

MIA AND THE HITMAN

Written by

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EXT. MOJAVE DESERT - DAY

A GOLDFISH flapping in the hot sand. Mindfuck.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAS VEGAS STATE PRISON - EVENING

An exit gate BUZZES and JOEY DOVES steps out.

Lock up your daughters. Skinhead, knuckle tats, rock n roll badass...

Inhales a lungful of freedom. Tastes good.

A PRISON GUARD points at a waiting taxi.

INT. TAXI, MOVING - LATER

Through the windshield - the Vegas strip. Uber neon.

Joey's hands marvel the newest iPhone. Technology left him behind.

It starts RINGING.

Smug, he hits 'ACCEPT', sides it to his ear--

JOEY

--Almost there, baby girl.

(surprised)

Yeah, now! Right now!

(beat)

Well, better get up there and get ready, ain't gonna suck itself, is it--

--BUT SUDDENLY, taxi makes a turn for the desert.

Joey is irked and leans to the Driver--

JOEY (CONT'D)

--Hey, wrong way...

But DRIVER steers for the shoulder...

EXT. SHOULDER - NIGHT

And coasts to a stop...

INT. TAXI, STATIONERY

Driver pivots to face Joey, forty hard years hanging off an emotionally bankrupt face.

First thing we really notice about Driver is the circular burn just south of his eye, about the size of a quarter.

Second thing - the GLOCK with SILENCER in his hand.

Joey drops his iphone--

DRIVER

--Hello, Joey.

(beat)

I'm sorry but it looks like nobody's gonna be sucking anything tonight. Elliott Green sends his love. He thought you didn't deserve early release.

Joey immediately goes for the door - nice try dickhead.

Driver just watches him. Curles a smirk as Joey SLAPS the window--

JOEY

--HELLLLPPPP!!!

DRIVER

--No witnesses.

(beat)

It's my thing.

JOEY

Wait... I'll pay you--

--But Driver FIRES--

--DIT!

Sorry ladies.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

Driver is digging a grave.

Because just as you thought, Driver is not really a taxi driver... he is a HITMAN.

EXT. POSH SUBURB - DAY

A HUGE Greek statue in the porch of this pad announces a severely cash drunk owner.

Hitman KNOCKS using a gold knocker.

The appropriate STIFF answers wearing a Santa hat. Hitman smiles.

HITMAN
Seasons greetings.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

Hitman, wearing the Santa hat, shovels dirt.

EXT. BEAUTY SPOT - DAY

A quiet hilltop overlooking a park, flash Maserati parked up.

INT. MASERATI, STATIONARY - DAY

A well groomed SUIT sitting in the driver's seat, fingers drumming the steering wheel in anticipation.

Suddenly, Hitman appears at the passenger door. He opens it and gets in.

HITMAN
Mr. Conway?

Mr. Conway is creeped--

HITMAN (CONT'D)
--I'm sorry, but your online date
isn't gonna make it.

Mr. Conway pulls a face.

His last.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

Hitman finishes filling another hole.

EXT. CLIFF TOP, DESERT - DAY

High up overlooking a spectacular canyon.

SUDDENLY--

--Hand of a ROCK CLIMBER digs into the top right in front of us.

Another hand -- and then the Climber hauls his ass up and over the final edge -- ONLY TO LOOK UP AND SEE--

--Hitman kneeling on the peak, leveling his gun.

HITMAN

Hi.

DIT, DIT...

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

Hitman stabs his shovel on top of another grave - hardest part of the job.

He sighs, deep and guttural. An old soul trapped in a middle aged body.

EXT - THE DEAD END DINER - NIGHT

A dying steak and eggs joint, a BUM laying outside.

Hitman's shadow suddenly looms, but he is different this time.

INT. THE DEAD END DINER - NIGHT

The Bum, sitting opposite Hitman, sinks his gums into pancakes and eggs.

But as Hitman eats his own, we can't actually tell if he is enjoying his food or spying on the Mom and Dad and their two young kids at the next table.

EXT. RICHARDSON HOUSEHOLD - NIGHT

The same family are getting out of a people carrier parked on the driveway of their two storey home. There is a lot of love here--

--But parked across the street...

A classic 1969 Skylark. One of the last true muscle cars of its era.

Hitman in the driver's seat watching the family.

EXT. PORCH - NIGHT

CLOSE ON FRONT DOOR: As Hitman raps on its wooden frame...

MOM opens up... but it's night and she is guarded.

HITMAN

Hi.

MOM

Can I... help you?

HITMAN

Hopefully.

Hitman quickly goes for an inside pocket but whips out--

--*HIS WALLET.*

Slips a driver's license out and shows her.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

Joseph Cosgrove. Grew up in this house.

(beat)

I was wondering... if it's not too much of an inconvenience... if I might be able to come in, take a look around. For old times sake.

Mom isn't sure - he squirms under her stare.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

Only in town for two days...

Mom half smiles...

MOM

I'm sorry. I've-- I've got kids. I don't know you...

HITMAN

That's okay. It's okay.

MOM

Sorry--

--She begins closing the door.

HITMAN

I should have dropped you a note
first. My apologies...

Hitman turns and starts back to the Skylark.

INT. SKYLARK - STATIONARY - NIGHT

Hitman opens the driver's door and sinks into his seat.

That went shitty.

DAD'S face at the living room window.

Hitman starts the engine.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

A roadside sign:

NIXON NEVADA - POPULATION 185 AND STILL TOO FREAKIN' MANY

EXT. THUNDERBIRD MOTEL - NIGHT

Rundown.

A black Cadillac with tinted windows rolls into a space,
parks.

DENNIS WOODRUFF gets out of the drivers side - all four
hundred pounds of him. 50's, hair growing out of every hole,
all round fuck up--

--Waddles to room 112.

INT. ROOM 112 - THUNDERBIRD MOTEL - NIGHT

Dennis opens the unlocked door and steps inside.

Flips the light on... TO FIND--

--Hitman sitting in a corner holding his gun.

DENNIS

What the--
(beat)
Karl?

But Hitman spits lead, DIT, DIT, one in each knee--

--Dennis drops. Hitman stands--

DENNIS (CONT'D)
--Wait, wait!!!

Agonizing -- he can hardly muster the might for mercy--

DENNIS (CONT'D)
Th-- the car, in the car--

--But suddenly, sound OF MOVEMENT outside -- and a firm knock on the motel door, TUNK, TUNK, TUNK...

Hitman quickly SMASHES Dennis in the face with the butt of his gun, PIAAAK!

CUT TO BLACK:

SOUND OF SOMEONE WAKING UP IN PAIN.

A LOT OF PAIN...

INT. BATHROOM, THUNDERBIRD MOTEL - NIGHT - LATER

Dennis opens his eyes to find himself inside a bathtub, wrists and ankles wire cuffed, pie hole sock gagged.

Agony, his leaking legs staining the tub red.

He WHINES... and then--

--His eyes SAUCER because--

--Hitman is looming down on him screwing the silencer back into the end of his Glock.

HITMAN
We meet again.
(beat)
The gentleman I'm working for asked me to keep you breathing til he got here.
(beat)
Also told me you had a particular disliking for snakes...

Dennis drops his eyes, a RATTLER BETWEEN HIS TREE TRUNKS--

--He busts out a horizontal dance.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
 You can take it up with the
 gentleman himself--

--And calmly sitting in a wheelchair as if he is watching
 nothing but a ball game -- -- is ELLIOTT GREEN. The man.
 The myth. The cunt.

Late sixties, gun-metal-grey hair, galaxy blue eyes that
 could burn a hole straight through you...

ELLIOTT
 --Dennis, Dennis, Dennis...

A strong air of authority hangs over Elliott like a rain
 cloud.

ELLIOTT (CONT'D)
 You're worse than cancer.

But Dennis suddenly FREEZES... almost in some sort of deep,
 realizing...

Starts GROANING as if trying to make a very important point.

ELLIOTT (CONT'D)
 Jesus, Joseph and doggy style Mary.
 (to Hitman)
 I think we finally got one who
 recognizes me.

Dennis shakes his head 'yes'...

But Elliott takes a long deep breath through the nose, kind
 of shit you do before unloading something profound.

ELLIOTT (CONT'D)
 Things I hate.
 (beat)
 Tailgaters. Bell peppers. Movies
 with open endings. Cats. Internet
 marketers. Wyoming. People who
 cough without covering their
 mouth... and dogshit on the fucking
 sidewalk. All that...
 (beat)
 And--

--Leans in for impact.

ELLIOTT (CONT'D)
 Care workers who get away with
 abusing their patients.

Dennis falls silent.

Shit.

ELLIOTT (CONT'D)
Their elderly patients.

Even closer.

ELLIOTT (CONT'D)
By conning them -- out of their
life savings...

A whisper.

ELLIOTT (CONT'D)
Every last penny.

Elliot leans back, the Devil in his eyes.

ELLIOTT (CONT'D)
Tell me, Dennis? Where is your
value in this world?

Indeed.

An awkward moment. Then--

--Dennis suddenly wriggles, face vomiting sorrow...

ELLIOTT (CONT'D)
I know, I know. You're sorry. You
didn't mean to...
(beat)
Old folk simply loved your charming
personality so much that they just
couldn't help themselves.
(beat)
Your profound care was so fucking
heartfelt during their final
days... they just wanted to reward
you with every dime they'd ever
earned... even if it meant leaving
their own children penniless...

Dennis squeezes eyes shut. Sounds bad. Really bad.

Elliott smiles a fuck you.

ELLIOTT (CONT'D)
You're a disgusting parasite.

Turns to Hitman.

ELLIOTT (CONT'D)
Let's go ahead and make the world a
better place now.

Hitman levels his Glock - pushes barrel right into Dennis'
eye socket--

--Dennis SQUEALS.

ELLIOTT (CONT'D)
You know... I never attend these
gigs personally, but with you...

Lets it sink in a moment, and then--

--Nods at Hitman.

--Hitman's finger touches the trigger -- BUT--

--Before he can squeeze the shot off--

--A CELL PHONE in his pocket starts RINGING.

HITMAN
Huh. Saved by the bell.

Dennis holds his breath. Life -- for a few seconds longer...

UNTIL--

--Hitman fires... TUNK -- Dennis' head spraying the wall...

HITMAN (CONT'D)
They can leave a message.

EXT. THUNDERBIRD MOTEL - NIGHT

The calm after the exploding skull.

Hitman opens a motel door, pokes his head out, scopes the
parking lot.

Dark.

No mouthbreathers.

Rolls out a FUCKING BIG SUITCASE and heads for Dennis' black
Cadillac sedan with tinted windows.

INT. TRUNK - NIGHT

Looking up as Hitman dumps the fucking big suitcase in with the strength of a thousand men, WUMPPPP!

INT. CADILLAC - NIGHT

Hitman climbs into the driver's side and SLAMS door, Elliott already in the passenger seat thumbing a phone.

Hitman curiously faces Elliot before starting the car.

HITMAN

Why do you hate Wyoming?

BUT SUDDENLY -- A GIRL'S VOICE... FROM THE BACK--

GIRL (O.S.)

--Denny?

Hitman and Elliott instinctively jerk around, Hitman snapping his gun up but --

-- He can't believe what he is aiming at--

--A little girl... strapped into a car seat. Five years old, butterfly patterned dress, pink backpack on the floor and...

...Two big blue eyes fixed squarely on her guests.

An iPad mini with a game on-screen in her lap.

MEET MIA

Hitman and Elliott look at each other like a pair of fucking dumb bells.

A long moment, then--

HITMAN

--Who brings their kid... to what they think's gonna be a sit down?

Beats Elliott.

Mia sits there staring down the barrel of Hitman's gun.

Might as well be pointing a snickers bar at her.

Another long moment, then--

HITMAN (CONT'D)
 --Thought you said he was
 divorced... with no kids?

Elliott back to front.

ELLIOTT
 He is. Maybe he's got something
 else going on here.

