

THE HOUSE OF HOMER BERGMAN

by
Micah P. Gerger

Inspired by The BROTHERS KARAMAZOV
A novel by Fyodor Dostoevsky

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Micahpgerger@gmail.com
(720) 874-9758

FADE IN

EXT. HOMER'S HOUSE - ROCKY MOUNTAINS - LATE AFTERNOON

Crooked white letters spell BERGMAN along the side of a badly dented mailbox. The red mail flag is up. Beneath the box, the plywood post is strapped to a steel reinforcement pole and rooted in concrete.

Behind the box stands a massive brown house. It looks cold. Distant.

A white mail truck screeches to a halt at the curb, blocking view of the house and mailbox.

The mailbox bangs shut. The truck speeds off.

The mail flag is down.

An orange glow flashes in one of the first floor windows. The window shatters. Black smoke billows out. The house is quickly consumed by flames. As it burns-

INSERT TITLES:

The House of Homer Bergman

CUT TO BLACK:

INT. VISITOR ROOM - COUNTY JAIL - EARLY MORNING

Throughout voice over: A man in an exquisite black suit strides confidently down the line of meeting booths past several inmates; a skinny meth-head, a massive black man, a neo-Nazi, etc. We cannot see the man's face; only that of each inmate he passes, each seated behind a thick sheet of wired Plexiglas.

A Mexican gangster covered in tattoos jumps up in excitement when he sees the man pass by. The man keeps moving.

ROTHBERG (V.O.)

They say I'm a liar. A leech. A heartless sociopath. The bane of organic evolution. But here's why.

(MORE)

ROTHBERG (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Despite that resounding feeling that accompanies only the most regrettable of decisions, and the cognizance that I'm deliberately stepping into a world which I vehemently detest, I still cannot dissuade myself from stubbornly concluding that this, and this alone, is the right thing to do.

The man stops at the end of the line, blocking view of the last booth.

ROTHBERG (V.O.) (CONT'D)

So, I'll begin with a list.

CLOSE ON DAX BERGMAN - Sadness and exhaustion hang in his battered face. He looks older than 28, but his fiery eyes tell the truth.

ROTHBERG (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Twenty six parking tickets totaling a sum of four thousand, two hundred and fifty dollars. Possession of a dangerous or illegal weapon. Destruction of government property. Misdemeanor criminal mischief. Resisting arrest.

Dax nods wryly.

ROTHBERG (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Four counts unlawful possession of a controlled substance with intent to distribute. Unlawful possession of drug paraphernalia. Burglary in the first degree.

(beat)

Attempted murder and murder in the first degree.

We now see Rothberg Weathers, 40. Superbly polished, elegantly hard-nosed. He sits across the glass from Dax with a yellow legal pad in one hand and a phone in the other.

ROTHBERG (CONT'D)

This is a dangerous list, Dmitry.

DAX

My name is Dax, and that list is bullshit.

ROTHBERG
They can use what is on this list
to put you to death.

DAX
No they can't. I'm innocent.

Rothberg eyes Dax with dispassionate incredulity.

ROTHBERG
A witness has placed you at the
scene just before the murders, the
blood of both of the victims was
found on your clothing, your
fingerprints were lifted from the
murder weapon and you had six
thousand dollars in cash in your
pockets.

Dax's gaze drops to his handcuffs. Rothberg nods to a guard
behind Dax.

DAX
That's all true, but-

The guard sets a document in front of Dax.

ROTHBERG
This is an invocation of rights.

Dax ignores the document.

DAX
Do I have a case?

ROTHBERG
It empowers me as your legal
representation and ensures your
protection from any further
interrogation absent my presence.

Dax eyes Rothberg warily.

DAX
Do I have a case, or not?

Rothberg leans forward with the aplomb of a prizefighter.

ROTHBERG
EVERYONE has a case.

Dax holds the gaze, picks up a pen with cuffed hands, and
signs the document.

Rothberg's eyes flash.

ROTHBERG (CONT'D)

I'll get them to drop the mischief, destruction and possession charges. I've already arranged to expedite your arraignment and they're conveniently anemic on the burglary charge, which should protect us from any felony murder issues.

DAX

Felony murder issues?

Rothberg waves it off.

ROTHBERG

Let's talk reality. The DA will seek the death penalty to elicit a plea bargain which would, at best, give you a chance at parole in twenty five years.

DAX

You can kiss my ass if you think-

ROTHBERG

If we go to trial and lose, you'll be looking, at the very least, at life with no parole.

Rothberg lets this sink in.

DAX

Can we win?

A guard hands Rothberg the document. He eyes it. Slips it into his briefcase. They lock eyes.

ROTHBERG

It sickens me to say things like this, but you probably will have to pay your parking tickets.

Dax smiles at Rothberg's cockiness.

ROTHBERG (CONT'D)

No lies. No omissions and no talking to ANYONE else about your case.

Dax touches his finger to the glass. Rothberg mimics him, completing the "attorney-prisoner handshake."

ROTHBERG (CONT'D)
 So, how did you end up in jail in
 the Rocky Mountains?

INT. UNDERGROUND PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

A mud-streaked Pathfinder barrels around a corner, down the ramp and expertly backs into a parking spot.

INT. DAX'S PATHFINDER - CONTINUOUS

Through the filthy windshield, Dax anxiously scans the dark, vacant parking garage. A light flickers above the car.

Dax stares at the orange gas light on the dash. The gauge is well below E.

He twists off the ignition. Checks his cell phone.

A hand pounds on the driver's side window. Dax doesn't jump. Rolls down the window.

A twitchy, emaciated guy of about 30 leans in.

DIO
 Yo, what's good, man?
 (scanning the garage)
 So, uh, you pop the question to
 your girl yet?

DAX
 Yeah, like three months ago.

DIO
 (still scanning anxiously)
 Yeah?

DAX
 There aren't any eyes in here.

DIO
 (menacing)
 Then congratu-fuckin-lations.
 (scanning the interior of
 the car)
 Where the fuck is it?

DAX
 Just give me three.

Dio laughs defiantly.

DAX (CONT'D)
Don't worry, I'll get you tomorrow.

Dio pulls out a Glock .357 and points it through the window.

DIO
That's actually what I WAS worried
about. You still owe me, bitch.

In one swift motion, Dax jams the door open - hard - knocking
Dio onto the pavement.

Dax steps out angrily, the Glock now in his hand. He holds
it up for inspection. Cocks it.

DIO (CONT'D)
Jesus, dude! Chill! Chill!

Dio digs his hands into his pockets. Freezes. Looks up.

Dax has the Glock pointed at Dio's chest.

DAX
Pretty uncomfortable, isn't it?

Dio just glares at him. Dax lowers the gun and ejects the
clip. It's empty.

DAX (CONT'D)
Unbelievable.
(holding the gun up)
What are you doing with this?
Don't you know how dangerous these
things are?

DIO
Look, it's cool. I'm sure we-

DAX
Dude. You just pointed a .357 in
my face.

DIO
Look-

Dax stops. Squares up with Dio.

DAX
No. You wanna be an asshole?
Fine. I got like twenty three
bucks in my account. You can take
it all.

DIO
What? You know, you really don't
have to-

DAX
(disgusted)
Stay right there. I'll be right
back with every dollar I got.

Dio watches with confusion as Dax storms off.

EXT. DOWNTOWN DENVER - LATER

Arms crossed, Dax anxiously waits as an ATM processes a request. He glances behind him at a stylishly dressed older woman. Her plastic face twisted in obvious irritation.

The ATM spits out a twenty dollar bill. Dax stuffs the bill in his pocket. Turns to walk away.

Behind him, the machine spits out a receipt. The woman examines it casually. Double-takes. Moves quickly to catch Dax. Hearing her, he turns.

DAX
Oh, I don't need-

She catches his arm as he turns away again.

CARLA
(suggestive)
Sure you do you want this?

Slightly confused, Dax takes the receipt. Forces a smile.

DAX
Thanks.

As Dax strides away, he glances down at the receipt. Stops.

INT. PATHFINDER - PARKING GARAGE - LATER

DAX (O.S.)
Just give me everything you've got.

The gun rests on the center console.

DIO
I thought you-

Dax produces a roll of cash. Drops it on Dio's lap. Dio is stunned.

DIO (CONT'D)
Where'd you-

Dax finds a brown paper bag under the seat.

DAX
You can put it all in there.

Dio reaches for the gun. Dax grabs it.

DAX (CONT'D)
And I'll take this, too.

Dio smiles wide. Looks at the money again.

DIO
It's all yours.

INT. WICKED GARDEN - NIGHT

A stylish underground club full of dancing night-lifers.

Dax leans across the bar toward a young bartender who is inspecting a white ATM receipt.

DAX
I don't know. I just withdrew
twenty bucks and that came out!

The bartender smiles. Hands the receipt back.

CLIFF
You know this is gonna come back to
haunt you, right?

Dax spots a gorgeous brunette eyeing him from the other end of bar. The long, flowing branches of a tattoo twist down her arm.

CLIFF (CONT'D)
So you want a drink, or what?

Dax just smiles deviously.

CLIFF (CONT'D)
Not a chance, dude. Last time I
almost got fired.

Dax hands the brown paper bag to Cliff. Cliff looks inside. His eyes go wide.

DAX
Do whatever you want with it.

Cliff steps from around the bar.

CLIFF

(smiling)

I'll save it for a special occasion. You, my friend, can do your worst.

INT. WICKED GARDEN - LATER

Loud music blasts through the bar. Two hands flip a bottle of 151 like a gunslinger.

A crowd has gathered at the bar watching Dax mix drinks with style.

Dax flips the bottle up and catches it upside-down in a silver shaker.

He flips the bottle out, slips it into the well, shakes the shaker, and strains a red liquid across six shot glasses lined up on the bar. He continues pouring a line of the liquid across about eight feet of the bar, stopping to fill one last shot.

Dax lights a match theatrically. Touches it to the shot in his hand. It catches fire.

He holds the fiery shot up to the brunette in toast, sets it down and blows a sharp breath. The fire splashes out of the shot, runs across the bar and ignites the other six shots. The crowd roars.

The brunette smiles, enamored. Dax downs the shot. Slams it on the bar.

INT. KRISTIN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING

An empty shot glass rests beside Dax Bergman's Navy ID. A hand reaches over the ID, past a massive mountain of cocaine, checks the time on a cheap silver watch and grabs a glass of water.

The room is a messy, estrogen-infused scene from a Pottery Barn catalogue.

Dax sits on the edge of the bed, squinting in pain. Very hung over. He looks at the glass, downs its contents and immediately coughs most of it out. As he gags, he spots an empty bottle of Belvedere on the vanity.

ON BATHROOM DOOR

We hear Dax puking violently in the toilet.

The toilet flushes. Dax reappears in the doorway scrubbing his teeth with a toothbrush.

Dax's brushing slows. He stares, mesmerized. A gorgeous young woman lies naked in the bed.

The crimson sheets barely cover her curves. Dark brown hair flows over the blossoming tree branches of a large tattoo on her back and arm. Proud of himself, Dax smiles.

Dax creeps closer for a better look and crushes a picture frame under his foot. He releases a string of silent obscenities, wincing as he lifts his foot.

The picture is a shot of Dax and Kristin, a beautiful blonde soaking in a mountain hot spring. Reality sets in. Around the room, there are a half dozen pictures of Dax and Kristin - obviously not the woman in the bed.

Dax searches the room in a frenzy: night tables, floor, under the bed, inside a wastebasket, on the vanity.

He slides a drawer open. Pulls out a box of condoms. It's still sealed. He looks down at his crotch.

INT. KRISTIN'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM

Still brushing his teeth, Dax pees in the toilet. It is a steady, constant stream. He is pleasantly surprised.

DAX
(mouth full of toothpaste)
Not guilty, your honor.

A phone vibrates from somewhere on the bathroom floor.

Finding it under a towel, Dax reads the display. Spits angrily into the sink.

CLOSE ON PHONE

2 NEW MESSAGES

FROM: (303) 505-2545

Hey it's me, save this number - had to get a new phone - old one won't charge. Took an early flight tho, C you soon babe!

Dax shames himself in the mirror with the toothbrush.

CLOSE ON PHONE

FROM: (303) 505-2545

Be home in 20! Hope you're not hung over! We're having breakfast with my boss.

Dax dry heaves in the sink.

Still spitting, he makes a desperate phone call. Hangs up. He dials again. Hangs up.

DAX (CONT'D)
(quiet, frantic)
Answer your fucking phone!

Dax almost spikes the phone on the floor. Stops. Sets it delicately on the counter.

Forcing a deep breath, he peers out a crack in the door. The bed is empty.

Dax swings the door open. Surveys the room. Nobody there.

DAX (CONT'D)
(sotto voce)
God, tell me you got that sexy
thing out of my fiancée's
apartment.

Still tense, Dax listens for movement in the apartment. A door slams.

Dax rushes out of the bedroom to the-

LIVING ROOM

where he opens the front door and peers down the hallway. She's gone.

INT. KRISTIN'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - MORNING

Dax sits on the counter munching a breakfast burrito. He stares pensively at the refrigerator. Several magnets are arranged to spell KRISTIN LOVES DAX.

He glances over at his phone. At the door.

Perplexed, he stuffs the rest of the burrito in his mouth.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - MORNING

Dax strides under an EXIT sign.

DAX
(into phone)
Hey! Are you here yet?

He cranes his neck, searching for his car.

DAX (CONT'D)
Just relax and take a deep breath,
Kay. I'm sure it wasn't as bad as
you-

Dax hits a button on his keys and hears a faint beep.

DAX (CONT'D)
No, of course I didn't... I'm ready
to go. What can I do to help?

He turns around, sees nothing.

DAX (CONT'D)
Okay, yeah, uh, which one did we
end up going with?

Dax hits the button again, squats to see the level below him.

DAX (CONT'D)
Whatever, you know I helped.

The tail lights of a black SUV are flashing. It's parked at an angle in a loading zone.

DAX (CONT'D)
Right. The one downtown. So how
much is the deposit?

Dax stops walking. Closes his eyes in suspense.

DAX (CONT'D)
What?!

In a quick motion, he turns and wails on a NO PARKING sign. It's surprisingly loud.

Dax examines his hand. Scans the garage. No witnesses.

DAX (CONT'D)
Fifteen grand?! That's two hundred
and...
(doing mental math)
(MORE)

DAX (CONT'D)
like two hundred and thirty bucks a
plate!

Dax storms toward the SUV. Stops.

DAX (CONT'D)
Oh... You did?
(disbelief)
In MY account...
(breaking into a smile)
Yesterday?
(beat)
No, no, no, don't even worry about
it.
(serious)
Of course. I'll take care of it.
I promise. Trust me.
(beat)
But, wait. I thought this phone
wasn't working. Didn't you just
text me from a-

Dax stares at the phone in his hand. Checks the phone
number. Puts it back to his ear.

DAX (CONT'D)
Okay, yah that sounds good. No,
I'll take care of- Okay, have a
good rest of your-

Dax looks at the phone. She hung up. A smile emerges as he
quickly makes a call.

SAMIA (V.O.)
(female, mellifluous)
Hi, you've reached Samia Vitalia.
If this is Dax, you're probably
realizing by now that Kristin is
NOT on her way home, and that when
you take a girl home to your
FIANCE's apartment, you DESERVE a
little heart attack in the morning.
(a devilish laugh)
Don't worry about leaving a
message, I never check them...
Byyye.

Dax laughs in shock.

DAX
(smitten)
You little punk.

At the car, Dax nonchalantly pulls two yellow tickets from under the wipers, slides into-

INT. DAX'S PATHFINDER - CONTINUOUS

Where he drops the tickets into the center console - already full of yellow tickets.

DAX
(a wry smile)
Greedy bastards...

The doors lock. A Glock .357 is pressed to the side of his head.

DEANDRE (O.S.)
(kid's voice)
Your money or your life, sucka!

Dax looks into the rearview mirror. It's a corn-rowed ten year-old and a fat bulldog.

DEANDRE (CONT'D)
Gotcha!

Deandre grins wide and lowers the gun. Dax isn't amused.

DAX
(re: the dog)
Who's that?

DEANDRE
I think his name is Chopper. He
was-

Dax wheels around and snatches the Glock from Deandre in an expert motion. He ejects the clip. Inspects it. It's empty. He tosses the clip on the seat. Checks the chamber. It's empty too.

Dax holds the Glock in front of Deandre's face.

DAX
What the hell are you doing with
this?

DEANDRE
I found it in your car last night.

DAX
(not listening)
The only thing more dangerous than
a LOADED gun is an EMPTY gun!

Dax stuffs the Glock in the glove compartment and glares at a pouting Deandre.

DAX (CONT'D)

Okay, okay. Don't get me wrong.
I'm glad to see you, buddy, but why
are you in my car?

DEANDRE

You don't remember?

Dax just glares at him.

DEANDRE (CONT'D)

Really?

(beat)

I couldn't find you anywhere last
night, so I just waited here. So
when you and Samia... she's so
cool, Dax. Is she your new girl?

DAX

(annoyed)

Well it's... nun-ya.

DEANDRE

Well, when you two got here, you
were all worried about your car, so
you hired me to guard it. So I
did, but I needed some protection
and then I found the-

Dax turns toward the front.

DAX

I don't care where it was. You see
a gun, you leave it there, okay?

(beat)

Wait, so you spent the whole NIGHT
in my car?

