

HIGHWAY TO HELL

"Pilot"

By

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TEASER

INT. DUNGEON - HALLWAY

JACK CRANE (34), a man with dirty blonde hair and a muscle-toned body, lies on the floor naked and unconscious.

A huge, scarred hand with long, black fingernails grabs and drags him.

TORTURE CHAMBER

Jack hangs from the ceiling, his wrists shackled by black chains. His feet barely touch the ground. His eyes are closed.

Distant screams can be heard.

The door creaks open.

Jack opens his eyes.

A tall, hooded FIGURE in dark robes that constantly giggles enters. Its face is hidden.

JACK

Hey! What is this place?

The hooded figure walks over to a small table covered by a blood-stained cloth.

JACK

I'm Detective Jack Crane.

It removes the cloth revealing various blades, needles, saws, and other tools of torture.

JACK

Listen, buddy, the last thing you
wanna do is harm a cop.

The hooded figure picks up a metal instrument that looks similar to a potato peeler, but bigger.

JACK

Who are you!? Where the hell am
I!?

The hooded figure removes his hood. His eyes are black, bottomless pits. His mouth is fixed into a perpetual, horrific smile.

Panic grips Jack.

The figure places the metal instrument on Jack's chest and peels away his flesh. Its giggles turn into maniacal laughter.

Jack's scream joins the cacophony of the other distant screams.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Jack opens dresser drawers searching for something.

JACK

Honey, I can't find my ties.

CAROLYN (O.S.)

I put them in the closet on a hanger.

Jack heads for the closet to continue his search.

KITCHEN

CAROLYN CRANE (30) makes a cup of coffee. She wears an ordinary bath robe. Even without makeup she is strikingly beautiful.

Jack enters. He holds up two ties.

JACK

Okay, which one goes better with all this?

Carolyn grabs one of the ties. She places it around Jack's collar.

CAROLYN

The last time you wore a tie was at my brother's wedding last year.

JACK

When I show up for court today, I want to look good for the media when I tell them, "No comment."

CAROLYN

Will we be able to move back home when the trial's over?

JACK

Maybe not right away.

CAROLYN

Having a police escort every time
I go out is getting old, Jack.

JACK

It's for your protection. We
don't want Maroni trying to go
through you to get to me.

CAROLYN

I know. There.

Carolyn finishes with the tie.

Jack glances at a box of pregnancy tests halfway out of a
grocery bag. He grabs the box.

CAROLYN

I was going to talk to you about
that tonight.

JACK

After what the doctor said, I
thought we agreed to adopt?

CAROLYN

Doctors have been known to be
wrong.

JACK

We could get a second opinion.

CAROLYN

No. No more doctors. I'm placing
this in God's hands.

Jack holds her in his arms.

JACK

So, God is going to teach my sperm
to be better swimmers?

CAROLYN

That's not funny, Jack.

JACK

It's a little funny.

(a beat)

Look, if it's what you want, then it's what I want. But, can we try again once we're back home and all this Maroni nonsense is behind us?

CAROLYN

Okay.

A knock at the front door.

JACK

Gotta run. I love you.

Jack kisses Carolyn. He grabs his keys, wallet, and coffee.

He opens the front door revealing Detective BRIAN WINTERS (49).

BRIAN

Mornin', sunshine.

JACK

Don't start. Here's your coffee.

BRIAN

Ah. Thank you, Mrs. Crane.

JACK

Why don't you make me anything?

CAROLYN

You don't like coffee.

JACK

Yeah, but I like scrambled eggs and bacon with toast, hash browns, the occasional Belgian waffle with strawberries and bananas...

Brian shuts the door.

JACK (O.S.)

I'm not asking for a lot, you know.

Carolyn produces a pregnancy test from her robe pocket.
It's positive.

She looks worried.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

A crowd of REPORTERS and CAMERA OPERATORS have assembled at
the steps.

A FEMALE REPORTER (30's) stands in front of a camera.