Hitman soaks her up.

Relaxes his gun hand.

HITMAN
 What now?

He absorbs Mia's innocence. It bothers him.

ELLIOTT
 Still gotta ditch the car.

As Hitman turns back to front--

ELLIOTT (CONT'D)
 --Cops in Wyoming take hours to
 respond, but five miles over the
 speed limit - all over you like
 shit on velcro.

Hitman fires up the engine.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Cadillac barrels through traffic.

EXT. FREEWAY BRIDGE - NIGHT

Looking down, Cadillac whips out into the open desert.

INT. CADILLAC, MOVING - NIGHT

The QUIETEST RIDE of all time.

Hitman steals glances at Mia through the rear mirror.

She is clutching a soft toy rabbit and SOBBING...

Elliott steals glances of Hitman stealing glances at her.

ELLIOTT
No witnesses. Right?

Told you he was a cunt.

But suddenly, Hitman quickly changes lanes and...

EXT. CADILLAC, MOVING

Pulls the car onto the shoulder, brakes.

INT. CADILLAC, STATIONARY

Hitman twists to Mia. We can feel his gears turning.

A killer smile. Literally.

The girl has a face that could knock you out and it's irking him.

HITMAN
Don't cry, slugger.
(re: toy)
Who's your pal?

Her eyes massage him.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
We're not gonna hurt you.
(beat)
Just take a drive. That okay?

But she isn't offering jack. Until--

MIA
--I w-- want... mommy...

HITMAN
I know.

Points at her toy rabbit.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
Like rabbits?
(beat)
Can tell a lot about a person from
the way they treat animals.
Usually means they're good people.

Uncomfortable silence that goes on forever.

And ever.

ELLIOTT
This actually going anywhere,
Doctor Doolittle?

HITMAN
(to Mia)
What's your name?

MIA
Mia.

HITMAN
And your friend?

MIA
Floppy.

Hitman nods. Takes the plunge.

HITMAN
--We'll take you home to your mommy
Mia, but first we need your help
with something.
(beat)
Think you could help us?

Mia is intrigued.

She isn't the only one.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

Middle of nowhere. Headlights slicing across a parched
valley.

Cadillac rolls up on the pre-parked '69 Skylark, its hulking
frame hidden in the cold black.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

Lit by Skylark's headlights, Mia is standing in a shallow,
freshly dug hole --

--Picking at the dirt with a shovel that is bigger than her.

Hitman, sweaty, dusty, and with a pain wrecked stare, looms
down on her gripping a pickaxe A BIT TOO TIGHTLY...

Rooted to the ground, his hands clench around wooden handle.

It's going to be easy.

She won't feel a thing.

Do it.

Do it now.

His knuckles whiten.

Face blazes.

He's killed before. Hell -- less than a few hours ago.

But his attention shifts to the Skylark--

--ELLIOT SITTING IN THE PASSENGER SEAT WATCHING HIM LIKE A HAWK...

Hitman stares him back. We're unsure why.

But we can take a guess.

He can't move. At war with his moral compass.

Relaxes axe grip.

HITMAN

(to Mia)

Okay...

(beat)

We're done with this sand castle.

EXT. SKYLARK, STATIONARY - NIGHT

Mia slides across the backseat as Hitman slams her door.

EXT. HOLE IN THE DESERT

Hitman kicks the FUCKING BIG SUITCASE into the freshly dug hole, TWUMP!

Dennis Woodruff is worm food.

INT. SKYLARK, STATIONARY - NIGHT

Hitman drops into driver's seat.

Elliott's glare could melt steel.

ELLIOTT

Killer with a conscience, eh?

HITMAN

She can't be more than five or six,
what could she say?

But Elliott's face twists -- as if this whole situation is as clear as day to him.

ELLIOTT

She could send us to the chair.

Hitman is nonchalant.

Elliot pivots back to her, arms himself with an extra warm smile.

ELLIOTT (CONT'D)

Hey there, Mia.

She stares.

ELLIOTT (CONT'D)

Let me ask you something?

Pats Hitman's shoulder.

ELLIOTT (CONT'D)

What does your friend here look like?

(beat)

Can you describe him for me?

Hitman faces her too. She considers him.

ELLIOTT (CONT'D)

Don't be scared, you can be honest.

Hitman scoffs.

MIA

He...

(beat)

He... haves-- a fat nose.

HITMAN

Easy on the charm little lady--

MIA

--And.. and...

She points to the burn mark under Hitman's eye.

MIA (CONT'D)

A red... spot.

Kills the moment. Kills it dead.

Hitman comes to terms with something bad.

Elliott faces front.

ELLIOTT

And there we have it. If she's old
enough to finger us in a line up...
she's old enough.

Hitman also faces frontward. Not entirely sold -- but maybe
in escrow.

ELLIOTT (CONT'D)

Lets just make this simple.

Back to Mia. Smile reloaded.

ELLIOTT (CONT'D)

Say, Mia.

(beat)

When we were back there looking for
a good spot to dig our sand castle,
I left my damn water by that big
cactus.

Elliott points off into the desert.

Mia climbs up and stands on her seat looking out.

Elliott points at the Pavarotti of cactus plants, Skylark's
beams lighting it up...

ELLIOTT (CONT'D)

See? The big one by the rocks.

Mia finds it, points--

MIA

--There...

ELLIOTT

You got it! I could sure use a
drink. My legs went to sleep a few
years back and they just won't wake
up. What'cha say you help an old
man out and go grab my bottle.

MIA

Okay...

Eager to please, Mia immediately turns to her door and opens
it, climbing out...

Jumps down and dashes off into the headlight beams.

ELLIOTT
 (to Hitman)
 Okay, go.

BUT HITMAN HESITATES

A look at Mia - her little figure blazing white--

ELLIOTT (CONT'D)
 --Go, what's your problem!?

Hitman watches her getting smaller. Makes a face like something hurts...

ELLIOTT (CONT'D)
 It'll never be this easy again...

Hitman - fuck it.

Prizes his eyes away - twists ignition key - stomps the gas..

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

Skylark chews up the sand.

EXT. FREEWAY - NIGHT

Skylark peels off a dirt track and onto the road eating it up like chocolate. Tail lights into the distance.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

Dark as Hell.

Mia's size fives crunch in the sand. Disorientated.

MIA
 M--o--
 (beat)
 Mommy...

A dot in the wilderness. Only moonlight.

INT. SKYLARK, SPEEDING - NIGHT

Hitman drives away.

Dead eyes.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

A CHILD-EATING SNAKE slithers under a rock.

Mia unknowingly steps towards it...

Another step -- UNTIL SUDDENLY --

--LIGHTS...

WHITE LIGHTS...

INT. SKYLARK, MOVING - NIGHT

Hitman pulls alongside her, window open.

HITMAN

There you are! Thought we'd lost
you.

Dusty silence.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

Forget the water.

He brakes and gets out, opening the back door for her.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

Get in.

Elliott steel-eyed.

EXT. FREEWAY - NIGHT

Skylark guns past.

INT. SKYLARK, MOVING - NIGHT

Mia is sleeping, a choke-hold on Floppy.

Hitman drives past an LED traffic sign:

*AMBER ALERT: VEH' 2007-08 Black 4dr CADILLAC SEDAN, TINTED
WINDOWS, PLATE 4NQE750, CHILD - 5 YEARS, 60lb, Hr:brn.*

ELLIOTT

Momma's been busy.

Hitman's eyes shift back to the road, hyper aware.

HITMAN

Wrong car.

ELLIOTT

But they're looking.

Hitman concentrates on the road.

Elliott twists to Mia. Studies her. This little life that has only been on the planet for a few years.

A delicate moment for a tough old bastard.

ELLIOTT (CONT'D)

(to Hitman)

Maybe you're right.

Back to front.

ELLIOTT (CONT'D)

You really think she won't say anything?

HITMAN

She'll say something, but not enough. We could be anyone.

Elliott considers it. Some gravity here.

ELLIOTT

Okay. We go to a motel and leave her in a room.

HITMAN

When we get a safe distance -- we call her in.

Hitman and Elliott share a look.

Agreed.

EXT. SAHARA LODGE MOTEL, DAYTON - NIGHT

A drab desert town with an even drabber motel. You sleep here to save green, not to enjoy the ambience.

Skylark creeps into a parking space.

INT. SKYLARK, STATIONARY

Mia is still asleep.

Hitman kills the engine, Elliott checking his cell.

ELLIOTT

Book a room.

Hitman moves his hand to grab the keys out of ignition but--
--He falters.

Something deep inside cautions him.

Eyes Elliott.

Who eyes him back.

ELLIOTT (CONT'D)

What?

Hitman's fingers linger over the keys.

Then...

...Hitman leaves them hanging, and gets out.

Elliott watches him like a hawk watching a mouse.

INT. MOTEL ROOM, SAHARA LODGE MOTEL - NIGHT

Mia is sitting in the middle of a queen bed looking lonely, backpack and Floppy beside her.

SOUND of the toilet FLUSHING and Hitman steps out of the bathroom--

HITMAN

--Get into bed Mia, we'll be back
with some dinner, okay.

She stonewalls him.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

I'm tired from driving.

(beat)

Soon as it's morning, we'll take
you home.

More stonewall.

He turns away but--

MIA
 --Bye, bye.

Her words hit him like bullets.

He kneels down facing her and slips a PHONE out of his jacket.

Angles the screen on Mia and takes a PHOTO of her.

Checks the picture. A lump in his throat. It's as if she knows.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Skylark cuts past.

INT. SKYLARK, MOVING - NIGHT

Hitman driving.

HITMAN
 We're far enough.

Elliott hits some cell digits - phone to ear...

ELLIOTT
 Police.
 (beat)
 The little girl who went missing in
 Nixon, I think I just saw her at
 the Sahara Lodge motel... in Baker,
 room 22. Please hurry...

Abruptly hangs up. Rolls his window down and--

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

--Drops his cell phone out of the car...

INT. ROOM 22, SAHARA LODGE MOTEL - NIGHT

Mia is laying on the covers hugging Floppy, eyes wide.

In this moment we can sense that she is used to this lonely feeling.

INT. MAGGIE'S DESERT CAFE - NIGHT

Hitman and Elliott eating in silence.

Maybe they're reflecting on what happened -- or maybe it's something unspoken.

Through a window, a black SUV cruises up outside.

Elliott wipes his mouth.

ELLIOTT

My ride.

But the hairs on the back of Hitman's neck stand.

HITMAN

Wait...

Elliott throws his napkin down.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

This... this never happened before.

(beat)

Why aren't we talking about it?

ELLIOTT

About what?

HITMAN

--This, this whole situation.

(beat)

It never happened before...

ELLIOTT

What are you talking about?

Hitman's face falls as he realizes something...

HITMAN

Give me your cell. Your real one.

ELLIOTT

What?

But Hitman is rattled. Whips his gun out and levels it at Elliott's head--

HITMAN

--GIVE ME - YOUR FUCKING CELLPHONE!

A WOMAN SCREAMS at the sight of his steel...

Another cowers.

But Elliott is chilled - a smoldering cigar in a roomful of Marlboros.

ELLIOTT

I think you just fucked up the 'no
witness' rule.

But Hitman leans over and reaches for Elliott's jacket, tugs his cell out.

Taps screen - eyes display.

Throws it back across the table - the curtain has dropped--

HITMAN

--Call him off.

ELLIOTT

She really got her claws into you,
didn't she?

(beat)

What... somehow you think you can
make up for losing your own kid?

They touch eyeballs in a way that they haven't before.

HITMAN

Call. Him. Off.

ELLIOTT

When I was eleven I walked into my
parent's bedroom to find my dad
beating my mom.

HITMAN

I don't give a shit.

ELLIOTT

I grabbed a golf club and
threatened him myself, but he
turned and beat the living shit out
of me.

Proud of his next words.

ELLIOTT (CONT'D)

Never touched mom again though.

(beat)

That's when I learned the power of
sacrifice.

