

V I O L E N T G E N T L E M E N

written by

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FADE IN:

BLACK

ALEX (V.O.)
My father told me once: America was
built on wagers.
Men bet their land, their names,
their lives—
called it honor.

A beat. The hum of a dying fluorescent tube.

ALEX (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Honor doesn't die. It just changes
shape.
New suits. New guns. New rules.
Some men never stop betting.
They pass the Code along, so the
circle never breaks.

A METAL DOOR ROLLS OPEN—echoing into—

INT. UNDERGROUND PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Concrete cathedral. Headlights form a ritual circle.

In the center: ELLIS MARTIN (40s), panicked, a BLUE "SECOND
CHANCE" VEST beneath his shirt.

Opposite: ROY GAUNT (50s) — immaculate trench, scar carved
down his throat, eyes calm as execution.
Around his neck: a necklace of lacquered TRIGGER FINGERS.

DEMARCO (30s), precise, priestly, opens a velvet case: TWO
TARAN TACTICAL JW4 COMBAT MASTER GLOCK 34 GEN 5s.

DEMARCO
(ritual cadence)
The Code of the Violent Gentlemen:
Matched weapons. Vest optional.
Terms declared. Paces agreed.
Honor above all.

ELLIS
First blood.

GAUNT
(raspy, calm)
No. To the death.

They stand spine-to-spine.

DEMARCO

Seven paces. On my count.

A shadow lingers at the edge: DAN WHEELER (50s), scarred, long coat. Watching.

DEMARCO (CONT'D)

One... Two... Three... Four... Five—

Ellis falters.

DEMARCO (CONT'D)

Six—

Gaunt pivots early. BLAM.

The vest swallows the round; Ellis drops gasping.

Gaunt approaches, winter-calm. Draws a blade. SAWS off Ellis' trigger finger.

Threads it onto his necklace.

GAUNT

Honor... satisfied.

From the shadow, Wheeler mutters—

WHEELER

You've lost your way.

Gaunt lifts his head. Thin smile.

SMASH TO TITLE: VIOLENT GENTLEMEN

MONTAGE - THE CITY AS CIRCUITRY (MICHAEL MANN STYLE)

- Freeways glow like neon veins.
- A glass tower pulses like a heartbeat.
- A blue vest, hung like a uniform.
- A Combat Master slide racked; brass spins in slow motion.
- A leather glove placed in a drawer like a passport.

INT. SOCIETY BAR - NIGHT

Cathedral of neon and wood. Expensive hush.

A corner booth: PETE HODGES (40s), charming smartass, whiskey in hand.

SUZIE OPALINE (30s), elegantly lethal.

SCOTT WIMMER (30s), jittery in a suit.

ROGER HARDAWAY (40s), union-tough in a \$5k jacket.

DEMARCO – precise, ledger-calm.

Blue vests peek beneath tailored armor.

HODGES

Everyone says The Office was about friendship.

It's about a sociopath boss and people too broke to quit.

WIMMER

So... you've worked at a startup.

HARDAWAY

Succession is Thanksgiving if your dad owns a satellite.

SUZIE

If anyone quotes Yellowstone at me again, I'm dueling for cultural hygiene.

Demarco raises his glass, solemn.

DEMARCO

Honor above all.

The door opens. ALEX VEDDER (30s) – outsider energy, loosened tie; casino-startup money but no home here.

HODGES

Vedder. The casino kid. Sold your app to billionaires, right? Come drink with people who never lose.

ALEX

People who never lose usually built the house.

SUZIE

We are the house.

INT. SOCIETY BAR – LATER

Hodges conspiratorial, whiskey in hand.

HODGES

Tell me you didn't really name the app Riverboat.

ALEX

I named the holding company Dealer Stands at Seventeen. Accountants loved it. Judges—less so.

WIMMER

So are you rich-rich, or podcast-rich?

ALEX

Comfortable enough to stop pretending.

HARDAWAY

That's how you know you're lying.