FEMALE REPORTER

The atmosphere here is tense as
the prosecution and the defense
prepare to give their closing
arguments in the Angelo Maroni
murder trial in less than an hour.
As you know, Angelo Maroni, a
well-known, well-respected
businessman, was arrested and
charged with first degree murder
of a John Doe nine months ago.

The reporter looks off camera.

FEMALE REPORTER

Is that... Yes, I believe...

The reporter rushes over to Jack and Brian as they make
their way up the steps.

FEMALE REPORTER

Detective Crane! Do you believe
the prosecution presented a strong
enough case to indict Mr. Maroni?

JACK

I have no comment at this time.
Excuse me.

FEMALE REPORTER

As the arresting officer, will you
publically apologize to Angelo
Maroni if the jury hands in a
verdict of not guilty?

JACK

I'm sorry, no comment.

Jack and Brian escape the reporters. They enter the courthouse.

INT. COURTHOUSE - COURTROOM

ANGELO MARONI (58), a bald, clean shaven man, sits next to his attorney, TONY VILLONE (63).

Behind the bench, the Honorable WARREN HOPSON (51) presides.

Jack and Brian sit in the crowded gallery behind the prosecution.

The PROSECUTOR (41) gives his closing argument.

PROSECUTOR

The defense would have you believe that Angelo Maroni is a kind, decent and generous business man who only wants what's best for this city. He may appear that way in the public eye, but behind closed doors, he runs the most sophisticated and organized crime syndicate this city has ever known. You saw the surveillance video showing Angelo Maroni pointing a gun at the head of a man at point blank range and then pulling the trigger. We've brought in small business owners that testified how Mr. Maroni's men would come in at least once a month to shake them down for protection money. If they didn't have the money, they were threatened and sometimes beaten. Angelo Maroni has been terrorizing this city for nearly three decades. A verdict of guilty from this jury would rid our fine city of this cancer. Thank you.

The prosecutor sits.

WARREN

Counsel for the defense, are you prepared to make your closing argument?

TONY

Yes, Your Honor.

Tony walks over to the jury.

TONY

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I'd like to thank you for your patience and due diligence in this case. The last six days have been trying on all of us. If the case had been dismissed as I requested on day one, we wouldn't have had to...

PROSECUTOR

Objection?

WARREN

Sustained.

(fake smile)

Mr. Villone, you will refrain from criticizing how I run my courtroom.

TONY

My apologies, Your Honor, I meant no offense.

(to the jury)

The prosecution's case against my client has been a farce from the beginning. Therefore, I'll make my argument brief. The only piece of evidence that they presented is a video of a man shooting another man. They claim that my client is the one doing the shooting, but claiming is not evidence. And since they have failed to produce for you a dead body or a murder weapon, the only logical verdict you can arrive at is not guilty. Thank you for your time.

HALLWAY

Jack sits on a bench.

Brian enters carrying two pastries. He hands one to Jack and sits on the bench.

JACK

Thanks.

BRIAN

I hate this part. The waiting.
Did you check in with the captain?

JACK

Yeah.

(a beat)

I never should've pursued this
case. It's been really hard on
Carolyn.

BRIAN

That's funny. A guy that looked
exactly like me said the same
thing nine months ago.

JACK

Gloating over your partner's
mistakes, do they teach that at
detective school?

BRIAN

Jack, you need to make a decision:
the job or family. A guy like you
can't have both.

JACK

What do you mean, "A guy like me?"

BRIAN

You're too dedicated to doing the
right thing.

JACK

Because I'm a cop, same as you.

BRIAN

(scoffs)

I was just as gung ho when I first joined the force. I thought I could make a difference by taking down bad guys like Maroni and, at the same time, be a good husband and father. I was wrong.

JACK

What am I supposed to do? Look the other way when a crime is committed for the sake of my family?

BRIAN

I'm saying choose your battles wisely. You want to be a hero, go for it, but don't drag Carolyn with you.

Brian holds up his cell phone.

BRIAN

I gotta go.

Brian stands.

BRIAN

Heroes are lonely people, Jack, because they usually destroy the ones they love most. They don't mean to, but it happens. Why do you think superheroes wear a mask?