But his words are falling on deaf ears and he has to push
harder--

ELLIOTT (CONT'D)

--You're anonymous, but what if she spots me on TV, or God forbid, in a courtroom? Thought about that, hero?

Smiles, as if his point is finally across.

ELLIOTT (CONT'D)

Man up and hold your balls together. She's already fucked. Hell, when she's older might even hire a gun to come look for you--

HITMAN

--That's on me! Call him off, God damn it!!

Hitman -- genuine panic in his eyes--

ELLIOTT

--What are you gonna do? Go save her?

(beat)

You'll never make it in time.

HITMAN

Shut up--

He starts squeezing the trigger...

ELLIOTT

And even if you do - then what? You can't watch her all the time.

Hitman - quick glance around the joint.

Some whispering. One SERVER on her cellphone.

Hitman suddenly reaches to another table and snatches a WOMAN'S cell phone dialing a very short number--

--Slaps it to his ear, eyes boring into Elliott all the way--

HITMAN

--Police.

(beat)

The little girl in the amber alert, 'Mia', she's at the Sahara Lodge motel in Dayton, room 22, send someone fast, she's in danger--

--Hangs up.

ELLIOTT
You're making a mistake.

But Hitman takes off...

Elliott watches him, then reaches for his phone, dials, and puts it to his ear--

ELLIOTT (CONT'D)
--Move quick. He called the cops.

EXT. SAHARA LODGE MOTEL - NIGHT

RADIO POLICE SPEAK CRACKLES...

Blue/red hue from two Sheriff's cruisers, doors still flung open and parked outside room 22.

TWO SHERIFFS -- one sitting in the driver's seat -- one standing and using his shoulder radio--

SHERIFF #1
--Ten nineteen, we got her, the girl's in custo--

--But before he finishes -- a high powered rifle shot catches his head -- WHAP!!!

--Another slug pierces the windshield, CRACK, dropping the other Sheriff...

INT. SHOOTER'S CAR - NIGHT

The SHOOTER is a big man, raw and muscular with cruel precision.

He is sitting in the back seat of a Lexus with a rifle across his arm, eye to the scope, window rolled down a crack.

SCOPE'S POV -- as the CROSS HAIRS drift across dead Sheriff and find Mia sitting in the back of the cruiser.

CROSS HAIRS move up Mia's pajamas -- to her forehead...

Shooter's finger strokes the trigger, but--

--Just as he's about to pull--

SOUND OF TIRES SCREECHING AND--

--DAZZLING HEADLIGHTS...

Shooter looks up.

Shit!

Skylark is coming at him HARD and FAST...

NANO SECONDS--

--AND IN A TOTALLY AWESOME MOMENT--

--SKYLARK SLAMS into side of the Lexus like a battering ram, KERRRRR-ANNGGGGGG -- t-boning it.

Shooter regains himself, but -- DIT -- a slug empties his head across the passenger seat...

EXT. FREEWAY - NIGHT

Skylark peels past. The Hood is fucked but it's old school tough.

INT. SKYLARK, MOVING - NIGHT

Hitman clears another LED traffic sign:

AMBER ALERT: VEH' 1965-69 Blue 4dr CLASSIC SKYLARK, FRONT DAMAGE, CHILD - 5 years, 60lb, Hr:brn, SUSP: 45-50yrs, 180lb, Hr: brn.

Hitman eyes Mia, still in her pajamas. She is staring again.

Relentlessly.

HITMAN

Sorry about all this, slugger.
Just taking you for a ride.

(beat)

Needed to makesure you were safe.

She murmurs--

MIA

--What's... your... name?

HITMAN

My name?

(beat)

Its...

Passes a sign for ROCKY POINTE.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

Rocky.

She turns and blinks out at the open desert.

Hard to tell what she's thinking.

EXT. DESERT STOP MOTEL - NIGHT

Another dump-hole. Skylark limps into a parking space, steaming radiator.

INT. SKYLARK, STATIONARY

Hitman kills the engine. Mia is asleep.

EXT. DESERT STOP MOTEL - NIGHT

Hitman walks for reception.

A motel door opens from the inside and VIOLET skulks out, the local cock socket working her turf.

Leans in a doorway, slutty, as Hitman passes by--

VIOLET

--Lookin' for a date, cowboy?

He ignores her.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Fuck you! Don't need your money or your two inches!

INT. RECEPTION, DESERT STOP - NIGHT

Hitman presents a driver license and credit card to a DINOSAUR behind a desk who is pruning a Bonsai tree and talking to it like it's his wife.

DINOSAUR

There we go, much prettier.

HITMAN

I need a room.

DINOSAUR

(without looking up)
Congratulations.

INT. SKYLARK, STATIONARY

Mia is still in Never Never land. Hitman opens driver's door, gets in.

Starts the engine.

EXT. BUDGET INN - NIGHT

Another low cost turd right across from Desert Stop.

Skylark rolls into a space and parks.

INT. SKYLARK, STATIONARY - NIGHT

Hitman switches engine off. Glances out window. Cranes his neck up at something.

HITMAN'S POV -- SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS OVER THE PARKING LOT.

EXT. BUDGET INN - NIGHT

Hitman is walking away from the Skylark with Mia in his arms - her backpack and Floppy over his shoulder.

Top of her head is right under his nose. Smell of innocence.

She senses energy and stirs.

MIA

Where... are we going?

HITMAN

To our room. Had to park outside a different place. Long story.

Walks back towards Desert Stop.

INT. HITMAN'S ROOM, DESERT STOP MOTEL - NIGHT

Hitman steps inside with Mia - closes door - light switch.

Single king.

Smells like someone stashed a used diaper under the floorboards but it'll do.

Gently puts Mia on the bed.

HITMAN

We'll stay here tonight. I need to
make sure it's safe before I take
you home.

She fiddles with her shoe.

MIA

My... foot... itches.

He pulls the curtains.

HITMAN

Sand in your socks.

INT. BATHROOM

A RUNNING SHOWER. Hitman slips a testing hand under the
water, Mia standing with a towel around her naked body.

HITMAN

I think it's good.

Moves to flip the light on but the bulb is out.

Mia drops her towel and holds her arms up.

Hitman blunders for a moment. He is used to killing, not
nurturing.

Reaches and gently lifts her delicate frame under the water.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

Okay?

She nods.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

I'll keep the door open. Shout if
you need anything.

INT. BEDROOM

Hitman slumps into a crappy desk chair.

How the fuck did he end up a parent?

Notices Mia's backpack. Reaches for it and unzips it. Her
iPad.

PROPERTY OF SUNDALE SCHOOL stamped on a cover.

And on the back flap - MIA WADE

HITMAN (CONT'D)

Wade?

Address scrawled onto a yellow sticker --

-- 351 SUNDALE AVE, #25, NIXON, NV 89424

A coloring book... some crayons... some clothes...

But before he can shove it all back--

MIA (O.S.)

--Wocky...

INT. BATHROOM

Hitman vigorously toweling Mia's hair dry.

HITMAN

That how mommy does it?

She nods. He finishes. Drapes towel over her shoulders--

HITMAN (CONT'D)

--Don't suppose you got a
cigarette?

MIA

Mom-- Mommy says-- cing-erettes are
bad and... and always tries to stop
daddy-- eating them.

HITMAN

Sounds like you gotta good Mommy.

(beat)

What else does Mommy say?

MIA

She-- she cries a lot.

Hitman tilts his head...

HITMAN

She cries a lot? Why does she cry?

MIA

She... she cried, when Dylan died.

HITMAN

Who's Dylan?

MIA
Dylan... is... the puppy.

Hitman sees something genuinely painful in her.

HITMAN
I'd probably cry too if my puppy
died.
(beat)
Ready for bed?

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Hitman drops a pillow onto the floor.

Mia is laying in bed still in her pajamas, backpack open,
Floppy next to her.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
I'm gonna take a shower and then
I'll sleep down here, okay?

MIA
When-- are we going home?

HITMAN
Soon.
(beat)
I promise.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Hitman showering.

INT. BEDROOM - DAWN

AN ALARM CLOCK

Hits 5:30AM and goes off for exactly one second because--
--Hitman's palm kills it.

EXT. HITMAN'S ROOM, DESERT STOP MOTEL - DAWN

Hitman, now dressed, opens the door, Ninja quiet.

Eyes Skylark across the street in the BUDGET INN parking lot.

His sixth sense tingles.

Shifts his attention to something else.

An old Camaro with black tinted windows creeps behind the building and away from any prying eyes.

But not Hitman's prying eyes.

INT. CAMARO, STATIONARY - DAWN

EDDIE PORTER switches engine off. Fifties, pizza face, he tips his head back as Violet, the class act from earlier, bobs her head up and down in his lap.

Eddie exhales. Bliss--

--Like biting into 800 cupcakes all at once. And believe me, he's tried that...

BUT SUDDENLY --

--A TAP on the window.

It's Hitman.

EDDIE
(to Violet)
Keep going.

Half rolls his window down--

HITMAN
--Sorry to interrupt the happy couple but I'm kind of in a hurry. Wondered how much you might take for this fine set of wheels?

Eddie is mortified--

EDDIE
--You brain dead bro, I'm busy here! Ain't for sa--

--But before he can finish--

--Hitman jabs a thumb into Eddie's throat and pinches his windpipe shut, causing him to start choking...

HITMAN
I don't like you anymore... you're off my Christmas list.

Violet surfaces but Hitman pushes her back down and keeps her there--

HITMAN (CONT'D)
 (to Violet)
 --Don't stop, you heard the
 gentleman.

She starts GAGGING on a mouthful of sausage - they're both
 choking--

HITMAN (CONT'D)
 (to Eddie)
 --Now. How about I go ahead and
 keep squeezing here, or... you can
 just hit me up with a number for
 this piece of shit and we can all
 walk away with cash in our pockets
 and air in our lungs. What do you
 say?

EXT. FREEWAY, DESERT - DAY

So hot even the geckos don't want to be here.

A HIGHWAY PATROL CRUISER has pulled over a blue classic. Not
 a Skylark - but close.

And there's Eddie's shitty Camaro whizzing by.

PRELAP:

MIA (V.O.)
 Are we going home?

HITMAN (V.O.)
 Soon, slugger. Had to change the
 plan.

INT. CAMARO, MOVING

Hitman drives.

HITMAN
 We gotta get off the road right
 now, keep a low profile.
 (beat)
 Need to makesure you're safe before
 you go home.

Way over her head.

Hitman studies road ahead, his passenger not one for
 conversation.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
 Why were you with that man who left
 you in the car? I know he isn't
 your daddy.

Gives her a penetrating look.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
 No daddy would leave their little
 girl in such a nasty neighborhood.

Can tell she is trying to digest this -- but just too young.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
 You got clothes in your bag, you
 were staying with him, right?

She nods 'yes'.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
 Why were you staying with him?

MIA
 Mommy said.

HITMAN
 Why did mommy say?

She fiddles with Floppy's ears, perhaps a comfort.

MIA
 Don't know.

Hitman eyes the road with a wooden face--

HITMAN
 --So! Nixon, right? Near Reno?
 (beat)
 Only city in the world where ninety
 year olds still dress as
 cheerleaders.
 (beat)
 Can you tell I spent some time
 there?

But she is hardly about to humor him.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
 How old are you? Forty three?

MIA
 Five.

HITMAN

Five! I was close.
(beat)
What's your mommy's name?

MIA

Her name is Manny-- Mandy.

HITMAN

Mandy. Pretty. I like that name.
(beat)
What about your daddy's name?

MIA

Dad-- my daddy's name it's Tyler.

HITMAN

Tyler?

Something about that name vexes him.

MIA

My... my daddy works in the banks
and-- and he doesn't like apples.

HITMAN

The bank. Good. Lots of money to
spend on you.
(beat)
But come on, what kind of guy
doesn't like apples?

MIA

Do... do you works in the banks?