DEANDRE

Of course! That was my job, wasn't
it?

DAX

(suspicious)

Your job? How much did I pay you
for this job?

DEANDRE

(proudly)

Five hundred big ones.

DAX

What?!

DEANDRE

You said it was what all car guards make.

A wave of realization hits Dax.

DEANDRE (CONT'D)

Do you need a loan? You had tons of money last night.

DAX

God, no. Fifteen grand. I had fifteen grand last night.

Dax grits his teeth. Starts the car.

DAX (CONT'D)

You still live off Alameda?

DEANDRE

No. Please!

DAX

You know I have to take you back.

DEANDRE

But-

Dax shoots a look at Deandre. The argument is over.

DAX

(sniffing)

What IS that...?

(sniffing again)

Oh come on Dee! You didn't let him shit in the car, did you?

DEANDRE

I think he just farts a lot.

Dax rolls down the window dramatically. He glances back at Deandre, who is suppressing a laugh. Dax smirks, shifts into gear.

Dax looks up in the mirror in time to see Deandre blow a loud, fake fart in the palms of his hands.

DAX

Awww, Chopper!

They both laugh hysterically.

INT. DAX'S PATHFINDER (MOVING) - LATE MORNING

Dax and Deandre are still laughing as they barrel down a ratty suburban street. Chopper sits on Dax's lap, licking his face as he drives.

DAX
(laughing)
I can't drive when he's licking me!
You're gonna have to do it!

Dax lifts his hands off the wheel.

DAX (CONT'D)
Hurry or we're gonna die!!

Deandre white-knuckles the wheel from the passenger seat.

DEANDRE
Chopper! Stop it! Down, Chopper!

DAX
We're here! Quick! Pull us over!

Deandre steers the car to the side of the road, bumping up over the curb.

Breathless, Dax rubs Chopper's head. The dog turns to butter.

DEANDRE
I can't believe he likes you. He's
been mean to everyone but me.

Deandre's smile falls.

DEANDRE (CONT'D)
She's never gonna let me keep him.

He looks up at Dax. Dax shakes his head - no.

DEANDRE (CONT'D)
Just for a little while... until I
can convince her?

Chopper licks the steering wheel vigorously. Dax watches with disgust.

DAX
Well I have no idea how you're
going to convince her...

DEANDRE
Thank you! Thank you!

Deandre pulls a wad of cash out of his pocket, hands Dax a few bills.

DEANDRE (CONT'D)
Here. This should get him some good food.

Dax laughs at the gesture, holds his hands up in defense.

DAX
No, no, that's yours. You earned it. I'll take good care of him. I promise.

Holding back tears, Deandre pats Chopper one last time, grabs his skateboard and his little Denver Nuggets backpack and gets out.

DAX (CONT'D)
And Dee... buddy, you can't keep running off like this. It scares the hell outta them.

DEANDRE
I can't stay here all the time!
They're boring!
(off Dax's' look)
Okay, okay.

DAX
Now hurry up and go before Ms. Tucker sees you parked us on her front lawn.

Deandre slams the door. Dax watches him sulk to the house.

DAX (CONT'D)
(to Chopper)
Don't get too sentimental now, Bubs. I got a bad feeling it only gets worse from here.

Glancing in the side-view mirror, Dax sees a cop car cruising slowly through the neighborhood.

Dax checks the rear-view. The cop is gone.

Dax shifts into gear and turns on his fuzz buster. It starts BEEPING.

EXT. DOWNTOWN DENVER - LATE MORNING

An ATM machine spits out a receipt.

Arms crossed, Dax glares at the receipt hanging from the machine. His fingers tap the black wallet in his hand.

Finally, Dax snatches the receipt, holds it up for inspection. He crushes it, throws it as far as he can and angrily swipes his card through the slot.

DAX
 (punching buttons)
 You dumb bastard. I know you
 didn't blow fifteen grand in one
 night.

The ATM spits out another receipt. His face falls. He crushes the receipt and bashes the ATM several times.

Turning toward the street, Dax gazes angrily up at the snow-capped mountains that rise behind the skyscrapers.

INT. VISITOR ROOM - COUNTY JAIL

Rothberg flips a page and continues taking notes.

ROTHBERG
 So your father owed you money?
 That's why you went back?

Dax shifts uncomfortably.

DAX
 My mom died 10 years ago. She left
 a fifty thousand dollar trust for
 my education.

ROTHBERG
 And you never got it?

DAX
 My eighteenth birthday was three
 weeks later. By then, he had
 already used the money to pay off
 one of his restaurants. I didn't
 find out until about a month ago.

ROTHBERG
 Wasn't he-

DAX
 Yes. But back then he was
 practically broke.

Rothberg scribbles a note.

ROTHBERG
So did you talk to him about it?

Dax stiffens.

DAX
You could say that.

INT. PATHFINDER (MOVING) - LATER

Dax weaves through mild traffic. The Rocky Mountains rise up ahead in the distance. Chopper slobbers out the window.

INT. PATHFINDER (MOVING) - LATER

The massive foothills rise up around the car. He passes a Falling Rock warning sign. Chopper sleeps with his head on Dax's lap.

EXT. PARKING LOT - BERGMAN'S PUB - AFTERNOON

Chopper cautiously jumps out of the Pathfinder and takes off running. Dax slams the door.

DAX
Hey!

Chopper stops. Looks back.

DAX (CONT'D)
We're going THIS way.

Dax nods his head toward the back alley. Chopper turns back obediently.

They cross the weed-infested gravel lot towards the back of the shabby brown dive bar. The sign in front is missing several letters.

EXT. BERGMAN'S PUB - BACK ALLEY

Dax ties Chopper to a fence. The area is littered with empty kegs, busted chairs and broken beer signs.

DAX
You gotta hang out here, Bubs.
We'll get you something to eat in
just a minute.

Dax tilts a rusty CO₂ tank, pulls a key from underneath and sneaks in the back door.

INT. BERGMAN'S PUB - LATE AFTERNOON

A worn, country-style bar equipped with several wooden booths, large round tables and a battered pool table. It's not much to look at, but behind the bar is an astonishing assortment of booze.

The bar is empty with the exception of a corner booth where several patrons listen as Homer Bergman, a burly, bearded man of 50, excitedly narrates a story.

PATRON

(smiling)

God, that is absolutely disgusting!
I don't even wanna hear the rest.

But the patron leans in for more.

HOMER

No, no, no, just listen... so her dad had these two dogs... chocolate labs... used to be champion show dogs. They were too old by then to be worth a damn, but he adored those fuckin dogs so when he and her mom got home, we could hear him petting and kissing and talking to them like they were humans... you know those people, it's nauseating.

One of the patrons leans toward Ian Bergman, 25, slim, disinterested.

PATRON

Fifty bucks says he's never even
BEEN to West Virginia.

Ian ignores him. Homer lights a cigarette.

HOMER

So by then, we were dying from the suspense. If they went into the living room, God knows what would happen. If they just went upstairs to go to bed, we'd have to clean up some shit, but at least he wouldn't find out what I did with his daughter.

Eric Rodstein, 35, dressed in a sharp grey suit, waits with a twisted grin. He's riveted.

HOMER (CONT'D)

But we weren't that lucky. First place he went was the Goddamn living room... turned on the TV, you know, played with the dogs... did just about everything but sit on that couch. By then, the girl couldn't take the suspense. She went into the bathroom to clean up. Meanwhile, I was putting my pants on, because I knew as soon as he sat on that shitty couch, some facts were gonna add up and he'd be heading downstairs with a shotgun... and I wasn't about go to the pearly gates in my skivvies.

Homer takes a sip from a scotch tumbler.

PATRON

So what happened? Did he notice it?

PATRON II

Jesus Christ, let him finish.

In the B.G., Ollie, a husky old bartender, pours Dax a shot. Dax downs it, staring in odium at the scene. No one notices him.

HOMER

So all of a sudden, the old man started screaming obscenities. You know, 'Goddamn it, this is the last fucking time! You stupid fucking mutts! I'm sick of it!' and things of that nature. So we heard him take the dogs outside, slam the door, and BANG! BANG!

The listeners are stunned.

PATRON

(laughing)

You bastard! You got the dogs killed?

HOMER

(smiling)

As soon as I heard the shots, all I could think of was those two beautiful, innocent, champion labs floating up to heaven, looking down at me yellin, 'You better tell them the truth, asshole!'

Homer and his listeners laugh hysterically.

IAN

(amused)

So was that a story? Or a joke? I don't get it.

HOMER

It was a fable, wise-ass. And the moral of that fable was that when you're banging a girl-

DAX

(hateful)

You really are a disgusting, depraved old bastard, aren't you?

Homer turns to see Dax.

HOMER

AHA! Von Sohn returns! Ollie, Break out the cheap tequila!

Dax holds up a shot, downs it. It feels like a showdown.

HOMER (CONT'D)

What is this? A spaghetti western? Get over here, Blondie! Say hello to your old man.

(off Dax's glare)

You're busted again, aren't you? Ha! You are. I can see it in your face. It is amazing what women can make us beasts do, is it not?

DAX

(restrained)

I got my dog out back. I wanna get him some water and some scraps or a bone or something.

Homer stands up, offers his chair to Dax.

HOMER

Of course, of course. I can get that taken care of for you. Take a seat, Tarzan, have a drink.

Homer stubs out his cigarette, removes a small plastic bag from his pocket and drops the butt in with about a dozen others. Dax watches the ritual disapprovingly.

Homer slaps Dax on the shoulder and hobbles toward the back door.

Ian offers up the bottle. Dax squints at it.

DAX

(mispronouncing)
Glen Garioch?

IAN

(correcting)
Glen Garioch. Yes. It's a forty-eight year. I just brought it back from New York. There were only three hundred and twenty ever made.

Dax holds it up for inspection. He uncorks it and takes a long whiff.

IAN (CONT'D)

Twenty-eight hundred a bottle.
(grabbing a tumbler)
You're supposed to...

Dax's eyes flash. He takes a long pull off the bottle. Gurgles it in his mouth. Swallows. Ian shakes his head at the blasphemy.

DAX

(overly genuine)
Mmmm... strong floral elements...
earthy... notes of cherry...
(smacking his lips)
and such a long, robust finish...
(an infectious smile)
But there were three hundred and twenty EIGHT made, dipshit. If you're gonna brag, you at least gotta get it right.

Dax bangs the bottle back on the table. The patrons roar with laughter. Ian allows an embarrassed smile. He's been set up.

DAX (CONT'D)
So how you doin, brother?

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - BOULDER - DAY

ROTHBERG
Let me cut in here for just a moment. Ian is your actual brother?

DAX
Half brother. He and Alex had a different mom.

ROTHBERG
When had you last seen each other?

DAX
He's a grad student at NYU. Kristin goes to Manhattan a few times a year for work, so I went with her one week last February and had lunch with him. Before that it had been several years.

ROTHBERG
What was he doing back home?

Dax thinks hard.

DAX
You know, I'm not really sure. I assumed he was there to see Alex, our other brother... his full brother.

Rothberg takes this in. Jots something down.

ROTHBERG
So what happened when you brought up the money?

DAX
That's when things got ugly.

INT. BERGMAN'S PUB - AFTERNOON

The table is covered with paperwork and a few glasses. Rodstein, Homer, Dax and Ian sit around the table. The other patrons are gone.

DAX

As far as I'm concerned, this is all bullshit. Benedict Arnold, here, was supposed to set it aside until I turned eighteen. As soon as I did, surprise, surprise! It was gone! How is that legal?!

Enjoying himself, Homer nods to Rodstein. Rodstein hands Dax a few documents.

RODSTEIN

In 1996, Mr. Bergman loaned you four-thousand, six hundred and seventeen dollars. With compounded interest, that totals fifty-six thousand, seven hundred and change.

HOMER

(off Dax's look)

You hear what Bagel Boy just said? You owe ME money!

DAX

That money was for my EDUCATION! I never would have NEEDED a loan from you and I wouldn't have had to join the NAVY if you would have just given it to me back then! Do you know what I WENT through?!

HOMER

Maybe you should get a job.

DAX

Excuse me?

HOMER

OR, maybe you should quit blowing all your money on booze and women that don't have your engagement ring on their finger.

DAX

You'd better think before you open that hypocritical fucking mouth again!

Dax swipes the paperwork off the table. A shot glass goes flying across the room, shattering on the floor.

DAX (CONT'D)

(pointing in Homer's face)

YOU were the one-

Homer suddenly jumps up.

Alex Bergman, 21, is standing by the front door.

HOMER

There he is!! Okay! Okay! Break
out the good stuff! My little monk
is home!

Alex just stands there, scared stiff.

HOMER (CONT'D)

Well, come on in, boy! Have a
drink! Oh, wait, you don't drink.
You don't have to drink if-

Alex holds up his palms. They're covered in blood.

Dax runs to Alex.

DAX

Oh, God! I didn't even see you
there, Al! I'm sorry buddy, I
didn't-

ALEX

(in shock)

No, no, I'm not cut. We just need
to call a veterinarian. Fast.
Someone's dog is hurt pretty bad.

Dax bolts toward the back door.

BACK ALLEY

Chopper shakes and whimpers on the ground in a pool of blood.

DAX

NO! NO! It's okay Bubs... you're
okay, Chopper...

The blood is coming from Chopper's mouth. The others arrive
on scene.

DAX (CONT'D)

What happened?! What's wrong,
buddy?!

Dax tries to open Chopper's mouth, but quickly pulls his hand
back in pain. He removes a piece of glass from his finger.

ALEX
(horrified)
It looks like he ate... a bunch of
broken glass.

Dax tries to move Chopper. Chopper stops whimpering, goes limp.

Dax turns to Homer with violence in his eyes.

DAX
It was you! You said you were
going to feed him! You sick,
twisted, old rat!

Dax rushes at Homer.

HOMER
No! I-

Ian and Alex try to stop Dax, but he's too strong. He tackles Homer and rains powerful blows on his head.

DAX
I'm gonna fucking kill you!

Ian and Alex struggle to pull Dax off of Homer. Dax gets several more shots in, wrestles free and stands on his own. Homer is bloody and unconscious.

Turning to his brothers with tears of rage in his eyes, Dax points a shaky, bloody finger at Homer.

DAX (CONT'D)
Why should a man like THAT be
allowed to live?

Dax spits on Homer. Picks up Chopper and carries him to the parking lot. Alex runs after Dax.

Ian spots something on the ground. Squats to inspect it. It's a bloody hunk of dough... spiked with glass shards.

INT. VISITOR ROOM - COUNTY JAIL - DAY

Dax's face shakes with anger.

DAX
He was a dirty son of a bitch, but
I never would have though he'd do
something like that to a dog.

Rothberg studies Dax. The pen is on the legal pad.

ROTHBERG

So after you paid off your drug dealer, you bought a lunch sack full of drugs, blew several thousand dollars on a one night stand-

DAX

She wasn't a one night stand. We're in-

ROTHBERG

And when you realized it was all your fiance's money, you went to your father's house and when he wouldn't bail you out, you beat him unconscious.

Rothberg flips his notebook closed.

DAX

No! Well, yes, but you twisted it! I didn't kill him. You have to believe me!

ROTHBERG

I'm actually not afforded the luxury of BELIEVING anything.

A guard appears behind Dax.

ROTHBERG (CONT'D)

Be good in there. I'll get you the best deal I can.

Rothberg hangs up the phone. Standing for the guard, Dax locks eyes with Rothberg.

DAX

(muted, shouting)

Talk to my brothers! You have to figure this out! I'm not pleading guilty to shit! I don't deserve this!

Rothberg watches the guard walk Dax back into prison.

CUT TO BLACK:

PAULETTE (V.O.)

You have no idea how much he hates it when I let people walk in unannounced... especially people like-

INT. OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY - DAY

ROTHBERG
People like ME?

Defiantly masking a spiteful smile, Rothberg stands before a massive cherry maple reception desk. Behind the desk, a smart young assistant sits at attention.

A wry, conciliatory smile emerges on her face.

PAULETTE
He's at the end of the hall... But if he asks, I was off running an errand.

ROTHBERG
Deal. Thanks babe.

INT. JARIK'S OFFICE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON NAME PLATE: WALTER TURTURRO - DISTRICT ATTORNEY

The door swings back.

Rothberg enters a small, disheveled office.

Behind the massive glass-top desk is Walter Turturro - a wiry, angular man with thinning black hair. He holds a phone to his ear. Glares at Rothberg.

ROTHBERG
Great closet. Very spacious. How many bad guys do you have to put away before they let you have an actual office?

WALTER
(into phone)
Jim? Jim. Sorry, the janitor just walked in. I gotta let you go, I think he forgot his cleaning supplies again.
(beat)
Will do.

Walter hangs up the phone.

Rothberg tosses a folder onto Walter's desk.

WALTER (CONT'D)
 Don't even fucking tell me-
 (opening folder)
 I thought he went PD?

ROTHBERG
 Lucky you.

Still glaring at Rothberg, Walter hits a button on the phone.

PAULETTE (V.O.)
 Yes?

WALTER
 (into phone)
 You're fired.

Walter hits the button on the phone again. Turns to Rothberg.

WALTER (CONT'D)
 I was beginning to think you
 weren't ever coming back from Rio.

ROTHBERG
 Sorry to disappoint you. I suppose
 I do have you to thank for the
 trip. If you'd been smart enough
 to cut Ruiz a deal, I couldn't have
 billed him out for those last
 eleven months.