Brian walks away.

JACK

Because it looks good with the rest of the outfit?

COURTHOUSE JAIL

Angelo and Tony sit inside a jail cell.

TONY

If the jury doesn't go our way,
I've made sure that the judge will
hand down the lightest possible
sentence.

ANGELO

You're a good man, Tony. I'm glad
you're on my side.

TONY

I'm always at your disposal, Mr.
Maroni, you know that.

Tony closes his suitcase and stands. Angelo joins him.

TONY

Oh, by the way...

He looks around.

TONY

(low voice)

Frankie needs to know what to do
about that surprise party you
planned.

ANGELO

Tell him to send out the
invitations and make sure Detective
Crane's doesn't get lost.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Carolyn walks in with a cup of coffee. She gives it to a
young OFFICER.

OFFICER

Thank you, ma'am.

CAROLYN

I just hope I made it right.

OFFICER

No worries, ma'am.

CAROLYN

How long have you been on the force?

OFFICER

About two months.

CAROLYN

Just... two months?

OFFICER

Yes, ma'am.

A knock at the door gets their attention.

OFFICER

I'll get that.

The officer walks over to the front door. He looks through the peep hole.

OFFICER

It's one of ours.

He opens the door. A muffled gunshot goes off.

Blood splatters from the back of the officer's head.

Carolyn, stained from the splattered blood, screams in horror.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. COURTHOUSE - HALLWAY

The double doors to the court room open. Angelo and Tony enter. They are greeted by a swarm of reporters.

REPORTER #1

Mr. Maroni! What's the first thing you plan to do, now that the trial is over?

ANGELO

I'm going home to enjoy some of my mom's baked ziti along with a bottle of salice salentino.

Some of the reporters laugh.

Jack watches from a distance.

REPORTER #2

Mr. Maroni! Do you have any animosity towards Detective Jack Crane?

ANGELO

I have nothing but respect and admiration for the men and women in our law enforcement community. Detective Crane was only doing his job. I wish nothing but the best for him...

Angelo looks over at Jack.

ANGELO

...and his lovely wife, Carolyn.

Jack becomes tense.

TONY

Alright, no more questions for today. My client is very tired and would like to go home. Excuse us.

The media mob moves with Angelo and his attorney as they make their way to the exit.

Jack uses his cell phone. A recording comes through.

CAROLYN (O.S.)
Hi, this is Carolyn. I'm probably
away from my phone, so please...

Jack dials another number as he runs for the side exit.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Jack hurries to his car with the phone up to his ear.

BRIAN (O.S.)
What's up, Jack?

JACK
Maroni came out of the courtroom
and said Carolyn's name in front
of a bunch of reporters. He gave
me this strange look when he said
it.

BRIAN (O.S.)
How did he know her name?

JACK
Exactly. Meet me at the apartment.

BRIAN (O.S.)
On my way.

Jack makes it to his car. He drives off with shrieking tires.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY

The elevator DINGS. The doors open. Jack enters with his weapon drawn. He walks with extreme caution.

His apartment door is closed. He turns the doorknob. It's unlocked. He pushes the door open.

Lying on the floor, just inside the apartment, is the dead officer. Blood and brain matter is everywhere.

INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Jack walks in.

JACK
Carolyn?

He checks the living room. Nothing.

He makes his way to the kitchen. Nothing.

The door to the bedroom is closed. He slowly turns the doorknob. He swings the door open with his gun raised.

Jack sees a note on the bed. He picks it up.

JACK
(reading the note)
Oh, God.

BRIAN (O.S.)
What?

Jack turns and aims his gun at Brian.

BRIAN
Whoa! It's just me.

Jack lowers his weapon.

JACK
Maroni. He took her.

He hands Brian the note.

JACK
He's holding her at the docks. He
wants me to be there tonight.
Alone.

BRIAN
You're not going in alone. I'm
coming with you.

JACK
Thanks, man.

BRIAN

What are partners for?

Jack sits on the bed.