HITMAN

Not exactly. I-- I-- work in a...
pet store.
(beat)
What about mommy? She gotta job?

MIA

Mommy... mommy does making things.

HITMAN

Making things? Like beer? Whisky?
Distillery in the garage?

MIA

Things-- of wearing...

HITMAN

Like jewelry? Hats? Boxing
gloves?

MIA
Clothes, things.

A warning light on the Camaro suddenly DINGS...

HITMAN
Uh-o. This thing needs some lunch.

EXT. GAS STATION, DESERT - DAY

Hitman is gassing up.

Bends his neck to peer into car at Mia - she is sitting in the passenger seat, coloring book and crayons in her lap.

She is filling in a picture she's drawn.

CLOSE ON PICTURE: Two stick people holding shovels, a hole beside them.

But the most prominent detail - big smiles on their faces.

Ear to ear.

Hitman is intrigued. She had fun. With him.

The image lands hard.

He makes a decision.

PRELAP: SOUND OF A PHONE RINGING... AND CONNECTING...

HITMAN (V.O.)
It's me.

ELLIOTT (V.O.)
I know you. You're that sack of
shit who pointed gun at me. I
think we need to talk.

Mia colors her picture.

HITMAN (V.O.)
Agreed. The girl is with her
mother. So much as sneeze within
ten miles of her, I'll be there to
wipe your nose with my 45.
(beat)
Send any clowns and I'll go to the
cops.

(MORE)

HITMAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 You'll be locked up with the same
 fucks you put away - and what's
 left of your family'll live in
 shame for the rest of their life.
 End of talk.

SOUND of a receiver SLAMMING down.

EXT. DIRT TRACK, DESERT - NIGHT

Headlights...

Tires churning grit as the Camaro bangs across a lonely track
 a mile from the freeway.

Rounds the base of a mountain to reveal:

AN OLD TRAILER...

Duct tape and cardboard where the back window used to be,
 wheels sunk so deep you'd think the entire thing had been
 growing there with all the cacti.

Camaro grinds to a halt. Engine off.

INT. CAMARO

Hitman faces Mia.

HITMAN
 Welcome to my chateau.

She peeks out. Curious moist eyes. A little scared...

HITMAN (CONT'D)
 I was thinking of adding a pool.

Another wasted pun.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
 We're gonna have to hang here for a
 few days, Mia, but it'll be fun.
 We'll play a few rounds of poker,
 sink a few beers, and when I know
 you're safe, I'll take you home to
 your mommy. What'cha say?

MIA
 It... it... looks like my houses.

Her comment stings him.

HITMAN
Everything is battery and solar
powered.

Stops himself.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
You're five, I don't know why I
just told you that.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

Stars on steroids out here.

INT. HITMAN'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Hitman dumps a plate of food down for Dog. Mia is sitting at a corner table eyeing a goldfish in a small bowl.

We've seen this goldfish before.

MIA
The water's dirty.

HITMAN
Yeah, water can be kind of an issue
out here.
(beat)
But wanna know something cool?

He grabs a tub of fish food, opens it and sprinkles some pellets into the bowl.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
If you listen real hard... you can
hear him eat.

Mia stands on her seat and leans into the bowl.

Goldfish gobbles a pellet. SOUND of a slight CRUNCH, no more than stepping on a single snowflake.

Mia smiles.

Best.

Thing.

Ever.

MIA
What's his name?

HITMAN
 You and names...
 (beat)
 I don't know. Wanna name him? Or
 her?

Mia nods enthusiastically--

HITMAN (CONT'D)
 --Okay.
 (beat)
 The fish is hereby named--

MIA
 --Dog!

HITMAN
 Dog-the-fish. I guarantee there is
 no other fish with that name.

She smiles. Likes it here. Fun.

MIA
 I'm hungry.

HITMAN
 Of course.

He moves for some overhead cupboards.

Rummages.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
 Lets see...

Turns to her, holding some little square packets.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
 Sugar?

MIA
 We can't eat sugar. Mommy says --
 she says -- sugar is the devils.

HITMAN
 Smart mommy.

Wades though cans of dog food and empty cereal boxes.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
 Looks like it might be another
 bottled water dinner.

But he finds something--

HITMAN (CONT'D)

--Popcorn!

(beat)

All little boys and girls like popcorn, right?

MIA

I-- I like popcorn. Sometimes.

He opens a bag and hands it to her. Watches her eat a piece. Then--

HITMAN

--I wanna show you something.

INT. BEDROOM

A bedroom cubicle, mattress on the floor, covers are army tight.

Hitman guides Mia inside and hits a battery operated lamp.

HITMAN

Think you could sleep in here a few nights?

She looks around.

MIA

Where-- where will you sleep?

Her concern touches him in a way nothing else has.

HITMAN

I'll... on... the sofa.

MIA

I wanna go home.

HITMAN

I... I know.

Kneels to her.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

I promise I'll take you... soon. A few days.

Holds his hands out. Palms up--

HITMAN (CONT'D)

--Give me your hands.

She doesn't understand. He gently takes them into his own.
Soft. Delicate. Untouched of any hardship.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
You're in my hands now.
(beat)
I didn't expect to bring you here
but I'll make sure you get home.
You have my word.

She doesn't understand but it somehow comforts her.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Hitman, half lidded, sitting on the sofa with Dog.

Intently swiping through pictures on Mia's iPad.

CLOSE ON iPad:

That must be her mom, MANDY. She is pretty.

And there is Dennis - Hitman's last kill - Mia sitting on his knee, mid-clap.

Another guy holding a beer in celebration and waist hugging Mandy.

Maybe Tyler. More like a biker than a banker.

Swipes past.

A puppy. We know how that story went.

Puts the iPad down and --

-- Picks up a cell phone in a BLUE CASE. Eyes the screen. Nothing but the date and time.

Toys with it. It seems to bother him until--

MIA (O.S.)
--Wocky?

Hitman lurches - Dog jumping down, Mia standing in the bedroom doorway, wet eyes.

MIA (CONT'D)
I-- wa-- want mommy.

Hitman desperately searching for an angle.

He kneels to her.

HITMAN

I know. I've...

(beat)

I've just spoken to her -- she's looking forward to seeing you. As soon as it's safe.

Mia looks at him wanting more.

Looks at Dog.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

He likes you. I think he wants you to stay.

MIA

Where... does... doggy come from?

HITMAN

He came from the city.

She runs her hand down Dog's back.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

I rescued him. Was really hungry when I found him.

MIA

Why?

HITMAN

Well... the men who owned him thought he wasn't important and kept forgetting to feed him.

(beat)

But don't worry, they won't forget anymore. I taught them a lesson about how to take care of their pets.

MIA

I like Dog.

(beat)

I like you too, Wocky.

Her bluntness shakes him. It's liberating for both of them.

MIA (CONT'D)

Mommy reads me a stories, will you read me a stories?

He hesitates. Talk about diving into an empty swimming pool.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mia is laying in bed with Floppy. Hitman sits down on the edge of the mattress.

A few boxes stacked at the foot of the bed. Grabs an old newspaper off the top of one. Unfolds it. Scans it.

HITMAN

Not really a story guy, slugger.

Checks the paper for an interesting article.

Something else catches his eye. The box he took the newspaper from has a dusty picture frame jutting out.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

Alright. I gotta story for you.

CLOSE ON PICTURE: A younger, more vibrant Hitman - in an L.A.P.D. uniform. Official head shot.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

Once upon a time there was a cop.
An L.A. cop. He was a good cop.
Hard working, respected. But one
day, he went on a call and pulled
the trigger when he shouldn't have.

(beat)

The wolves tore him apart and sent
him to prison. Now if there is one
thing an inmate population loves
more than shaking down new guys...
it's shaking down ex-cops. Pretty
much tried to use his face as an
ashtray every night.

Mia's eyes slowly closing. Relaxed breathing.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

Boring, huh?

But it's almost permission for him to speak painful words without being judged.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

While he was there, his pregnant
wife left him after accusing him of
abandoning her.

(beat)

When he finally got out, he
couldn't get a job and got so poor -
ended up sleeping under a nearby
freeway.

Stares at the head shot totally lost in himself.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

The wife isolated herself. Didn't want their little girl growing up knowing her father was an ex-con.

(beat)

Eventually someone came by and offered him a job.

(beat)

A different kind of job.

MIA (O.S.)

What was his name?

Hitman snaps back to reality...

HITMAN

What's your obsession with names?

But Mia is waiting - eyes full of wonder.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

Karl. His name was Karl.

A moment to untangle his mind.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Hitman steps in from Mia's bedroom and pets Dog.

HITMAN

Good boy--

-- BUT SUDDENLY -- A NOISE FROM OUTSIDE...

Dog SNARLS AT SOMETHING...

Hitman lunges for a cereal box, pulls a shooter out, and then another. Takes a knee in the shadows.

Cocks the hammers back ready for Jihad, but--

--A KNOCK ON THE DOOR.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

--Police! Open up, ballsack!

Hitman tightens, but--

MALE VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 --It's me... I come in peace.
 (beat)
 Surprised I found ya!?

Obviously Hitman doesn't usually have visitors.

MALE VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 I'm not packin', I'm retired,
 remember?
 (beat)
 Wouldn't be knocking if I was here
 to party. Just talk, that's all...

Hitman marinates.

MALE VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 I know you're in there, saw a light
 go out.

Hitman reaches for a door latch, unhooks it, pushes it open
 to reveal:

LUCA - a tall Italian but lacking the meat to compensate.
 The Jersey accent betrays his origins.

Hitman beads two barrels at him.

LUCA
 You can't hide from me,
 motherfucker.

HITMAN
 She's not here. I took her home.
 (beat)
 He knows what happens if anyone
 touches her.

LUCA
 Smoke a bowl, dipshit. Old man
 still owes you, for the fat fuck.

Throws Hitman an envelope, but Hitman is an edgy.

HITMAN
 It's 2am. You didn't come here to
 pay me.

LUCA
 Awww, poor baby. I wake you?

Luca picks up a bulging shopping bag.

LUCA (CONT'D)
I'm hungry. Felt like barbecue.

Hitman throws the envelope inside.

LUCA (CONT'D)
Hope you don't keep all your green
in there. Not very secure.

HITMAN
Keep it in the bank, like a good
citizen.

EXT. HITMAN'S TRAILER - NIGHT

THREE STEAKS SIZZLE on the rusty barbecue, Hitman works them.

Luca is standing peeing into the sand. Just for kicks - he aims his piss-stream into Dog's water bowl.

We can tell he was born slightly lacking empathy for others.

Zips up and sinks into a beach chair, the desert his backyard.

Chugs a beer. Hitman throws a steak to Dog and jabs another one with the knife tip.

HITMAN
So. Last time the old man saw
me... he had my gun in his face.

Hitman serves up cow on the knife tip that is perilously close to Luca's throat.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
And now he wants to pay me?

Luca slides the meat onto a plate, Hitman dropping into his own beach chair.

LUCA
Yeah. You ain't exactly flavor of
the month, but you do gotta
straighten it out with him.

Luca reaches under his chair and hands Hitman an iPad, a shot of a woman wearing a red power suit.

LUCA (CONT'D)
And before you piss your panties...
yeah, another broad, he knows--

--Hitman immediately dumps the iPad.

LUCA (CONT'D)

What can I say, we don't always get the massage we're hoping for--

HITMAN

--I wasn't hoping for any massage! It's been less than two days!

LUCA

He knows, but this one's time sensitive.

(beat)

Bitch is cold man, really cold. Could use a fuckin' icecube as a tampon.

But Hitman isn't playing.

LUCA (CONT'D)

Gold digger married an eighty year old, pretty much to jack his accountancy biz. Grandpa walks with a cane... one night, after cops responded to a domestic at the lovebirds mansion, they found him on the floor in a pool of blood. She claims he attacked her after a drinking binge so she beat him to death with his own cane, but she's on tape discussing it a few weeks earlier with her pole on the side. Turns out Grandpa was already suspicious and had someone tailing her for a few months.