WALTER
 Well, now that we've exchanged our
 socially requisite pleasantries, I
 would like to extend a formal "fuck
 you" to you AND the murderous, drug-
 dealing jarhead you're
 representing.

Rothberg nods courteously - "fuck you too."

ROTHBERG
 You know, that is precisely what I
 love about you. Right down to
 business. No bullshit.

Walter scowls.

WALTER

Yet again, your presence has created an egregious affront to the air quality of my workplace so I must insist that you get the fuck out.

With a wry smile, Rothberg stands. Moves to the door.

ROTHBERG

Give me a call when you're done playing in the sandbox. I'll buy you a juice box and some graham crackers and we can meet by the monkey bars to negotiate.

WALTER

When did I say anything about negotiating?

ROTHBERG

Do you really want to waste another year on a twenty minute deliberation?

WALTER

I don't care how good you are at shoveling, Will. There won't be ANY deals in this case. THAT you can count on.

Barely masking his hatred, Rothberg glares at Walter.

ROTHBERG

Then I'll see you in the pit, counselor.

Rothberg storms out.

The sound of FEET RUNNING on concrete.

INT. MONASTERY OF ST. JOHN - SAN FRANCISCO - AFTERNOON

CLOSE ON TWO FEET - running down a long hallway, through a door and up a dark stone staircase.

They belong to Alex Bergman. At the top, he rips open a door and disappears down a hallway.

UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Two dozen monastics wait patiently in a dense crowd by a bedroom door. Alex turns the corner at the other end of the hallway. One of the monastics waves Alex over.

Alex rushes through the crowd.

FATHER PAISII
He's been waiting for you. He
hasn't much time.

ALEX
(out of breath)
Thank you, Father.

Alex rushes past Father Paisii into the-

BEDROOM

Where Father Zosima, a fragile, white-bearded monastic rests in bed.

Father Paisii whispers something in Father Zosima's ear. Father Zosima's eyes open. His serene smile welcomes Alex. Alex holds back tears as he kneels by the edge of the bed.

FATHER ZOSIMA
Let the world shed tears for their
dead. We here are happy for one
who is departing.

Alex wipes his eyes.

ALEX
Can I do anything for you, Father?

FATHER ZOSIMA
You can go home. To your family.

Alex touches Father Zosima's hand.

ALEX
Please, THIS is my home.

FATHER ZOSIMA
A call came in. Your father... he
is very sick. Cancer.

ALEX
But I'm happy here.

FATHER ZOSIMA
 You're not happy. You're hiding.
 This is no place for you, my boy.
 At least not yet.

ALEX
 But what if you-

FATHER ZOSIMA
 You'll leave tonight.

Father Zosima winces; struggling for a breath. He looks up at Father Paisii. Father Paisii hands Alex a sealed envelope.

Father Zosima grabs Alex's hand, pulls him close.

FATHER ZOSIMA (CONT'D)
 For when you don't know what else
 to do...
 (coughing)
 Now go. This old man needs to
 pray.

Alex hugs Father Zosima tenderly and looks down at the sealed envelope.

INT. CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR - COACH CAR - NIGHT

The envelope vibrates on a plastic tray table. Alex steadies it and stares out the window into darkness. Lights slowly pass by as the train begins to move.

Alex pulls down the shade and glances across the aisle. An elderly woman badgers her husband as he struggles to get a bag in the overhead compartment.

The woman glares at Alex. He smiles sheepishly and helps the old man.

INT. CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR - COACH CAR - LATER

Alex rearranges a few mini pillows along the window and tries to rest his head.

One of the pillows falls to the floor. He picks it up. Tries again. This time, two pillows tumble to the floor. He glares at them, frustrated.

Alex pulls up the shade. Lights flash by the window. The train is going full speed.

INT. CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR - OBSERVATION CAR - EARLY MORNING

A hand dangles beside three mini pillows and a Bible on the floor of a train.

Alex sleeps awkwardly across several plastic seats. He suddenly jerks his head up, clutching his neck in pain.

As the train exits a tunnel in the mountains, Alex gazes gravely at the beautiful landscape.

Alex removes the letter from a page in his Bible. He moves to open it. Stops.

A perky, middle-aged train attendant appears.

ATTENDANT

That's a pretty sad face for such a beautiful view. Is someone homesick?

Alex tucks the letter back in his Bible. Tries to smile.

ALEX

Technically, I'm going home, but yeah.

ATTENDANT

(all smiles)

I know what you mean. My family's nuts, too... wanna trade?

Alex nods sympathetically. The attendant scurries off. Alex watches her go with an ominous look.

INT. ROTHBERG'S OFFICE - DAY

Alex sits in a luxurious leather chair across from Rothberg in a posh post-modern office.

ROTHBERG

So when was the last time you had seen your father?

ALEX

About three years ago. When my mom... when she died, I was only a year old. My dad sent me to live with my aunt in San Francisco. I came back to see him when I finished high school.

ROTHBERG

And that's when you joined the
monastery?

Alex nods.

ROTHBERG (CONT'D)

Were you angry with him for making
you leave?

Alex stares out the window.

ALEX

He was sick... he'd been sick for a
long time.

EXT. HOMER'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Alex stares in appreciation at the massive mountains that
rise up just miles away.

Alex bends down and waves a warm goodbye through the window
of a taxi. The driver tries to hand a wad of cash back out
the window. Alex holds up his hands.

The taxi speeds off.

Turning toward the peeling brown house, the warmth drains
from Alex's face.

At the front door, Alex rings the bell and waits. He
listens. Hears nothing. Tries punching a number code into
the handle. Nothing happens. He tries another. Nothing.
He glances around. No one watching. He tries another combo.
The door unlocks.

Alex pushes on the door. It bumps something. He pushes
harder. As the door is jarred open, a barrage of phone books
and catalogs tumble out into his stomach and legs.

Surprised, he collects an armful and looks for a place to set
them inside. There's no space; too many piles. Alex
squeezes between the piles into-

HOMER'S HOUSE

Alex manages to get the door shut. It locks automatically.

Alex tiptoes down a thin pathway through what used to be a
living room. It is now home to several thousand DVD's, VHS
tapes and CD's stacked haphazardly in thin towers.

He looks to the left. A wall of unopened boxes (speakers, DVD players, stereo receivers, etc.) blocks the windows.

Alex sneezes violently. Wipes a finger along some of the DVD's. A thick layer of dust covers everything.

Reaching a corner, Alex finds a huge plasma TV propped against the wall. Before it, an old recliner is nestled in a haven of more unopened boxes.

The end of the path is blocked by a stack of unopened coffee-maker boxes. Alex looks for a way out.

ALEX
Hello? Dad?

HALLWAY

Alex weaves down a hallway lined with collections of antique mirrors and strange clocks. Some hang from the walls, but most are stacked or propped up.

Alex stops at a door. Peers in. It is a bathroom, or, used to be. Now it is home to so many newspaper ads and sale fliers the toilet is hardly visible.

Stepping over the piles of fliers, Alex tugs the shower door open. About a hundred plastic bags filled with cigarette butts fall out. Alex is dumfounded.

The shower is filled halfway to the ceiling with bags of cigarette butts, neatly stacked like bricks.

Alex hears a door bang shut at the end of the hall. He quickly shuts the shower door and makes way to the-

KITCHEN

Where Seth Pavlovich, a pale, emaciated kid of 20 skillfully twists dough into a pretzel and places it on a baking sheet.

ALEX
Seth?

Seth jumps, letting out a small yelp.

SETH
(eyes wide)
Who are you?

ALEX
Alex...? Your-

SETH
 (still tense)
 Oh... Didn't recognize you.
 They're all in the bar.

Seth points toward a door leading out the back. Returns to the dough.

ALEX
 Great, thanks. Why don't you come
 with me?

Seth twists another pretzel...

SETH
 I have work to do.

...drops it on a second sheet.

Seth picks up both sheets. Heads for the door.

Alex steps over a row of boxes and jumps ahead of Seth.

ALEX
 Here. Let me. So you said "they"
 are all in the bar? Who do you
 mean?

Alex holds the screen door. Follows Seth out.

SETH
 (perking up)
 Your brothers. Ian's even here.
 You didn't know that?

PATIO

The door bangs shut behind them. Seth ambles over to a massive brick oven.

ALEX
 (ecstatic)
 Really? I haven't-

The sound of a DOG WHINING in pain.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 Is that a dog?

SETH
 Is what a dog?

ALEX

Do you hear that?

The whining gets louder. Alex rushes down a wide dirt path between a small guest house and a massive barn-like structure.

INT. ROTHBERG'S OFFICE - DAY

ALEX

It was horrible. I couldn't believe Dad would do something like that.

Rothberg looks incredibly intrigued.

ROTHBERG

So you were unaware of the fact that both of your brothers were in town?

ALEX

I had no idea. I hadn't spoken with either of them in-

Behind Alex, Ian appears in the doorway, clearly impressed by the lavish office.

IAN

I hope you don't mind. Your secretary said I could just come in.

Rothberg waves off the intrusion, strides around the massive desk. Extends a hand.

ROTHBERG

William Rothberg Weathers.

Ian nods. Shakes his hand. They take their seats.

ROTHBERG (CONT'D)

Can I get you anything? A coffee? Sandwich?

Ian shakes his head - no.

ROTHBERG (CONT'D)

Okay, well you feel free to let me know. Your brother has just been filling me in on how-

IAN
Is this a deposition? Am I-

ROTHBERG
Oh no, no, no. We're just a few gentlemen having a chat. We'll start with depositions next week after the formal arraignment.

Rothberg's intense gaze doesn't alleviate Ian's concern.

ROTHBERG (CONT'D)
I'd like to continue with you, Alex, if you don't mind, and then I'll get to my questions for Ian shortly. Does that work for everyone? Fantastic.

Rothberg's eyes flash.

ROTHBERG (CONT'D)
So, what happened to Chopper?

EXT. VETERINARY CLINIC - CONTINUOUS

Dax sits on the curb, head in hands. Seeing Alex approach, he stands.

DAX
He isn't dead, is he?

Alex walks quickly toward the car. Dax follows.

ALEX
No. He should be fine.

DAX
Thank God.

Alex keeps walking.

DAX (CONT'D)
Wait, what's wrong, then?

Dax studies Alex's red face. Smiles.

DAX (CONT'D)
Did you get her phone number?

INT/EXT. PATHFINDER - CAR WASH - LATER

Dax and Alex are cleaning blood off the back seat of the Pathfinder.

DAX

TWO promises! I make TWO fucking promises in one day and somehow I find a way to break both of them.

ALEX

Well... Chopper wasn't your-

DAX

Fine. Sure. But I promised Kristin she could trust me with her money, and I won't leave her until I make good on that promise.

ALEX

Leave her? How much do you really know about this other girl?

Dax stops scrubbing. Thinks for a moment.

DAX

All I remember is this fiery look in her eye.

(realizing)

But that's enough for me.

Alex studies Dax for a moment. Sprays a seat belt with cleaner. Dax grinds a rag into a blood spot on the floor.

ALEX

Well I have four grand I can give you, and I'm sure Ian can give you the rest.

Dax tosses a bloody paper towel out of the car.

DAX

No fuckin way. You don't owe me. Ian doesn't owe me. The old bastard owes me. I'll get my money from HIM.

They scrub in silence for a moment. Alex visibly shaken by Dax's violent tone.

A cell phone vibrates in front. Dax snatches it, checks the display. It's not who he'd hoped. He hands it to Alex.

IAN (V.O.)
Alex, how's the dog?

INT. BERGMAN'S PUB - SAME TIME

The place is empty. Ian sits at the bar, talking on the phone.

ALEX (V.O.)
Okay, actually. They say after a few surgeries he'll be fine. How's dad?

Homer and Rodstein sit at a table nearby. Homer's face is stitched, swollen and bruised.

Ian watches Homer pop some pills from a prescription bottle, then chase them down with a shot of whisky.

IAN
There aren't enough surgeries in the world.

HOMER
If that's your big sister on the phone, tell her she hits like a fucking six year-old with leukemia!

Homer crushes some pills on the table.

IAN
He says he feels terrible about the entire situation.

HOMER
And tell that little girl scout she's gonna have to sell cookies cause she's not getting a goddamn penny from me!

IAN
And to make up for it, he would like to throw Dax and Kristin an engagement party on Friday.

Homer snorts a line of powdered pills off the table. Snaps angry eyes up at Ian.

INT. PATHFINDER - SAME TIME

ALEX
 (to Dax)
 He's sorry and he's going to throw
 you and Kristin an engagement party
 on Friday. All expenses paid.

Dax looks impressed... turns skeptical.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 AND I get that fifteen grand back!

ALEX (CONT'D)
 (into phone)
 And he-

IAN (V.O.)
 I heard him. I'll take care of it.

Alex hangs up. Closes his eyes in a quick prayer of thanks.

INT. BERGMAN'S PUB - SAME TIME

Ian pockets the phone. Homer is lighting up a joint.

IAN
 (re: the joint)
 Really? In here?

HOMER
 (scanning the empty bar)
 My customers aren't offended.

Ian doesn't want to argue. Homer slinks back in his chair.

HOMER (CONT'D)
 So as a token, no, an olive
 branch... to show my... to fucking
 apologize, I'll throw the little
 shit head a party.
 (a deviant smile)
 That's genius.

Ian looks at him dubiously.

IAN
 Glad those pills are working, pop.

INT. ROTHBERG'S OFFICE - DAY

Rothberg reclines in his tall leather chair. He looks perplexed.

ROTHBERG

So it was actually YOUR idea to have the party?

IAN

Well, yes. I thought it would help them bury the hatchet, and if my dad could make enough money off of it, maybe he'd be willing to work something out with Dax.

Rothberg leans forward, apparently trying to read something off Ian's forehead. Ian stops fidgeting and puts on a poker face. Rothberg quickly snaps out his gaze.

ROTHBERG

Okay, let's keep moving. What happened at the party.

INT. HOMER'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Alex is carefully organizing the stacks of books, newspapers and magazines. The area around him is relatively neat, but no other real progress is recognizable. The place is an overwhelming collection of unorganized junk.

He stops at a stack of Bibles. Picks one up. It still has the plastic wrap on it. They all do.

Spotting something, Alex climbs over the Bibles and pulls a thick textbook from the middle of a stack.

CLOSE ON BOOK

Master ASL!

Sign Language in Three Easy Levels

A car door slams outside. Alex looks up. Another car door slams.

Alex carefully sets the Bible and textbook on top of a pile.

The sound of a LIVE JAZZ BAND PLAYING a song. It's smooth. Relaxing.

EXT. BERGMAN'S PUB - BANQUET PATIO - EVENING

Four jazz musicians play in the corner of the large, beautifully lit patio. A party is in full force.

Dozens of tables are set up around the patio where guests happily eat and drink.

On one side of the patio, Seth and Anya, a robust woman of about 60, attend to a massive buffet. It's an impressive spread, equipped with countless platters of delectables, a chocolate fountain, and an impressive ice sculpture of a man and woman dancing.

Alex scans the array of tables and spots Ian and Rodstein sitting with several guests by the buffet line. Ian smokes a cigar as he entertains. By his rapid, loose speech, it's obvious he's a little toasted.

IAN

So I ask him, I HAD to ask, what it's like to escape from an area so enveloped in violent conflict, and he begins to describe this game the Serbian soldiers used to play.

(spotting Alex)

Perfect! You're just in time Al, have a seat!

Alex finds a seat, waves off a drink offer. Seth hovers at the buffet line, listening to Ian's every word.

IAN (CONT'D)

Okay, so imagine a Croat mother, with her baby in her arms, surrounded by Serbs. They laugh and tickle the baby to make it laugh, too. Eventually, they succeed and the baby begins to giggle. Then, one of the Serbs points a gun in the baby's face. It squirms with delight and tries to catch the shiny pistol in its tiny hands. Suddenly, the soldier fires the pistol in the baby's face, splattering it's brains on the mother. Pure art, isn't it? Incidentally, I've heard that Serbs love chocolates and sweets.

The guests are speechless. Seth smiles behind Ian, and delivers a plate of food to Alex.

RODSTEIN

(appalled)

I'm not sure I understand... why
are we talking about this?

Ian takes a satisfying sip of scotch.

IAN

People love to describe human
atrocities as bestial, but the fact
is, no animal could ever be as
cruel as a man... as refinedly,
artistically cruel.

RODSTEIN

The implication being...?

IAN

That if the devil doesn't exist,
man certainly created him in his
own image.

ALEX

As he did God?

Ian laughs condescendingly. Seth still hovers, filling
drinks and delivering plates superfluously.

IAN

God is a superstition manufactured
to justify a moral code. Without a
God, all things are lawful.

Dax appears behind Alex and Rodstein. Seth slinks away.

DAX

Is there a God? I think he's
black. Maybe he's a lesbian! What
if he doesn't love me anymore when
I die?

Everyone laughs. Dax reaches out to Kristin, an absolute
knockout blonde. Pulls her close. She's a smart, elegant
contrast to Dax.

She smiles warmly at the guests.

DAX (CONT'D)

Everyone, this is Kristin. For
some reason, she's agreed to marry
me-

RODSTEIN

Wasn't the money.

DAX

So don't talk her out of it.
 Kristin, these are my brothers, Ian
 and Alex, my dad's asshole lawyer,
 Rodstein, and I don't know anyone
 else, but if we're lucky, they
 brought us gifts, so you may have
 to kiss a little ass.