Suzie studies Alex's hands. Steady. Uncalloused.

SUZIE

Ever shot under pressure?

ALEX

At what?

SUZIE

Yourself.

Demarco checks a vintage watch.

DEMARCO

Orientation. Midnight. West garage. Bring a vest.

Hodges taps a leather glove on the table like a metronome.

HODGES

First rule: don't faint.
Second rule: if you faint, don't bleed on the nice shoes.

INT. ALEX & JANE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Keys. Door. Quiet. Lived-in. A plant reaching for lamplight.

JANE (30s) at the table, laptop open, receipts fanned like a losing hand.

She clocks everything—the time, the smell, the faint bruise he hasn't noticed yet.

JANE
You're late.

ALEX
Brought your favorite dessert:
apologies.

JANE
(slight smile)
Is there gluten in apologies?

She pulls a gel pack from the freezer, tape in hand. He peels off his shirt.
Purple bruises bloom faint across his ribs.

JANE (CONT'D)
(soft, clinical)
You come home marked up, smelling
like smoke,
with eyes that don't belong to me.
If you're living two lives, Alex...
just make sure the right one comes
home.

ALEX
Can I be romantic instead?

JANE
You can be here.

She tapes the gel pack. Their eyes lock — one breath.

JANE (CONT'D)
Don't make me the lie you tell to
cover where you've been.
Make me the truth that keeps you
alive.

EXT. WEST GARAGE - NIGHT (ORIENTATION)

The ritual circle. Smaller. Colder.
SUZIE. HODGES. WIMMER. HARDAWAY. DEMARCO with the velvet
case.

Two MATCHED JW4s gleam like relics.

DEMARCO

(ritual cadence)

The Code of the Violent Gentlemen:
Insult answered with the glove.
Terms—first blood, incapacitation,
or death.
Matched weapons. Paces counted.
Refusal means exile.

WIMMER

(awkward)

We almost never exile.

HARDAWAY

We just stop calling.

HODGES

Which is worse. Trust me.

Suzie steps into Alex's space. Ceremonial. Not cruel.
She SLAPS the glove lightly against his cheek.

SUZIE

Orientation. Five paces.
Incapacitation.

Hardaway straps Alex's blue vest.

HARDAWAY

Notch down, or you'll eat the plate
when you sneeze.

Back-to-back.

DEMARCO

Five paces. On my count.
One... Two... Three... Four... FIVE.

They spin. TWO SHOTS almost as one.
— Alex tags Suzie's vest, sternum-high.
— Suzie threads Alex under the clavicle seam; air rips from
him.

SUZIE

Not bad for a man who names
companies after card tricks.

ALEX

Not bad for a woman who wears armor
like jewelry.

DEMARCO

Draw. Honor satisfied.

From the shadows—

WHEELER (O.S.)
He doesn't have a teacher yet.

INT. GARAGE - FAR CORNER - CONTINUOUS

Paper torsos hang with chalked seam marks: underarm gap,
clavicle notch, side seam.
A metronome ticks on a milk crate.

Wheeler gestures Alex over, studies his grip, his breathing.

WHEELER
Center mass is what men shoot when
they're scared they'll miss.
The vest forgives cowards.

ALEX
What forgives the rest of us?

WHEELER
Nothing.
(sets his stance)
So don't be the rest of us.

He checks Alex's pistol by feel. Hands it back.

WHEELER (CONT'D)
On five, you turn.
On six, he cheats.
On seven, you live.

He flicks the metronome. TICK. TICK.

ALEX
Ready.

Wheeler's scar almost smiles—then fades.

WHEELER
Six.

Alex pivots early. Breaks a seam shot. Chalk explodes.

WHEELER (CONT'D)
Again.

They reset. Breath in, breath out. The metronome keeps time.

ALEX
Why help me?

Wheeler watches him a long beat. Something measured, sad.

WHEELER
Because men like Roy Gaunt count on
no one teaching you where to aim.