JACK

What was it you said earlier about heroes?

BRIAN

Hey.

Jack looks up at Brian.

BRIAN

We'll get her back. Besides, It'll give you a chance to put some of that Navy seal training to good use.

Jack gets up. He goes to the closet and takes out some black clothing. He undresses.

BRIAN

What are you doing?

JACK

Changing into my hero outfit.

EXT. DOCKS - NIGHT

An SUV with no running headlights parks next to a building. Jack and Brian exit the SUV.

Brian opens the SUV's backdoor revealing an arsenal of weapons.

JACK

You expecting a zombie apocalypse?

Brian hands Jack a sawed-off shotgun.

BRIAN

A what?

JACK

A zombie... forget it.

After loading their weapons, Brian closes the SUV door.

BRIAN
Carolyn's being held in warehouse
A-five, three buildings down.

JACK
Okay, you approach from the east
and I'll take the west.

BRIAN
Sounds good. Oh, wait!

JACK
What?

BRIAN
I left the radios in the back.
Can you get 'em?

JACK
Yeah.

Jack opens the backdoor. He grabs two radios.

JACK
(turns around)
I'm not sure these radios are...

BAM! Brian hits Jack in the face with the butt of his
shotgun. Jack drops the radios.

Jack staggers as he pulls out his handgun. Brian knocks it
away.

BRIAN
I'm sorry, Jack.

He hits Jack in the face again.

Jack is unconscious.

INT. WAREHOUSE - SMALL OFFICE - NIGHT

A single light bulb hangs from the ceiling.

Jack lies on the floor unconscious, gagged with his hands tied behind his back. His nose is bloodied.

The door swings open. Two MEN enter. They pick up Jack and drag him out.

WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The two men prop him up on a chair. One of them administers smelling salts. Jack is forced to consciousness.

Jack looks around. He sees two empty chairs.

The entrance to the warehouse opens. A limousine enters.

FRANKIE (35), a tall man with a stern look, exits from the front passenger side. He opens the back passenger side door.

Angelo Maroni emerges from the limousine. On the other side, Brian exits with Carolyn.

Brian sits Carolyn down on the chair next to Jack. He ties her hands together.

BRIAN

(low voice)

Listen carefully, Jack. If Maroni offers you an out, you take it. This is no time to be a hero.

Angelo sits across from Jack and Carolyn.

ANGELO

Remove their gags.

Brian removes them.

CAROLYN

(panicked)

Jack?

JACK

Did they hurt you?

ANGELO

We're not barbarians, detective.

Jack looks at Angelo and scoffs.

JACK
(to Brian)
You're a piece of shit.

ANGELO
I have somewhere I need to be, so
I'll make this quick. You've cost
me time and money with this murder
trial of yours. Not to mention,
you've tarnished my reputation.

Jack spits blood on the floor. Angelo looks offended.

JACK
Oh, sorry. Uh... you were saying?

ANGELO
Despite your partner's repeated
attempts to sway you, you
continued your one-man crusade
against me and my family.

JACK
You're making a mistake.

ANGELO
Am I.

JACK
My ex-partner here may think you're
the second coming, but I think
you're just as much a piece of shit
as he is. So, you can save your
recruitment speech.

BRIAN
Dammit, Jack!

ANGELO
It's quite alright. I admire
Detective Crane's tenacity.
(to Jack)
But, it's you that's mistaken. I
have no interest in recruiting you.

Brian gives Angelo a concerned look.

ANGELO

I have other plans for you and
your lovely wife.

Two men move behind Jack and Carolyn each with a handgun.

BRIAN

What's going on?

ANGELO

I never liked killing women, much
less ones that are pregnant.

Jack looks at Carolyn in surprise.

JACK

You're pregnant?

CAROLYN

I was going to tell you.

BRIAN

This isn't what we discussed,
Maroni.

ANGELO

If I don't kill him, I'll gain the
reputation of being soft. I can't
allow that.

JACK

At least let my wife go. I'm the
one you want. She has nothing to
do with this.