(beat)

Tape was deemed 'entrapment' though, inadmissible in court, bitch got away with it but she's as guilty as a nun squatting in a cucumber field, no doubt about it.

Hitman dumps his plate. Dog scores.

LUCA (CONT'D)

Says it'll be your last. I think it's fair, all things considered.

Hitman livid.

LUCA (CONT'D)

Ice Queen took over Grandpa's
company in Crystal springs, pretty
much got a nine to five pussy grip
on it, but she's about to sell
up... on a plane outta Maclaren
Wednesday, which means you gotta be
in Crystal tomorrow--

HITMAN

--What the fuck! No! It's not a
good time, tell him--

LUCA

--Don't forget, we owe the old man
for being the only fucking guy in
the world to get our sorry asses
off the street. Without him we'd
still be popping Xanax with all the
other class acts.

Hitman seethes.

LUCA (CONT'D)

Says if you get it done he'll
forget about your girl.

Hitman's blood freezes. A wild look.

LUCA (CONT'D)

Photo in your email. And it's
imperative this bitch disappears...
and I mean... even the fuckin'
worms can't find her.

HITMAN

How do you even expect me to get to
her so fast, I need more time--

LUCA

--Well you don't got any. You're
clever. You'll think of something.

EXT. DESERT - DAWN

An intense sunrise. The mountain beyond Hitman's trailer.

Hitman is hiking up them with Dog.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PEAK - DAWN

Hitman and Dog admiring the view - sun rays coating the desert in a yellow curtain.

But there is a sadness in Hitman's eyes. It's as if this is as good as it's ever going to get and it's nearly gone.

Stoops his head and gazes to a GRAVE made out of rocks, a wooden cross crudely marking it.

Slips Luca's envelope out of his pocket.

HITMAN
(to grave)
Another one for you.

EXT. HITMAN'S TRAILER - MORNING

Hitman frying eggs on the barbecue - weight of the world on his shoulders.

Mia is sitting in a beach chair in her pajamas.

Hitman serves the eggs -- but Mia is hesitant.

MIA
I -- don't likes egg.

HITMAN
What? Why didn't you tell me?

Icing on the cake after the last few hours.

Hitman suddenly FLINGS the whole frying pan into the desert.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
Well I don't like eggs either.

Only now you can look into his eyes and see that the last few years have truly stolen a piece of his humanity.

Mia stares at him... if looks could kill...

Hitman deflates.

Asshole.

Dinosaur asshole.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
We'll get something on the road.

EXT. DESERT PLAIN - MORNING

Camaro zipping across the desert in a dust cloud.

EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

Camaro blasts past.

INT. CAMARO, MOVING

Mia sticking and unsticking the velcro on her shoe.

Hitman drives.

HITMAN

Don't worry I always leave him
enough food. Should only be gone
for two days. Dogs are survivors.

She's on the velcro. Hitman really needs to clear the air.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

So. What do you wanna be when you
grow up?

Sticking and unsticking...

MIA

I-- I wanted to be, a farm.

HITMAN

A farm?

(beat)

A farmer? Milking cows and stuff?

Halts the velcro.

Glances at her for reaction but she is already bored and
pulling her cheek in that way kids do.

MIA

Why... do we have eyebrows?

Hitman is vexed.

HITMAN

I don't know.

(beat)

Cos... we'd look weird without 'em.

She dwells on his lame answer. So does he.

EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

Camaro whizzes by.

EXT. MEGA BURGER - EVENING

Camaro rolls into the neon drenched lot of a burger joint. Passes a HOMELESS BLACK GUY sleeping on the sidewalk.

INT. CAMARO, STATIONARY - NIGHT

Parked up, Hitman and Mia bite into burgers. And in the back-

--The Homeless Black Guy bites into his.

HITMAN

(to Mia)

It's harder for women. They wear oversized clothes. Act crazy. Just to avoid being attacked.

And on closer inspection, under the layer of grime, we can just tell that the mumbling homeless man is actually a WOMAN.

EXT. MOTEL NIAGRA - NIGHT

Usual dump.

INT. BEDROOM, MOTEL NIAGRA

Mia - bed.

Hitman - floor.

Hitman checks the display of the phone in the blue case.

Nothing.

EXT. SPRINGER & ASSOCIATES C.P.A. - MORNING

A small number crunching firm squeezed into a strip mall in Crystal Springs. Hitman's Camaro parked opposite.

INT. CAMARO, STATIONARY

Hitman and Mia sitting in the front behind tinted glass.

A printed photo of the target/gold digger, EMMA, taped to the steering wheel. Hitman twists to Mia--

HITMAN

--Mia?

She looks up from her tablet.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

Before I take you home, I wanna
play a little game.

(beat)

Think you could play a game with
me?

She stares at him, curiosity level rising.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

Get your crayons out of your
backpack.

EXT. SPRINGER & ASSOCIATES C.P.A. - AFTERNOON

EMMA SIMMS bowls out of the office rolling a carry on.

Walks like a woman with purpose, a hot woman who just stole a company from an old man, heels clicking across the concrete.

She crosses through the parking lot -- but all of a sudden--

--FREEZES--

--Because Mia is standing in front of her holding a scrap of paper up - backpack over her shoulder, floppy under arm.

MIA

I'm lost. Can you take me home?

Emma eyes the little girl, long faced...

Looks around.

Looks some more.

EMMA

Wh-- where's your mommy?

MIA

I don't know.

Emma glances at the scrap of paper, AN ADDRESS SCRIBBLED IN CRAYON - child like handwriting.

EMMA

That's where you live?

INT. CAMARO, STATIONARY

Hitman watches as Emma takes a cell phone out of her pocket.

EXT. PARKING LOT

CLOSE ON EMMA'S CELL PHONE SCREEN: GOOGLE MAPS

She glances to Mia--

EMMA

--Alrighty. You found the right woman.

(beat)

It's only 3 miles away. I'll drop you off. What's your name?

INT. CAMARO, STATIONARY

Hitman observes Emma hold her hand out. Mia takes it.

EXT. PARKING LOT

A glittering silver BENZ. The spoils of a good inheritance. Emma opens back door for Mia.

INT. CAMARO, STATIONARY

Hitman starts the engine.

INT. EMMA'S BENZ - STATIONARY

Emma buckles up and clips her phone into a holder - street map still showing, Mia sitting in the back.

EMMA

How long have you been here?

MIA

I don't know.

Emma pulls out and drives through the lot.

EMMA

What's your last name, sweetie?

But Mia isn't very fast on the uptake.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Your last name? Your full name?

MIA

Mia... Wade.

Emma snaps her phone out of the holder and speed dials someone--

EMMA

--It's me. Do me a favor, check out if anyone reported a little girl missing in the last few hours. Crystal springs area. Maybe five or six, Caucasian, brown hair, fifty pounds. Thanks.

INT. CAMARO, MOVING

Hitman surreptitiously follows.

INT. EMMA'S BENZ, MOVING

Emma clears the parking lot, drives through a street--

--And down another street...

Turns--

--Stops for a red.

Camaro slinks up beside them. Brakes...

Emma eyes Mia--

EMMA

--Recognize the area?

Mia shakes her head negatively, and starts staring at the Camaro next to them.

A five year old mind is easily confused.

MIA

We-- I wanted to the desert... with... Wocky.

EMMA

The desert?

MIA

We digged a tandcastle.

Light goes green. Emma pulls away -- Camaro ZOOMS past and out of sight...

EMMA

Do you know your phone number? So we can call your mommy?

Mia gingerly rubs her head...

EMMA (CONT'D)

When I was a little girl my mommy made me remember her phone number.

MIA

Yes... I knowed it.

EMMA

Can you tell me mommy's number?

MIA

Yes.

EMMA

Let's call mommy and tell her your safe. What is it?

Mia takes her time...

MIA

It's 7 7 5...

INT. SUNDALE COMMUNITY CHURCH - DAY

MANDY WADE has her back to us and is kneeling before a cross, whispering a prayer - we can guess its contents...

Rest of the Church is empty except for TYLER WADE standing at the back.

We saw a shot of him on Mia's iPad, he was the shining star with his arms around Mandy and a beer in his fist.

And he is even shinier in person if you catch my drift.

40's, goatee, smoke tucked behind his ear, type you come across outside Seven Eleven on a Friday night buying a six pack--

TYLER

--Come on, woman, lets go...

But a CELLPHONE in his pocket starts RINGING...

He pulls it and answers--

TYLER (CONT'D)

--Hello?

INTERCUT WITH EMMA IN HER CAR:

EMMA

Hello... who's this?

TYLER

It's Tyler, I got Mandy's phone,
who the heck is this--

EMMA

--Do you have a daughter?

A cold suddenly washes over him--

TYLER

--Mia!

He barrels through the church doors and--

EXT. SUNDALE COMMUNITY CHURCH - SAME

Pauses outside--

EMMA

--Yes, Mia... I found her by my
office, I think she lost momm--

TYLER

--What -- where is she!

EMMA

I'm driving her home, she's in the
car--

TYLER

--What! What car -- put her on!

Emma leans back, hands phone to Mia.

EMMA

Here, I think it's your daddy...

Mia takes it--

MIA

--Daddy?

TYLER

Mia! Jesus, are you--

MIA

--I've been with Wocky. We're coming home after the game.

TYLER

Game, what... who's driving the car!?

MIA

I don't know.

TYLER

Let me speak to the driver, honey.

Mia hands the phone back--

MIA

--He... wanted you...

Emma puts the phone to her ear.

EMMA

Hello--

TYLER

--Please-- don't hurt her, I'll get her mother--

EMMA

--Sir, I said I'm bringing her home -- to you -- she gave me your address--

TYLER

Home...

Tyler races back through the Church doors, yelling--

TYLER (CONT'D)

Mandy -- quickly -- Mia--

--Turns back out...

TYLER (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Where are you!?

EMMA

I'm on Acorn -- heading west.

Tyler rushes for a pickup, pops drivers door, mind racing 100 miles an hour--

TYLER

--Acorn! Where the heck is acorn!?

But Emma eases off the gas as she drives through a run down neighborhood -- last few houses boarded up and covered in graffiti, a stray dog the only sign of life and...

The perfect place for a hit...

EMMA

I'm... at the end of the street...
she gave me 22875 Acorn Avenue--

Tyler, frantic, the air sucked from his lungs--

TYLER

--We ain't there, that's not our place!!

Emma SLAMS the brake -- *what the fuck!*

TYLER (CONT'D)

This some sort of sick fucking joke? Please, just take her to the nearest cop shop, don't even gotta go in, just drop her--

EMMA

--What!?

EXT. STREET - SAME

But outside on the street, Hitman is watching from the shadow of a tree--

--ONLY TO SEE--

--Emma lean back and hand Mia a cell phone.

HITMAN

Shit!!

Suddenly energized, Hitman explodes into a sprint and BEELINES straight for Emma's Benz...

INT. EMMA'S BENZ, STATIONARY

Emma with the phone for Mia...

EMMA

Here, talk to your daddy.

Mia takes the phone -- and as Emma swivels back to front--

--She spots Hitman pounding towards her full tilt--

EMMA (CONT'D)

--Who-- who's that Mia... is that your daddy?

MIA

No, it's not daddy.

EMMA

Oh my God... hang on--

SLAMS Benz into reverse and CRANKS engine, VROOMMMMM...

EXT. STREET

Hitman is AMPED -- lost the element of surprise as the Benz reverses, but--

--Mid-sprint, he produces his silenced shooter...

Fierce and focused, aims at Emma's head... and --

--FIRES... DIT...

One shot, one kill --

INT. EMMA'S BENZ, REVERSING

Single slug PENETRATES the windshield, spider webbing it--

--And TWIRLS into Emma's forehead - *SPLUT* - barreling through her skull and--

--SEARING PAST MIA'S FACE, exploding through the rear window and finally dying in a tree, WUMP!

