

He can't finish the words. Too painful. Nina stares at him tenderly.

NINA

Then let me go. You get your daughter back and I will go after Nicole.

JOHN

No, I can't let you.

NINA

You can't let me? John, you can't stop me. I've spent my whole life trying to kill Nicole. Because of you, I missed that chance at the park. I won't miss it again.

JOHN

You think you can stop Nicole by yourself? You haven't succeeded before, why would you now?

Nina has no answer.

JOHN

You need me.
(beat)
Besides, it isn't just Nicole that I'm after.

Nina reads his face... realizes.

NINA

Li Chung.

JOHN

I'm not loosing my daughter just for Nicole. Every mob boss in this city will fall. So pick your side.

INT. HOSPITAL - DANTE'S WARD - DAY

John enters. A nurse is tending to Dante, who still alive, but asleep.

JOHN

How is he?

NURSE

He's doing better.

John walks over to Dante. Touches his hand. Dante responds, squeezing John's hand.

JOHN

Dante?

Dante wakes, opening his eyes. The nurse checks on him.

NURSE

I'll get the doctor.

As she leaves John sits beside his friend.

JOHN

How you doing buddy?

DANTE

Where... I'm... I?

JOHN

You're in hospital.

The doctor and nurse enter to check on Dante.

DOCTOR

Could you give us a moment please,
Mr. Cross?

JOHN

Is everything alright?

DOCTOR

Yes. We just want to make sure he's
fine.

John watches as they tend to Dante for a moment, then reaches into his pocket and brings out a folded paper.

JOHN

Nurse... could you give this to him
when he wakes up?

NURSE

Sure.

She takes the note from John.

JOHN

(under his breath)
I'll see you, buddy.

INT. HORNE ENTERPRISE - NICOLE'S OFFICE - DAY

Nicole paces anxiously in her office. Vinnie sits in one corner, fidgeting with a pencil.

VINNIE

What's wrong? You've been anxious since we left the park.

NICOLE

I have a feeling he's planning something.

VINNIE

I thought we got over this? You gave him daughter back. If he has any sense he'd go play happy families.

NICOLE

It's like you said before, Vinnie. John cross's already lost his whole family. I believe he just wanted top see that little girl for the last time.

Vinnie becomes tentative.

VINNIE

You think he's gonna come here.

NICOLE

I don't think. I know.

VINNIE

I'll alert the men.

Vinnie heads for the door, then pauses.

VINNIE

This is our territory, Nicole. Cross ain't gonna win this one.

INT. LI CHUNG'S MANSION - WEAPONRY - DAY

John and Nina are suiting up for battle.

JOHN

Have you informed the others?

NINA

They're not coming.

JOHN

Why not?

NINA
 You asked me to make a choice. I
 made my choice. They won't need to
 come with us.

A tear falls to her cheek.

JOHN
 I'm sorry.

She snap-cocks a uzi.

NINA
 Me too.

EXT. HORNE ENTERPRISE - DAY

The streets are quiet. John and Nina sit in a sedan, parked
 across the street from the Horne Enterprise building.

JOHN
 Did you say anything to Li Chung?

NINA
 I left him a note.

Beat.

JOHN
 We should go.

NINA
 No. Not yet.

INT. LI CHUNG'S MANSION - DAY

Li Chung moves down the corridor, stops an enforcer along the
 way.

LI CHUNG
 Have you seen Nina?

ENFORCER
 No, Mr. Chung.

Li Chung moves on, crossing to the living room.

INT. LI CHUNG'S MANSION - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Li Chung pours himself a glass of scotch. Then spots a small envelope with his name on it on the table. Curiously he picks it up. A momentary pause, and then he opens the envelope. There's a card inside.

CU - CARD

The card reads:

*Thank you for everything,
Mr. Chung. But the world
needs heroes, not villains
and warlords.*

Love, Nina.

Li Chung shuts his eyes tight. It is the last thing he will do.

EXT. LI CHUNG'S MANSION - SAME

BA-BOOOM! The entire mansion explodes with such force the world seems to shake.

INT./EXT. JOHN'S CAR - HORNE- ENTERPRISE - DAY

Nina closes her eyes, as if feeling the devastation of Li Chung's mansion.

NINA

We can go now.

John and Nina get out. They move swiftly, crossing to the back of the car. John opens the trunk and brings out a black duffel bag. He unzips the bag and takes out a FLAMETHROWER. Straps it on.

They cross the street toward the building.