ANGELO

Sorry, Jack, but I can't afford a
loose end.

BRIAN

I want no part in this.

ANGELO

I understand, detective. You're
free to go.

Brian looks at Jack and Carolyn.

BRIAN
I'm sorry.

Brian takes two steps away from Angelo before Frankie takes his gun and shoots him twice in the back.

Angelo looks at his watch.

ANGELO
(stands)
Time to go.
(to the men)
Make it quick and at the same
time. There's no need for one to
watch the other die.

He and Frankie enter the limousine. It drives away.

CAROLYN
(sobs)
I love you, Jack.

JACK
I'm so sorry, Carolyn.

The men cock the hammers back on their guns and aim at Jack's and Carolyn's heads.

Jack closes his eyes.

BANG!

Jack opens his eyes. His hands are no longer tied together. He stands up. Carolyn does the same.

Carolyn gasps as she turns and sees her dead body in the chair.

JACK
Are we...

A bright light appears over Carolyn.

CAROLYN
I'm being pulled away. Come with me.

She stretches out her hand to Jack. He tries to grab it, but his hand goes through hers.

She drifts farther and farther into the light.

CAROLYN

Jack!

The light disappears. Jack is alone.

JACK

Goodbye, Carolyn.

A dark hole has opened in the floor.

Jack tries to move his feet, but is stuck into place.

The hole grows bigger as it inches its way towards Jack.

Jack's feet are at the edge of the hole.

JACK

Well, this sucks!

Jack falls into the abyss.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. TORTURE CHAMBER

Jack hangs from the ceiling, his wrists shackled by black chains. His feet barely touch the ground. His eyes are closed.

SORANUS (O.S.)

Jack.

Jack opens his eyes.

A man dressed in a black three-piece suit and a walking cane stands in front of him. This is SORANUS (45). He has an elitist disposition with a condescending tone in his voice.

Jack looks around. Body parts and entrails litter the blood-stained floor. Human skins decorate the walls.

SORANUS

Welcome to my little slice of hell.

The black manacles around Jack's wrists release him. He falls to the floor.

SORANUS

I would have been here sooner, but
I was delayed.

JACK

Are you the devil?

SORANUS

Hardly. My name is Soranus.
What's the last thing you remember?

Jack stands.

JACK

Getting shot in the head.

SORANUS

Good. Then you don't remember
being tortured.

JACK
I was tortured?

SORANUS
Repeatedly. Where do you think
all this hanging flesh and body
parts came from?

Jack looks down at his feet. He stands on some of his
entrails. He takes a step away from them.

JACK
Ah! This cannot be sanitary!

Soranus laughs.

SORANUS
Why don't you and I take a walk,
Jack?

EXT. DESERT - ROAD

The sky is black with no stars. The sand is blood-red.

A line of PEOPLE stretching as far as the eye can see moves
slowly on a road, their faces expressing hopelessness.

Jack and Soranus walk next them.

JACK
Who are all these people?

SORANUS
Tortured souls.

JACK
Where are they going?

SORANUS
To eternal damnation.

JACK
You mean Hell.

SORANUS
That's one name for it, yes.

Jack laughs.

JACK

So, this is the highway to Hell.

Soranus gives Jack a quizzical look.

JACK

You know, the rock song? AC/DC?

SORANUS

As far as I'm concerned, music peeked with Mozart. Now, may I continue?

JACK

Yeah, sure.

SORANUS

This is the Road of Reflection. They're forced to relive all of the grief and anguish they inflicted, but from their victims' point of view.

JACK

Do you give everyone that comes down here the guided tour?

SORANUS

No, but you're a special case, Jack. Your arrival here is most propitious.

JACK

What makes me so special? You don't know anything about me.

SORANUS

Jack Aurelius Crane, born December twenty-first, nineteen eighty-two. It was a Tuesday. At age seven, you were nearly molested by your uncle David Crane, who happens to be here with the other pedophiles. Would you like to see him?

JACK

Uh, you know, I think I'll pass on that.