Kristin jabs Dax in the ribs. He play wincing in pain.

Kristin smiles hello to all the guests. They already love Dax.

Dax beckons Seth with a wave. Seth hands Dax a drink and a plate of food.

DAX (CONT'D)

(quietly)

Where's the old bastard?

SETH

He hasn't arrived yet.

DAX

He LIVES here!

Seth shrugs. Kristin shoots a piercing glare at Dax.

DAX (CONT'D)

(suspicious)

Well, come find me when he does.

(nodding at Kristin)

And where are your manners, Pavlov?
 Ladies first.

EXT. BERGMAN'S PUB - BANQUET PATIO - NIGHT

The band is playing a faster tune. The party is hopping.
 Dax, dancing with Kristin, spots Anya by the buffet line.

DAX

Sorry, babes, don't get jealous.
 She practically raised me all by
 herself.

KRISTIN

I'll be fine. Go.

Kristin watches Dax chase after Anya. Anya bats him away
 with a pair of plastic tongs. Kristin finds a seat by Ian.

IAN
What are you doing?

KRISTIN
Engaging you in an innocuous,
pedestrian conversation.

IAN
(amused)
No. With HIM.

Ian nods at Dax who is now carrying Anya to the dance floor.

Caught off guard, Kristin watches Dax wrestle with the old woman. Ian watches the struggle. Chuckles.

KRISTIN
Well, considering what Dax has told
me, this isn't nearly as
dysfunctional as I'd expected.

A black Mercedes limousine pulls up by the patio. The driver rushes around the car and opens the door for Homer and Samia. Both dressed to the nines in expensive evening wear.

IAN
(spotting Homer)
You may want to reserve judgement
on that for another minute or so.

Dax, now dancing peacefully with Anya, sees Homer and Samia arrive. His face falls. He stops dancing.

Homer, face still battered, smiles and waves to some of the guests. The band finishes a song and waves Homer to the front. Homer nods and circumnavigates Dax on his way.

Dax reaches Samia as Homer reaches the microphone.

DAX
Now I see why you didn't
answer my
calls.

HOMER
(into microphone)
Hello! First, I'd like to
thank everyone for coming.

SAMIA
(all smiles)
Quite the party.

HOMER
I hope you're all enjoying
the beautiful spread I so
painstakingly engendered.

Scattered laughter.

DAX
This is like a bad joke. I
don't know any of these
people.

HOMER
I just want to remind
everyone that as this is a
celebration for my son's
engagement, drinks ARE on the
house.

Wild applause.

DAX
So tell me. Are you really
banging that disgusting old
bag of shit?

HOMER
However, we would be so
pleased to accept any
generosity you may grace us
with.

SAMIA
You're just mad because I
made such a smooth getaway.

HOMER
Now, I know what you're
thinking. Why would I be
generous to this crazy old
drunk? Because any proceeds
from tonight's event will be
donated to the Colorado
Humane Society.

Everyone cheers. Dax stares hatefully at Homer.

DAX
Humane Society my ass. Are these
people actually buying this?

He looks around. They are.

SAMIA
So... where is she?

Dax scans the patio. Kristin is gone.

INT. BERGMAN'S PUB - SAME TIME

Alex wanders aimlessly through the bar watching various
groups of guests socialize. Ollie approaches him from behind
the bar. A look of concern on his face and a cordless phone
in his hand.

OLLIE
Phone call for you. A man named
Paisii.

Taking the phone, the life drains out of Alex's face. In the
BG, Ollie watches apprehensively.

ALEX
Hello?

Stiff with anxiety, Alex listens.

His face twists sadly. After a long moment, Alex hangs up the phone. Pads over to Ollie at the bar.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Do you need help with anything?

Ollie smiles compassionately.

OLLIE
Yes! I can always use sweat equity. Will you go and get more ice for me? There are ice machines in micro-brewery.

ALEX
Of course.

Ollie scans behind the bar.

OLLIE
Let me find keys.

INT. ROTHBERG'S OFFICE

Alex looks nervously at Ian.

IAN
Well I wouldn't want your conscience to get a bruise.

Alex still looks hesitant.

IAN (CONT'D)
(challenging)
Go ahead.

Rothberg eyes Ian with curiosity.

IAN (CONT'D)
It's really not what he's-

ALEX
Fine. Okay.
(beat)
So we never could find the keys.
It was already open.

EXT. GARAGE BREWERY- NIGHT

Several open padlocks hang from a peeling door frame. Alex pushes on the door. It doesn't move. Alex steps back, lowers his shoulder and bangs through the door.

INT. GARAGE BREWERY - CONTINUOUS

Something metallic falls from the wall, clanging across the cement floor. Alex jumps. Turns on the light. It's an impressive micro-brewery. Several massive tanks, kettles, and other equipment occupy every square inch of the garage. Two large ice machines line the wall by the door. He picks up an ice bucket.

EXT. GARAGE BREWERY - CONTINUOUS

The light goes out. Alex stumbles out of the garage with two big buckets of ice. He pulls the door shut and disappears down the path.

After a long beat, the light turns back on.

A bit disheveled, Ian and Kristin, emerge from the door. Ian scans the area. The coast is clear.

IAN

I think I may have said something
about New York to Dax the other-

KRISTIN

There's no way he heard anything.

Kristin slaps him in the butt. Points to the door.

IAN

Shit.

Ian works on the padlocks, fumbling with the last one.

IAN (CONT'D)

I don't think he made the
connection, but if he did-

Kristin spins Ian around by the arm. Alex stares at them. Stunned.

ALEX

Ollie, uh, needs some more ice.

Ian and Kristin share a nervous look. Alex stares at them like kids in the principal's office.

IAN
Look, Al, we were-

ALEX
Just help me get the ice, okay?

EXT. BERGMAN'S PUB - PATIO - LATER

The band plays a soft, relaxing tune. Plates in hand, Dax and Samia talk across the buffet line.

DAX
You're full of shit. No one has let me pour firewall shots in at least three years. I would have remembered that.

He drops a large chicken breast onto his plate, already loaded with food.

SAMIA
You did, I swear. I still can't believe the bartender let you do it.

Samia scoops some vegetables onto her plate and smiles at Dax as he heaps more potatoes onto his plate.

SAMIA (CONT'D)
And that little kid... Deandre? He was sooo cute.

Dax smiles to himself.

DAX
Yeah. Dee's my man. He's been following me around for a couple years now. Kid's ten years old and he practically takes care of himself.

Samia catches Dax's eyes.

SAMIA
So you really don't remember ANY-thing from that night?

DAX
Why? Did I do some other wild shit?

She pops an olive into her mouth. Nods suggestively.

Homer turns the corner. Stares at Samia lustfully. His approach is overtly sexual. Dax looks on, disgusted.

HOMER

We're just about ready to go,
Sugar, I promise. Will you wait in
the limo for me?

SAMIA

Congratulations on your engagement,
Dax.

Dax and Homer watch as she saunters off.

HOMER

She's a Goddamn killer, isn't she?

Dax tosses his plate onto the table.

DAX

You scandalous-

HOMER

Awww, I throw you this extravagant
party and you don't even want to
thank me?

DAX

What is she doing here with you?

HOMER

Oh, didn't I tell you? So the
other day-

DAX

I said what is she DOING HERE?

HOMER

Well, she's going to run VIP for my
new club in Denver.

Dax stares blankly. Suddenly, it all sets in.

DAX

You set me up, didn't you?! You
sent her to me!

HOMER

Well I wasn't going to give her the
job until I knew she could get meat
heads like you to blow all their
money...

Dax grits his teeth. Controlling his rage.

HOMER (CONT'D)

Calm down, Chachi. You know I'm a business man...

DAX

Not interested.

HOMER

Just listen, cause I'm sure you'll love this. You keep your wee-wee away from Samia... and by away, I do mean FAR AWAY... and you'll get fifteen grand.

DAX

(attempting restraint)

Forget it.

HOMER

That should more than cover your losses-

DAX

No, it won't!

HOMER

Look, this is in your best interest, Tarzan. You're engaged to a wonderful girl.

(leaning closer)

And you don't have what it takes to bag this one anyway.

Homer rubs his fingers together - money.

DAX

You'll never have her!

Homer laughs. Dax storms past a stunned Alex and looks up in time to see Samia whispering in Kristin's ear at a table.

Kristin's face turns red with anger. Samia smiles devilishly. Homer grabs a bottle of Scotch off a table.

HOMER

Nothing washes down a scandalous scene like a glass of good Scotch.

Samia takes Homer's arm.

Shaking with rage, Dax watches them stroll off toward the limo.

KRISTIN
I'm going home.

DAX
What's-

KRISTIN
Alone.

IAN
Do you-

KRISTIN
(short)
No. I'm... bye.

Kristin gets up, hurries off. The limo pulls away. Kristin disappears inside the bar.

Ian smirks at Dax. Dax glares at him but Ian can't hold back his laughter. He holds up a glass of wine in toast form.

IAN
To the enchanting absurdity of
beautiful women!

Dax smiles maniacally at Ian.

DAX
Where's Baalam's Ass?

Ian points toward the buffet line. Seth is cleaning up.

DAX (CONT'D)
(to Ian)
Let's get buried.

INT. BERGMAN'S PUB - LATER

Two steel doors are chained up, bolted, and padlocked about a dozen times over. Four hands excitedly work with two sets of keys to unlock the doors.

ALEX (O.S.)
Come on, guys. This is NOT a good
idea.

DAX (O.S.)
(matter of fact)
This is a GREAT idea.

Ian pops the last padlock, pulls the chain from the door. Looks over at Dax. They share a mischievous smile.

IAN

Alex, buddy... you may not want to
be around for this.

Dax rips open the doors. Throws an arm over Alex's shoulder.

DAX

Yes he does. He's not a member of
the monastery anymore.

Dax pulls Alex into-

THE LIQUOR ROOM

About fifteen hundred square feet of booze. It's almost bigger than the actual bar side. Racked bottles of rums, whiskies, tequilas, gins, cordials, vodkas, brandies and wines fill the room from wall to wall, floor to ceiling. Organized perfectly. A connoisseur's wet dream.

Dax and Ian bust into laughter at the sight. Taking Ian's keys, Dax turns to Seth, who sits quietly on a stool in the hall.

DAX

You rat us out and I'll make sure
you never speak again.

Dax tosses the keys to Seth. Seth drops both of them.

DAX (CONT'D)

And don't you fall sleep until
Rumpelstiltskin gets home. If
Samia comes back with him, come get
me.

Seth nods and quickly disappears down the hall. Dax pulls on the double doors. When they click shut-

CUT TO BLACK:

The sound of metal DOORS RATTLING.

INT. BERGMAN'S PUB - LATER

We are still outside the liquor room. It's pitch black. The muffled voices of Dax and Ian can be heard through the door. They're obviously drunk.

DAX (O.S.)

SHIT! We're fuckin trapped like
coons!

(MORE)

DAX (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 That sorry little Goddamn son of a retarded bitch must've locked us in. I bet that little rat's rattin' it up out there. Telling evvverybody how he got us good.

IAN (O.S.)
 You fucking idiot! YOU locked us in here. The old man must have this place rigged up to catch-

Something metallic crashes.

IAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Damn it!

DAX (O.S.)
 Here, let me... just-

IAN (O.S.)
 No, I'm- get off me! I'm fine!

DAX (O.S.)
 Okay, okay! Sorry!
 (beat)
 Alright. So here's what we do... We take three of these, tie them together with... wait, where's Al? We're gonna need Al if we're gonna pull this off.

IAN (O.S.)
 HEYO! There he is! I was beginning to think you were cold-cocked. Where are you go-

The doors swing open, flooding the frame with light. Alex stumbles out in a drunken daze. Disappears around the corner. Dax and Ian, both slumped on empty kegs, share a look and bust out laughing.

DAX
 Praise the Lawwwd, it's a miracle!

The doors close slowly as the two brothers talk.

IAN
 Damn, that kid can hold his liquor! He just went toe to toe with us and he's never even tasted anything but Jesus juice!

They both laugh in a drunken stupor. The doors click shut, returning us to darkness. Ian stops laughing. The doors rattle.

IAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
SHIT! How'd he do that?

INT. BERGMAN'S PUB - LATE MORNING

Two pale hands count a stack of twenty dollar bills, paperclip the stack, set it on the bar beside several other stacks and grab two fistfuls from a massive pile of loose bills.

DAX (O.S.)
(deep, raspy)
Don't even tell me those are the donations to the Humane Society.

Clearly hung over, Dax stumbles through the bar toward Seth, who is counting cash.

SETH
Humane Society?

Dax scowls.

DAX
You know you're not allowed in here. What the fuck are you doing?

Dax wanders behind the bar, turns on a faucet and dips his head out of view.

SETH
Just not when we're open.
(beat)
Don't worry. I didn't say anything to Mr. Bergman about last night. He doesn't know anything about it.

Dax reappears, wipes his mouth, and finds a Boston shaker.

DAX
Good. What about Samia? Did she come home with him?

Seth stops counting. Doesn't respond. Dax shakes a bottle of Bloody Mary mix, spins it in his hand and repeats.

DAX (CONT'D)
Well?

SETH

Well... yes. But she didn't stay.

Dax fills a shaker with ice and adds vodka.

DAX

So what happened?

SETH

Well I was in the kitchen when they got here. I heard them talking on the patio.

Dax pours the red mix into the shaker and starts adding sauces and spices.

SETH (CONT'D)

She wouldn't stay over, so he, uh... he offered her ten thousand dollars... to sleep with him for one night.

DAX

Did she take it?

SETH

No. She laughed at him.

Dax happily shakes a bottle of Tabasco.

SETH (CONT'D)

So then he offered her twenty thousand... Then fifty.

Dax sets the Tabasco down.

DAX

She didn't take that either, right?

SETH

She's thinking about it. She might be back in the next couple days. He has fifty thousand in cash in his room right now.

Dax looks behind Seth. Alex rises from a booth. He looks deathly ill.

DAX

What's the house code?

Seth flinches, waiting for a blow from Dax.

SETH
Alex's birthday.

DAX
Listen close, Pavlov. If I find out that she came over here and you didn't tell me about it, I'll bury you myself.

Alex drags himself out of the booth, around the corner and to the bathroom.

INT. COSTCO - DAY

An electric salsa maker grinds up a red mixture.

Homer beholds the gizmo amorously. Ian stands nearby, unimpressed. Beside Ian is a shopping cart, loaded to the hilt with random bulk foods and appliances.

HOMER
Boyardee makes a salsa so hot it'll burn your balls off. This is perfect. He'll be able to crank it out even faster.

He looks to Ian for approval. Ian mollifies him with a nod. Homer grabs three boxes from the display, nods giddily at the sales rep and looks at the cart. It's full.

HOMER (CONT'D)
He's a strange bird, but I can trust him. Even with money. And the shit he can cook...

He spots an unattended cart nearby. Glances around.

Nearby, a plump woman in a jogging suit stares indecisively at a detergent display. Her back is turned.

Homer nonchalantly starts pulling the items out of her cart and setting them on the floor. Ian watches anxiously.

HOMER (CONT'D)
I can call him up and go, 'hey, turn off your Floodgate CD, put down your razor blade and make me some South Austrian marinated pig balls on German goat cheese bread' and thirty minutes later it's ready...

(MORE)

HOMER (CONT'D)
half the time its completely
fictitious and he still brings it
to me! It's unbelievable.

Finishing the process, he drops the salsa makers into the cart and turns a corner. Slightly amused, Ian grabs a cart and ducks around the corner as the woman turns back.

IAN
Dad, I think she saw-

HOMER
She's business class. What's she
gonna do?

Ian looks confused.

HOMER (CONT'D)
Business class. Too fat to fly
coach.
(off Ian's look)
A hundred bucks says she parked in
a handicapped spot just so she
could get to the Haagen-Dazs
faster.

Ian pulls the full cart around another corner.

HOMER (CONT'D)
Listen, though. I need you to do
me a favor.

IAN
I'd rather not-

HOMER
Look, I don't go giving great
opportunities like this away every
day.

IAN
You should have an infomercial.

HOMER
I'm trying to snag this bar in
Omaha, but somehow I managed to rub
the owner a little raw so he's
stonewalling me. Fuckin shovel-
heads...

Ian studies Homer as they stroll down the aisle. Homer's in a different world.

IAN
So you want me to go?

Homer examines a wall of candles. Smells a few.

HOMER
It was actually Seth's idea... and
a GOOD one. You're smart enough to
handle this, and if you play it
right, we can steal it right out
from under his flat ass.

Homer loads candles into the cart. Silently counting them as
he goes. Behind Ian, a man hurriedly pushes an empty cart by
the aisle. The woman in the jogging suit rampages after him.

IAN
I don't know. I'll think about it.

HOMER
It's time you learned how to make
some money, boy. Haven't you spent
enough time in the chess club?

Ignoring the comment, Ian nods at the candles.

IAN
Why do you need so many-

Homer holds up a finger. Stops to think.

HOMER
Was that twelve or thirteen?

Homer glares at Ian and starts counting the candles again.

INT. ROTHBERG'S OFFICE - DAY

Rothberg stares skeptically at Ian.

IAN
Look, I realize how this looks and
I know what you must be thinking,
but I came back to spend some time
with him before-

ROTHBERG
He died of the cancer he didn't
have?