A shadow crosses Wheeler's face. His hand unconsciously touches the old scar.

FLASH - FRACTURED MEMORY:

- TWO MUZZLE FLASHES ignite the dark in perfect sync.
- BULLETS tear forward, twin comets.
- FLESH AND FABRIC blossom apart: one round rips a throat open; another scores a face in a red diagonal.
- Blood arcs like mirrored choreography.
- A glove falls in slow motion. A ledger slams shut.

BACK TO SCENE

ALEX
That scar-

WHEELER
I dueled him once.
One bullet each.
Neither of us missed.
Neither of us forgot.

He nudges Alex's elbow-micro-adjustment.

WHEELER (CONT'D)
Again.

Alex fires. Chalk blooms at the underarm seam.

Wheeler nods, the rarest compliment.

WHEELER (CONT'D)
On seven, you live.

INT. SOCIETY BAR - NIGHT (LATER)

Quiet after-hours hum. Demarco sits alone with his ledger, entries neat as epitaphs. Wimmer and Hardaway heckle each other softly at the far end. Suzie cleans her pistol like a jeweler.

Alex approaches Demarco's table. Demarco doesn't look up.

ALEX

What happens if the Code is wrong?

Demarco's pen pauses, just once.

DEMARCO

The Code isn't right or wrong.
It's binding.

He finishes a line, closes the book with priestly care.

DEMARCO (CONT'D)

Honor above all.

Alex watches the cover settle. It sounds like a verdict.

INT. GAUNT'S LOFT - NIGHT

A wall of glass over the black river. The city hums like distant machinery.

Gaunt sits at a steel table.

On a tablet: DISTRIBUTION ROUTES.

On paper: HEARING DOCKETS and WITNESS LISTS - most
"postponed."

Society names annotated with blue dots. Some crossed out.

He opens a velvet pouch. A pristine Combat Master gleams like a reliquary.

His reflection in the slide looks inhuman for a beat.

Gaunt's fingers drift to the raised seam of his throat scar.

FLASH - FRACTURED MEMORY:

- The bullet blossoms through wet red meat at the neck.
- Blood fans across a black coat like ink on paper.
- A man drops to one knee, not in prayer but in refusal.

BACK TO SCENE

Gaunt's breath rattles—half rasp, half satisfaction.

GAUNT
(soft, to the glass)
Wheeler.

He lifts a lacquered trigger finger from the necklace. Turns it like a coin, listening to the weight.

GAUNT (CONT'D)
Loyalty bought cheap dies cheap.
The rest chose the law.
The law doesn't bury them.

He slides a blue dot to a new name.

GAUNT (CONT'D)
I do.

He lays the Combat Master down with surgical neatness, sights aligned to some invisible horizon.
The river below keeps moving. He never does.

EXT. RANGE - NIGHT (TRAINING CONTINUES)

A paper torso rushes on a rope. The metronome now silent; Alex has his own rhythm.

WHEELER
You breathe for the seam, not the
center.
Catch a man where the armor ends
and the body begins.

Alex fires — two clean seam shots. The silhouette spins, torn precisely.

Wheeler's approval is a flicker.

WHEELER (CONT'D)
Again.
(beat)
On seven.

Alex nods. He doesn't ask seven what anymore. He just moves.

INT. ALEX & JANE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (BUTTON)

Jane sits on the couch in the half-light, reading, not reading.
Alex stands in the doorway, stillness humming off him like heat.

JANE
You're buzzing.

ALEX
New teacher.

She studies his eyes — steadier now, but farther away.

JANE
Don't let a teacher turn you into a soldier.

ALEX
He's trying to keep me from being a corpse.

She rises, steps close, palms against his chest — finding the places without bruises.

JANE
Then remember what you promised me.
Not safe.
Just breathing.

They breathe together. He nods against her forehead, the quietest vow.

NT. HODGES' NIGHTCLUB - GREEN ROOM - NIGHT

Lights buzz. Hodges in a pastel jacket, vest beneath.
Mirror crowded with Polaroids and bad advice.