SORANUS

Very well. Let's see, you lost your virginity when you were fifteen to Teresa Monk. Your father was able to get you into Harvard, but you decided to go to West Point, where you graduated as a Navy ensign. Soon after, you became a Navy seal. You were discharged due to an injury you sustained in Syria. Afterwards, you decided to join law enforcement. Shortly before you were promoted to detective, you married Carolyn Struck. Eighteen months later, you were both murdered, execution style. She's in Heaven and you're... here.

JACK

You didn't answer my question. Why am I special?

SORANUS

Because you have the exact qualities I need.

JACK

For what?

Soranus looks around.

SORANUS

I think it best we move this conversation to a more private locale.

Soranus raises his cane.

INT. STUDY - CONTINUOUS

Soranus lowers his cane.

The walls are lined with old, musty books. A fire roars inside a large, marbled fireplace. Two long couches face each other in the middle of the room.

JACK

Impressive. Where are we?

SORANUS

My home. Would you care for a drink?

JACK

Yeah, thanks.

The door opens. A BUTLER walks in. He pushes a refreshment cart. He is missing the upper-half of his head.

The butler stops next to Jack and offers him a glass of ice-cold water. With reluctance, Jack takes it.

JACK

Thanks.

The butler turns and leaves.

SORANUS

Now, to answer your question, I need you to find something very important for me.

JACK

What? You lose your car keys?

SORANUS

Nothing so trivial, Jack. I need you to find Lucifer's scepter.

JACK

Lucifer. You mean Satan?

SORANUS

Yes.

JACK

I thought he had a pitchfork.

SORANUS

That was an absurdity conjured up
by medieval artists.

JACK

Oh. How did he lose it?

SORANUS

He didn't lose it.

JACK

It was stolen?

SORANUS

He hid it.

JACK

He doesn't remember where he hid
it?

SORANUS

He knows exactly where he hid it.

JACK

So, ask him where he hid it.

SORANUS

It's not that simple, Jack.

JACK

Why not?

SORANUS

Because he's gone.

JACK

What? You mean he's dead?

SORANUS

I mean he's missing.

JACK

Where'd he go?

SORANUS

No one knows.

JACK

So, who's running the place?

SORANUS

You're beginning to annoy me, Jack.

Jack takes a drink of his water.

JACK

How do you know he hid the
scepter? How do you know he
doesn't have it with him?

SORANUS

Let's just say that I have the
inside track into his inner circle.

Jack thinks a moment.

JACK

Okay, I'll do it.

SORANUS

I beg your pardon?

JACK

But, I do have some concessions.

SORANUS

(amused)

Do you?

JACK

If I find this scepter, you have
to free my soul.

SORANUS

And how would that work, exactly?

JACK

I live out my life on Earth with
the same chance of getting into
Heaven as the next guy.

SORANUS

So you can be with your wife.

JACK

That's right.

Soranus stares at Jack

SORANUS

No.

JACK

What do you propose?

SORANUS

I'm glad you asked. Here's what I propose: if you don't find Lucifer's scepter or you refuse to look for it, I'll tear you in half.

JACK

That hardly seems fair.

SORANUS

Let me make myself perfectly clear. I own you. Therefore, you will do as I command.

Jack stares at Soranus.

JACK

No.

SORANUS

No?

JACK

My wife and unborn child are dead because of me. I'm willing to spend the rest of eternity in pain and suffering for it. So, if you want me to go looking for this thing, you'll agree to my terms. Otherwise, break out the torture devices and let's get this party started.

Both men stare at each other, intently.

SORANUS

So be it.

Soranus raises his cane.

INT. TORTURE CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Jack hangs from the ceiling by his wrists. Below him, instead of a hard floor, are hundreds of rotating knives.

Hanging next to Jack, a TORTURE VICTIM descends into the meat grinder. He struggles like a fish on a hook hoping to free himself.

TORTURE VICTIM

No! Please, stop!

The grotesque sound of high-pitched screaming, along with the shredding of bone and muscle, can be heard.

Jack descends into the bloodied grinder.