IAN
I didn't know-

ROTHBERG

How very compassionate of you. So the three of you, who hadn't seen each other in years, just happened to return to your father's house on the same day? And not one of you knew the others were going to be there?

ALEX

Strange, isn't it?

ROTHBERG

(to Ian)

I'd say so.

Rothberg jots something on his legal pad.

ROTHBERG (CONT'D)

How long had you been having an affair with Dax's fiance?

IAN

That was only the second time we'd been together. I couldn't get her off me.

ROTHBERG

I'm sure you made a valiant effort.

IAN

I assumed she needed one last little fling before she got married. Everyone does it.

Rothberg waits for Ian to elaborate. Ian says nothing.

ROTHBERG

Okay, let's come back to that later. Right now, I'd like to talk more about your father.

IAN

He was a hoarder. Textbook OCHD.

Rothberg jots this down. Looks to Alex.

ALEX

Like I was saying before, it had gotten really bad.

EXT. BERGMAN'S PUB - BACKYARD - DAY

Alex reads a textbook in a hammock by the patio. His face still shows the aftermath of a hangover. Through the trees, the rising mountains are visible. It's actually an incredibly beautiful, peaceful spot.

A car door slams.

HOMER (O.S.)

Alex! I need your help, boy!

Alex reluctantly shuts his book and rolls off the hammock.

EXT. BERGMAN'S PUB - PATIO - CONTINUOUS

A muddy Chevy pickup is backed up onto the grass by the patio. The bed is full of grocery bags. Homer hands a few bags to Alex.

HOMER

Here. I need you to take these down to the basement. There should be space for them by the freezers.

Homer hands Alex two more bags and returns to the truck bed.

ALEX

Dad... uh, do you really-

Homer starts setting bags on the patio.

HOMER

What a storm downtown! So much lightning! I thought God was finally comin after me...

ALEX

Dad, this is crazy. You'll-

Homer turns menacingly.

HOMER

Boy, if you ever use that word around me again I'll beat the sweet Jesus out of you.

Homer puts the last two bags on the patio, slams the door of the truck and speeds off. Alex is stunned.

INT. HOMER'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - DAY

Reaching the bottom of the steps, Alex works his way through the dark. He sets some bags on the floor and pulls a light bulb chain.

It is a creepy, concrete warehouse of neuroses. Home to the shadows of several thousand liquor bottles, beer signs, stools, taxidermy animals, broken furniture and other strange collections.

Seeing a pathway, Alex heads toward a walled-off section in the far corner, stopping to pull light chains as he goes.

Alex sets down the bags and pulls on one final light. He bends to pick them back up. Stops. The 'walls' are actually ceiling-high stacks of canned food that surround a complex of six or seven freezers and refrigerators. Enough food for a decade. A rodent skitters across the floor by his feet.

He grabs a can. Checks the expiration date. It's Oct/2003. Checks another. They've all expired years ago.

Through the "gate" of cans, Each of the freezers and refrigerators is covered with old pictures. Alex pulls one off. It is a shot of a much younger Homer with a beautiful young woman. Homer is kissing the woman on the cheek as she holds a toddler in her arms.

Alex flips the picture over. On the back is scribbled: Dmitry - 18 months.

Alex magnets the picture back up, surveys the other refrigerators. Stopping at one, he leans in closely. It is covered with shots of Homer and a beautiful young woman with a sad smile. Amidst the pictures is a small grey envelope. In beautiful feminine handwriting, it reads: To Homer and My Darling boys. Removing it, Alex can barely contain his emotion.

CLOSE ON REFRIGERATOR

Covered with pictures. Alex's hand places the magnet back on the fridge in an empty space. The light goes out.

INT. ROTHBERG'S OFFICE - DAY

IAN
See, our mom-

He stops to look at Alex. Decides to continue.

IAN (CONT'D)

Our mom committed suicide the day after Alex's first birthday. I remember her but Al was too young. That was the note she left. I thought Dad burned it a long time ago.

ROTHBERG

Did either of you read it?

ALEX

I couldn't do it.

Rothberg looks to Ian.

IAN

(bitter, to Alex)

I never got the chance.

INT. HOMER'S HOUSE - HOMER'S ROOM - MORNING

Alex knocks on Homer's door. The upstairs hallway is lined with ceiling-high piles of old audio-visual equipment. Receivers, VCR's, microphones, stands, etc. Alex fiddles with a microphone stand while he waits.

The door opens. Homer appears in a ratty bathrobe. A smoldering joint hangs out of the corner of his mouth.

HOMER

(surprised)

Shouldn't you be at God's house right now?

ALEX

I thought we'd have breakfast together.

HOMER

(excitedly)

What? Is my little monk choosing his depraved old man over Jesus and Father Finger-banger?

ALEX

Dad-

HOMER

This calls for a celebration.
(with a majestic gesture)
Come in! Come in!

Homer swings the door open. Alex enters-

HOMER'S BEDROOM

A huge master suite full of books, movies, newspapers and porno magazines - piled haphazardly all around the room. It's such a disgusting mess Alex has trouble navigating through the piles. Homer quickly flips off the TV - which had been featuring a soft core porno.

HOMER
(re: the joint)
I know what you're thinking, but
it's medicinal, so...

Homer stubs out the joint in an ashtray overflowing with roaches. He grabs a phone.

HOMER (CONT'D)
(into phone)
We need two jalapeno-bacon
omelettes, garlic hash browns,
chocolate raspberry pancakes, A
bloody Mary and a mimosa.

ALEX
Dad, I really don't-

HOMER
Oh, right, well I'll just drink 'em
both.

Alex moves a pile of newspapers off a small armed chair. Sits across from Homer.

ALEX
So, Dad, I uh... when I was putting
that food away yesterday I found
this...

Alex holds up the envelope. Homer is visibly shaken.

ALEX (CONT'D)
And, uh, I was hoping you would-

Homer snatches the envelope out of Alex's hand.

HOMER
Who told you it was okay to take
that?

ALEX
Well, I just-

HOMER

Didn't those hermit virgins teach
you not to take things from other
people?

Alex is speechless. The picture shakes in Homer's hand.

HOMER (CONT'D)

When your mom-

(beat)

When I sent you to live with your
aunt I never thought she'd let you
go live with a bunch of Bible
beating pedophiles.

ALEX

Dad, they're good people. Father
Zosima-

HOMER

(coldly)

Ahhh, yes, your special Father
Zosima. If you love him so much
more than your REAL father, maybe
you should get the fuck out and go
back to him!

Alex stares at the floor.

ALEX

He died two days ago.

Homer lights a cigarette.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Why did you lie to him? Why did
you say you had cancer?

Seth enters with a large tray of food. Homer stands.

HOMER

I think I'll take breakfast alone
today.

Alex stares sadly at Homer.

ALEX

THIS is my home now. I'm not going
anywhere, Dad.

Alex stands and weaves his way out of the room.

INT. ROTHBERG'S OFFICE - DAY

Alex is holding back tears.

ALEX

That was the last time I saw my
father alive.

ROTHBERG

(genuinely)

I'm sorry for your loss.

Rothberg waits patiently for Alex to continue.

ALEX

(collecting himself)

After that, he wouldn't even let
anyone in his room unless it was
Seth or Samia.

Rothberg retrieves a Scotch decanter. Holds it up in
offering. Ian nods. Rothberg pours three glasses.

ROTHBERG

So tell me about Seth. He's the
youngest of you four, right?

Ian finishes off his glass in one gulp.

IAN

Well, in a way. He's the result of
a bar bet my dad made in the
eighties. He banged this-

ALEX

Supposedly.

IAN

SUPPOSEDLY, he banged this retarded
girl, she got pregnant and Seth
Pavlovich, the weak, pathetic
epileptic is what came out.

Alex takes a sip of his drink.

ALEX

(looking at Ian)

He's a great chef, and a real loyal
guy. Everyone just always picked
on him so bad that now he's got a
bad wrap.

ROTHBERG

Do you think he could have been the one who killed your father?

IAN

(matter of fact)

There's something seriously wrong with that kid, but there's no way he did it.

ROTHBERG

How do you know?

Ian pours more Scotch into his glass.

IAN

Because he's smart. He set it all up too well...

EXT. HOMER'S HOUSE - PATIO - LATE MORNING

Ian steps out the back door. A glass of Scotch in his hand. The wind blows cottonwood seeds across the back yard. It looks like snow. Seth is sitting on a bench holding a cigarette. He just stares at Ian. A coy look on his face.

Trying to avoid eye contact with Seth, Ian strides uncomfortably toward the walkway. Seth waits patiently for Ian to say something first. Ian stops walking.

IAN

(involuntarily)

So is the old man still passed out?

SETH

Yes. Mr. Bergman is still resting.

An awkward, silent beat. Ian reluctantly plops into a seat.

SETH (CONT'D)

I'm surprised at you.

IAN

Excuse me?

SETH

Why haven't you left for Omaha?

IAN

Why the hell would I go to Omaha?

SETH
(smiling strangely)
I'll make sure you don't regret it.

IAN
Why are you looking at me like
that? What do you want?

SETH
(enjoying the reaction)
I don't want anything, Ian.
Nothing important.

Seth stands slowly, still not taking his eyes off Ian.

SETH (CONT'D)
I'm just in a terrible position
right now, and I'm not sure what to
do.

IAN
(unmoved)
Really.

SETH
They're acting like madmen... your
brother and father.

IAN
Well why the hell did you get
involved with it?

SETH
I couldn't help it. For some
reason Dax decided I was his
watchdog... If she comes over and I
don't tell him, he'll kill me. I
know it. If I DO tell him, he'll
kill Mr. Bergman and I'll go down
as an accomplice.

IAN
Why would anyone consider you
culpable for anything?

SETH
I told him there was fifty thousand
in cash in Mr. Bergman's room.

IAN
So what? He can't-

SETH
And I told him the house code.

Ian jumps up.

IAN

What?! How could you do something so stupid?!

SETH

I had to! He would have-

IAN

(convincing himself)
Listen, Dax would never do anything to you or to Dad.

SETH

Who just put Mr. Bergman in the hospital last week?
(beat)
This whole thing has me so scared I think I might have another seizure.

IAN

What? You can't predict a seizure, can you?

SETH

(a reptilian smile)
No. I can't.

IAN

So how- are you telling me you intend to fake a seizure?

Seth rolls up his sleeve, revealing a forearm covered in scars. He extinguishes the cigarette on his arm, grinding the ember into his skin. Seth smiles at Ian who stares in horror.

SETH

Even if I COULD do that, and for some people it wouldn't be that hard, I'd have every right to if it would save me from those animals. I wouldn't be able to call Dax if Samia came and I wouldn't get hurt if Dax came.

IAN

If you were sick, he'd just have Ollie do it.

SETH

No, Ollie's back has been so bad lately that some nights he has to eat three Oxycontin just so he can lay down. If he was in a lot of pain, he could be out by seven or eight o'clock.

IAN

That's a hell of a lot of if's. Assuming that's all true, why would you want me to go to Omaha?

SETH

I don't... unless you want to go.

Ian stares at Seth, confused and infuriated.

IAN

Damnit man! Just say what you mean!

SETH

What I mean, is, if I were you, with all this going on, I'd take any excuse to leave.

IAN

You're a Goddamned idiot.

Ian turns to leave.

SETH

You're right. That's why I needed to talk to you. It's true what they say...

Ian waits impatiently for him to finish.

SETH (CONT'D)

It's always rewarding to talk to a clever man.

Ian breaks into nervous laughter and wanders off. Seth smiles. Lights another cigarette.

INT. ROTHBERG'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

ALEX

And you still left?! How could you-

Ian slams his glass down on the desk.

IAN
I didn't think Dax would actually
do-

ALEX
He DIDN'T do it!

IAN
How do you know? How the FUCK
could you possibly know?

ALEX
Dax is a lot of things, but he's
not a liar. He'd never lie to me.
If he says he didn't do it, I
believe him.

IAN
He's a violent, worthless drunk
who'd feed you or anyone else to
the fucking wolves just to get
laid!

Rothberg is leaned back in his chair, lost in thought.

ALEX
That's not true and you-

Suddenly, Rothberg snaps out of it.

ROTHBERG
Save the arm wrestling for the back
seat of the hearse, kids. We don't
have time for it now. You say Seth
set the whole thing up. How'd he
do it? What happened later that
night?

Ian and Alex share an apologetic look.

ALEX
Well that letter from...

ROTHBERG
The one from the monastery?

ALEX
Yes. It was missing...

INT. GUEST HOUSE - EVENING

Alex frantically searches under the bed and around the night
stand.

Drawers are open and the night stand is moved away from the wall. He grabs his open Bible. Flips through the pages. Holds it upside-down by the cover. Shakes it. Nothing comes out. A look of panic crosses his face. The letter is gone.

EXT. HOMER'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Alex searches around the hammock. No sign of it anywhere. A powerful wind gust tosses a plastic trash can lid across the property.

INT. GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Alex enters the massive garage. Home to a ratty, black Malibu, a long Astro van, and an immaculate, perfectly maintained Jetta. Seth is obsessively cleaning the interior of the Jetta with a loud shop-vac.

ALEX

SETH!

Seth doesn't hear him. Alex switches off the shop-vac. Seth jumps. Pauses his mp3 player.

ALEX (CONT'D)

(uneasy)

Hi, sorry. I had a really important letter...uh, a small sealed envelope in my Bible... and I'm afraid it fell out. Have you seen it anywhere?

Seth moves a box of chef hats into the back seat. He doesn't appear to be listening.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Seth?

Seth puts the earphones back in, switches the vacuum on and gets back to work. Alex's face falls.

INT. KRISTIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATE NIGHT

Ian and Kristin are snuggled up on the couch laughing hysterically at a movie. Kristin jumps up, runs to the-

KITCHEN

Pops open the fridge and grabs a bottle of white wine. Closing the refrigerator door, she sees KRISTIN LOVES DAX in magnets. Guilt creeps into her face. She returns to the-

LIVING ROOM

Where she fills two wine glasses with wine and sits uneasily. He raises one for a toast. Kristin just looks at him.

KRISTIN

Don't you feel a little bit bad about this?

IAN

About what?

Kristin does the 'you and me' gesture. Ian shakes his head - no.

IAN (CONT'D)

Not at all, actually.

Ian takes a slow sip of wine.

KRISTIN

Your brother is my FIANCE-

IAN

So you only like it in Manhattan or on the floor of the micro-brewery... got it.

KRISTIN

You know what I mean.

DAX

You mean you don't mind Dax spending all YOUR money and banging my dad's girlfriend?

KRISTIN

Stop it. Dax would never-

IAN

If you weren't so blinded by your savior complex you'd know he'd do it in a-

KRISTIN

What?! No. He wouldn't.

IAN
How do you know?

KRISTIN
Because SHE told me! At the party.
She said, "I'm gonna fuck your
fiance."

IAN
See? There-

KRISTIN
She said I'm GONNA. She wouldn't
have said that if she already had!

IAN
Ooh, thank you for clarifying that
for me! That certainly justifies-

KRISTIN
At least he's honest! He'd never
lie about it or try to explain it
away. He'd admit it to me! I at
least owe him that same decency.

Ian stands up.

IAN
How noble of you. I hope that
works out for you.

Kristin tears up.

KRISTIN
No. Don't go. It's over with him,
I just can't-

Ian walks for the door.

IAN
You're just as base as everyone
else... you just hide it well.

KRISTIN
Fuck you, Ian!

KRISTIN (CONT'D)
I'm not getting killed on behalf of
your misplaced conscience.

Ian slams the door behind him.

KRISTIN (CONT'D)
Glad I fell in love with such a
PUSSY!

EXT. PARKING GARAGE - LATE NIGHT

Ian rages across the parking lot to Homer's beat-up black Malibu. He sticks his keys in the door. Looks up. On the other side of his car is Dax's Pathfinder. Dax is sleeping in the front seat. Ian stares at him for a long, uncertain beat.

Finally, Ian gets in the Malibu. Drives into the darkness.

INT. HOMER'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - LATE NIGHT

Alex sits at an old, rickety desk, surrounded by Homer's strange stockpiles of junk. A lone light bulb hangs above his head, illuminating the countless pictures that cover the desk. He stares straight ahead in a pained, empty daze.

The door at the top of the stairs opens.

IAN (O.S.)
Alex? You down there?

His stare returns to the pictures one last time. He picks one up. Slides it into his Bible. Stands up. Pulls the light bulb chain.

INT. BERGMAN'S PUB - LATE MORNING

Alex wolfs down a plate of bacon and eggs. Seth appears from the back. A smug smile on his face. He nods at Alex's plate quizzically.

ALEX
(wiping his mouth)
That was amazing, Seth. Seriously.
What do you put in the eggs?

SETH
Green chilies and three cheeses.

ALEX
That's it?

SETH

I get special organic chiles from a farmer's market in Denver and process them myself. I'm actually going to get more today.

Something metallic crashes loudly from the back room.

OLLIE

(in Russian)

You stupid bastard!

Alex runs around the corner. Ollie writhes in pain on the floor by the open walk-in cooler. Several full kegs are on their side on the floor. Alex kneels beside Ollie, not sure what to do.

ALEX

What's wrong? What hurts?

OLLIE

Is my back! Give me minute. I will be okay.

Alex turns to Seth, but there's no one there.

INT. HOMER'S HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Alex hurries down a pathway toward an open door at the end of the hall. Ian strides out, suitcases in hand.