Alex nearby, watching him tape a cracked mic flag with gaffer tape.

HODGES
Comedy's just trauma with timing.
Too sharp, you cut the crowd.
Too dull-LinkedIn.

He kisses his knuckles, taps a photo of him and his younger brother, sunburnt, holding a giant fish.

HODGES (CONT'D)
Don't get sentimental. Ruins my eyeliner.

ALEX
You don't wear eyeliner.

HODGES
That's because I'm not sentimental.
Stay for the set. If I bomb, laugh
like you were paid to.

Alex smirks. Nods. He's staying.

INT. HODGES' NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Jazz trio clears. Phones glow. Spotlights flare.

Hodges takes the mic like he owns the oxygen.

HODGES
They say comedy's about timing.
Wrong. Comedy's about trauma.

LAUGH. He paces.

HODGES (CONT'D)
My therapist says I'm in a
"complicated relationship with
accountability."
I said, Doc, I own a nightclub and
an espresso machine.
I haven't been accountable since
2009.

BIGGER LAUGH.

HODGES (CONT'D)
My third wife said I wasn't
"emotionally available."
Lady, I tell strangers about my
failures for money.
How much more open do you want?

LAUGHS. Then softer—he breathes.

HODGES (CONT'D)
My kid brother was twenty-seven.
Thought he could outdrink the
planet. Planet won.
I didn't pick up the phone. Thought
I had time.

The room stills.

HODGES (CONT'D)
Turns out time's a bookie.
He'll comp your drinks.
Still break your thumbs.

A few rough laughs. A few people blink tears away.
At the rail: Alex. In a booth: Suzie, Wimmer, Hardaway.
In the dark: Demarco listening, ledger closed.

INT. SOCIETY BAR - AFTER-HOURS

Lights low, glasses scattered.
WIMMER and HARDAWAY wobble into the ritual circle, vests
crooked, whiskey still in hand.

They slap gloves across each other's cheeks, exaggerated and
sloppy.

WIMMER
Terms: first stumble.

HARDAWAY
First spill. Drinks included.

DEMARCO storms in, ledger tucked under his arm.

DEMARCO
This is not sanctioned.

WIMMER
Neither was karaoke night.
You still sang "Don't Stop
Believin'."

Hardaway wheezes laughing. Demarco glares.

DEMARCO
Seven paces.
(under his breath)
Honor above all.

Back-to-back. They count half-drunk.

WIMMER
One... two--wait, is it one or uno?

HARDAWAY
It's uno, dos, tres, you
Philistine.

They spin early. TWO SHOTS — a chandelier explodes; bottles shatter.
Patrons duck. Glass rains.

SUZIE (from the booth)
If either of you reproduce, civilization is doomed.

Wimmer clutches a singed ear, smoke curling.

WIMMER
First blood. Mine. That's a win.

Hardaway raises his glass, swaying.

HARDAWAY
Lesson? Never duel after tequila.

Demarco slams his ledger shut.

DEMARCO
Honor... satisfied.
God help me.

INT. HODGES' NIGHTCLUB - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Backstage bustle. Hodges fixes his jacket.
Wimmer and Hardaway still grinning from the duel.
Alex checks exits, unease tightening in him.

The door opens. ROY GAUNT stands there.
A leather glove dangling between two fingers.

HODGES
We're closed, Roy. Come back when
you pretend to laugh at the jokes.

GAUNT
A glove.

He tosses it. Lands in Hodges' lap.

GAUNT (CONT'D)
Terms: death.

Demarco appears, ledger under his arm.
He sees Hodges—sees Gaunt. The rulebook flickers in his eyes.

DEMARCO
Seven paces. Honor above all.

Hodges pats the glove. Looks to Alex.

HODGES
You coming?

Alex nods. Always.

EXT. CITY PLAZA - NOON

Glass-and-steel canyon. Food trucks, strollers, sunlight.
A ritual circle - invisible to civilians.