JACK

Okay, uh, obviously you're upset. I get it. You wanna rule this place and you need the scepter to do it. You know I'm the perfect guy for the job, Soranus. You can't afford to wait for someone else to come along that fits the bill.

Jack's feet are only a few feet away from the merciless knives.

JACK

I'm willing to bet that others are looking for it. Lucifer's inner circle, perhaps? Others like yourself? If the angels know, who's to say they're not looking for it, too? You're wasting time, Soranus.

Jack's descent stops. The human grinder below shuts off.

SORANUS (O.S.)

You're very intuitive, Jack.

JACK

What do you say, Soranus? let's make a deal. I help you, you help me.

SORANUS (O.S.)

Indeed.

INT. STUDY

Soranus imprints his seal into the black candle wax at the bottom of a contract.

His butler stands next to him.

JACK

Couldn't you have gotten a better witness? Your butler doesn't have any eyes.

(at the butler)

No offense.

SORANUS

He can see just fine, Jack.

JACK

So, that's it?

SORANUS

The deal is sealed.

JACK

Great! Send me back.

SORANUS

Not so fast, Jack. There's a few minor details you need to know.

JACK

I read the fine print in the contract, so don't try...

SORANUS

This isn't about the bloody contract.

(a beat)

Now, remember: you're not invulnerable. If you die up there, the game's over. I can't send you back.

JACK

Go directly to Hell. Do not pass go, do not collect two hundred dollars. Got it.

SORANUS

You're free to do as you please, but when I call on you, you must cease whatever it is you're doing and do as I say.

JACK

Okay.

SORANUS

I'm also setting you up with Peebo.

JACK

What's a Peebo?

SORANUS

He can get you anything you need. Think of him as your own personal squire.

JACK

Is that it?

SORANUS

No, but the rest you can figure out on your own.

JACK

What?

SORANUS

Goodbye, Jack.

A vortex appears above Jack. He is sucked into it.

BUTLER

I like him.

SORANUS

Well, that makes one of us.

INT. PEEBO'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

PEEBO (27), a slovenly, out-of-shape man, sits at a desk with three computer monitors. Soda cans and pizza boxes are everywhere.

The first monitor displays a spreadsheet, the second displays a video game, and the third displays porn.

Peebo uses a joystick controller, focused on the video game.

PEEBO

Yeah, that's right. Peebo's coming for ya. Just hold still.

A black candle on the corner of his desk flickers on. Peebo sees it.

PEEBO

Son of a bitch.

BASEMENT

Peebo goes down the steps.

Jack Crane's dead body lies in a coffin.

Peebo approaches Jack's body.

PEEBO

Hey, are you alive?

He touches Jack's throat checking for a pulse.

Jack grabs Peebo's throat as he chokes the life out of him.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. PEEBO'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Peebo stands next to a closed door. Puking is heard behind the door.

PEEBO

It's perfectly normal. The same thing happened to Peebo when he came back.

The toilet flushes.

The door opens revealing a weak and weary Jack.

JACK

You're not Peebo?

PEEBO

I'm Peebo.

JACK

But, you said the same thing happened to Peebo.

PEEBO

Yeah?

JACK

Yeah.

The two men stare at each other.

PEEBO

A-Are you hungry?

JACK

Very.

PEEBO

Peebo's on it.

KITCHEN

Peebo puts a slice of pizza in front of Jack.

PEEBO
It's a day old, so it's still
fresh.

Jack takes a bite of the pizza.

PEEBO
So, how was Hell?

Jack looks at Peebo with a puzzled look as he chews his
food.

PEEBO
Okay, stupid question. What did
you think of Soranus?

JACK
He's a bit of a dick.

Jack looks around and sees Peebo's computer setup.

JACK
How good are you with computers?

PEEBO
Peebo is strong with the virtual
arts. Peebo was my hacker name in
my previous life.

Jack picks up a pen.

JACK
I need something to write with.

Peebo picks up a used envelop and hands it to Jack.

JACK
(writing)
I need you to find this tracker on
GPS.