ALEX

You don't really have to go, do you? Dad doesn't need to buy any more... anything, let alone another bar.

Ian stops in front of Alex.

IAN

True, but this way I can be sure the deal's so bad even HE won't take it.

Alex stares at the floor.

IAN (CONT'D)

Why don't you ride to the airport with me? The old man got me a limo. You ever been in one?

ALEX

No... but-

IAN

Then you don't have a choice. It's
a sin to decline a free limo ride.

INT. LIMOUSINE - MOVING - AFTERNOON

Ian relaxes on the luxurious leather seat, sipping a glass of
scotch. Across from him, Alex sits uncomfortably.

ALEX

Can I ask you something?
Seriously?

IAN

(perking up)
I'm already interested.

ALEX

Did you really mean what you were
saying the other night?

IAN

What was I saying the other night?

Alex looks perplexed.

ALEX

At the party...? I guess I don't
really understand what you were
saying. I know you don't believe
in God...

IAN

(smiling)
Ahh, the novice turns evangelist.
I knew that's why you came back.

ALEX

I just don't know anything about
you and-

IAN

No, it's okay. You're right. I
don't believe in God anymore.

ALEX

So what DO you believe in?

IAN

The only thing I believe in is
absurdity. It's all we have.
Everywhere you look, there it is.

(MORE)

IAN (CONT'D)

A couple punishing a five year-old for wetting her bed by making her eat excrement; a soldier slicing off a journalist's head in his basement; teenagers huffing paint thinner because their parents got divorced; people who can hardly READ making forty million a year for injecting the right drugs in their ass. And meanwhile, we're all tuned in to prime-time to see the guy with the forty pound tumor on his face and find out who gets voted off the show so we have something to bitch about in our blog before bed!

Ian laughs at his maniacal alliteration. Alex is speechless.

IAN (CONT'D)

I say forget debating about God and religion. It always turns ugly, and nobody's ever right. All you have to do is look at the Golden Rule and you'll see the absurdity. I can imagine the possibility of loving people who are far away, but the idea of loving one's NEIGHBOR is conceivable only as an abstraction. If I'm expected to love my fellow man, he'd better hide himself, because as soon as I see his face, my ability to love is gone!

The limo has slowed to a stop. They're on the highway. Ian is practically breathless.

IAN (CONT'D)

So why was this absurdity 'created'? Why did your God grant us this hideous gift?

Alex shakes his head.

IAN (CONT'D)

They say that without it, we couldn't learn the difference between good and evil. But do you know what I say? I say I'd rather not know about their damned good and evil if we have to pay such a horrible price for it.

(MORE)

IAN (CONT'D)

All the universal truths in the world aren't worth that one little girl's tears!

ALEX

(genuinely)

You should be thankful you have a heart big enough to handle such torment. Most people don't even care.

Caught off guard, Ian looks out the window. The limo is barely moving.

IAN

Why are we going so slow?

Alex's head is still reeling. He shrugs. Ian rolls down the divider.

IAN (CONT'D)

What's up Jerry?

JERRY

There's an accident. It's just up ahead. You should be able to see it.

Alex and Ian look out the window. Just ahead, rescue vehicles are everywhere. Lights flashing.

Alex rolls down a window. A crumpled, black Jetta rests precariously on the median. Ian's eyes widen.

ALEX

That looks like Seth's car.

IAN

It's not.

ALEX

(worried)

He said he was going to Denver this afternoon.

IAN

(convincing himself)

No, his car has different rims.

ALEX

What rims? I don't even see any wheels anywhere.

Alex looks closer. By the car is a half-charred chef's hat. Alex pounds on the divider.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Jerry! Stop the car! It's him!

The car stops. Alex opens the door to jump out. Looks back at Ian expectantly.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Come on! He's-

IAN
I'll be back in a few days.

The look in Alex's eye sends chills through Ian. Alex jumps out and runs to the scene.

ALEX (O.S.)
Wait! That's my brother!

Ian closes the door. Takes a long sip of scotch.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Alex and Anya wheel Seth out of the hospital. Seth's arm is in a cast, and his left leg is in a large brace. His face is lacerated and badly bruised.

Reaching Rodstein's BMW, Alex struggles to get Seth into the front seat. Seth is so heavily medicated that Alex has to do all of the work. Rodstein waits impatiently in the driver's seat.

RODSTEIN
On the news, that car looked like a ball of aluminum foil. They said he stopped traffic on 70 for four hours.
(looking at Seth)
Congrats! Your little seizure made about thirty thousand people late today!

ALEX
It wasn't his fault. He could have DIED.

RODSTEIN
Pity.

INT. BERGMAN'S PUB - SETH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Alex and Anya wheel Seth into a small bedroom in the apartment adjoined to the bar.

ANYA

(thick Russian accent)

I'll stay in here tonight to keep eye on you.

(to Alex)

Will you get aspirin from bathroom?

BATHROOM

Alex sifts through several drawers in the adjoining bathroom.

ALEX

How's Ollie doing?

In one of the drawers, Alex finds a small orange key ring. Holds it up for inspection. It says U-Store. There are a half-dozen keys on the ring.

ANYA

Trying to sleep. He's in great amount of pain. His back... it's no good.

He pulls on the mirror. It opens. It's loaded with about fifteen prescription bottles.

Alex examines one of the bottles. Oxycontin. He examines another. Vicodin.

ALEX

(handing her the aspirin)

Do you want me to stick around so you can take care of Ollie?

Alex finds a bottle of aspirin. Shuts the mirror.

ANYA

(yawning)

No, thank you, Alexei. You can go. He will have peaceful rest here.

EXT. HOMER'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Rodstein talks on a cell phone by his BMW. Seeing Alex, he ends the call.

ALEX
How about a drink?

Rodstein smiles.

INT. THE HORNET - NIGHT

A bartender pours Belvedere into two shot glasses.

Alex and Rodstein sit at the bar. The place is relatively empty.

RODSTEIN
Top shelf man, eh?

ALEX
I didn't know there was any other kind.

RODSTEIN
You actually ARE a Bergman, aren't you? I knew a little time in the real world would cure you.

He takes a sip of vodka. Cringes.

ALEX
(annoyed)
Cure me? Of what?
(beat)
Ian's gone. Probably to have an affair with Dax's fiance. Dad locked himself in his bedroom, and won't come out unless Samia comes over. Seth almost died today. Ollie can't move...

RODSTEIN
(aloof)
I'll never understand what goes on in a madhouse or what makes mad men act the way they do.

ALEX
I just wish I knew where Dax was. I'm scared he might do something stupid.

RODSTEIN
Well tonight would be the night he'd do it, if ever.

Alex sets his drink down, looks at Rodstein quizzically.

RODSTEIN (CONT'D)
Well who's there to stop him?

EXT. THE HORNET - SAME TIME

Alex barrels out the front door of the bar, keys in hand. He hits a button on the keys, sees Rodstein's flashing BMW down the street. Behind him, Rodstein stumbles out of the bar.

Alex sprints to the car.

RODSTEIN
You hit a fucking JUNEBUG and I'll-

Alex jumps in the car, jams the keys in the ignition and fires it up. Reaches for the shifter. Stops in a panic - It's a manual. He jams the stick right and back and looks behind him. The car lunges forward, banging into a car in front of him. Alex cringes.

ALEX
Sorry! What did I...?

Restarting the car, Alex studies the knob on the stick. Realizing the mistake, he shifts forward, left and slowly lets out the clutch. The BMW moves backward. He jams it into first and tears off down the street.

EXT. HOMER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Alex slams the door to the BMW and sprints toward the house. The front door is open already. He stops. Afraid.

At the front door, Alex lunges over several piles of books. Peers in. Suddenly sprints into-

HOMER'S HOUSE

At the bottom of the stairs, Ollie's body is splayed out in a pool of blood. Alex checks his pulse. Runs down the cluttered hallway to the-

KITCHEN

Where he searches the counters in desperation. He stops. Hears the beeping of a phone off the hook. He rifles through stacks of paperwork. No phone. He swipes off the counter top, scattering junk across the kitchen. Finds a cordless phone. Listens. It's dead.

Alex scans the floor. A red display blinks: NO MESSAGES. It's a wireless receiver. Alex grabs it, stops. Searches the floor blindly with his hands.

A flashlight lands on Alex's face. Emergency lights flash from down the hall behind it.

POLICE OFFICER

Don't move! I'm serious. Do NOT MOVE!

The flashlight creeps closer.

Alex holds his hands in the air. Eyes wide with fear.

INT. HOMER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Alex sadly watches as paramedics wheel Ollie's body to an ambulance. An aging veteran with a compassionate face slowly approaches Alex.

DETECTIVE RAINS

We have, uh, located an... additional victim on the second floor.

Alex doesn't look at the detective.

ALEX

I was kinda afraid you would.
(turning reluctantly)
Which room?

INT. HOMER'S HOUSE - HOMER'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Alex and Detective Rains enter Homer's bedroom - now home to a gruesome crime scene. Blood is splattered on the wall and all over several piles of porno DVD's by Homer's corpse. Alex covers his mouth and nose, forcing control of himself.

DETECTIVE RAINS

Are you able to-

ALEX

That's Homer Bergman... that's my father.

INT. ROTHBERG'S OFFICE - DAY

The look on Rothberg's face is grave. Intense. Alex's face is white. Ian stares out the window, detached.

ROTHBERG

So, Ian, how did you get back from Omaha so quickly?

Ian snaps out of his gaze.

IAN

Oh, the, uh, traffic made me miss my flight. I had to get on a standby list and waited at the airport for about seven hours

ROTHBERG

And what time was it scheduled to leave?

IAN

Oh, seven forty four.

ROTHBERG

Which airline?

IAN

American. I believe it was Flight seventy four thirty one.

ROTHBERG

Don't worry, I'll look into it for you.

IAN

You took the wrong case. You know that, right? He did it. He'll never admit it, but even Alex, here, knows it.

Rothberg looks to Alex. His look says Ian's right.

Rothberg studies Ian for a moment, jots something down and closes his notebook.

ROTHBERG

(short, cold)

Thank you gentlemen for your time. My office will be contacting you both in a few days.

Rothberg moves toward the door.

Alex and Ian share a look of confusion.

INT. ATTORNEY MEETING ROOM - COUNTY JAIL - AFTERNOON

Across the table from Dax, Rothberg speaks with rapid precision.

ROTHBERG

We're not cutting any deals. The formal arraignment is in two days. After we plead not guilty to everything, we'll initiate formal discovery and begin deposing witnesses.

DAX

What does this mean?

ROTHBERG

It means we're going to trial.

DAX

So you think we can-

ROTHBERG

We WILL win. Turns out you weren't the only person that wanted your father dead.

DAX

Damn right, I wasn't!
(beat)
So who did it?

ROTHBERG

It was Ian. He was broke, hated you, was in love with your fiance, and was smart enough to orchestrate this whole thing. I think it was his idea for Kristin to put that money in your account and then kept her busy so you wouldn't know until the next day where it came from. He started this whole thing knowing what buttons to press to get you to go after your dad.

DAX

No. That can't be right. He went in Omaha, remember?

ROTHBERG

He's a smart guy. He never got on the plane.

(MORE)

ROTHBERG (CONT'D)

Once he saw Seth was in an accident, he knew there wouldn't be any other witnesses at the house so he could actually be there to make sure someone finished the job.

Rothberg removes a legal pad from his briefcase. Dax is stunned.

ROTHBERG (CONT'D)

Now, I need to know what happened after you found out about your dad's offer to Samia?

DAX

Well, uh, shit. That's when she really started torturing me.

EXT. PEARL STREET MALL - EVENING

Dax eats a hotdog on a bench in the pedestrian mall. He checks his cell phone. Nothing new. Around him, the mall is alive with activity. He types something into his phone and looks up at a small women's clothing store nearby. The glass door in front is closing.

He suddenly jumps up, shovels the remainder of the hotdog into his mouth and starts walking. Through the crowd ahead of him, we see Homer and Samia. They both have full loads of shopping bags.

Samia points across the mall to a little lingerie shop. She and Homer cross to the store. Dax stops walking, his rage boiling.

EXT. RED SQUARE BISTRO - EVENING

Dax stares through the window into the restaurant. Homer and Samia laugh and flirt as they pick away at a number of delicious dishes and drinks.

EXT. BETA NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Dax watches Homer and Samia greet the bouncers and stroll toward the door into the club.

Dax storms after them. The bouncers stop him.

BOUNCER 1

I need ID and we got twenty dollar cover tonight.

Dax stares past the bouncer. Before she enters the club, Samia glances back at Dax. Smiles devilishly.

INT. BELCARO MOTEL - LATE NIGHT

Dax stares at his phone on his bed in a seedy motel room. He turns on the TV. Looks at his phone. Hits a button. It vibrates.

He tears the plastic wrap off a cup. Fills it with tequila. Turns up the volume on the TV.

The phone vibrates.

CLOSE ON PHONE

NEW PICTURE MESSAGE - SAMIA

It is a picture of Samia posing in sexy black lingerie. The caption: Cute, huh?

Dax shakes his head, finishes his cup of tequila and sets it next to the Glock on the night stand.

He stares at the gun for a moment. His face tells us he may pick it up. He reaches toward the Glock but opens the drawer beneath it.

In the drawer: a Gideon Bible, a yellow note pad and a pen.

He grabs the yellow pad and pen.

INT. KRISTIN'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Dax sits on the counter with a yellow note in his hand. His sad eyes are fixed on the refrigerator where magnet letters still spell KRISTIN LOVES DAX.

He suddenly hops off and jumbles the letters in frustration.

Dax solemnly removes a yellow note from his pocket and sticks it to the fridge.

EXT. BETA NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Dax walks past a long line of people waiting to get into the club. A freakishly big bouncer stops him. Dax isn't intimidated. He holds up his Navy ID.

DAX
 (spelling it out)
 B.E.R.G.M.A.N.

This doesn't register with the bouncer.

DAX (CONT'D)
 You don't even know who your owner
 is? What's your name?

The bouncer nervously gives way. Dax glares at him as he passes.

INT. BETA NIGHTCLUB - LATER

The place is packed. Loud tech/house music blasts. Lasers cut through the smoke. Dax stops a large bouncer.

DAX
 Samia Vitalia?

The bouncer points toward a DJ booth. Samia is talking to one of the DJ's. Dax makes his way through the packed dance floor. The DJ nods at Dax. Samia turns.

SAMIA
 Yes?

DAX
 This place isn't bad.

SAMIA
 (coldly)
 It's the exact same as it was
 before...

DAX
 (suggestive)
 I like it much better now for some
 reason.

SAMIA
 (staring at the upper
 level)
 Good for you.

Dax starts to say something, but Samia just walks off coldly. Dax is stunned. He starts to chase after her, but two bouncers are immediately in his face.

DAX
 What the-

BOUNCER 1
Let's go, Dax.

Dax reaches back and pounds Bouncer 1 in the face. The bouncer goes down. Hard.

Bouncer 2 comes at Dax. Dax quickly takes him down. They wrestle violently across the dance floor amidst the laser light show and ravers, Dax clearly dominating his massive opponent.

SAMIA'S POV - UPPER LEVEL

Dax gets Bouncer 2 in a sleeper hold. Wraps his legs around the bouncer's waist, squeezing the life out. Several other bouncers appear on scene. Dax squeezes tighter. Bouncer 2's head might actually pop off. The other bouncers step back.

Releasing Bouncer 2, Dax holds up his hands in defense.

Dax spots Samia above him on the upper level. Flashes a maniacal smile.

The bouncers close in, pummeling him with kicks and punches.

INT. 16TH STREET MALL-RIDE - MOVING - NIGHT

Dax slumps in the back of the bus, staring off in a haze of depression. Dry blood crusted around a cut above his eye. His lips and cheekbones swollen. Several night-lifers chatter around him.

The bus stops. Deandre jumps through the front door, spots Dax and runs back to him.

DEANDRE
Dax! What happened?!

Deandre looks at Dax's cut. Dax fends him off.

DAX
What does it look like?

DEANDRE
Are you okay?

DAX
(bitterly)
Phenomenal.

DEANDRE
Where's Chopper? How is-

DAX
 He's dead. Get your juvenile ass
 home.

Deandre is devastated. He stares angrily at Dax.

DAX (CONT'D)
 (off Deandre's look)
 I can't take care of you.

DEANDRE
 Fuck you! I can take care of
 myself!

The bus comes to a stop. Deandre jumps out. Dax follows.

Deandre runs off, jumps on a skateboard and turns down an
 alley.

Dax turns back angrily. The bus drives off without him.

INT. KRISTINS' APARTMENT - HALLWAY - LATE NIGHT

Dax limps down the hallway to Kristin's apartment. He
 reaches for the handle. Stops. Putting his ear to the door,
 he can hear muffled laughter - Kristin and a man.

At first he looks furious, but the rage quickly melts. He
 stumbles back down the hallway.

INT. ATTORNEY MEETING ROOM - COUNTY JAIL - EVENING

DAX
 Samia was just testing me. I knew
 it.

ROTHBERG
 How do you mean?

DAX
 I knew she'd been hurt before, you
 know? It was all over her face.
 But I could see how she reacted to
 me, too. She just wanted to see if
 I felt the same way... but I
 couldn't in good conscience do
 ANYTHING more with her until I paid
 Kristin back.

ROTHBERG
 But you knew Kristin was cheating
 on you with Ian. Why-

DAX

I still cared about her, though.
And if I couldn't get the money to
pay her back, things were going to
get ugly.