INT. HORNE ENTERPRISE - LOBBY - DAY

A few guards sit a security station, talking. John and Nina push through the doors. The guards look at them, and panic erupts.

GUARD #1

Shit, it's Cross.

Before they can do anything, John and Nina have unloaded their clips -- dropping all but one guard. A deliberate attempt to use to this lucky guard for one thing. And one thing only --

NINA
 (indicates the entrance doors)
 Go over there and lock the doors.
 And lock it properly.

The terrified guard moves quickly and locks the entrance doors, bolting them with chains and iron padlocks.

JOHN
 Now, raise the alarm.

GUARD
 (puzzled)
 What?

JOHN
 I want you to raise the alarm.

The guard is still confused, staring at John and Nina. What are they up to?

JOHN
 I won't ask you again. Raise the alarm.

Gladly, the guard moves to his desk and pushes the alarm button. Instantly ALARM BELLS begin to WAIL.

GUARD
 You're gonna get fucked up.

Nina puts a bullet right in the middle of his forehead.

JOHN
 We'll have at least ninety seconds.

Nina nods.

INT. HORNE ENTERPRISE - NICOLE'S OFFICE - DAY

Nicole sits behind her desk, rigid as the building ALARM BLARES. We're not seeing that regal and confident woman here. Right now she's terrified.

Vinnie bursts in and Nicole almost jumps out of her skin.

VINNIE
Cross is here.

NICOLE
I figured that.

VINNIE
But it's just him, and some other
girl. No one else.

Nicole bolts up, hope and confidence suddenly returned.

NICOLE
You sure?

VINNIE
We got them on the cameras. I've
sent a team down already.

NICOLE
That son-of-a-bitch really has a
death wish, coming here alone. I
want his head!

Vinnie nods and dashes off. Nicole starts pacing.

INT. HORNE ENTERPRISE - STAIRWELL - DAY

A wave of armed GUARDS and SOLDIERS rush down the stairs.

INT. HORNE ENTERPRISE - LOBBY - DAY

John and Nina are stooped on the floor, hidden behind two separate slate pillars. Nina has two M-16s ready, while John carries his flamethrower gun.

They look at each other across the room.

JOHN
Tell me about your family. Your
brothers and sisters... what were
they like?

NINA
The coolest people you'll ever
meet. We all had a strong bond. We
did everything together. I dream
about them all the time.

JOHN
I know the feeling.

As they stare at each other, guards and soldiers arrive in full force, blocking the elevator and anywhere leading upward.

LEAD SOLDIER

We know you're here! Come out with your hands in the air!

No answer. The lead soldier summons the troop forward, and they begin to advance toward John and Nina's position.

Behind their pillars, John and Nina can feel the troops approaching. They hold themselves still. The atmosphere is tense. John mutters to himself under his breath.

JOHN

Closer... closer... closer...

The troops draw nearer -- almost upon them when --

JOHN

...Now!

All hell breaks loose;

John and Nina spring out in one motion -- surprising the troops. Nina immediately OPENS FIRE -- sending soldiers slumping to the floor.

Beside her John FIRES his flamethrower. 40-foot FLAME BELCHES OUT -- igniting everyone within range -- engulfing the rear part of the lobby with FIRECLOUDS. SCREAMS echo in the air.

Then FIRE ALARMS start up. Followed by emergency sprinklers, which begin to shower down water.

John and Nina advance through the rain, never breaking stride. John uses his flamethrower, again and again. Sending the wave of soldiers and guards running for their lives.

Then a second wave of troops appear, led by Vinnie, who hurls grenades at John and Nina --

The duo dive away, each covering behind another pillar as the grenades explode.

INT. NICOLE'S OFFICE - DAY

Nicole paces as GUNFIRE and SCREAMS echo through the building. She knows her troops are in trouble.

INT. HORNE ENTERPRISE - LOBBY - DAY

Vinnie leads the troops forward, warily advancing toward John and Nina.

John uses the time to regain himself. He drops the flamethrower and whips out two uzi's. At the same time, Nina loads new clips into her M-16s.

Both look at each other -- and with a single nod, they spring out again, OPENING FIRE -- driving Vinnie and his troops back.

Slate walls and pillars pock, crack and crater under the hail storm of EXPLOSIVE-tipped BULLETS.

VINNIE

Fuck!!

Nina and John cover again as Vinnie and his troops return FIRE.

VINNIE

You're not gonna make it, John! So why don't you just give it up?!

JOHN

You have to die first.

VINNIE

Then come on! Come and kill me!