Emma instantly lops forward onto the wheel, foot STOMPING accelerator and sending the car into a high speed reverse--

--CAREERING towards a FOUR WAY STOP...

EXT. STREET

Hitman gawks...

HITMAN

No!

Runs like his ass is on fire--

But he is not fast enough, Benz SMASHING into the side of a MUSTANG in mid turn, WHAMMM--

INT. EMMA'S BENZ

--Cell phone thrown from Mia's hand at the FORCE OF IMPACT.

EXT. STREET

Mustang and Benz fused, bumper to wheel arch.

Rattled Mustang driver leaps out of his car, a HOODLUM, probably in this part of town to hawk dope...

Approaches the Benz like he's king of the fucking castle--

HOODLUM

--The fuck you think you're do--

--But Hitman raises his steel and fires a warning shot into Mustang's wing mirror -- PING!!!

HITMAN

Run!

Hoodlum doesn't need telling twice.

Hitman rips Benz' back door open to find Mia crying--

HITMAN (CONT'D)

--Mia -- what happened, are you okay! Who were you talking to?

But she is five... and this is fucked up.

Hitman spots the cell phone and snatches it, listening--

TYLER (V.O.)

--HELLO! HELLO... MIA!

Hitman hangs up and pockets it. SIRENS...

HITMAN
We gotta go!

He dives in and scoops Mia into his arms. Hooks her backpack but--

MIA
--I wanna go home...

HITMAN
I'll take you--

--Holds her tight and races to Hoodlum's Mustang...

INT. MUSTANG

Hitman rips front door open, dumps Mia in passenger seat--

HITMAN
--Buckle up!

One of those cars that doubles as a trash can, Mia's feet hanging over burger wrappers, empty bottles, old food...

Hitman rushes to the driver's side and leaps in, BUT--

--*Mia has opened her door...*

HITMAN (CONT'D)
MIA--

MIA
--I wanna go home, nowwwwww...

HITMAN
We're going!

Lurches across her and SLAMS her door flipping the lock.

MIA
I want mommy--

--She tries to flip the lock as Hitman reverses--

HITMAN
--Leave it alone!

But she pulls the button up and opens the door, *tarmac whizzing past below*--

HITMAN (CONT'D)
--MIA!

Hitman fights with the wheel and SLAMS her door again.

Mustang SWERVES.

Hitman BRAKES -- throws the car into drive and accelerates
but--

--Mia isn't done - goes for the door yet again.

THIS TIME Hitman grabs her sleeve and pulls her--

HITMAN (CONT'D)
--I said leave it!

But as he pulls...

... Her sleeve RIPS--

--EXPOSING AN UGLY SHOULDER BRUISE...

Hitman reels...

HITMAN (CONT'D)
What the...

It scars him.

It's enough for him to pull over and catch his breath.

Engine idles.

Looks at her with fresh eyes.

Innocence dragged into chaos.

His newfound calm rubs off onto her--

HITMAN (CONT'D)
--How did you get that? Did you
fall over?
(beat)
Or... did... someone do it to you?

She stares at him. Eyes that you could sink into.

But as he waits -- the needle finally threads.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
Why does mommy cry so much, Mia?
(beat)
Does your daddy make her cry?

It's just the two of them, in total tableau.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
 Does... he... hit her?
 (beat)
 Does he hurt her, Mia?

She nods, coyly. It's enough.

He looks at her like his soul hurts.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
 Does he -- hit you?

She nods.

Hitman chokes down his grief.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
 Does he drink a lot?

She is unsure. Hitman reaches down and grabs a crushed beer can.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
 Always got one of these in his hand?

She nods again.

He drops the can. A moment of clarity.

And then suddenly--

--Grabs at her backpack -- yanking her iPad out.

Taps the PHOTO APP and brings up some pictures--

--Swipes through some and pauses on the shot of Tyler with his arms around Mandy.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
 Is this your daddy, Mia?
 (beat)
 Tyler?

MIA
 Yes...

He stares coldly at her.

HITMAN
 Did... did Tyler... hurt the puppy?
 (beat)
 Dylan? Dylan the puppy?

MIA

He... he putted the puppy in a bag,
and... hitted it at the wall.

We can feel Hitman's anger in the back of our skull.

HITMAN

Who was that man on the phone. Just
now? Was that your daddy too?

She nods.

Tyler stares back from the photo. The Devil is alive and
well.

Hitman dumps the iPad. Turns to front with fire in his eyes.

Slips Emma's phone out of his pocket.

His mind has gone. He is somewhere else. A human powder
keg.

Switches the phone off, pockets it.

EXT. HIGHWAY - AFTERNOON

Mustang blows past wayyyyy over the speed limit.

INT. MUSTANG, MOVING

Hitman and Mia. The air is heavy.

HITMAN

Sorry I yelled at you earlier.

Seems like she is over it anyway.

MIA

Are we going h--

HITMAN

--Yeah.

(beat)

I'm gonna teach your daddy how to
take care of his pets.

EXT. HITMAN'S TRAILER, DESERT - NIGHT

Headlights moving across the barren landscape.

INT. MUSTANG, MOVING

Mustang rattles across the sand.

Hitman necks last of a gas station coffee and plants the cup into a holder beside an ashtray that is full of dead joints.

Mia is sleeping but the BUMPING stirs her as Hitman parks outside his trailer.

Switches engine off. But before he gets out--

HITMAN

--Mia?

Her eyes meet his.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

I... know... what it's like...

Mia... blink...

HITMAN (CONT'D)

My... my daddy -- was a hands on
daddy too.

He looks at her and somehow we can sense that he has made a promise.

But she turns her nose up at something.

MIA

It-- smells, in here...

HITMAN

Yeah. I think the previous owner
had a bad habit.

Hitman goes for his door.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

I'm just gonna grab a few things
and we'll be out of here.

EXT. HITMAN'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Hitman crunches across the sand with a busy mind. But as he lifts a foot onto the first trailer step--

--Something inside STOPS HIM...

Something is weird...

HITMAN
 (to himself)
 Dog?

Turns his head back -- and just as he gazes across the plain--

--THE GUNSHOT RINGS OUT --

--BLAM!

A round fired from INSIDE the trailer RIPS through the door and plants itself straight into Hitman's gut, *WHAPP!*

Hitman is launched backwards, foot leaving the step...

Flies through the air and lands in a cloud of dust, *VOOMMP!!*

His stomach bleeding - it feels like it's on fire...

Numb for moment. Unbelieving. But this is real.

Trailer door opens and Luca steps out packing heat.

LUCA
 Hola!

Hitman flounders.

Luca approaches with a swagger like he just got laid by ten playmates--

HITMAN
 --What... what have you done?

LUCA
 Question is, what have you done,
 bro?

Luca looms as Hitman comes to terms with dying--

LUCA (CONT'D)
 --And your place smells like balls,
 what you been doing in there?

Hitman can only GURGLE, hand over gut, blood between digits.

Luca squats.

LUCA (CONT'D)
 Before you become one with the
 soil... mind explaining that shit
 sandwich you left back in Crystal?
 (beat)
 (MORE)

LUCA (CONT'D)

What's wrong with you? First that little bitch, and now this--

--But Hitman isn't in a very talkative mood.

LUCA (CONT'D)

Should'a posted a selfie. They got witnesses, your description... and you even left her ass right there... out in the open!

Pauses for reaction, but nothing more than writhing--

LUCA (CONT'D)

--You were doing so good, why'd you have to go and shit the bed?

Luca rises.

LUCA (CONT'D)

Broad was an undercover Federal Agent investigating the old man you dumb fuck.

Hitman seethes.

LUCA (CONT'D)

Had her beak in a company Elliott set up -- to pay guys like us.

(beat)

About to fly back to her office and file charges, but now they're gonna have an even bigger hard-on for the old man... which means - you gotta cash out.

HITMAN

I... I shot... a cop--

LUCA

--Yeah, well, life ain't all puppies and rainbows.

Hitman trying to come to terms with it.

LUCA (CONT'D)

Look, there ain't gonna be any long speeches, but I do got an offer. Where you keep your greenery, can't find shit in there?

(beat)

Tell me, and you catch the last one in the noggin, won't feel a thing. Otherwise, it's vagina first.

HITMAN
Eat... eat shit...

Luca levels his gat at Hitman's balls--

LUCA
--Sucks to be you.
(beat)
Oh, and message from Elliott.
After you, that little bitch is
next.

But Hitman groans something...

HITMAN
--W-- where's my d-- dog?

LUCA
What can I say, a mutt bit me once,
I don't like 'em.

But just as Luca touches the trigger--

--A VOICE FROM THE DARKNESS...

MIA (O.S.)
Wocky?

LUCA
What...

Luca pivots, training his gun into the black void--

HITMAN
--Mia, run!

BLUR of a figure through Mustang headlights...

Luca fires at it--

-- BLAM... BLAM...

And in hair raising horror - the slug hits it's target--

--MIA SHRIEKS, punched to the ground by the bullet, THWUMP--

HITMAN (CONT'D)
--NOOOO!

With a surge of strength, Hitman shimmies onto his front,
arches his back and reaches for --

-- THE STEAK KNIFE laying on the barbecue...

Flips it, gripping the blade like he's done this before and--

--Pitches it straight into Luca's back -- SCCCHLIKT!

Luca GASPS as the blade skewers his spine...

Stumbles... but--

--He is still on his feet... still holding that fucking gun.

Hitman snags a rubber hose coming off a propane tank underneath the barbecue, pulls one end loose and--

--Twists the tank's valve -- releasing gas...

Luca, ZOMBIE LIKE, turning to face Hitman - and as he raises his weapon--

--Hitman aims the end of the rubber hose up, whips a metal fire lighter to the tip of it -- CLICKING IT --

--A SPARK creates an instant FLAME... a jet of fire SPOUTING out of the hose into Luca's face--

--Luca SCREAMS...

A wild shot, BLAM--

--Hitman rolls...

BLAM, a second shot ruptures the pressurized propane tank--

--A mini EXPLOSION flings Luca to the ground, leaving him char grilled.

Hitman bellies across the sand until he comes to a LUMP...

HITMAN (CONT'D)

M--Mia--Mia!

MIA MOVES...

SOBBING -- BUT ALIVE...

She rolls over.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

Mia!?

Hitman, tunnel vision on her.

Frantically runs hands over her clothes looking for blood.

Feels something in her backpack.

Unusual.

Pulls it open to find--

--A GUNSHOT ROUND mashed into the back of her iPad.

It saved her.

Relaxes as his own pain comes flooding back.

He rolls, looking up. The moon and stars...

And then--

--MIA'S FACE...

MIA

Are you dying?

Forces himself upright breathing in HITCHES and GASPS.

HITMAN

What makes you think that?

(beat)

W--we gotta get you to your mommy.

Rolls onto his knees. More pain than he is letting on.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

Please-- I... need you-- to get me something, slugger...

EXT. BASE OF THE MOUNTAIN - NIGHT

Behind Hitman's trailer, a FLASHLIGHT beam dances across the sand following TIRE TRACKS...

Hitman, standing upright, levels the beam to reveal a BLACK SUV parked at the foot of the mountain.

Hitman's hand tightens around Luca's gun.

Staggers towards the vehicle, falling onto the driver's side in agony...

Grabs handle and rips door open to reveal--

--ELLIOTT

Sitting in the passenger seat, cool as shit even as Hitman stands there with a leaking gut and a tsunami in his eyes.

Hitman raises his gun and points it at Elliott but--

ELLIOTT

--You already proved a pussy with the gun.

Hitman SCREAMS AND--

--BLAM, BLAM!

Two slugs SPLUT into Elliott's dead thigh...

Elliott doesn't react with anything more than a scowl as blood seeps through his pants.

HITMAN

I'm honored you came.

But Elliott's as chilled as a snowman's spit--

HITMAN (CONT'D)

--I k--killed-- a cop... so you...
c-c-could protect yourself--

--Sucks air.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

I don't kill c-cops... I was a cop!

