

Hard Case

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Jack  
Morbidjack@gmail.com

EXT. CITY STREET - EARLY MORNING

The titles play throughout the opening scenes.

An ARMORED TRUCK moves through the city streets. The buildings on either side are graffiti covered, many look abandoned. The truck passes pawn shops, check cashing joints, shady looking jewelry stores.

JEFF and MARK, two large and slightly overweight GUARDS sit in the cab, looking bored. They are wearing matching gray uniforms, with baseball hats that say OCEANVIEW SECURITY.

They pull off the street into an enclosed parking lot behind a JEWELRY STORE. A small sign says: Max's Diamond Wholesale, rear lot.

INT. ARMORED TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Jeff brings the armored truck to a halt behind the diamond retailer.

JEFF

Alright, man, last stop.

Mark gets out of the passengers seat and climbs down. Jeff watches him in the side view mirrors as he disappears into the building.

A moment later Mark reappears, carrying a kevlar bank bag. He keeps his head down as he walks up beside the truck. His hand reaches up and knocks on the window.

Jeff hits a button on the dashboard and the heavy door unlocks.

JEFF

Hey, put that in the ba- !

Jeff cuts off as the door swings open and he sees that it's not Mark pulling himself into the truck.

Instead it is CARTER, professional thief and badass, wearing a counterfeit uniform and hat. He's mid-thirties, muscular, unshaven.

JEFF

Oh shit!

Jeff reaches for the GUN at his hip, but not fast enough. Calmly, Carter aims a TASER at him and fires, the prongs striking the Jeff in the neck and shoulder. Immediately he convulses as the current rushes through him.

Carter slides across the seat of the truck, jamming his foot onto the gas pedal. The armored truck lurches out of the parking lot and into traffic.

Jeff begins struggling again, Carter punches him in the face, pulls Jeff's from its holster then uses it to hit the dashboard button. The driver side door unlocks and Carter muscles Jeff out the door.

Jeff falls out of the truck as it speeds through traffic, horns hocking around it.

With one hand on the steering wheel Carter expertly drops the magazine and strips the weapon, tossing it to the floor of the truck.

Seconds later, Carter swings off the street, into an abandoned WAREHOUSE.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The warehouse is boarded up and grungy. Old machinery is covered with rotting tarps. The only new things are a waiting sedan and a table covered with cutting tools.

As the truck screeches to a halt inside, the door is pulled shut by STUTZ, (50) another professional thief and Carter's partner in crime. Stutz looks like an older version of Carter, worn down by his criminal life.

The whole feel of the robbery is very rehearsed and professional. The two thieves move quickly and calmly, two career criminals in their element.

As Carter jumps down out of the truck Stutz grabs a cutting torch off the table and climbs in, wearing a jumpsuit.

INTERCUT as needed between Stutz and Carter.

STUTZ

Eight minutes before they track the truck's GPS!

Stutz begins cutting through the sheet metal between the cab and the box of the truck, no thick armor there.

Carter strips out of his guard uniform, throwing it in a metal barrel. He picks up a bottle of lighter fluid and douses the clothing. Carter tosses a match in, stepping away as the drum erupts in flames.

Behind him there's a clang as a small hole is cut in the sheet metal of the cab. Stutz wriggles through the new opening, into the rear of the truck.

As the barrel burns behind him Carter walks around the truck, soaking it with lighter fluid. As Carter passes the rear doors of the truck as Stutz opens them from the inside.

CARTER

Four minutes.

The inside of the truck is lined with shelves. Framed by the open doors Stutz goes to work, ripping out the contents. Papers and kevlar bank bags spill to the floor.

Carter loops around the truck with the lighter fluid, soaking the cab, exterior and floor of the warehouse.

Stutz continues to search for something specific in the truck, trampling over receipts and some precious stones mixing on the floor.

Finally he finds a METAL CASE, a smile spreads across his face. Stutz holds it up triumphantly to Carter, who checks his watch.

CARTER

Sixty seconds!

As Stutz jumps out of the truck and walks past him towards a waiting getaway car, Carter pulls out a match book, preparing to burn any evidence.

Behind him Stutz turns, revealing a gun in his hand, out of Carter's view. Carter hesitates, sensing something, a lit match in his hand. Time slows as he looks over his shoulder.

Stutz fires just as Carter tries to jerk out of the way. The bullet hits Carter in the back, tossing him to the ground, the match arcs through the air, bouncing off the side of the truck.

The truck bursts into flames, Stutz shields his face with the case, firing a few more rounds in Carter's general direction. Carter's body can be seen against the bonfire, unmoving.

Stutz turns away, walking towards the car, gun loose at his side.

White screen.

FADE IN AND OUT OF TIME LAPSED FOOTAGE OF THE WAREHOUSE.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

BIRDS EYE of burning armored truck, Carter unconscious next to it, small flames flickering on his clothing.

POLICE OFFICERS with drawn weapons and FIREMEN move around the scene.

The flames are being put out by the firemen, MEDICS pick Carter up on stretcher.

Throughout a steady HEART MONITOR TONE plays.

BLACK SCREEN (ONE)

Title card reads 'HARD CASE'

Black screen lingers for the beginning of conversation between Marigold and Tripp.

Tripp's voice is calm but tired, Marigold's voice is soft and menacing.

TRIPP

There's been a problem.

MARIGOLD

Did they get the case?

TRIPP

Yea. But Stutz is laying low. Things got sloppy.

MARIGOLD

They always do.

FADE IN:

INT. STRIP CLUB - EARLY MORNING

It's past closing time, the strip club is empty of clients. Early daylight streams in the windows, revealing discarded beer bottles and the general seediness of the joint.

Several half naked STRIPPERS lounge around, looking tired and counting dollar bills. Various GOONS are mixed in, some trying to chat up the strippers.

Behind the bar stands TRIPP, a middle aged athletic man who's clearly been up all night.

TRIPP

I'll take care of it.

MARIGOLD

You sure you're up for it?

Tripp doesn't answer. The silence stretches for a moment.

MARIGOLD

Alright. But take Skinner with you.

One of the enforcers sits off by himself, well dressed in expensive shirt and tie. His shirt sleeves are rolled up, showing his heavily tattooed forearms. Other tattoos creep up from the collar onto his neck. This is Skinner.

Tripp looks at Skinner, who smiles menacingly back, exhaling cigarette smoke. His teeth are stained from the nicotine.

MARIGOLD

Don't get soft on me now, this is important.

Tripp puts down his glass, picks up his coat from behind the bar.

TRIPP

Oh, I know.

Tripp snaps his fingers at two of the goons, they turn away from the strippers they were sweet talking.

FREEZE FRAME as a SUPER appears under him, reading 'TRIPP'. The super lingers over the next few seconds.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. PAWN SHOP - DAY

The front door of the pawn shop opens. The shop is typical, glass cases with guitars, jewelry and handguns.

COUNCILMAN CARLSON (43) enters. He's good looking in a bland way, wearing an immaculate suit. A standard politician.

He glances nervously at the FAT CLERK sitting behind a counter, continuing to walk toward the back.

INT. PAWN SHOP - REAR OFFICE - DAY

Tripp sits behind a desk in the rear of the shop, scruffier and less well-dressed than before.

Across from him sits an OVERSIZED GOON.

The Councilman enters, without preamble he throws an envelope on the desk.

COUNCILMAN CARLSON

This is all I could get together. Just tell Marigold not to send his boys over again.

Tripp looks up from counting the money inside the envelope.

TRIPP

You're short.

COUNCILMAN CARLSON

That's all I have. My daughter just got married.

TRIPP

I see. So should I consider this her debt then?

COUNCILMAN CARLSON

No! I'll get it.

TRIPP

You fail to understand. This money is needed tonight.

Behind the Councilman, Skinner quietly enters.

Tripp raises his eyebrows, not pleased at the intrusion. He clearly does not recognize Skinner.

TRIPP  
Who the fuck are you?

SKINNER  
I'm Skinner.

TRIPP  
Skinner? Marigold's man.

Throughout their conversation Councilman Carlson looks back and forth between them, silent.

SKINNER  
That's right.

TRIPP  
What do you want?

SKINNER  
He wants to see you.

TRIPP  
Marigold?

SKINNER  
Yes. He's happy with your work.

Tripp considers.

TRIPP  
I gotta take care of this Cuban deal. The Councilman came up short.

Skinner shrugs, not considering it important.