John closes his eyes. Nina sees the gesture, realizes what he's about to do...

NINA

John, no!

But it's too late. John is out, answering the challenge. Vinnie comes out too -- and they start BLASTING at each other, twenty feet apart. Others hold back to watch the duel.

John is hit in the shoulder. But he doesn't even flinch. Just advances toward Vinnie -- who is also advancing toward him.

John is hit again, in the midsection. In the leg. He drops for a spilt-second, instantly regains himself. And without moving, FIRES a single shot, which HITS Vinnie right in the middle of the forehead. Blowing the man's brains out.

Vinnie collapses. John drops to one knee, bleeding. Nina rushes to help him, while keeping her guns trained on the soldiers.

NINA

We just came for Nicole. You guys don't have to die for her.

JOHN

You will be paid well. I promise.

The soldiers mull over this for several moments. Finally one of them speaks.

SOLDIER

Go on. She's on the top floor.

A stunned comrade tries to dispute the decision, but the soldier stares him to silence. He's clearly in command.

Nina drops her guns and helps John to his feet.

JOHN

(to Nina)
Get out of here.

NINA

What?

There is a certain sort of calm to him as he speaks.

JOHN

I'm going up alone. Get out of here.

NINA

You're wounded. You can't --

JOHN

-- Yes, I can.
(to the soldiers)
And you too. Leave.

COMMANDING SOLDIER

(to his team)
Let's go!

The soldiers head for the entrance doors. John limps to where he left his flamethrower. He grabs it, then walks back to Nina. She's saddened as she stares at him.

NINA

You're not coming back, are you?

JOHN
This is where I say goodbye.

NINA
You don't have to, John. I can do
this.

John touches her face gently.

JOHN
Mercenia needs you.

NINA
They need you too.

JOHN
That's why I'm going to give them
one last fireworks.

He walks past Nina and heads for the elevator.

INT. NICOLE'S OFFICE - DAY

Nicole sits behind her chair, tense. She opens a draw beneath the desk and brings out a gun -- aims it readily toward the door.

We hear footsteps approaching. Nicole's gun's hand trembles.

Suddenly the door bursts opens as John enters. Nicole FIRES instantly -- but the bullet misses John, flying out the door. John shoots Nicole in the shoulder, disabling her. She GROANS in pain.

John now moves into the room and sits on the chair across Nicole. Both are bleeding badly, but John is more fatally wounded. And with the little energy he has left, he sets the flamethrower gun on the table, making sure that the igniter is facing Nicole.

NICOLE
It's funny. You survive a fucking
rocket. But not a tiny bullet.

JOHN
You're not gonna see me die,
Nicole. I'm not gonna give you that
satisfaction. You're gonna leave
this earth wondering whether or not
John Cross made it.

Nicole seethes.

NICOLE

Fuck you.

JOHN

I'm already fulling my promise. All the money you have in this building here is already doing wonders for the people of Mercenia.

(off Nicole's look)

Go to the window. See for yourself.

EXT. HORNE ENTERPRISE - DAY

THE SKY IS SNOWING MONEY. \$100 bills. Thousands of bills. Bale upon bale is blowing at the 25th floor.

Pedestrians are scattering and screaming, chasing the money, stuffing bills away.

INT. SEDAN - DAY

Nina sits, gathering her thought. She hears the commotion outside and steps out of the car.

Nina smiles at what she sees. The street is blissful. People are happy, very happy as they scramble for the snowing cash.

Off across the street, we see some of Nicole Horne's former soldiers, looking up at the falling cash, stunned.

COMMANDING SOLDIER

So that's what he meant.

ANOTHER SOLDIER

That's our payday? Fuck this.

COMMANDIN SOLDIER

You best start packing if you wanna get paid.

The soldiers too join in the scramble.

INT. HORNE ENTERPRISE - DAY

Nicole is at the window, in tears, watching in horror as people fight for her money. She wheels on John, who without pause, FIRES his flamethrower, setting her alight.

Nicole SCREAMS, staggering as she BURNS! John just sits there, watching her grimly, even as the room catches fire.

JOHN
How does hell feel, Nicole?

EXT. HORNE ENTERPRISE - DAY

Nina watches as all the TOP FLOOR OFFICES suddenly BLOW OUT - a huge fireball erupting over one side of the Horne Enterprise.

People panic and run. Nina casually gets back into her car and drives away. As she goes, the entire highrise that makes up the "Horne Enterprise" EXPLODE inside out, splintering into a billion tiny particles!

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END