ELLIOTT

--And look where it got you!

(beat)

You walked into an art class and found a teacher messin' with a kid, so what did you do -- you shot him!

(beat)

We're the same, you and I, we're practically fucking related.

HITMAN

I didn't agree to kill kids!

ELLIOTT

--And I didn't agree to preside over courtrooms full of half baked, fuck rags just to watch them get kicked back onto the streets early...

(beat)

You and I probably saved more innocents ending up like me... than our fucked up laws have. Not forgetting...

(beat)

I SAVED YOUR LIFE, YOU FUCKING
IDIOT--

HITMAN

--I was homeless and starving! I would'a stabbed the president for a slice of bread!

Hitman winces - wounds sucking his humanity away like an invisible vampire.

Suddenly turns and throws his gun out into the night.

Stalks around to passenger side RIPPING the door open and--

--Planting both hands onto Elliott's lapels, YANKING him out of the vehicle and flinging him to the ground with a WUMP!!

HITMAN (CONT'D)

We're not helping anyone!

Elliott fumbles... unable to get upright...

ELLIOTT

We're doing a public service! You think unknowing families want these lowlifes moving into their neighborhoods? Mothers, with kids. Little kids. Like Mia?

Rolls onto his side desperate to cling onto his sense of worth and power--

ELLIOTT (CONT'D)

--I'm the answer to the ones that slip through the cracks! I got a life sentence in a 'chair' because some punks were on the street when they should'a been locked up!

(beat)

I'm making the difference now. ME!

But Hitman has administered himself a dose of calm.

HITMAN

You made a difference when you tried to kill a little girl.

They eagerly eye fuck each other.

A beat.

And then Hitman turns away--

--But pauses.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
 Make sure you're not here when I
 come back.

CRUNCHES across the sand leaving Elliott and his useless legs
 to the desert.

INT. HITMAN'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Place has been turned upside down.

Goldfish bowl laying on the floor on its side, fish laid out
 in a puddle but still GASPING for life.

A PAIR of small shoes step up to it.

INT. BATHROOM

A bloody sink.

Hitman is sitting on the toilet, bandages around his bare
 stomach.

Bites back tears - this ain't just a scratch.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Hitman hobbles out of the bathroom clinging to walls.

Bumbles through the trailer towards Mia who is sitting
 watching the Goldfish. It's swimming in the bowl now, empty
 water bottles next to it.

HITMAN
 That's my girl.

Pauses and leans. Watches her as she studies this wonderful
 creature. There is still good in the world.

Somehow it makes him ashamed.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
 I...
 (beat)
 I don't really work in a... p-- pet
 store, slugger.

Perhaps the most honest moment of his life. She looks up,
 inquisitive.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
I went down a bad road.

She stares him down -- almost forcing him to give her more.
Unsure if he should close the book now or turn another page.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
Sometimes... I follow families.
(beat)
I go to their homes. Just to look
around and see to see how it
could've been. Be surprised how
many people open their doors once
you tell them you used to live
there.

Dueling eyes, but his sense of regret is suffocating.
Stumbles forward buzzing with remorse.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
Wait here-- slugger.

Heads for the door.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

Deep fried Luca.

Inside the parked Mustang - the glow of a cigarette cherry.

INT. MUSTANG

Hitman drags on a leftover joint. Feels like he has
swallowed a grenade.

Moves a hand to his pocket and fishes out the CELL PHONE Mia
was using.

Switches it on...

IMMEDIATELY VIBRATES WITH VOICEMAILS -- all from same number.

Taps one and listens...

TYLER (V.O.)
Please... whoever you are, please,
just bring Mia bac--

--Taps another...

MANDY (V.O.)
 (sobbing)
 Please... I'm begging you, bring my
 little--

--Hits END.

No point -- they'll all be the same message.

A moment. Another hit.

Then--

--Taps the number.

Puts the phone to ear. RINGS ONCE and connects as if someone
 was waiting--

TYLER (V.O.)
 --Mia!

But all Hitman offers is breath.

TYLER (V.O.)
 Hello!

More breath.

TYLER (V.O.)
 Please... we'll do anything. We'll
 pay anything--

INT. TYLER'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tyler - sitting on a sofa, two bleary SUITS either side of
 him.

One of the SUITS gestures Tyler to keep it rolling...

TYLER
 Please... just bring her back.

INTERCUT: As Hitman rouses...

HITMAN
 Oh, she's coming back alright.
 (beat)
 I took Mia away to save her... and
 that's exactly what I intend to do.

--Lowers cell phone but doesn't hang up.

Another drag -- this one with urgency.

Glances back to his trailer. Dog's empty food bowl. It hurts.

EXT. MUSTANG - NIGHT

Hitman wobbles out of the car and purposefully drops the cell phone into the sand.

STILL CONNECTED.

INT. HITMAN'S TRAILER - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: *A GAME ON MIA'S iPad...*

The door CREAKS and Hitman looms. Regards the bullet proof tablet--

HITMAN
--Huh. Still works.
(beat)
Ready to go home?

Mia switches the game off and nods. BUT--

--Hitman stares at the iPad.

His brain ticks.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
Mind if I borrow that thing?

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

Cold, bleak and barren. An EXCRUCIATING MOAN as--

--Elliott hauls himself through the arid sand, dormant legs heavy like anchors.

Suddenly pauses--

--Wrinkles his forehead -- gaze fixed on something weird...

TWO TWINKLING DOTS

That slowly move closer and closer... eventually revealing--

--The sharp beady eyes of a COYOTE.

MORE blinking eyes appear in the gloom.

Coyote noses to the air -- scent of Elliott's bleeding leg.

Elliott is on the menu tonight. A coyote SNARLS...

The pack close in... Elliott SCREAMS...

EXT. FREEWAY - NIGHT

Elliott's SUV powers past.

INT. SUV - MOVING

Hitman drives. Pale. Sweaty. Not pretty.

Smiles at Mia trying to counter his appearance.

HITMAN

I-- I gotta question-- for you--
slugger.

(beat)

Would you rather -- f--fight, a h--
h-- horse-sized-duck... or... a
hundred duck sized horses?

She finger stabs her face.

MIA

A... duck size -- duck.

HITMAN

(repeating)

A duck sized duck. Guess that
would just be... a duck... then...

He chugs from a bottle of water. Hurts to swallow.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

Clever girl.

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - NIGHT

SUV blows into the distance.

EXT. MOUNTAIN TOP - DAWN

Passes that sign again.

NIXON NEVADA - POPULATION 185 AND STILL TOO FREAKIN' MANY

Looking down on town. There is a shitstorm coming.

INT. SUV, MOVING - MORNING

Hitman parks up in a strip mall full of fast food joints.

Coughs violently.

A long hard look at Mia as if it's for the first time again.

INT. BATHROOM, HUNGRY JACKS

Hitman is staring at himself in a dirty mirror. Changed into a dark blue dress shirt. Another fierce COUGHING episode.

Back to mirror. It's like watching yourself decay.

Warily grabs a FLAT CAP from a duffel bag - and when he places it on his head, that's when we realize--

--It's the final touch to a Police Officer's uniform.

Thumbs a nametag on his lapel: *TENBROOK*

It meant something once.

INT. SUV - STATIONARY

Hitman gets into the SUV and SLAMS his door. Faces Mia--

HITMAN

--You're under arrest.

She looks at him, quizzical.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

Like it? Used to wear it every day.

Takes a bag of food out of his duffel bag and hands her.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

Eat. Then we gotta go.

EXT. HIGHWAY - EVENING

Passing cars.

We favor a TAXI...

INT. TAXI, MOVING

Hitman and Mia riding in the back.

Hitman has a jacket on over his uniform, duffel bag in his lap and a fantastic poker face hiding his pain.

Mia's iPad on his knee displaying her address.

And through the windshield: SUNDALE TRAILER PARK...

Mia is quiet, backpack and Floppy in her lap... UNTIL--

--She suddenly spots home--

MIA

--Mommy!

HITMAN

(to himself)

So you do live in trailer.

Leans to the Armenian driver, we'll call him VOSKI--

HITMAN (CONT'D)

--Pull over opposite.

EXT. SUNDALE TRAILER PARK - EVENING

Voski eases to a stop across from the park.

INT. TAXI, STATIONARY

Voski twists to Hitman.

VOSKI

Twelve, ninety.

Hitman forks over some hundreds that he already prepped--

HITMAN

--Here is three hundred... but I need a favor.

Voski's eyes pop.

VOSKI

My friend. Consider me your trusty servant.

HITMAN

All I need you to do is sit here
and watch my daughter.

(beat)

I gotta go have a serious
conversation with her mother... if
you know what I mean.

(beat)

Twenty minutes... and they'll be
another more when I'm back.

VOSKI

For that, I even sing her classic
Armenian folk song while she wait.

HITMAN

She's a lucky girl.

Hitman to Mia. Takes her little hands again. They share a
moment.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

Mia. I'm just going to talk to
mommy on my own. Can you wait here
a few minutes?

MIA

Noooo, I-- I want to come.

HITMAN

Mommy's sick and doesn't want to
get you sick too. We just gotta
make sure she's well enough for you
to come in, okay?

She stays put -- but her soul is screaming to get out.

Hitman lets her hands go. Turns to the door but chokes on an
unexpected emotion.

Back to Mia. Kind of thing you do when you don't want to
forget someones face.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

I've got some good news for you.
That nasty man who doesn't like
apples...

(beat)

He isn't your daddy.

The world melts away for a moment. And then Hitman smiles
and winks at her.

Eyes refuse to leave her until the very last minute.

EXT. TAXI - NIGHT

Hitman gets out with the duffel bag.

Crosses towards trailer park. Life hurts but he still has some fight. Especially for this cause.

EXT. SUNDALE TRAILER PARK - NIGHT

Third world America. Place is a mash up of run down trailers.

Hitman slips through the gates and into the park.

INT. SUNDALE TRAILER PARK - NIGHT

Hitman looms in the shadows. Distant voices, a couple of guys around a fire.

Continues through the park... until--

--MIA'S TRAILER... dead ahead.

Not hard to spot - one with the COP CRUISER parked outside.

Ducks behind another trailer. Dumps his bag down.

Takes a breath.

This is it.

Kneels to unzip bag, but--

--A RAGING PITBULL on the end of a chain almost rips his face off--

--Hitman falls south and lands in mud... searing pain kicking him in the ass...

His entire body needs a software update.

Scrambles, grabs his bag.

Criss crosses into a clearing beyond Mia's trailer - every step like wading through syrup.

Dumps his bag, kneels, takes the flat cap out.

Fits it on his head.

Next--

--A SAWN OFF SHOTGUN. Wide bullet spread - easier to nail a moving target.

Unzips jacket revealing the Police Officer's shirt. Hides shotgun under arm.

INT. POLICE CRUISER, STATIONARY - NIGHT

OFFICER MILLER is watching YouTube on his phone as Officer Hitman approaches his window and TAPS on it...

CLINK, CLINK...

Officer Miller rolls his window down but--

--Hitman SMASHES him in the face with the butt of his sawn off -- KRAKKKKK!

EXT. WADE TRAILER - NIGHT

Soundless, Hitman eases up the trailer steps. Pauses at top.

Leans to a window -- but a curtain is covering it.

No dice.

KNOCKS on the door, TAP, TAP, TAP...

Arm CLENCHES the shotgun under jacket.

A moment... and then the door opens to reveal MANDY WADE and her black eye.

Hitman contemplates her. Three square meals of nicotine a day has clearly taken a toll.

But she instantly perks up giving Hitman a curt look -- a look he already knows...

MANDY

What the Hell are you--

HITMAN

--I can't believe our daughter's missing and you haven't called me.

Slips the PHONE IN THE BLUE CASE out of his pocket.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

You could'a called anytime, I know
you have this number, only reason I
keep the phone.