SKINNER  
Don't worry about the cash. They can handle it.

TRIPP  
No offense, but they can't handle their own dicks without a user's manual.

Skinner grimaces a smile.

SKINNER  
Marigold says they can handle it. You're moving up now.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. STRIP CLUB - EARLY MORNING

Return to previous FREEZE FRAME.

Tripp catches himself as he's about to hang up.

TRIPP

Oh, there was another  
problem. Carter isn't dead.

MARIGOLD

Well, he shouldn't be too hard to  
find, should he?

Tripp nods, hangs up.

INT. JOHNNY'S HOUSE - POSH BEDROOM

An ultramodern bedroom, floor to ceiling windows show off a  
magnificent view, overly hip modern art is on the walls.

Johnny (40s) lies sleeping on the giant bed. He's mousy and  
balding, sleeping alone on the silk sheets.

Johnny rolls over, scratching his belly. His unimpressive  
physique takes away from the expensive setting.

Johnny opens his eyes, then suddenly flinches, scrambling up  
the bed to a sitting position.

JOHNNY

Jesus!

Standing along the walls are Skinner, Tripp and the two  
Goons.

SKINNER

Nice view.

TRIPP

You know who we work for?

JOHNNY

(fearful)

Yea...

TRIPP

We're looking for Stutz.

JOHNNY

Well, he aint fucking here.

TRIPP

I guess he 'aint' anywhere. But you set the deal up, you were the one who introduced him to Marigold.

JOHNNY

And?

TRIPP

And that means you fucking vouched for him, and he seems to have disappeared. Where can we find him?

JOHNNY

I don't know, don't want to know.

Before Tripp can speak, Skinner pulls out a knife. Johnny scoots a little further away on the bed.

SKINNER

The next question we ask will be carved into your back.

Tripp steps in, holding up a hand.

TRIPP

That's not necessary.

(To Johnny)

Tell us where to find the list and we're gone.

Johnny looks back and forth between the two of them, face registering fear and defiance.

JOHNNY

What is this, good cop, bad cop?

Tripp abruptly runs out of patience, his face goes cold. He jerks Johnny bodily out of the bed and throws him across the room. Johnny hits the floor to ceiling windows, spider webbing it without falling through.

Tripp grabs him, gun in hand. He puts the tip of the pistol into Johnny's closed eye and pushes.

JOHNNY

Aaargghhh!

Tripp ignores Johnny's pain as he continues to grind the tip of his pistol into his eye, speaking quietly and calmly.

TRIPP

I don't enjoy this the way others do. This sickens me, honestly. That's why it'll be quick. If you don't tell us where Stutz is in the next ten seconds I'll just put a bullet in your skull and move on with my day.

JOHNNY

Noo!

TRIPP

Six seconds!

JOHNNY

Shit!...He's out in suburbia, out by Trenton.

Tripp stands up.

Johnny slumps against the wall, one hand cupped over his injured eye.

Tripp looks down at him dispassionately.

TRIPP

You might want to be a little more alert, I hear Carter isn't dead. He might want to know why you set him up.

Johnny's face once again expresses fear.

EXT. SUBURBIA - STUTZ'S HOUSE - DAY

Tripp and his entourage walk through a picket fence, up a path to a suburban house. Behind Tripp, Skinner looks around, face registering amusement at their location.

Tripp walks up to the front door, reaching a hand to knock, then pausing.

The doorjamb is SPLINTERED where it was smashed open.

Tripp raises his eyebrows, then pushes the door gently open, revealing...

INT. STUTZ'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

STUTZ, dressed in slacks and a button down. He is bloody and bruised, and he's pointing an oversized pistol at Tripp's head.

Calmly, Tripp walks into the house, forcing Stutz to back up.

Behind Tripp the three goons enter, guns drawn and pointing at Stutz. He is embarrassingly outgunned.

Ignoring the guns, Tripp looks around the suburban house. Stutz's wife KAREN (40) stands in the background. Like him she's bloody and injured, clutching her shoulder.

Other than the signs of recent violence the house is entirely typical, nick-nacks and wallpaper.

TRIPP

Now, what happened here?

Stutz reluctantly drops his gun to the floor.

STUTZ

Carter's escaped, he's coming for us.

TRIPP

That a fact?

Skinner enters, taking in the violence. He raises and eyebrow.

SKINNER

Why didn't he kill you?

STUTZ

He wanted to make sure the case was where I said.

TRIPP

And where was that?

STUTZ

Stashed in a container by the docks.

SKINNER

We don't have anyone down there.

Tripp looks at Skinner, thoughtful. He pulls out his phone, dials a number.

TRIPP  
(into phone)  
Connect me to Bay Harbor PD.

The others look at him, confused.

TRIPP (CONT'D)  
The escapee from the armored car  
bust will be at the south docks in  
a few moments. Yea, he's looking  
to leave the country. No, I'm not  
leaving my name.

Tripp hangs up.

SKINNER  
You call the fucking cops?

TRIPP  
(shrugging)  
Let them earn their money. They  
pick him up, we pick the case up.

He walks towards door.

SKINNER  
What do we do with these two?

Tripp shrugs, still walking.

TRIPP  
They aint worth killing.

Just as he puts a hand on the doorknob, Skinner holds up a  
hand, looking out a front window.

Without warning Skinner shoves Tripp away from the door. As  
he does the door is kicked open, knocking Skinner down.

A FEDERAL WARRANT TEAM tries to enter, stumbling over  
Skinner.

WARRANT AGENT ONE  
FBI! Nobody move!!

The goons draw and fire, WARRANT AGENT ONE falls under  
gunfire.

Two WARRANT AGENTS manage to enter, from the floor Skinner  
kicks the door closed before anyone else gets in. He draws  
a knife and from the floor slashes at one of the Agent's  
ankle.

The front door splinters as Agents outside try to batter it in.

WARRANT AGENT TWO sprays down one of the goons, moving into the room. He sends another spray of bullets at Tripp, barely skimming him before the weapon goes dry.

Tripp recovers from his wound, tackling the Agent as he tries to reload. They wrestle on the floor.

Stutz scrambles up from the floor, clutching one of the Goon's guns. He runs to the front door and fires through the crack, screams come from outside.

Skinner crawls away from the door, coming to his feet.

On the floor SWAT AGENT TWO gains the upper hand over Tripp, punching him repeatedly. He manages to disengage, grabbing a fresh magazine to reload.

Tripp recovers, sees the Agent preparing to reload and kill him. Eye's wide, he spots a PISTOL lying under the couch. He scoots across the floor, grabs it, spins and fires, just as the Agent is about to shoot him.

SWAT AGENT TWO falls dead, Tripp stares at him, expressing shock.

At the door Stutz is taking return fire, being hit multiple times.

KAREN

Nooo!

From the rear of the house Karen runs up to him, grabbing a fallen Agent's weapon and firing through the door. She too is hit by return fire.

Tripp seems too shocked to react, still staring at the Agent he just killed.

Skinner ducks past the shooting at the door, grabs Tripp pulling him towards the rear of the house, away from Stutz dying at the front door.

SKINNER

We need to get out of here, get the case to the hotel.

Skinner shoves Tripp through a rear window, following him into the back yard.

Gunshots sound in the house as Skinner drags the shell-shocked Tripp into a neighbors yard.

BLACK SCREEN (TWO)

After a beat, the conversation from the beginning replays over a black screen.

TRIPP  
There's been a problem.

MARIGOLD  
They have the case?

TRIPP  
Yes. But things got sloppy.

MARIGOLD  
They always do.

TRIPP  
I'll take care of it.

MARIGOLD  
You sure you're up for it?

No answer. The silence stretches for a moment.

FADE IN TO:

INT. PRIVATE JET - NIGHT

Various characters are spread around the leather interior of a small private jet. There are several provocatively dressed GOLD DIGGERS, a few suited LAWYERS, and in the center of it, FREDDY MARIGOLD.

Freddy Marigold is a fifty year old man in an extremely expensive suit, balding and bearded. He wears heavy gold jewelry on his hands and neck, and a scar across his face. Not a man to trifle with.

MARIGOLD  
Alright. But take Skinner with you.

Beat.

MARIGOLD  
Don't get soft on me now, this is important.

TRIPP  
Oh, I know.

As he listens, Marigold absentmindedly caresses one of the women.

TRIPP

Oh, there was another problem. Carter isn't dead.

MARIGOLD

Well, he shouldn't be too hard to find, should he?