ROY GAUNT - trench open, gleaming JW4 at his hip.
DARREN SYKES (30s) - tech-cool jacket, trembling hands, blue
vest beneath.

On the fringes: Wimmer, Hardaway, Demarco.
Farther back, by a food truck - Alex, cap low, blending.

SYKES
Here? In front of kids?

GAUNT
(amused rasp)
Daylight hides more sins than
midnight.

Sykes draws a glove. Taps Gaunt's shoulder. Formal.

SYKES
Terms: death.

DEMARCO
Seven paces. Honor above all.

Back-to-back. Fountain jets surge; mist rises like incense.

DEMARCO (CONT'D)
One... Two... Three... Four...
Five... Six... Seven.

They spin. TWO MUFFLED SHOTS under water's roar.

Sykes jerks - seam under the arm. Kneels, gasping by the
fountain.

SYKES
(weak smile)
You'll drown in it, Roy.

Gaunt fires point-blank.

Blood mists into spray. Screams. Coffee spills. Phones lift too late.
Sirens – distant, uncaring.

Demarco can barely breathe.

DEMARCO
(hushed)
Honor... satisfied.

Gaunt holsters with priestly neatness. His eyes sweep the chaos.
They find Alex.

A beat of locked gaze.
Gaunt turns. Trench flares. He vanishes into daylight.

Alex can't move. The city keeps going without him.

EXT. ABANDONED TENNIS COURTS - DUSK

Skyline bleeding orange into bruise-purple.

Hodges in pastel jacket, vest beneath.
Opposite: Gaunt, trench open, pristine JW4 gleaming.

On the bleachers: Wimmer, Hardaway, Demarco.
At the rail: Alex.

HODGES (calling out)
Roy, I'm not saying you need therapy—
but if therapy were a duel, you'd be undefeated.

Gaunt doesn't smile.
Hodges slips on a glove. Taps Gaunt's chest.

HODGES
Terms: incapacitation.
Mercy's in the book, Demo.

GAUNT
(pleased rasp)
Death.

Hodges' grin falters—then sets. He nods.

DEMARCO
Seven paces. On my count.

They spin. TWO SHOTS.
— One sparks a service line.

— One slams Hodges' ribs. The vest eats it. He drops, laughing—

HODGES
(laughing through pain)
Damn... should've stuck to open mic
nights.
At least the hecklers missed.

Gaunt closes, fires again.
Hodges sprawls. Still.

WIMMER
(breaking whisper)
Honor... satisfied.

No one believes it.
Alex burns the moment into memory.

INT. SOCIETY BAR - LATE

Hodges' jacket on a chair. His glass half-full.
A glove tucked in the pocket.

Suzie throws back Hodges' drink.

SUZIE
He died brave.

HARDAWAY
He died because Roy called death—
and Demo said yes.

DEMARCO
The Code binds the violent.
Protects the living.

ALEX
He's not the living.
He's the book you're afraid to
close.

Demarco lowers his gaze. Ledger shut tight.

Beat. Alex turns to Suzie.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Next glove's yours?

She meets his eyes. A hard, sad nod.

Block 4 (~pages 76-END)

EXT. ROOFTOP GARDEN - SUNSET

The Society gathers. Wind through ornamental grasses.
Nervous faces. The city yawns in glass.

Suzie faces Gaunt. Pearl grips steady in her hands.

ALEX
Don't give him death.

SUZIE
I'm not giving him anything.
I'm taking back a friend.

She pockets a glove. Steps into the circle.

DEMARCO
Seven paces. On my count.

They spin. TWO SHOTS.

Suzie grazes Gaunt's cheek — the first wound in years.
He smiles, faith renewed.

GAUNT
Finally.

He fires. Tears Suzie's throat.
She collapses into Alex's arms.

SUZIE (GURGLING)
Told you... guns are mirrors...

Her pearl pistol slips away. She's gone.