MANDY

She hasn't been your daughter ever
since you killed someone and
abandoned us--

HITMAN

--They sent me to prison, I didn't
abandon you--

MANDY

--Yes you did!

(beat)

And yeah, she's missing, we've
called the cops, we've called
everyone -- what the fuck do you
think you're gonna do about it!

HITMAN

A lot.

He takes a moment to re-calibrate.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

Nice eye. A gift from your
husband?

A flash of discomfort steals her tongue...

HITMAN (CONT'D)

Where is he?

(beat)

I'm here for Tyler.

MANDY

What!?

Doesn't make sense... runs her eyes up and down him.

MANDY (CONT'D)

Why... why are you dressed like
that?

Trying to piece it together but suddenly -- an overwhelming
sense of fear grips her.

Hitman catches her furtively glance toward Officer Miller's
patrol car--

HITMAN
--He took a walk.

Mandy gauges him - flushed face, sweat drenched, muddy pants... not quite wired right...

HITMAN (CONT'D)
Tyler?

The air drains from her lungs...

MANDY
I don't think so--

--And with that she suddenly moves to slam the door but--

--Hitman SWOOPS, stiff arming her backwards into the trailer--

--Mandy SCREAMS as he shoehorns his way in...

INT. WADE TRAILER

Hitman pushes Mandy back into a frayed sofa.

Place reeks of a desperate woman's touch. Some photos of Mia, a few sad plants. Get the feeling if you pull the carpet back the floor won't be pretty.

Hitman whips the shotgun out from under arm, careful not to point it at her but firm enough to command submission.

HITMAN
Your piece of shit brother took our daughter to a very bad situation--

--Mandy's face goes stone cold.

MANDY
--Wh--at the...
(beat)
W-- why isn't Dennis answering the phone... what have you done!!

HITMAN
Where's Tyler!

MANDY
WHERE'S MIA, WHAT HAVE YOU DONE--

HITMAN
--Where's Tyler?

MANDY
He isn't here!

HITMAN
Where is he? I get Tyler, you get Mia.

Mandy GASPS big.

Some trade off.

Her move--

MANDY
--H-- he... went to w-work.

HITMAN
At a time like this!?

MANDY
Look around - we're fucking poor...

HITMAN
Call him. You fell and hit your head. You feel dizzy.

But it's a death sentence and she knows it.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
--Why are you covering for a man who beats you?

They contemplate each other for a long moment...

HITMAN (CONT'D)
It isn't your fault you ended up with a piece of shit. Your dad was a piece of shit and so was your brother...

Mandy balks.

MANDY
Was?

HITMAN
Like I said. Asshole brought her to a very bad situation and recognized me.
(beat)
Before I could shut him up he told me Mia was in the car but it was too late to move her.
(beat)
(MORE)

HITMAN (CONT'D)

I acted surprised. To protect her... from someone else.

MANDY

D-- Dennis was a piece of shit...
but -- he was never violent.

HITMAN

I know you gave her to him to protect her.

(beat)

From Tyler.

Hitman tilts his head at her as if peeking into her soul.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

Just relax and breathe.

(beat)

Where is he?

Ungodly silence. Mandy's lip trembles...

Hitman slowly and painfully takes a knee to level with her.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

I know he drinks...

(beat)

I just wonder what we don't know.

Her silence is haunting. And a stinging giveaway that Hitman is right.

Whatever he is about to say next disgusts him to the core.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

Mandy. You're... you're not the only one he--

--But before he can get it out...

--BLAM...

SOUND OF A ROUND EXPLODING -- AND...

--A slug smokes through Hitman's chest with the force of a STEAM TRAIN...

Bounces him back into a stack of shelves, shotgun flying out of his hands...

He drops to the floor on his belly - state of profound shock.

Mandy leaps up as--

--BOOTS step through the bedroom doorway, and--

--TYLER EMERGES - DRESSED AS A SECURITY GUARD FOR CENTURY EIGHT BANK GROUP, AND HOLDING A SMOKING SERVICE REVOLVER...

Hitman with a strangling epiphany.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
(to himself)
Of... course. A bank...

Coughs blood.

Heavy duty boots stop in front of Hitman's face.

Mandy - desperate harried eyes...

Tyler turns his head to her.

TYLER
Well don't just stand there cunt,
call the real cops. We got the son
of a bitch.

Mandy's shaky hand moves for a handset.

Paint chipped nails hit digits.

Tyler looms over Hitman.

Smiles.

Lego teeth.

TYLER (CONT'D)
Now. Where's my fucking daughter,
asshole?

HITMAN
F-- fuck you. She isn't yours...
(beat)
I know what you did to her.

Tyler sighs. It's bad. Faces Mandy again.

TYLER
--Best be on the phone, ain't gonna
tell ya'll again with my mouth.

She hits call, handset to ear...

MANDY
(into phone)
Police.

Tyler steps halfway over Hitman's body and holds there like a lion that has found it's prey.

Suddenly knee drops onto Hitman's chest with all his weight, not an ounce of conscience...

Hitman emotionally and physically shattered...

Nose to nose--

TYLER

--Last chance.

But Hitman just heaves...

HITMAN

Yo-- you're the reason, I've been doing, what I've been doing...

Tyler cocks his revolver, none the wiser--

TYLER

--Goodbye, asshole.

Face you see in your nightmares.

Tyler pushes gun barrel to Hitman's lips--

--Forces the tip through Hitman's mouth SCRAPING it across his front teeth...

Hitman braces...

Eyes lock to each other, laser guided. Wasn't supposed to end like this...

And as Tyler's finger touches the trigger--

TYLER (CONT'D)

Wouldn't be the first time,
motherfu--

--BUT SUDDENLY--

--KER BOOOOOOOOO... the shotgun barks--

--SPLATTERING Tyler all over the sofa.

Tyler's body pitches forward SLUMPING onto of Hitman's and--

--Revealing Mandy clutching the double barreled SAWN OFF with the kind of look you never forget.

No explanation necessary. All the answers in her broken face.

Hitman GROANS. Pushes Tyler off.

But Mandy's grip is firm. Eyes determined.

They both know there is a second shot here--

HITMAN
(re: Tyler)
--T-- tell them-- I did it.

And then he drops the bomb.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
She's... in a taxi... out front.

Mandy immediately drops the gun and bolts for the door.

EXT. WADE TRAILER - NIGHT

People have gathered. Gunshots = crowds--

--But Mandy steams across the trailer park, bare feet through mud, sand, across stones and finally -- into the road.

EXT. SUNDALE TRAILER PARK - NIGHT

Mandy through the gates and --

--Straight to the taxi...

INT. TAXI, STATIONARY

Mandy rips the back door open to find Mia sitting pretty--

MIA
--Mommy!

A frantic embrace. A tsunami of kisses.

INT. WADE TRAILER - NIGHT

Hitman on his hands and knees. Eyes swimming.

Crawls to the door - pushes it open and--

EXT. WADE TRAILER - NIGHT

--TUMBLES down the steps.

Body feels like a brick. He rolls. The black sky.

Tries to regain himself... but he is free falling.

Faces -- people watching -- voices...

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

He's a cop!

Dancing flashlights.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Help him!

But Hitman is outside of the reality that the rest of us exist in. Battles forwards...

EXT. SUNDALE TRAILER PARK

Mia, still wrapped in her mother's arms, but SUDDENLY--

--Spots Hitman back by the trailer park.

MIA

Wocky!

Wiggles out of Mandy's arms almost falling to the ground,

MANDY

--Mia!

INT. SUNDALE TRAILER PARK - NIGHT

Mia's stumps carry her back to Hitman - she plunges to her knees and throws her arms around his head.

MIA

Wocky!

Hitman's arms give way, body slapping the ground...

HITMAN

H-- hello... Mia...

(beat)

It's-- it's safe... for you, to go home now...

A bead of sweat rolls down his forehead catching in his eyebrow.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
I-- I know why we have eyebrows
now, slugger.

Curious Mia.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
To stop water getting in our eyes.
(beat)
When the sky-- is crying.

He twitches. Pulse dropping. Head sagging.

MIA
Wocky?

HITMAN'S UPSIDE DOWN P.O.V: On Mia.

The strangest moment of his life.

HITMAN
Take care... s-- slugger...

Smiles with the greatest warmth in his eyes. Focuses on her as Mandy arrives...

The last thing he ever sees.

EXT. MOJAVE DESERT - DAY

That yellow landscape. But there is a special hue to it now.

HITMAN (V.O.)
Hello, Mandy.
(beat)
I'm probably dead now if you're
watching this.

A rusty station wagon streaks past.

INT. STATION WAGON, MOVING - DAY

Fresh faced Mandy at the wheel.

HITMAN (V.O.)
I'm sorry I took Mia.
(beat)
(MORE)

HITMAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 I could have brought her back
 earlier, but as you know, I'd never
 met her before. I recognized her
 from a picture I found on the
 internet.

INT. BEDROOM, WADE TRAILER - NIGHT

Mandy is sitting on the edge of her bed holding Mia's iPad
 and watching a VIDEO that Hitman made from his own trailer--

Hitman-in-the-video squirms, stomach wound still fresh here--

HITMAN IN THE VIDEO
 --I've been involved in something
 bad and I knew I shouldn't have
 taken a job so close to home... but
 I never expected it to lead to Mia.
 And to you.

INT. STATION WAGON - DAY

Mandy steers towards Hitman's trailer, Mia buckled in back.

HITMAN (V.O.)
 I know my actions have probably
 left you in a financial hole, but I
 do have a way to make amends.

Crime scene tape around Hitman's lonely shack.

HITMAN (V.O.)
 At the top of the mountain behind
 my place, you'll find a grave.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PEAK - DAY

Mandy's on her knees removing rocks from the grave site.

HITMAN (V.O.)
 It isn't really a grave. It's a
 marker.

She comes across some dusty lock boxes. Opens one.

Cash.

HITMAN (V.O.)
 Take the money and use it.
 (beat)
 It was always meant for you.
 (MORE)

HITMAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 It's bad money from bad people but
 you can turn it good.

INT. HITMAN'S TRAILER - DAY

Mandy is standing inside Hitman's broken abode...

HITMAN (V.O.)
 And please give Mia my goldfish.

Mandy watches Mia lift the fishbowl with both hands.

HITMAN (V.O.)
 They're old friends now.

INT. BEDROOM, WADE TRAILER - NIGHT

Mandy continues viewing the video...

HITMAN IN THE VIDEO
 Mia saved my life today... and now
 I gotta help her with hers.

Mandy chokes up. Mia - probably safer with Hitman than she
 ever was at home.

HITMAN IN THE VIDEO (CONT'D)
 When-- when I finish this video,
 open the map. I dropped a pin
 where you can find my place.

EXT. HITMAN'S TRAILER, MOJAVE DESERT - DAY

Mandy walking back to the car with a bulging backpack, Mia in
 tow with the fishbowl, water SLOSHING with every step.

One SLOSH too many and the goldfish spills onto the hot sand.

FLAPS AROUND...

We've been here before.

But this time, a pair of tiny hands wrap around it.

INT. STATION WAGON, STATIONARY - DAY

Mandy gets into the driver's seat and SLAMS the door, Mia in the back holding the fishbowl.

HITMAN (V.O.)
It's time for me to bring her back
to you now... and to right a wrong.

Mandy starts the engine, but as she begins pulling away--

--MIA FRANTICALLY POUNDS ON A WINDOW...

Mandy STOMPS the brake -- glances out. DOG. Blooded ear and some matted fur, but alive.

INT. BEDROOM, WADE TRAILER - NIGHT

Mandy listens to Hitman's final words.

HITMAN ON THE VIDEO
Take care. Your friend. Karl.

Forces a smile. Then reaches out and stops the video.

EXT. STATION WAGON, MOVING - NIGHT

Car bumps off the dirt track and onto the lonesome highway.

INT. STATION WAGON, MOVING - NIGHT

In the back, Dog is sitting next to Mia.

CUT TO BLACK:

THE END