Marigold hangs up. For a moment he sits, face blank. Then he dials a new number into his phone.

EXT. JEWELRY STORE - EVENING

Close on two LARGE MEN in cheap suits. They look like ex-football players that have been on the donut diet for the last ten years. One is older, grizzled, the other younger.

The older one answers cell phone, as SUPERS appear under them, reading 'GATES' and 'JENSEN'.

GATES

Hello?

A UNIFORMED COP appears behind them, unrolling a line of police tape. Our view expands, the two are standing behind the diamond shop, now becoming a crime scene.

FREEZE as the supers under them expand, adding 'DETECTIVE' before each name.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

EXT. CITY ALLEY - NIGHT

Oversized Goon and another MAN from the pawn shop lean against the hood of a car in an alleyway.

A vehicle turns down the alley, approaching them. They raise arms to shield against the glare of the headlights.

Three CUBANS step out. One carries a briefcase.

OVERSIZED GOON

Buenas noches.

The Cuban responds to man's mocking Spanish with unaccented English.

CUBAN  
You got the money?

Man brings out a large mailing envelope. Tosses it across the gap.

The Cuban feels the envelope, then nods to his associate, who passes the case.

Both crews begin to examine their payment, opening the case and envelope.

Suddenly Jensen and Gates appear from behind the Cubans. Their guns are drawn, pointing to two of the Cubans heads.

The Cubans reach for guns, Jensen flashes a badge.

JENSEN  
Whoa there!

The men freeze, seeing the badge.

GATES  
Drop them.

Guns drop to the pavement.

GATES  
The cash too.

Cuban drops the envelop.

The Detectives move to check out the drugs, turning their backs to the Cubans.

The Cubans glance at each other, then bolt down the alley way.

Jensen and Gates watch them run away, oddly uninterested.

They walk up to men, open the case.

GATES  
Not a bad deal here.

Jensen opens the envelope checking the cash.

JENSEN  
Not a bad deal at all.

He pulls out four thick stacks of cash.

JENSEN  
You were short.

MAN  
Then I guess it's good you showed  
up.

Jensen hands a stack of money to Gates. They each pocket a stack. Jensen tosses the other two back to Oversized Goon.

He gestures to the money and the coke.

GATES  
Don't blow it all in one place.

OVERSIZED GOON  
Pleasure doing business.

RETURN TO SCENE:

EXT. JEWELRY STORE - EVENING

Back to the crime scene.

Gates responds to the ringing phone as Jensen looks around the crime scene. Police and forensic specialists move around, collecting evidence and witness statements.

GATES  
(into phone)  
Alright...sure...We're there right  
now...We'll look into it.

He hangs up, the two detectives look down at cordoned off tire marks on the pavement, where the armored car peeled out of the parking lot.

A JUNIOR OFFICER in uniform walks up to the two detectives.

JUNIOR OFFICER  
Sir, the guard was hit by a taser,  
then knocked out. He IDed a photo  
of the suspect who was shot at the  
scene.

JENSEN  
So, he knocks out one guard to get  
into the truck, gives the second a  
pavement facial, pulls into an  
abandoned warehouse and cracks open  
the back.

GATES

Only to leave the majority of the merchandise spilled on the floor.

JUNIOR OFFICER

Maybe they were looking for something specific?

Jensen and Gates stare at the Junior Officer, unsure how to respond to the obvious statement.

As the awkward moment happens, a BLACK SEDAN with heavily tinted windows pulls up.

Out of it step two FEDERAL AGENTS, suited and clean cut. College boys. AGENT DONAVON and AGENT STEPHENS.

They stride confidently up to Jensen and Gates.

The two sets of partners face off, the expensive suited feds looking up at the larger detectives.

AGENT DONAVON

I'm Agent Donavan, this is Agent Stephens. We're with the FBI.

Jensen laughs.

JENSEN

Yea, we got that with the whole dark car, dark suits, dark glasses. Sneaky.

GATES

What are you doing on a diamond bust?

The Feds exchange glances.

AGENT DONAVON

There's some stuff at stake that's a little above your paygrade.

AGENT STEPHENS

Not that we don't trust you, but I understand the one suspect in custody has already managed to escaped.

Jensen smiles, unconcerned. The Junior Officer chooses this moment to back away. Nobody notices.

JENSEN

For the moment. But who said that was such a bad thing?

AGENT DONAVON

Well, maybe here you do a catch and release program, but over at the FBI, we generally try to keep the bad guys.

JENSEN

Cute.

AGENT STEPHENS

So you two just go back to whatever it is you do.

Jensen and Gates stand, staring down the two Feds.

AGENT DONAVON

That means you're off the case, if you're two slow to understand.

The Detectives raise their eyebrows, clearly displeased with this shift in power.

GATES

Well...don't let us get in your way.

Agent Stephens smiles pleasantly.

AGENT STEPHENS

We won't. If you'll excuse us, we need to get to work.

The two Agents move off, leaving the Detectives standing, staring at each other in disbelief. After a beat Gates shakes his head, recovering his cool.

GATES

Hey boot-camp!

JUNIOR OFFICER

Yes, sir?

Gates beckons the Junior officer closer.

GATES

Find out where this truck was going.

JUNIOR OFFICER

Yessir.

GATES

And when you find out...you talk to me, yea? No one else.

JUNIOR OFFICER

Ten four, sir.

Junior Officer moves off quickly.

Gates and Jensen exchange looks.

GATES

I guess we could go ask around.

Jensen nods, agreeing.

JENSEN

Play detective a bit. Sounds good.

INT. BARBER SHOP - DAY

A typical hood barber shop, several black HOODLUMS sitting around, reading magazines and joking.

One of them, RAY J, sits in the barber's chair, one side of his afro trimmed down, the BARBER busily working on the second side.

BARBER

...and I'm not talking about a cute little mustache down there or anything. This thing was huge, I think it had it's own ecosystem.

The guys are laughing at the barber's story when it's interrupted by the OS wail of a car alarm.

The Barber makes a few more moves with the buzzers, continuing his story.

BARBER

So I'm frozen, deciding whether to back out or grab some hedge clippers and dive in-

Ray J holds up a hand, interrupting the story.

RAY J  
Hey, hold up, man.

He stands and walks to the doorway, still wearing the barbers cape, looking out inquisitively. His demeanor abruptly changes.

RAY J  
Mother Fucker!

EXT. CITY STREET - OUTSIDE BARBER SHOP - DAY

POV behind Ray J as he strides into the street. On the other curb is Ray J's ride, a pimped out TOWN CAR. Leaning against the hood is a suited man with his back to Ray J.

RAY J  
Hey asshole!

He pulls off the barber cape, letting it fall to the street. Just as he reaches the car the suited man turns around, it's Detective Gates.

Ray J reacts, turning to run, but Jensen appears out of nowhere behind him, and shoves him face down over the hood of his car. Jensen roughly pats Ray J down.

JENSEN  
Been a while, Ray J. How's the wife and kids?

RAY J  
Fuck you.

The Hoodlums and Barber stand in the doorway of the Barber Shop. Gates flashes them his badge.

GATES  
Get back inside unless you wanna take his place.

They swear and mutter, but back away, not wanting to get involved.

JENSEN  
Alright! Look at this shit.

He holds up a small baggy containing crack rocks.

RAY J  
You planted that shit!

GATES  
Our word against yours.

RAY J  
That's straight racist, man.

Jensen steps back, letting Ray J straighten up.

JENSEN  
Haven't you heard? Aint no racism  
in America, man!

Ray J looks skeptical.

RAY J  
Yeah right.

GATES  
Well, you can tell the judge all  
about it.

JENSEN  
Or you can tell us what you heard  
about the armored car robbery  
yesterday.

RAY J  
I don't do that.

Jensen shakes the packet of crack in Ray J's face.

JENSEN  
Not setting a very good example for  
your boys, are you? And with your  
record you might be wishing happy  
birthday through plexiglass a few  
times.

Ray J grimaces, finally holds up his hands, giving in.

RAY J  
There aint nothing to say. A few  
hard cases busted out a  
truck. Commission job. One of  
them got popped.

GATES  
Whose commission?

RAY J  
I don't know, but there's only a  
couple guys that have that kinda  
cash in this city.

JENSEN  
What kind of cash?

Ray J wavers, not wanting to spill everything. Finally he relents.

RAY J  
Seven figures.

Gates and Jensen exchange looks, considering this new information.