ROTHBERG

How do you mean?

DAX

I was going to take it from my dad,
drop it off at Kristin's, take
Samia out for a wild night and then
I was going to kill myself.

This catches Rothberg off guard.

ROTHBERG

And that's what you wrote in the
note?

DAX

(nodding)

If I couldn't get the money that
next day I was going to go through
with it all... So I went on a
mission.

INT. PATHFINDER - MORNING

Dax yawns and stretches, stopping to work out a kink in his neck. He turns on the car, shifts into reverse and looks behind him. The engine revs, but the car doesn't move. Dax looks confused. We hear the engine rev harder, but the car still doesn't move. Dax opens the door. Looks down at his wheels.

EXT. PARKING GARAGE - LATER

Dax is squatted down before the front wheel on the driver's side. His arm cranks on a jack. The front end of the Pathfinder slowly raises off the ground. Dax turns away from the wheel to search a tool box. We see the tire isn't flat - it's locked by a parking boot.

Dax removes a long military knife from its sheath and stabs it into the tire. Air hisses out.

Dax rolls a spare tire from the trunk of the Pathfinder to the front. He easily slides the boot off the now completely flat tire and goes to work on the lug nuts.

INT. PATHFINDER - DOWNTOWN DENVER - DAY

The car is parked amidst several massive skyscrapers in downtown Denver. Dax takes a deep breath. Opens the door.

INT. BANK OF THE WEST - DAY

Dax fills out paperwork in the massive lobby. Compared to the sharply dressed business men and women rushing in and out of the lobby, Dax looks like a battered, ineffectual bum.

EXT. BANK OF THE WEST - DAY

Dax storms out the front door of the building.

EXT. 16TH STREET MALL - DAY

Dax drops nickels and dimes into a vending machine on the street. He presses a button. Nothing happens. He's short. A homeless woman beside him smiles. Hands him a dime. Dax nods. Retrieves his chips.

INT. COMPASS BANK - DAY

Settled in a cozy armchair, Dax cuddles a Styrofoam cup of coffee. A mountain of paperwork in his lap. He looks up in time to catch a cute blonde teller staring at him. Feebly forcing charm, he raises his glass in toast.

EXT. COMPASS BANK - LATER

Dax angrily storms out of the bank.

INT. U.S. BANK - LATER

Dax is escorted out of the bank by two security guards.

He throws a crumpled piece of paper at a trash can. It ricochets off the top. He moves to pick the paper up. It blows away. Dax punishes the trash can with a booming side kick. It skids across the concrete into a glass door. The door shatters.

Dax strides away, ignoring the blanket of stares.

INT. E-Z MONEY PAWN SHOP - NIGHT

Two pristine, nickel-plated revolvers rest on a glass counter.

Dax stands in front of the counter. A bleak look on his face. These are clearly his prized possessions.

DAX

Those were given to me by Master Chief William Sullivan after I was awarded two Purple Hearts under his command. They were once owned by General MacArthur.

The clerk examines one of the pistols.

CLERK

No shit? I bet they were used to shoot Hitler himself, huh?

Dax's face reddens. He might jump over the counter.

DAX

(very restrained)
They're priceless.

CLERK

I'll give you a hundred bucks.

EXT. PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Dax spots two hippie tow-truck guys arguing by his Pathfinder. It is chained up to a tow truck. Dax sprints across the parking garage. One of the tow truck guys gets in the car.

DAX

That's my car!

TOW TRUCK GUY 1

(genuinely sorry)
Awww, no! Seriously? That sucks, man! That means your car is getting TOWED.
(to guy in tow truck)
Dude, this is HIS car!

TOW TRUCK GUY 2

(leaning out the window)
Shit, brah! I feel terrible now!

DAX
Can I at least get some stuff out
of there first?

TOW TRUCK GUY 1
(genuinely sympathetic)
Yeah, man. Of course. Whatever
you need.

Dax rips the door open and disappears in the car for a moment. He reappears with a backpack over his shoulder. In his hand is the Glock.

Dax removes a brown paper bag from his backpack and extracts a black bullet clip.

TOW TRUCK GUY 1 (CONT'D)
(staring at the gun)
Hey man, listen, we're really-

Dax stares at Tow Truck Guy 1. Jams the clip into the gun.

DAX
No worries, bud. It's out of gas
anyway.

Dax tosses the paper bag to Tow Truck Guy 1 and storms off.

Tow Truck Guy 1 opens the bag, removes a box of bullets and shares a look of fear with his buddy.

INT. TAXI - NIGHT

Dax stares angrily out the window at Homer's house. It's dark. Ominous. Only one of the lights by the walkway in front of the house is functioning. It flickers unpredictably.

Dax digs some cash from his pocket. Hands it to Malik.

DAX
I wish I had more for you, but
that's all I've got.

Malik waves it off. No big deal.

INT. HOMER'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Dax pulls the Glock from his backpack and walks blindly through the darkness toward the stairs. A few steps and he trips and falls over a pile of boxes. He finds his feet. Freezes. Listens for movement. Silence.

UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

Glock in hand, Dax weaves down a pathway through the strange shadows of Homer's upstairs hallway collections. Something moves ahead of him.

Homer steps out of a doorway behind Dax. Homer raises a bat and swings, catching Dax in the back. Dax flies face first into a pile of old turntables and sound equipment.

As Homer steps forward for another swing, Dax spins, catching Homer in the knee with a microphone stand. Homer drops to the floor.

Dax gets to his feet, swings one last time, catching Homer in the torso. Dax finds the gun on the floor and watches Homer crawl back towards the door. Dax steps over him and turns on a light.

DAX
Get up old man!

Homer coughs, eyes wide in terror.

HOMER
I think you broke my knee cap.

Dax punches Homer in the nose. Hard. Steps back, satisfied.

DAX
I DEFINITELY broke your nose.

Dax grabs Homer by the hair and drags him into-

HOMER'S BEDROOM

Where Homer frantically crawls over piles of junk toward an armoire. Blood dripping freely from his nose. Dax kicks him in the rib cage. Homer doubles over. Rolls into a stack of magazines. Coughs violently. Dax cocks the gun and points it in Homer's face. Blood runs over Homer's lips. Drips off his chin.

DAX
She never came, did she?

Homer wipes some of the blood off his mouth.

DAX (CONT'D)
Well?!

Tears well up in Homer's eyes. He coughs and spits blood.

DAX (CONT'D)
SAY SOMETHING!

HOMER
(pained)
I love you, son.

DAX
What?!

Dax lowers the gun. Takes a step back, confused.

HOMER
It'd be much easier to show it if
you didn't have so much of me in
you. But you do. All you boys do.
And for that, I'm sorry.

DAX
So it's OUR fault you're a shitty
father?!

HOMER
I thought if I never babied you,
you'd come out tougher, stronger,
and smarter than I ever was.

Dax presses the point of the gun to Homer's head.

DAX
(sadistically)
You obviously succeeded at that
didn't you?

Dax grips Homer by the chin, grinding the barrel of the gun
into his head.

DAX (CONT'D)
My entire life, you've done nothing
but throw me in the fire... over
and over... even when I was a KID!
A little fucking KID!

HOMER
You know when your mom left us it
wasn't because the spark was gone.
It was never there to begin with.
She never wanted me.

DAX
That's a shocker.

HOMER

She never wanted you, either. She just wanted an extra bank account... and I ran out.

DAX

It's not-

HOMER

Ian and Alex's mom?

(beat)

I loved her so much... and you know what she did?

Homer chokes back a sob. Dax lowers the gun.

DAX

(resolute)

You're wrong about Samia. I know it.

Homer pulls himself up on one leg. Removes a gallon-sized bag of cash from the armoire. Hobbling back, he presses it into Dax's chest.

HOMER

Then here, son. You're gonna need all of it.

Dax stares at the bag. He's never seen so much money. He holds it back out to Homer.

DAX

I don't want your money.

HOMER

It was never mine in the first place.

Dax stares down at the money in his hands. Turns for the door.

HOMER (CONT'D)

She's gonna break you, Dax.

Dax stops. Looks back at Homer.

DAX

I'm already broken.

(beat)

But thanks, Dad.

Dax sets the Glock on the armoire. Walks out to the-

HALLWAY

Where he weaves down a pathway through the darkness toward the stairs.

A shadow jumps out at him from a doorway on the left wielding a baseball bat. Dax struggles with the assailant, trying to control the bat. Dax realizes it's Ollie.

OLLIE

You ungrateful little bastard! How could you-

Dax carefully fends off Ollie's spirited attack.

DAX

Ollie! I didn't do anything to him! We're-

A gunshot rings out from Homer's bedroom, startling Dax and Ollie. Ollie falls backward, tumbling down the flight of hard wood stairs.

Dax can only watch helplessly.

Ollie lays motionless at the foot of the stairs.

Dax shoots a look back toward the bedroom and rushes down the stairs to Ollie's side. Blood pours from a cut on Ollie's head.

DAX (CONT'D)

Ollie! I'm sorry! Ollie! Fuck!
Are you okay?

Ollie is unconscious. Dax runs to the kitchen. Searches for a phone. Finding one, he dials 911 and drops it on the floor. He grabs his backpack and the bag of money from the bottom of the stairs and runs out the door.

INT. TAXI - DEANDRE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Dax pulls two bundles of cash out of his backpack and stuffs them in his pockets. He hands two bills to Malik.

DAX

I'll be right back.

Dax jogs across the lawn to the front porch. He drops the backpack in front of the door, rings the doorbell and jogs back to the cab.

As Dax gets in the cab, Deandre opens the front door. Seeing the backpack, he unzips it. It's full of cash. He looks up to see the taxi pulling away.

DAX'S POV - THROUGH WINDOW

Deandre runs across the yard toward the moving cab. We can see him yelling, but cannot hear him. Dax turns away from the window.

Through the windshield we see the Denver skyline at night.

The SOUND of MUFFLED MUSIC

INT. BETA NIGHTCLUB - UPPER LEVEL - NIGHT

Dax jogs up a dark stairway. He strides to a door, outlined by orange lights. He pulls it open - music erupts as he steps into a lavish VIP arena. Ravers dancing, wild lights, sexy cocktail waitresses with platters of candy, etc.

Dax spots Samia by a bar in the corner. He watches her work as he slowly approaches. She is doing Dax's "firewall shot" presentation.

Finishing the set-up, she holds up her flaming shot and sees Dax. To wild cheers, she downs the shot with the group, never breaking eye contact with Dax. Samia steps aside, visibly shaken by his battered face.

DAX
(smiling)
Not bad. Who taught you that?

SAMIA
I didn't... you can't be in here.
They'll-

Dax smiles. Leans in.

DAX
I don't care. I have something to
show you when you're done tonight.

SAMIA
I'm not working.

Samia nods to a VIP table occupied by several high-rollers. One of them is eyeing Dax jealously.

DAX
Him? Seriously?

SAMIA
I was afraid you weren't coming
back.

INT. JET HOTEL - ELEVATOR - LATER

Dax and Samia kiss passionately in the elevator. Between
kisses:

SAMIA
I'm sorry I fucked with your head
so much.

DAX
No you're not.

SAMIA
I had to see how far you'd go-

Dax stops her with another kiss. Samia pushes him backward.
They slam into the other wall, still kissing.

SAMIA (CONT'D)
I might fall in love with you.

The elevator opens.

DAX
I think you did that first night.

Samia slaps at him - playing angry.

SAMIA
You don't even REMEMBER that night!

Dax catches one of her hands, pulls her out of the elevator.
Holds her close.

DAX
Did you call your friends?

SAMIA
I did.

DAX
All of them?

SAMIA
Just a few. I don't think the
rooms here are that big...

She looks at him suspiciously as he plays with a strand of her hair. We can see a blood stain on his shirt sleeve. He smiles.

DAX

You might be surprised.

INT. JET HOTEL - VIP SUITE - 1:00 AM

Dax and Samia enter the suite. They are blasted by a wall of music. A DJ works on an elaborate set-up in the corner. A party is raging. Samia is blown away.

Dax takes her hand.

DAX

Whatever you want, you can have tonight.

In the corner, decked out in a black tuxedo, Cliff pours champagne. Seeing Dax, Cliff nods to a black marble coffee table - equipped with several bowls of pills, a jar of pot, a bong and a mountain of cocaine. Samia smiles diabolically.

INT. JET HOTEL - VIP SUITE - 3:00 AM

A rolled-up hundred dollar bill snorts a huge line of cocaine off the coffee table. Several long lines are cut up beside it.

The party is raging. Samia dances seductively with a several girls.

Dax snorts a line of cocaine and slumps back on the massive couch. A solemn look on his face. A guy sits beside him, excitedly telling a story. Dax isn't listening.

Seeing Dax, Samia saunters over to the couch. Sits on his lap.

SAMIA

What's wrong?

DAX

I left someone behind in a pretty bad state... I'd give ten years of my life for him to be okay.

SAMIA

What can you do about it? If he's sick, he's sick!

She grabs his hand. Tries to pull him off the couch.

SAMIA (CONT'D)
Come with me, I'm sure I know how
to make you feel better.

Dax forces a smile, takes her hand. He follows her into the-

BEDROOM

Where she pushes him onto the bed. Straddles him.

SAMIA
What's wrong with you? Tell me.

DAX
I almost killed my dad tonight.
Literally.

SAMIA
What? Why?
(beat)
Was it because of me?

DAX
I couldn't let him treat you like
that.

Samia leans in for a long kiss. The music is dark, slow and seductive. She pulls away.

SAMIA
You didn't do it, though, right?
You didn't kill him.

Samia looks him in the eyes. Dax shakes his head - no. Samia smiles blissfully. Dax delicately kisses her shoulder. Her neck. Her cheek. She runs her hands through his hair.

DAX
I'd do anything for you. Except
for that.

SAMIA
I believe you.

The music stops. The door busts open. SWAT agents flood the room. Guns trained. Dax and Samia kiss passionately.

INT. VISITOR ROOM - COUNTY JAIL - EVENING

Dax is smiling in warm recollection. Rothberg rifles through an accordion file.

ROTHBERG

Wow. So let me backpedal for a moment. Before Ollie fell down the stairs, you heard a gunshot?

DAX

Yeah.

Rothberg stops rifling. Removes a document. Flips through a few pages. Examines one.

ROTHBERG

There it is. The police report lists your father's cause of death as a gunshot wound to the chest.

DAX

Right.

ROTHBERG

ONE gunshot would. If he died of ONE shot, and you HEARD the shot, that means Ollie heard the shot, too, and can testify that it couldn't have been you pulling the trigger.

They lock eyes.

ROTHBERG (CONT'D)

Right now, your freedom is laying in that hospital.

EXT. COUNTY JAIL - EVENING

Rothberg is swarmed by a pack of journalists begging for a statement. He holds up a hand to the barrage of questions. Waits for silence.

ROTHBERG

First, I must note that Dax is in a severe state of mourning after the loss of his father.

Several reporters shout out questions.

ROTHBERG (CONT'D)

Dax has asked that I represent him in this matter, and it will be my pleasure to pursue justice on his behalf. As a defense attorney, I seldom have the privilege of representing a truly innocent man. That, however, is exactly the privilege I now enjoy today. Dax Bergman did not commit murder and I will prove it. That is all for now. Thank you.

Rothberg wades through the mess of cameras, microphones and reporters.

INT. OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY - EVENING

Rothberg stands defiantly before Walter's desk. A smug look on Walter's face.

ROTHBERG

You're going to drop all charges against my client and put Ollie Kolodzieski in protective custody.

WALTER

Yeah? And why would I do that?

ROTHBERG

He's a material witness and his life is in danger.

WALTER

I should say so. Your client threw him down a flight of stairs in a murderous rage.

ROTHBERG

He was defending himself, FROM OLLIE, when Homer was shot. This man's testimony won't just exonerate my client. It has the added bonus of saving you an embarrassing trial of the wrong guy.

Walter thinks hard for a moment.

WALTER

I'll drop the burglary and possession.

(MORE)

WALTER (CONT'D)

He pleads destruction, mischief,
resisting and two counts
manslaughter and he'll get a chance
at parole in twenty.

ROTHBERG

Protect my witness and you'll be
able to prosecute the person that
actually deserves it.

WALTER

Take the deal and I'll make sure he
gets all the protective custody you
want.

Rothberg turns to the door.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

ROTHBERG

To the hospital. One statement
from Ollie and you'll be looking at
a dismissal.

Rothberg strides to the door. Stops.

WALTER

Two counts manslaughter, mischief
and resisting. That's the best I
can do.

ROTHBERG

I'll fax that statement over in an
hour.

INT. HOMER'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - EVENING

Several police cars are parked by the house. Four CSI's chat
on the lawn as a few others load evidence bags into a black
Suburban.

Down the dirt path we see Ian, clearly rattled by the gravity
of the scene. He grabs his suitcase from off the ground.
Turns toward the bar.

INT. BERGMAN'S PUB - SETH'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

Seth lays motionless in bed. Ian storms in. Shakes Seth's
shoulder.

IAN
Wake up you little fucking worm.

A creepy smile emerges on Seth's face as his eyes slowly open.

SETH
How was your trip?

SETH (CONT'D)
You look stressed. Are you not feeling well?

IAN
Fuck you. Of course I'm stressed. Start talking. What did you do?

SETH
I told you I'd make sure you didn't regret leaving.