DEMARCO
(whisper, broken)
Honor... satisfied.

It sounds like failure.

ALEX
Next glove's mine.

GAUNT
(raspy)
One by one.
Until Wheeler crawls out.

He holsters. Vanishes into light.

Alex holds Suzie, jaw clenched. Wimmer looks away.
Hardaway's eyes shine. Demarco can't open his book.

EXT. RIVER BRIDGE - NIGHT

Traffic hush. Water black as undealt cards.

Alex alone at the railing. He strips the vest.
Drops it into the river.

ALEX (V.O.)
Some wagers don't pay.
They collect.

Behind him: JANE.

JANE
Every time you walk out that door,
I don't know if I'm losing a
husband...
or if you're just becoming one of
them.

ALEX
If I don't, more people die.
If I do... it might be me.

She steps in. Hand on his. Steadies him.

JANE
Then finish it.
For your brother. For us.
And when it's done—let it stay
done.

He nods. Pact without paperwork.

EXT. GOTHIC CEMETERY - DAY

High noon. Sun a blade. Statues lean like jurors.

Alex crawls, bleeding, pistol kicked far.

Boot heels crunch gravel. The necklace rattles like dice.
ROY GAUNT arrives.

GAUNT
All wagers end the same.

WHEELER steps from behind an angel. Bloodstained. Steady JW4 in hand.

WHEELER
No more Code.
No more paces.

GAUNT
Old-fashioned, then.
Fastest draw wins.

FLASH — THE FULL SADISTIC DANCE:

- TWO MUZZLE FLASHES ignite the dark.
- BULLETS shear forward like dueling comets.
- FLESH shredding: one round rips a throat—blood fans in an arc.
- Another scores a face—stitching a man into scar forever.
- Both men collapse in mirrored agony.
- A glove drifts. A ledger SLAMS shut.

BACK TO PRESENT

Leone silence. Dust hangs.

DRAW. TWO SHOTS.

Wheeler's round blows through Gaunt's jaw.
The necklace snaps—lacquered fingers scatter like teeth.
Gaunt slumps against an angel. Dead.

EXT. CEMETERY - CONTINUOUS

Wheeler buckles; still, he hauls Alex up.

A flash of a DEA BADGE clipped inside Alex's jacket.

Wheeler sees it. Doesn't flinch.

WHEELER
You and your brother...
most honorable men I ever met.

They clasp hands. It's goodbye.

WHEELER (CONT'D)
Take care of your family.
And lay that gun down forever.

He turns toward the sun.
Kneels. Falls. Still.

Alex faces Wimmer, Hardaway, Demarco at the edge of the graves.

ALEX

Fuck off.
Or I arrest every last one of you.

They believe him.
Wimmer's jaw trembles. Hardaway nods once.
Demarco stares at the ledger like it's a bomb.

He closes it. For once, no prayer.

EXT. CEMETERY GATE - LATER

EMT lights strobe faint and far.

JANE takes Alex's hand.

JANE

Is it over?

ALEX

It cost everything.
But yes.

She breathes. He does too.

MONTAGE - AFTERMATH (NEON FUNERAL)

- Wimmer and Hardaway at a bar. Hodges' stool left open.
- Lockers at the range: blue vests folded like flags.
- A velvet case of JW4s shuts with a click.
- City at night: freeways as neon veins, windows pulsing like hearts.

EXT. RIVER OVERLOOK - NIGHT

Alex alone. Scuffed JW4 in hand.

He studies the slide like a mirror.
Sets it down. Walks away.

ALEX (V.O.)
Hodges bet bravado.
Suzie bet ambition.
Wheeler bet loyalty.
Gaunt bet fear.
They all lost.

He looks at his palm—Suzie's blood faint in the lines.

ALEX (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Me? I bet everything. And I'm still
standing.
But standing isn't winning.
Not when the mirror shows you what
you've become.

SMASH TO BLACK.

TEXT ON SCREEN:
HONOR NEVER DIES.

FADE OUT.