JENSEN  
Why are the Feds interested in the diamonds?

RAY J  
Who said anything about diamonds?

EXT. CITY STREET - UNMARKED POLICE CAR - DAY

Jensen and Gates sit in their unmarked car, surrounded by cameras, binoculars and take-out containers. All the signs of a stake out.

After several moments a door opens across the street. Jensen picks up the binos as Agents Donovan and Stephen exit the building.

The Cops are watching the Feds.

Jensen wipes his mouth with his tie, setting down a hamburger.

JENSEN  
So, what you think?

GATES  
I think this is easier than tracking down the fuckers ourselves.

Jensen smirks, a beat passes before Gates continues, tone serious.

GATES  
This is definitely too much attention for some diamonds. I think college boy wasn't bluffing when he said something more was going on.

JENSEN

The question is: is there a profit  
in it?

One of the Feds answers his phone, Gates and Jensen watch as he talks into it.

Abruptly the Fed hangs up, says something to the other and they hurry into their car, peeling out into traffic.

The two Detectives duck down as the Feds pass.

JENSEN

Damn, looks like something's going  
down.

They slowly straighten up. Gates twists in his seat, looking over his shoulder.

GATES

Looks like they're headed towards  
the docks.

Jensen puts the car in gear, trying to pull out into traffic.

GATES

A fish sandwich sounds pretty good  
right now.

EXT. DOCKS - DAY

Large industrial docks, warehouses and rows of storage containers. Huge cranes stud the skyline.

Between the storage containers are a few police cars, an ambulance, all with overhead lights on. COPS and PARAMEDICS hustle chaotically around.

Jensen and Gates arrive, stepping out of their car.

Under their feet bullet casings are scattered, the containers and police cars are pocked with bullet holes.

No sign of Carter.

Cops walk up, Agent Stephens on a stretcher, pale as Medics wrap a bullet wound in his arm.

The cops smirk to realize that the Feds have failed to bring in Carter

Gates sidles over to the Fed's car as Jensen walks up to the Agents.

JENSEN  
Damn, looks like he got away?

The Agents are in no mood to talk to Jensen.

AGENT DONAVON  
Looks that way.

JENSEN  
Not sure how it generally works in the FBI, but when we have a tip on a fugitive we generally like to catch the bad guys.

As Jensen taunts the Feds, Gates is inspecting the damage done to the Fed's car. Multiple bullet holes pock the vehicle, the windshield is spider-webbed.

On the stretcher Agent Stephens struggles up, trying to take a swing at Jensen. He only manages to hurt himself, groaning back to the stretcher.

JENSEN  
(mock compassionate)  
Careful, tiger. You've had a rough day.

Gates pokes his finger through a bullet hole in the headrest, smiling to himself.

A folder lying in the backseat catches Gates's eye.

AGENT DONAVON  
You local cocksuckers should leave now.

JENSEN  
Yea? Sure you don't need us to keep pressure on that for you?

Agent Donavon steps towards Jensen threateningly. Before anything happens Gates walks up to him, catching Jensen's arm.

GATES  
C'mon, we're out of here.

JENSEN  
What?

Jensen lets himself be pulled away.

The two Detectives walk to their vehicle, climbing in.

JENSEN

What's up?

Gates pulls the Fed's folder from under his jacket, hands it to Jensen.

Jensen flips it open, it's the case folder on the armored truck, various crime scene photos and lists of suspects.

As Jensen looks through it, Gates dials his phone.

GATES

Newbie? You got anything back yet?

JUNIOR OFFICER

The truck was headed to the airport, meeting a secured flight to DC.

GATES

Alright. I got some businesses for you to run down.

He grabs a paper off the top of the folder.

GATES (CONT'D)

You can ignore the Jewelry dealers, but see what you come up with with the rest.

As Gates lists business addresses, Jensen flips through the rest of the folder. Recognizable are pictures of Carter and Stutz.

Jensen pauses on a sheet showing Johnny's picture. He holds it up to Gates once he hangs up the phone.

GATES

Who's that?

Jensen reads the file.

JENSEN

A fence. Says he was the one that set up the deal between Carter and the buyer.

Gates nods, thinking.

GATES  
Does it list an address?

JENSEN  
Sure...an Apartment uptown, and a club.

GATES  
Alright. If Carter's looking for payback, he'll be paying him a visit.

EXT. CITY STREET - EVENING

An unmarked police car sits in an alley across from a CLUB.

INT. UNMARKED POLICE CAR - CONTINUOUS

Inside the car Jensen and Gates are still in stakeout mode. Jensen's seat is reclined, he's snoring gently.

Gates nudges his partner awake.

GATES  
Hey...

Jensen jerks groggily up. Gates gestures out the window.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

In the alley beside the club Carter steps out of a back door. He looks around then walks out of sight.

After a beat, the Detectives pass by, following Carter.

Around the corner they see him walking down the street, fifty feet ahead. Their guns come out, ready to take him.

Ahead of them Carter turns a corner, they pick up the pace to catch up.

A few yards from the corner a snappy RINGTONE sounds. Gates catches himself, holding out a hand to slow Jensen.

Gates answers the phone.

GATES  
What?

JUNIOR OFFICER (OS)  
 Look, I checked out all the stops  
 on the route.

INTERCUT as needed between Gates and Junior Officer in the  
 POLICE STATION.

GATES  
 And...

JUNIOR OFFICER  
 A couple jewelry dealers, picked up  
 some coupons and shit.

GATES  
 Get to the point.

JUNIOR OFFICER  
 One office, rented to Americorps  
 Industry. But guess what...

GATES  
 Enlighten me.

JUNIOR OFFICER  
 Americorps doesn't exist. It's a  
 shell.

Gates reaches the corner that Carter went around,  
 pauses. Gates and Jensen stand, a foot from the corner.

GATES  
 A fucking front?

JUNIOR OFFICER  
 Exactly, I think..

GATES  
 Shut up. What was that address?

JUNIOR OFFICER  
 5540 Lincoln, I'm gues-

Gates hangs up.

GATES  
 (to Jensen)  
 Lincoln Street. Let's go.

JENSEN  
 And Carter?

Gates's already walking away.

GATES

Let the Feds waste their time. He doesn't have anything we need.

INT. CITY STREET - UNMARKED POLICE CAR - DAY

Gates and Jensen are parked outside an abandoned-looking office building.

JENSEN

Looks dead.

GATES

Those are new cars parked out front.

They ponder the situation for a minute.

JENSEN

So how we gonna play this?

Gates thinks.

GATES

Well, we aren't officially on duty any more.

JENSEN

I guess we just concerned citizens then.

INT. EMPTY OFFICE BUILDING - MINUTES LATER

The office is stripped down, wide open with cracked floor to ceiling windows. Only a few industrial looking desks and cabinets are mixed in with the support pillars.

Sitting at the desks are THREE MEN wearing shirts and ties. OFFICE BOSS, BLACK OFFICE WORKER, and WHITE OFFICE WORKER.

Abruptly the door opens, Jensen and Gates stride confidently in.

The office workers react, standing up startled.

GATES

(to Jensen)

I can see what the Realtor was saying. Plenty of roo-

OFFICE BOSS  
 (interrupting)  
 Whoa, this is private property.

GATES  
 Well, yea... And we're interested  
 in buying it.

Gates sticks out his hand for Office Boss to shake. Office Boss just stares at it.

GATES  
 We work for J&J Charities,  
 Incorporated. We're loo-

As Gates and Black Office Worker talk, Jensen skirts around the other desks, trying to check out the other guys.

Office Boss holds his hands up, trying to get a word in.

OFFICE BOSS  
 This building isn't for sale. You  
 need to leave.

The office workers seem a little too muscular and tense to be regular office workers. Tattoos cover their forearms.

There's an open drawer, Jensen sees a hand gun lying on top of folders.

JENSEN  
 Gates! Guns!

Everyone in the room reacts, the White Office Worker reaches for the gun, Jensen kicks the drawer closed, smashing the Office worker's hand. Jensen pulls his gun covering the two workers.

Office Boss goes for a gun in a hip holster, Gates mirrors him. They both draw, and grab each others wrist, firing into the ceiling. They wrestle back and forth.

Jensen is busy keeping the two office workers back, finger tight on the trigger.

JENSEN  
 Don't fuckin' think about it!

Gates and Office Boss continue to wrestle. Office Boss hip tosses Jensen to the ground, who drags him down too. They roll, knocking into the office furniture.