Seth sits up. Nods to a prescription bottle on the night stand. Ian picks up the bottle.

IAN
I didn't think he'd actually go THROUGH with it.

SETH
Sure you did...

Ian glares at Seth.

SETH (CNT'D) (CONT'D)
(enjoying the reaction)
But you were wrong.

A wave of confusion hits Ian.

IAN
I was wrong about what?

SETH
Dax didn't have the balls to go through with it.

IAN
What does that mean?

Seth nods at the prescription bottle.

IAN (CONT'D)
WHAT did you DO?

Seth's face tightens with rage.

SETH
Exactly what you told me to!

IAN
I didn't TELL you to do ANYTHING!

Ian opens the prescription bottle and throws the bottle at the wall, scattering pills everywhere.

IAN (CONT'D)
That's not-

SETH
Out of all of us, you're the most like him. You knew full well what was going to happen if you left and I can testify to-

Seth's eyes roll back in his head. His body starts convulsing violently. Ian looks on callously.

Seth's body goes limp. Ian moves over him. Listens for breathing. Steps back, surprised.

After a beat of indecision, Ian checks for a pulse. He tilts Seth's head back like he's about to start mouth to mouth, but stops.

He pulls his hands back. Stares coldly at Seth's limp body.

Behind Ian, one of the CSI's comes through the door.

CSI
Is everything okay? We heard some yelling.

The CSI sees Seth's blue face.

CSI (CONT'D)
Is he-

IAN
Yes, no, I was just coming to get you. He just went into a seizure and stopped breathing.

The investigator calls out the door for help and rushes into the apartment.

INT. COMMUNITY HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - EVENING

Ian paces around a quad of armchairs. A nurse nods in his direction. He speeds over to her. Follows her out the door to the-

HALLWAY

Where he struggles to keep up. As they walk:

IAN
Can he talk? How bad is it?

NURSE
It was a very, very severe seizure.

IAN
Will he be okay?

Ian follows the nurse around the corner.

NURSE
We are still waiting on some tests and considering the recent trauma he's been through, I can't really say, but he does seem to be-

The nurse nods to a room on the left. They enter-

SETH'S HOSPITAL ROOM

Where the bed is empty. They share a look of panic.

INT. COMMUNITY HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Seth limps down a long, empty hallway. A strange, sedated look on his face. A nurse eyes him from down the hall. He smiles warmly. Satisfied, she turns away. His smile evaporates.

OLLIE'S ROOM

Seth limps into the small, private room, dimly lit by the flickering lights of several machines. Ollie appears to be unconscious.

Beside the bed, Anya sleeps awkwardly in a chair. Seth glares at her.

Seth finds a needle disposal box. Removes a large, used syringe.

Holding the syringe with his good hand, he pulls the plunger back with his teeth, filling the needle with air, sinks the needle into Ollie's chest and compresses the plunger. Ollie's body shakes slightly and goes limp.

The "flat line" beep of the cardiac monitor sounds loudly. A serene monstrosity in his eyes, Seth grins.

INT. BERGMAN'S PUB - LATE MORNING

Alex and Rodstein are seated at a ratty corner booth. Paperwork covers the table.

RODSTEIN

In his will, your father named me executor of his estate.

ALEX

Can't the fights over my dad's money wait until AFTER we finish burying him?

RODSTEIN

Well that would be fine, but there are variables affecting the situation of which you probably have no knowledge.

ALEX

Listen, I don't want anything, so-

RODSTEIN

That's fine. Actually, that's good, because there may not be anything to inherit.

ALEX

Have you BEEN inside that house?

RODSTEIN

That's exactly my point.

Rodstein waits for Alex to understand.

RODSTEIN (CONT'D)

(annoyed)

Your father died with approximately nine hundred and forty-eight thousand dollars of debt.

Alex's eyes go wide.

RODSTEIN (CONT'D)

And he left the house and everything in it to you. Ian got Bergman's Pub, both cars and the micro-brewery and Dax got his other two clubs. Considering the potential value of these assets, it may not be as bad as it sounds.

ALEX

You're saying there might be a million dollars worth of junk just sitting around in my dad's house?

RODSTEIN

That, and hoarders tend to utilize storage units to house special collections so there may be any number of facilities in the surrounding areas with assets we don't even know about. Point is, there are about nine trucks and a crew of about thirty people that will be here in a few hours to clear out the house and begin the asset valuation process so we can figure out what needs to be auctioned to service this debt.

ALEX

What does this have to do with me?

RODSTEIN

I need you to be advised that the house may be subject to auction and... well, most of his- your property will be seized and sold.

ALEX

Whatever you think you have to do, do it.

RODSTEIN

I assumed that would be the case so I've drafted a deed transfer that encompasses all other... ontological units-

ALEX

To YOU? I don't think-

Rothberg appears beside the booth.

ROTHBERG

Ollie is dead and your other brothers are both missing. I need your help.

(beat)

I know you didn't have anything to do with this... and we need evidence. Now.

Reeling with the news, Alex thinks for a moment. Locks eyes with Rothberg. He's got it.

ROTHBERG (CONT'D)

I'll drive.

INT. ROTHBERG'S PORSCHE - LATER

CLOSE ON the orange U-Store key chain.

Alex begins removing the keys from the ring. He sits shotgun while Rothberg speeds through the gates of "U-Store."

ROTHBERG

How many are there?

ALEX

Seven. But one isn't numbered.

Rothberg parks the car between a row of garages.

ROTHBERG

Okay, I'll take three and you take three. The last one's probably a duplicate, anyway.

U-STORE - LATER

Rothberg jimmies one of the keys in the lock of a storage garage door. Leaning into it, he gets the key to turn. Rips the garage door up.

The garage is full of rusted out lawn mowers, old couches, paintings and other random junk.

SERIES OF SHOTS

Alex rips open a garage. It's full of lamps and mirrors - all covered with thick layers of dust and spider webs.

Rothberg rips open another garage. It's full of boxes.

Alex rips open a door. It's full of hundreds of snowboards, skis and a busted up snowmobile.

Rothberg rips open a door. It's full of auto parts and taxidermy animals. He covers his mouth to avoid the stench.

A combination of fear and disgust on his face, Alex opens a door - the garage is full of scrap metal and worn tires. A long metal pipe comes sliding out at his chest. He barely dodges it.

Rothberg appears behind him.

ROTHBERG

No luck.

ALEX

I don't really know what I was expecting to find...

ROTHBERG

It was worth a shot. I'll check with the office and see about this other key.

Alex nods solemnly. Rothberg strides off.

Alex turns back to the garage full of tires and junk metal. He pushes on the metal pipe. It doesn't move. In a moment of rage, he rams his shoulder into it, launching a tire out into the alley. It comes to rest between the garages. Alex chases after it. Stops. Looks up. A rusted out Astro van barrels down the alley toward him. He rushes out of the way, barely escaping the grill of the van.

The van squeals around the corner. After a brief glance back at the tire, Alex storms down the alley after the van.

The Astro is parked around the corner of the end unit. The garage door is shut, but the side door is cracked open.

Alex appears around the corner, eyeing the cracked door as he approaches. The van is full to the ceiling with untouched shopping bags and boxes.

INT. U-STORE - SETH'S GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Alex peeks his head into the storage garage. One entire wall is lined with books. It is an immaculately organized study. Seated at a desk in the corner, a backpack in his lap, Seth studies Alex's reaction carefully.

ALEX

It wasn't Dad. It was you that fed the glass shards to Chopper, wasn't it?

SETH

That reeking pile of shit told me to give the mutt something to eat. So I did.

Seth closes a laptop and slides it into a slot in his backpack.

ALEX

And Dad? You killed him, too?

SETH

Everyone who ever met him wished the same thing.

(smiling)

Even you.

ALEX

But, how...? The car accident. How did you know you'd make it through?

SETH

I didn't think I'd have to. I thought Dax would be man enough to handle it if given the opportunity. Fortunately, I was strong enough to finish the job he couldn't.

ALEX

He couldn't go finish it because the JOB was our DAD. I can't believe you-

SETH

He was the most depraved, disgusting human being ever to contaminate this earth with his breath. And, yes, he was our dad.

Alex looks at him sadly.

SETH (CONT'D)

Don't pretend you didn't hate him for pulling you out of your little religious hole, or for driving your mom to suicide before you ever even knew her.

ALEX

Why are you trying to-

SETH

I am not TRYING to do anything.
I've SUCCEDED.

Alex shakes his head in disbelief.

SETH (CONT'D)

I got you, the pure, innocent
novice to leave the church, start
drinking and begin lusting after a
woman.

ALEX

That's not-

SETH

I ran Ian, the agnostic,
philosophical moralizer through an
ethical gauntlet so confusing that
he's losing his grip on reality as
we speak. I shot that disgusting
bastard you used to call 'dad' in
the heart and Dax, the only son of
a bitch who abused me more than the
old man, is going to pay for it for
the rest of his life.

ALEX

Rothberg's one of the best
attorneys in the country..

SETH

Who do you think recommended him to
Kristin? I researched him AND that
DA. They went to law school
together. Rothberg would take a
case to trial against Turturro on
principle alone and the same goes
for Turturro. He'd sell his first
born just for a shot at putting a
client of Rothberg's away for life.
Even without any evidence
whatsoever. Either way, Dax is
going away for good.

Seth removes a prescription bottle from his backpack. Pops a
few pills.

ALEX

How can you wish that upon an
innocent-

SETH
 Innocent? INNOCENT? He's as
 guilty as me, and Ian, and you.

ALEX
 What are you talking about?

SETH
 This was a team effort, which, I
 must say, went beautifully.

Seth slips a booklet of plane tickets into the front pocket
 of his backpack. Zips it up.

ALEX
 I had no part of this and you know
 it.

SETH
 Oh no? You and that slut Samia
 were the perfect little
 distractions we needed to make this
 work.

Alex is speechless. Seth picks up his backpack and suitcase.

SETH (CONT'D)
 You're more than welcome to stay
 and look around, but I doubt you'll
 find anything of interest... except
 this.

Seth holds up the envelope from Father Zosima. Alex snatches
 it as Seth hobbles toward the door.

SETH (CONT'D)
 I have one more little errand
 before I go. You'll forgive me if
 I don't elaborate.

Seth limps out the door. Alex just stares at the envelope in
 shock. Outside, a door slams and the Astro screeches away.

Rothberg strides into the garage.

ROTHBERG
 Was that-

Alex nods.

ROTHBERG (CONT'D)
 What happened? Where is he going?

ALEX

It was him all along. He set it
all up.

Rothberg strides past Alex - stopping at some filing
cabinets.

ROTHBERG

I know.

ALEX

No. You don't understand... it was
all him. He even called Father
Zosima...

Ignoring Alex, Rothberg rips one of the cabinets open. It's
empty. He tries another. It's empty, too. He pulls out his
cell phone. Makes a call.

ROTHBERG

(to Alex)

He won't get far. There has to be
something in here we can use.

(into phone)

Paulette, it's Rothberg. I need a
favor.

Rothberg points to a pile of notebooks and journals.

ROTHBERG (CONT'D)

(to Alex)

START DIGGING!

Alex stiffens.

ALEX

I know exactly where he is.

INT. BERGMAN'S PUB - CONTINUOUS

Seth climbs onto a seat at the bar and scans the room. There
are about two dozen patrons having a great time.

Behind the bar, the bartender serves a fresh beer to a skinny
old man and fumbles with the cash register.

SETH

I'd like to buy a shot for everyone
in here.

The bartender eyes him contemptuously.

BARTENDER

He'd roll over in his grave if he
knew I let you in here.

Seth tosses a wad of cash on the bar.

The bartender picks it up. Flips through it. It's all
hundreds.

Seth smiles strangely. The bartender looks at him like he's
crazy.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)

Godet. V.S.O.P.

The bartender shrugs. Starts lining up shots. Seth wanders
around to the-

BACK ROOM

Where he finds a large knife. He picks it up. Looks down at
the cast on his left hand.

INT. BERGMAN'S PUB - LATER

Seth stands on a rung of his bar stool and raises a shot in
the air. The cast is gone. His left hand and wrist are
grotesquely bruised.

The patrons in the bar all raise their shots in silent
anticipation.

SETH

To the day we die.

PATRONS

To the day we die!

Seth takes a sip and watches in satisfaction as the patrons
all down their shots. He climbs down to a chorus of thank-
you's.

Seth limps across the bar to the bathroom, pushes through a
battered wooden door and disappears inside. The door bangs
shut. A tarnished bronze plate reads: GENTLEMEN.

The sound of a gunshot rings out.

A puddle of blood seeps out from under the door.

BATHROOM

A newspaper rests on a ledge above the radiator. Above it, the window is open.

A newspaper flier is blown free. It tumbles across the bathroom, landing in a pool of blood.

Seth's body is sprawled on the filthy tile floor. Blood oozes from his head. A Smith & Wesson near his body. The door bulges in the frame, banging against his foot.

The sound of a FAUCET RUNNING.

INT. HOMER'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Two feet stand amidst a maelstrom of newspaper fliers.

They belong to Ian who is maniacally scrubbing his hands and arms in the sink. The soapy water is pink with blood. Two black gloves are neatly placed on the back of the sink.

IAN

(manic muttering)

Gypsy's curiosity was hot. Do
girls love me? Do they not?
Gypsy, he will always steal,
wretched all my life I'll feel.
Soldier's curiosity was hot. Do
girls love me? Do they not?
Soldier will be rough and blunt.
Always chasing after cunt...

Ian unravels a roll of paper towels already pink with bloody water. He wipes his hands and starts washing again.

IAN (CONT'D)

(muttering)

Merchant's curiosity was hot. Do
girls love me? Do they not?

INT. OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY - LATE AFTERNOON

Rothberg's dilemma - he's got nothing and Turturro knows it

Intro: the letter -

WALTER

So you didn't find anything?

ROTHBERG

Nothing.

WALTER

Ready to throw in the towel?

ROTHBERG

Not on your life.

WALTER

This is not a circumstantial case, Will. I have direct evidence across the board... oh, and this.

Walter removes a small yellow note.

Rothberg stiffens.

ROTHBERG

This isn't Salem. You don't get to burn an innocent man just because you want a bigger office.

WALTER

Take this gift or your boy's never going to get another BREATH outside of prison for the rest of his life.

ROTHBERG

Fuck you. We're going to trial.

Rothberg stares angrily at Walter.

JARIK

I bet that jarhead's just as stubborn as you, isn't he?
(off Rothberg's look)
A man of 'principle?' Never take a deal no matter how much it costs him?

ROTHBERG

Rothberg uses the DA to goad Dax into taking the deal got no evidence whatsoever. Seth and Ian

INT. - CLOSED CASSET

INT. ATTORNEY MEETING ROOM - COUNTY JAIL - MORNING

EXT. HOMER'S HOUSE - DAY

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

FUNERAL MONTAGE

Surrounded by police, Dax in cuffs with Samia and Deandre watching the casket drop.

Kristin visiting Ian in an institution.

EXT. HOMER'S HOUSE - DAY

A pretty young girl of about 20 stands nervously on the step. Beside her, Chopper sits patiently, his belly bandaged with several dressings and a big cone around his head. The poor dog looks humiliated. The girl signs as she speaks.

LISE

We tried to call-

Clearly nervous, Alex signs fluently as he speaks.

ALEX

Oh, uh, yeah they disconnected the phones... Thank you so much for taking care of him.

Alex bends down to pet Chopper. Chopper is quick to accept. Lise is smitten.

LISE

You learned sign language?

Alex stands up.

ALEX

I wanted to be able to talk to you... so you could hear me.

Lise smiles bashfully.

LISE

Well now you can...
 (re: Alex's eyes)
 What's wrong? Do you want me to go?

ALEX

(re: the house)
 No. No, please, I just...
 (MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)

I have to do something real quick.
Is that okay?

LISE

Take your time.

INT. HOMER'S HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

Slouched on an empty box in the kitchen, Alex stares in awe at the massive empty rooms. A few boxes and newspaper fliers are all that remain. The place seems gigantic.

On the counter before him is the sealed letter and the paperwork from Rodstein. After long deliberation, Alex picks up the sealed envelope. Slowly opens it. Inside is a tri-folded letter.

FATHER ZOSIMA (V.O.)

At your lowest moment of despair,
when you see that despite all your
efforts, you have not only failed
to achieve your goal but actually
seem even farther from it than
ever, you will finally recognize
the enduring strength that has been
within you all along. Let go and
live your life, my dear boy.
Father Z.

Alex picks up a pen. Signs several pages of the paperwork from Rodstein. Slips them back into the manila envelope and searches the cupboards of the kitchen. They're all empty.

He opens a drawer. It's full of pens. Opens another. It's full of ticket stubs. Checks a few more. Stops on one.

It's full of match books.

Alex smiles. Sparks a match. Ignites the letter. Drops it into the drawer.

EXT. HOMER'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Alex strides out the front door, down the steps and to the mailbox. He slips the manila envelope into the box and lifts the mail flag.

Alex turns for one last look at the house. Malik emerges from the other side, smiles wide and opens the back door. Alex ducks into the cab.

Malik hurries to the driver's seat. The cab speeds off.

After a beat, a white mail truck pulls up, blocking view of the house and mailbox.

CUT TO BLACK:

REPORTER (V.O.)

I'm here with criminal defense attorney W. Rothberg Weathers. Counsel for Dax Bergman. Mr. Weathers, what has happened here today?