As they fight Black Office Worker slowly reaches to the small of his back.

JENSEN  
Hands up, fucker!

Black Office Worker doesn't listen, hand still reaching, other hand open and placating.

Finally Gates gets the upper hand, pinning Office Boss down, putting his gun to his head.

GATES  
Office workers, my ass! Who are you fuckers?

OFFICE BOSS  
You're in big trouble, boy. You don't want problems with us.

GATES  
Oh, I got no fear of you, buddy. Either you tell us what you sent in that case or all three of you are gonna have a tragic accident.

Gates's finger tightens on his trigger.

Before Office Boss can respond, the tense moment is interrupted by an upbeat RINGTONE.

Everyone freezes, confused.

Gates keeps his gun pressed against Office Bosses head, slowly reaching into his suit pocket. He retrieves a phone, answers it.

GATES  
I'm in the middle of something.

INT. POLICE STATION - CONTINUOUS

Junior Officer is on the other end of the line. He has a donut in one hand, smiling as he eats it.

His happy tone contrasts with the Jensen's situation on the other end.

JUNIOR OFFICER  
Guess what, sir.

INTERCUT as needed between Police Station and Empty Office Building.

GATES  
Fucking what?

JUNIOR OFFICER  
The case that was stolen...

GATES  
Yea?

JUNIOR OFFICER  
One of the Feds let out what it was.

GATES  
And!?

JUNIOR OFFICER  
That list is from a Disrupt Unit, totally of the grid. These are the guys that no one knows about. Deep cover.

JENSEN  
What are you saying?

JUNIOR OFFICER  
The files are deep cover operatives. They're undercover cops!

Gates is stunned, staring down at the man he was about to shoot.

Black Office Worker slowly pulls his hand from the small of his back, revealing...a BADGE.

Gates and Jensen look at each other, eyes wide.

INT. COP CAR - DAY

Gates and Jensen drive away from the warehouse, looking tired. From their expressions it's clear they've been pondering their situation.

GATES  
So, we're talking about cops.

Gates sits silent for a moment, thinking.

JENSEN  
How much would they pay for that those files?

The two of them mull this over. Even for the two corrupt officers, this is a new depth to sink to.

JENSEN

The way I figure it, all we're talking about is some paper.

GATES

Alright.

JENSEN

And whatever else happens has nothing to do with us.

Jensen doesn't say anything.

JENSEN

You with me?

GATES

Whatever it takes.

JENSEN

Let's find Marigold then.

FADE TO:

BLACK SCREEN (THREE)

Over a black screen the steady beep of a heart monitor plays.

After a moment the dialogue from the beginning plays.

TRIPP (VO)

Oh, there was another problem. Carter isn't dead.

MARIGOLD (VO)

Well, he shouldn't be too hard to find, should he?

Beat, fade in to:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - AFTERNOON

Typical white on white hospital room. Carter lies on a hospital bed, bandages visible around his arm and torso.

At the foot of the bed an OVERWEIGHT COP sits, trashy magazine open in his lap.

Carter's eyes open to slits.

He moves just slightly, there's a quiet CLINK. Carter's right hand is handcuffed to the bed.

The guard looks up from his magazine, sensing something.

He stands, walks to the right side of the bed. Carter's eyes are closed. The cop reaches down to check the cuffs on Carter.

With a sudden movement Carter twists his hand, grabbing the cop's wrist. Sitting up, he begins punching the cop with his free hand.

The cop pulls away, but can't escape Carter's vise-like grip. He blocks the punches, begins hitting back.

Carter switches tactics, grabs for the cop's sidearm. He gets a hand on it, but can't get it out of the holster.

The cop slams his fist into Carter's face, Carter takes it, concentrating on the gun.

Finally the cop pushes against the bed, Carter is jerked bodily out of the bed, wrist still cuffed to the rail.

The cop reaches to protect and draw his gun. They both struggle for the gun, until Carter headbutts the cop, knocking him back, the gun clatters to the floor.

Carter smiles, reaches for the gun - CLINK! The handcuffs catch him, the gun just out of reach.

The cop recovers from the headbutt, smiling. He steps toward the pistol.

OVERWEIGHT COP

Good try, fuck-

He's cut off as Carter grabs an IV stand and slams it across the cop's head. Overweight Cop goes down, out cold.

Carter's shoulders sag, he sighs. With the IV stand he scoots the gun closer, picks it up.

He jerks on his cuffed wrist, it won't budge. He looks to the cop, spots the cuff key dangling on his belt.

Carter reaches for it, but the cop is just out of reach.

A noise behind him gets his attention.

A nurse stands in the doorway, hands over her mouth, eyes wide.

CARTER  
Hey, come here.

NURSE  
Oh, my god!

Carter raises the gun.

CARTER  
I said, get over here.

The nurse screams and runs out of the room.

CARTER  
Shit!

He uses the IV stand and continues trying to drag the cop closer.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Carter walks into the hallway, rubbing his wrist.

He's wearing the cop's leather jacket. He rips off the badge pinned on the front, tossing it over his shoulder.

FREEZE FRAME as he throws the badge over his shoulder,

A SUPER reads: 'CARTER.'

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

EXT. GARDEN WEDDING - DAY

A small but lavish wedding reception in the backyard of a stone mini-mansion.

WELL DRESSED MEN AND WOMEN mill around, sipping champagne and snacking. The mood is celebratory.

A few tuxedoed WAITERS walk though, with trays of champagne and appetizers.

In the center of attention is the BRIDE, and her father, COUNCILMAN CARLSON.

From a side gate TWO WAITERS in tuxes enter. One carries a large case. They weave discreetly through the party.

A flamboyantly dressed COUGAR (45), catches one of their arms.

COUGAR

Senor? Another tray of champagne,  
and tell the cook we're almost  
ready for the cake.

As the Waiter turns to her, he's revealed as Carter. The other waiter is Stutz.

CARTER

Of course, ma'am.

They smile their way past a guard standing at the entrance to the house.

INT. COUNCILMAN'S HOUSE - HALLWAY

A hallway leads through the house towards the kitchen. Another GUARD blocks the back stairway.

Stutz walks close the the Guard, bumping him with the case.

GUARD

Hey, watch it.

Stutz turns, face apologetic.

STUTZ

Oh, sorry, man.

Stutz swings the case hard, hitting the Guard under the chin. Carter catches him as his knees buckle.

The two look over their shoulders, dragging the guard out of sight.

They move up the stairs.

INT. COUNCILMAN'S HOUSE - OFFICE

Carter and Stutz enter a conservative leather and oak office.

Carter walks to the window, looks out over the back yard. He can see Councilman Carlson standing next to the Bride, a proud father.

Carter pulls out a cell phone, dials a number.

EXT. GARDEN WEDDING - CONTINUOUS

Councilman Carlson smiles and jokes with the other guests, arm around the Bride.

A MAID walks to him.

MAID

Sir? The governor is on the phone.

COUNCILMAN CARLSON

Of course. I'll take it upstairs.

He smiles at his guests.

COUNCILMAN CARLSON

Excuse me, I'll be right back.

INT. COUNCILMAN'S HOUSE - OFFICE

Carlson enters the office, walks to his desk, picks up the phone.

COUNCILMAN CARLSON

Jimmy?

He taps a button on the phone, face registering confusion.

COUNCILMAN CARLSON

Hello?

He taps the button a few more times, then hangs up, turning around. He freezes.

The door to the office has been shut, Carter and Stutz stand in front of it. Stutz slides a deadbolt across.

COUNCILMAN CARLSON

Who, who are you guys?

CARTER

Friends of your friends.

As Carter and Carlson talk, Stutz opens the case he was carrying. Inside is a disassembled rifle.

Carlson looks at it fearfully.

CARTER

You had a deal and you broke it.

COUNCILMAN CARLSON  
It's just time, I need more time.

Stutz begins snapping the pieces of the rifle together.

CARTER  
Your friends are less than generous  
with time.

Carlson is distracted by Stutz's actions.

COUNCILMAN CARLSON  
Wait, what's he doing.

Carter points back and forth between his eyes and the  
Councilman's.

CARTER  
Focus, buddy. Focus. When are you  
going to have the money?

COUNCILMAN CARLSON  
I'll come by before the end of the  
week.

CARTER  
(to Stutz)  
You believe him?

Stutz doesn't answer. Instead he locks the final piece onto  
the rifle, then slaps a magazine into place.

CARTER  
Me neither.

COUNCILMAN CARLSON  
Holy shit, don't do anything. It's  
a wedding for fuck's sake!

They ignore him, Stutz brings the rifle to his shoulder,  
readying the shot.

Through the window the Bride is visible, clapping  
delightedly as the WEDDING CAKE is brought out.

COUNCILMAN CARLSON  
Tomorrow, I swear to Christ, I'll  
have it tomorrow!

Stutz racks the bolt, chambering a round.

Carter lets the councilman sweat for a moment, then relents.

CARTER

Bring it by the Pawn shop. You don't want to fuck around on this one.

To emphasize the point Stutz racks the weapon loudly. A bullet exits the chamber, falling to the hard-wood floor. Stutz picks it up, hands it to the Councilman.

CARTER

A wedding present for your daughter.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. HARDWARE STORE - AFTERNOON

Carter walks into a large Hardware store, wearing the hospital scrub pants and a police leather jacket.

Carter walks down the aisles, into the tool section, looking at hammers. He finds a firefighter style ax, hefts it. Then trades it for a sledge hammer.

He weighs the sledge in his hands, nods to himself.

Walking towards the exit he grabs some construction pants and a shirt, draping them over a shoulder.

Walks out towards the exit.

A teenage CUTE CASHIER stands by the checkout line.

CUTE CASHIER

So, you ready to check out?

Carter keeps walking.

CUTE CASHIER

Hey, wait. Hey! He's stealing that!

Some burly CONSTRUCTION GUYS hear the yell and move towards him.

CONSTRUCTION GUY

Yo!

Carter ignores them, the automatic doors slide open. Without looking back he swings the sledge hammer over his head, smashing the motion detector device as he walks through the doors.

The doors shut between him and the construction guys, not reopening.

EXT. HARDWARE STORE - CONTINUOUS

An illegally parked POLICE CAR waits for Carter outside.

Stunned shoppers stare around him.

He tosses the sledge in the open passenger window, then climbs in, SLAMMING the door.

INT. STUTZ'S HOUSE - MORNING

The sound of HARD KNOCKING on a door introduces us to Stutz's House.

The same typical two story suburban house, decorated with curtains and nicknacks.

There's another burst of hard knocking, as...

Stutz enters the frame, dressed in khaki slacks and a button down shirt. A few prison tattoos on his forearms throw off the suburban husband image.

STUTZ

Yea, yea, yea...

He walks to the door and peers through the peep hole, then his eyes widen and he recoils.

EXT. STUTZ'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Carter takes a running swing with a SLEDGE HAMMER, impacting the door right below the knob. The door splinters open, hitting Stutz in the head as it does.

Carter pushes his way inside, jabbing the sledge into Stutz's gut, then whipping his head with the handle.

INT. STUTZ'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

CARTER

You motherfucker, you didn't expect to see me again, did you? Where's the fucking case?

STUTZ

Fuck you!

Carter slams Stutz with the sledge handle again then drops it, drawing a police issue HAND GUN from his waist band and shoving it under Stutz's chin.

CARTER

(Without emotion)

Where's the case?

Stutz doesn't answer, Carter pistol whips Stutz's face bloody.

Finally, Stutz holds a hand up, gasping.

STUTZ

Wait, wait, wait!

CARTER

Yea?

STUTZ

It's behind you.

Sound of gun cocking OS, our view expands to see a woman holding absurdly large PISTOL shaky in her hands. This is Stutz's wife, KAREN; a skinny, middle aged woman who is not used to violence.

KAREN

(nervously)

Drop the gun...cock...sucker.

Carter straightens, his gun steady on Stutz, the wife backs up, gun trained on him, all three are locked in a triangular stand off. Stutz wipes blood from lip.

STUTZ

Carter, meet my wife.

Carter's eyes are to the side.

CARTER

Charmed, I'm sure.

Carter smiles, his relaxed attitude contrasting Karen's nervousness.

CARTER

That hand cannon seems kinda large  
for a little lady like  
yourself. Is it getting heavy yet?

KAREN

Shut up. Drop the gun.

CARTER

Hmmmm. No, I don't think I will. Are your hands starting to shake?

Karen tries to steady her hands, but the harder she tries the more the gun shakes. Carter watches carefully, eying Stutz out of the corner of his eye.

CARTER

Now, I didn't even know you were married. You certainly didn't act like it last weekend...

Close on wife, her eyes widen, staring at Carter. Her eyes flick to husband, time slows to a crawl.

Full speed, Carter shifts and shoots Karen in shoulder, her gun is tossed to the side, she falls to her knees, groaning.

STUTZ

You dumb bitch, he was just fucking with your head!

Karen sobs on the floor, clutching at her shoulder.

CARTER

Stop whining, it's just a flesh wound. Now you-  
(turning to Stutz)  
where's the case? Any more games and I'll start blowing bits of you off, starting with...  
(moves gun to crotch)  
...your wife's best friend.

Throughout this, Karen is inching painfully toward her pistol where it landed. Without looking, Carter lifts his gun and fires twice, hitting the gun on floor and skittering it away from wife and under a couch.

CARTER

Sit still or you will die.  
(to Stutz)  
The case ... now.

EXT. DOCKS - DAY

The docks are a maze of shipping containers arranged along the waterfront. Huge cranes stud the skyline.

Carter's stolen POLICE CAR pulls up between rows of shipping containers. It slow rolls through them, Carter peering out the window at the containers.

Finally he pulls to a halt in an open area.

Carter steps out of the vehicle, looking at the numbers listed on the containers.

Before he can approach one he's surprised by the sudden sound of sirens. Two unmarked police cars skid to a halt near him.

Agents Stephens and Donavon lean out the doors, pointing handguns at Carter.

AGENT DONAVON

Sir, put your hands up!

Carter acts like he's going to comply, then jerks out pistol, fires a dozen shots into windshield. The Feds duck, barely moving out of the way as a bullet tears through the headrest of the seat.

The Feds recover, returning fire, but Carter ducks between containers, running away.

The Feds give chase, moving slowly through the maze of the containers, guns up.

Agents Dawson and Stephens turn corners around containers carefully, tense.

Turn after turn, no sign of Carter, until they reach the edge of the docks, nothing ahead but water, rippling slightly.

The Feds slowly lower their guns.

AGENT DONAVON

Shit...

EXT. DOCKS - EVENING

Hours have passed, the sun is low.

An OVERHEAD VIEW scans across the containers, showing POLICE TAPE flapping in the wind. Spray painted circles dot the containers where bullets and shells were collected. The police are gone.

Carter is revealed, lying flat against the top of one of the containers. He begins inching along it, moving back towards the open area.

Carter reaches the edge of the container, able to see the bullet pocked cop cars.

Suddenly two figures move into view.

CARTER  
(quietly)  
Shit...

He pulls out his handgun.

It's Tripp and Skinner, carrying the case. They turn away from Carter, too far away for him to shoot.

Carter low crawls along the container, preparing to follow them.

He's interrupted by a flashlight playing across the container, he rolls quickly away from the edge.

Two COPS walk past, shining their lights across the crime scene.

COP  
You hear something?

COP 2  
I guess not.

Carter grimaces on top of the container, unable to escape.

A final glance across the crime scene shows Tripp and Skinner sneaking away, out of sight of the two cops.

INT. NIGHT CLUB - EVENING

A packed neon lit nightclub, well dressed BUSINESS MEN cutting loose with trashy WOMEN.

JOHNNY weaves his way through the crowd, wearing a flashy suit, drink in hand. He glad-hands some of the customers, flirting inaudibly with the women.

Occasionally Johnny slips the customers drugs in exchange for cash.

Johnny makes his way past two BOUNCERS into the VIP section. He chats briefly with the VIPs, then lets himself through another door into a back office.

INT. NIGHT CLUB - BACK OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The office is messy and homely, a strong contrast to the club outside. Johnny walks to a table, sets down his drink and pulls out a wad of cash, counting it.

Unseen by him, Carter steps out of the darkness on one side.

CARTER

Hey there, Johnny.

Johnny jumps, startled, dropping the cash to the floor.

JOHNNY

Jesus! Carter! What the fuck you getting all theatrical for?

Johnny bends to pick up the dropped money, keeping an eye on Carter as he does.

CARTER

You set me up.

JOHNNY

Your dumbass set yourself up.

CARTER

I need to know what was in the case.

JOHNNY

You dumb shit, you had it and you let it go. You have no idea what those files are worth.

CARTER  
How much?

JOHNNY  
Retirement kinda money.

Carter starts walking closer.

CARTER  
Where's Marigold, Johnny?

Johnny retreats, but puts a threatening expression on.

JOHNNY  
Don't try that shit with me,  
man. I knew you'd be showing up,  
I'm prepared for your bullshit.

He pulls back his coat to reveal a huge revolver in a shoulder holster, unclips it. A little fear creeps into his tough guy act.

JOHNNY  
You try your strong arm shit on me  
and I'll...I'll blow you all over  
these walls.

Carter has Johnny cornered, an arms length away. He stares at Johnny a second, eyes squinting slightly. Without warning Carter jerks his hand out and snatches Johnny's gun out of the holster.

JOHNNY  
Oh, shit.

Both of them stare down at the gun, now in Carter's hand.

CARTER  
Where's Marigold, Johnny?

JOHNNY  
(Backing up, frightened)  
I don't know. I was cut out of it  
as soon as you guys screwed up.

Carter weighs gun in hands.

CARTER  
You can do better than that.

He looks at Johnny meaningfully.

JOHNNY

My guy at the airport cleared a private plane to land. He's flying in tonight.

CARTER

Where's he staying?

JOHNNY

He has a suite at the Merrimack.

Carter smiles, holsters the pistol in the front of his pants.

Johnny watches him. Half-heartedly Johnny reaches out to grab the pistol, Carter easily knocks his hand away.

CARTER

Gimme your shirt.

JOHNNY

What?!

CARTER

Your shirt...and the holster. Now.

EXT. CITY STREET - MINUTES LATER

Carter walks out a rear exit of the club onto the sidewalk.

He hustles down an alleyway, face thoughtful.

After a moment he cocks his head to the side, noticing something amiss.

He quickens his pace, reaching a deserted street corner.

Carter turns the corner, then flattens himself against the wall. He pulls out Johnny's huge PISTOL, holds it up at head height, ready to kill anyone that comes around the corner.

Around the corner Gates and Jensen are revealed, approaching fast.

Right before the cops reach the corner Gates's RINGTONE sounds, they pause right at the corner.

Carter listens to Gates's conversation.

GATES  
What? ... And...? Get to the  
point.

Carter fidgets, slowly cocking the gun.

Two teenage WHITE BOYS dressed ghetto walk along the sidewalk, freezing when they see him.

GATES  
Enlighten me ... A fucking front?

Carter puts a finger to his lips, then shoos the white boys away. They retreat the way they came, eye's wide.

GATES  
Shut up. What was that address?

GATES  
(to Jensen)  
Lincoln Street. Move.

Carter listens to the Cops footsteps walking away from the corner, slowly lowering his gun.

His expression is thoughtful.

EXT. LINCOLN ST. - NIGHT

Carter sits in a crappy car on Lincoln street, adjacent to the Abandoned Office building.

A block in front of his car is the Gates's unmarked car.

INT. CRAPPY CAR - LINCOLN ST. - CONTINUOUS

The passenger seat of the car is covered with broken glass from a busted window. Ignition wires hang from below the steering column.

In the drivers seat Carter has the Fed's folder open on his lap. He flips idly through the papers, smirking to himself when he reaches his file.

His study is interrupted by the cops coming out of the Abandoned Office.

They turn on the vehicle, driving off. After a moment Carter puts his car in gear, following them.

He flips the folder closed.

WHITE SCREEN (FOUR)

FADE IN TO:

INT. MERRIMACK HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

Skinner and Tripp walk through the ornate hotel lobby, palming the elevator button. Skinner carries the case, Tripp seems preoccupied, staring at it.

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Skinner and Tripp get into elevator together, Skinner holding briefcase. Skinner fiddles with the case, smiling, pleased with himself.

Finally he gives in, flashing a grin at Tripp as he opens the case, pulling open one of the folders.

SKINNER

Look at this; Kyle Paretto, New York State Police. Currently undercover with the Stepatz Family. Ugly fucker, too.

Skinner shows Tripp the photo page, laughing.

SKINNER

How much you think the guidos will pay for this?

As Skinner looks at the next folder, Tripp begins slipping a hand to the small of his back. Skinner fails to notice how tense Tripp has become.

Smiling to himself Skinner flips to the next folder. He pauses, eyes narrowing, Tripp watches him from across the elevator.

Abruptly Tripp jerks a gun out of his waistband, but Skinner reacts, swinging the case to knock the gun to the side, the files spray through the air as a shot goes off.

Tripp spins and pistol whips Skinner, who's knocked back. Tripp gets his gun up as Skinner comes forward, Tripp shoots him in the side. The shot twists Skinner's body, but he moves forward and slashes Tripp's gun hand.

SKINNER

You fucking lying cop!

Tripp's gun falls, along with the tip of his trigger finger. Skinner stabs again and Tripp blocks, guiding the knife into wall. The knife sticks in the aluminum walls of the elevator.

Skinner fights to pull the knife out of the wall, Tripp steps towards the gun, when: The elevator DINGS and opens. An OLD LADY (75), gets in between them with walker, oblivious.

The Old Lady hits a button, the elevator heads downwards as elevator music plays. The old lady smiles up at them, Skinner smiles back, coughs to cover the sound of pulling the knife from wall.

Tripp looks down at gun, wanting to pick it up, but Skinner gestures to old lady with knife, her still unaware of the danger she's in.

The elevator stops, the doors opening on a busy hallway. The Old Lady begins her slow crawl out into the hallway.

OLD LADY

You boys have a nice day.

Tripp and Skinner both tense. The knife is in Skinner's hand, the gun at Tripp's feet. It'll be a race to whoever is able to strike first.

The old woman leaves, but before the doors shut a stereotyped Mexican JANITOR walks in, pulling a yellow mop bucket. He hits the button for the lobby.

The doors close on the three of them, the two poised for violence on either side of the sleepy Janitor. The doors DING loudly as they seal shut.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Doors open with a CHIME, Tripp steps out with a dazed look on his face, a bandana wrapped around his bloody hand. He strides out of elevator and across the nearly empty marble floor.

In his hand is the CASE, a small spray of blood across it.

Halfway across the floor he passes Gates walking the opposite direction. Neither of them recognize each other. As they pass each other we turn and follow Gates as he walks toward the elevator.

He reacts to the elevator, both Skinner and the Janitor are lying DEAD, pooling blood from multiple bullet/knife wounds.

Immediately Gates turns to the lobby.

GATES

Hey!

Tripp reacts by starting to run toward the revolving doors of the lobby to escape.

GATES

Grab him!

Just as Tripp is about to reach the doors, they rotate and Jensen steps through, grabbing Tripp and throwing him against a wall. He shoves his gun into Tripp's gut before he can react.

JENSEN

Be cool!

Gates runs up just as Jensen is retrieving Tripp's gun. Gates looks at the case.

GATES

Is that what I think it is?

At that moment a large BELLHOP walks up.

BELLHOP

What's going on here?

Gates flashes him a badge.

GATES

Police, take a walk.

The Bellhop backs off. Tripp looks surprised.

TRIPP

You're officers?

GATES

Oh, we're off duty at the moment.

JENSEN

You could say...freelance.

They begin hustling him across the lobby back towards the elevators.

TRIPP  
You're bent?!

JENSEN  
(Winking)  
Just slightly crooked.

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

The three stand over the bleeding bodies of the Janitor and Skinner as elevator music plays once again.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - DAY

In a luxurious hotel suite, Marigold stands behind a bar, pulling out a tumbler. Two BODYGUARDS stand in opposite corners of the room.

Without warning the door is thrown open, Jensen and Gates stride into the room as the bodyguards pull out guns.

GATES  
Mr. Marigold. We're so happy to see you again.

MARIGOLD  
I can't say the feelings mutual, Detectives.

Marigold waves for his bodyguards to relax. Grudgingly they return their weapons to their holsters. Marigold's eyes are on the case in Gates's hand.

Behind the detectives Tripp comes in, still clutching a handkerchief over his injured hand.

JENSEN  
(gesturing to the bar)  
You going to offer us drink?

Marigold pulls out two additional glasses from behind the bar, retrieves a bottle of liquor.

MARIGOLD  
You know the things I hate most, gentlemen?

JENSEN  
What's that?

Marigold ticks items off as he fills each of the three glasses.

MARIGOLD

My ex-wife...snitches...and dirty  
cops.

He smiles coldly, holding out two drinks to the  
detectives. Gates laughs, nonplussed. They take their  
drinks.

GATES

That's real funny, considering how  
you call us every time your panties  
are in a bunch.

Gates sets the case on the table, saluting Marigold with his  
drink. Marigold opens the case, flips through the folders  
idly, smiling to himself. Tripp stands off to one side,  
looking tense.

Finally Marigold drops the folders, not having looked at the  
last couple. He notices Tripp looking strange.

MARIGOLD

You okay?

TRIPP

Sure, yea. I just gotta take care  
of this.

He raises his hand, blood dripping through the  
cloth. Marigold nods and Tripp walks out of the room,  
towards the bathroom.

Marigold shakes his head, turning back to the dirty cops.

MARIGOLD

(ironic)

You sure you're okay with this? I  
mean, you two are some cold  
bastards, but these are your own  
guys.

GATES

Oh, I feel horrible about it. I  
think the only way I'll feel better  
is with very expensive therapy.

JENSEN

And a new car.

GATES

Yea, a new car might help too.

Marigold shakes his head, impressed at their coldness.

MARIGOLD

So, what kinda deal we talking about here?

GATES

We're talking about a Federal hit team ready to swarm this place. That'll be grand theft auto, robbery, murder, trafficking in classified documents.

MARIGOLD

(calmly)

Well, that sounds like a bad deal for me.

JENSEN

Or...you take a briefcase and fill it with five hundred thousand dollars.

MARIGOLD

That sounds like a good deal for you two.

Gates and Jensen stand waiting. Marigold considers for a minute, then turns away from them. He pulls a painting off the wall, revealing a hidden safe.

Marigold opens it, revealing stacks of money and a few handguns. He grabs out two thick stacks of cash, drops them into the now empty metal case.

MARIGOLD

I'll give two now. Another hundred grand within the week. And that's it.

Gates and Jensen exchange looks. This is not a surprising development.

GATES

Another two hundred.

Before Marigold can respond Gates's phone rings. He answers it just as Tripp reenters the room.

GATES

(into phone)

Yea?...How did they find out? Fuck, alright.

Gates hangs up vehemently.

GATES

The Feds are on their way  
here. They were just tipped off.

A moment passes as the people in the room digest  
this. Marigold slowly turns his attention to Tripp.

JENSEN

We need to get out of here.

He reaches for the files, scooping them off the bar.

MARIGOLD

Hold the fuck up. What you doing?

Jensen pulls out his gun, pointing it at Body Guard 1 next  
to Marigold.

GATES

The files stay with us. You get  
cash together and we'll do this  
later. And it'll be four hundred.

Tripp steps to the still open safe, grabbing a handgun. He  
points it at Jensen's head.

TRIPP

Wrong. The files aren't going  
anywhere.

There's a tense stand off, Jensen's gun on Body Guard 1,  
Tripp's gun on Jensen.

JENSEN

You really going to shoot a cop  
with the Feds on the way?

TRIPP

A dirty cop, fuck yea I  
will. They'll thank me.

Gates and Marigold are looking at each other, ignoring the  
guns.

GATES

How'd the Feds know where we are?

MARIGOLD

(To Tripp)

Where'd you go a minute ago?

TRIPP  
(raising injured hand)  
To fix this, boss.

GATES  
Let me see your phone.

TRIPP  
Fuck yourself, cop.

MARIGOLD  
Do what he says, Tripp.

Tripp looks back and forth between Marigold and the various henchmen, realizing he's trapped. Slowly, he reaches for his phone.

The second Body Guard and Gates pull out their guns, there's no doubt violence is imminent. Everyone in the room is tense, focused on Tripp, when:

The door is blown in with a SHOTGUN BLAST, Body Guard 2 goes down with a spray of blood.

Immediately everyone dives for cover behind furniture/in doorways as two more shotgun blasts blow holes in couches. The bodyguards and cops return fire.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Carter lies slumped in the hallway, not flinching as bullets spray plaster into the air around him. Calmly he reloads the shotgun tube with shells from his pocket.

CARTER  
You should have just paid me,  
Marigold!

Return gunfire answers Carter's yell.

He twists, looking through a bullet hole into the suite. Through the small hole he gets a glimpse of movement, one of the bodyguards repositioning himself.

Carter cocks the shotgun. Without exposing his body Carter reaches into the doorway and fires. Immediately he jerks his hands back as bullets spray around them.

MARIGOLD (OS)  
What you gonna do Carter? You're  
not making it in here alive!

Carter ignores Marigold, looks back through the bullet hole. He sees his last shot went low. He recocks the gun and fires again, this time winging the bodyguard.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - CONTINUOUS

Inside the suite everyone's crouched behind cover. Gates gestures to Jensen.

GATES

The cash, man!

Jensen reaches onto the bar and grabs the case. He ducks as more shotgun blasts tear apart the room. He throws the files into the case on top of the cash.

JENSEN

Let's get the fuck out of here!

Tripp crouches in the doorway to another room, watching the action. He empties his pistol into the hallway, then tosses the empty gun.

Tripp sees Marigold begin to make a move for the wall safe, wanting the guns.

Tripp hesitates, then rushes in after him. He catches Marigold just as he reaches the safe, shoving him against the wall.

Without hesitation Tripp shoves his head into the safe, slamming the heavy metal door against him.

Marigold struggles, retrieving one of the guns he tries to reach behind himself and shoot Tripp. They fight, Marigold squeezes off a few misaimed shots into the ceiling.

With effort Tripp slams Marigold into the safe, ripping the gun from his hand, puts it to the back of Marigold's head and fires.

Marigold slowly falls, the safe door swings open to reveal stacks of money and guns soaked in blood and brains.

Tripp turns, looking for the corrupt officers.

TRIPP

Cop!

Jensen turns, raising his gun as Tripp shoots him down unflinchingly. The case is tossed into the center of the room, opening, cash and folders spill out.

Gates reacts, firing at Tripp as he ducks behind the bar, bottles exploding. Gates is yelling incoherently, doesn't notice Carter entering the room slowly behind him, shooting down the last body guard.

SLOMO Carter fires into Gates's back, he goes down dramatically. Carter drops the shotgun, retrieves a bodyguard's handgun from the floor.

As he reaches for the case Tripp pops up from behind the bar, firing. Hit, Carter scrambles awkwardly back into the hallway, trailing blood.

Tripp, injured by one of Gates's bullets, works along the wall opposite Carter. They are inches apart, separated by the wall.

On the bloody carpet Gates's body slowly moves, he reaches for his fallen pistol. Gates straightens up behind Tripp, a bullet proof vest showing through his torn shirt. Tripp's attention is focused on the doorway.

TRIPP

Give it up, Carter!

In the hallway Carter lies bleeding, bodyguard's gun held in his hand. From his position he can just see the case through the doorway. He grimaces from the pain, pushing himself to his feet.

TRIPP

The cops are on their way, it's too late!

Tripp doesn't see Gates behind him. Gates reaches out, his revolver inches from Tripp's head. Tripp continues moving toward his confrontation with Carter, oblivious.

Gates squeezes the trigger, the cylinder rotates, the hammer falls...Click!

Tripp spins and fires, bullets tear into Gates's face and neck. Gates goes down, for good this time.

Carter takes that moment to move out of cover, shooting Tripp. Tripp reacts, both of them too injured to aim properly. They stand toe to toe, each taking bullets.

Their guns go empty, but they continue firing, dry clicks sounding as their willpower gives in to gravity and they both collapse.

The two lie on the floor, guns still clutched in their hands, slides locked to the rear. Around them everyone else is dead, the suite is destroyed.

A federal SWAT TEAM swarms the room as Tripp and Carter lie bleeding next to each other.

Slowly Carter's hand moves across the floor, reaching into the open case. His bloody hand grabs a fistful of money.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING - DAYS LATER

Carter stretched out in a typical white on white hospital room, it could be the same exact room he was in before. His body covered in bandages, breathing tube and IVs. Both arms are cuffed to the bed.

Two LARGE OFFICERS stand against the walls.

At the foot of the bed sits Tripp. He is also bandaged, an arm in a sling across his chest. He's wearing a police DRESS UNIFORM, the shirt draped over his shoulders.

CARTER (VO)

They say there's a hero to every story. I don't know about that. I'd say the hero is just who ever's left once everyone else is dead.

Carter's eyes open to slits.

END