He hands the envelope back to Peebo.

PEEBO
Consider it found.

JACK

Where can I find a gun?

BASEMENT - LARGE CLOSET

Jack opens a door. He flicks a light switch. Inside, rows of assorted handguns, shotguns, semi-auto and automatic weapons line the walls.

Knives, grenades, throwing stars, and a katana sword are also present.

JACK

Very nice!

Jack notices a long, black leather jacket. He takes it down and puts it on.

JACK

A little cliché, but what the hell.

LIVING ROOM

Peebo works diligently on his computer.

Jack enters wearing all black and carrying a katana sword.

JACK

I never used this before, but when I picked it up I instantly knew how to use it. It just came to me.

PEEBO

(keeps working)
Cool.

JACK

How's it coming?

PEEBO

It was easy to trace. Here.

Peebo hands Jack a smart phone.

PEEBO

You can track it in case it starts moving. Who's Peebo tracking, by the way?

JACK

Maroni.

PEEBO

You're going after him?

JACK

(nods)

I need a car.

EXT. PEEBO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jack and Peebo stand in front of the garage door. The door opens revealing...

JACK

What the hell is this?

...a yellow smart car.

JACK

Did you take this out of a kid's toy box?

PEEBO

It's totally electric, which means it's good for the environment.

JACK

Peebo, take a good look at me. Now, take a look at the car. Does the word "mismatch" come to mind?

PEEBO

Oh, Peebo sees it. Peebo should've gotten it in black.

Jack stares at Peebo.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

A single cargo container sits in the middle of the warehouse.

A limousine drives in and parks several yards away.

Frankie steps out of the front passenger side of the limousine. He opens the back passenger side door. Angelo Maroni steps out.

Ten GUARDS are here with automatic weapons.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - FRONT ENTRANCE

A guard stands watch.

A rustling sound catches his attention. He moves to a dark alley to investigate.

A rat scurries out.

With a sigh of relief, the guard turns around.

Jack, wearing a black ski mask, comes out of the shadows, twisting the guard's neck. He drags the body into the dark alley.

INT. WAREHOUSE

Frankie opens the cargo container revealing a group of Asian CHILDREN.

ANGELO

How many?

FRANKIE

There's nine in this shipment and another twelve next month.

ANGELO

Fine. Load 'em up. I want them working in the factory by noon tomorrow.

A car alarm goes off outside the front entrance.

ANGELO

(to Frankie)

Check that out.

Frankie walks towards the front entrance.

FRANKIE
(draws his gun)
Open it up!

Two guards open the front entrance revealing the yellow smart car with no one inside. The car horn continues to BEEP.

FRANKIE
Turn it off!

Two guards approach the smart car.

BOOM! The smart car explodes taking out the two guards.

Gunfire from the rafters. Two more guards down.

Smoke grenades come down from the rafters. The guards fire at the ceiling.

Angelo hurries over to the limousine. His DRIVER's throat has been slit.

Frankie rushes to Angelo's side.

FRANKIE
Get in the limo. It's
bulletproof. Lock the doors.

ANGELO
I want that bastard's lungs on a
plate!

FRANKIE
I'll handle it.

Angelo gets in the limo.

The warehouse is full of gray smoke.

The guards venture into the fog.

SERIES OF SHOTS - JACK TAKES DOWN MARONI'S GUARDS.

- A) A guard has a sword driven into his chest from behind.
- B) Frankie hears a guard cry out in pain. He tries to

follow the sound. He finds a guard lying on the floor in a growing pool of blood.

- C) Two guards accidentally bump into each other. As they give a sigh of relief, one loses his head. The other attacks Jack, but also loses his head.
- D) A guard has his left leg cut off just above the knee. He falls to the ground screaming in agony. Jack moves back into the obscuring fog.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

Frankie finds the wounded guard. He turns around to see Jack swinging for his head. Frankie ducks just in time.

Frankie sweeps Jack's legs, but fails. Jack answers back by giving Frankie a large gash on his arm. Jack retreats into the fog.

Frankie empties his gun as he fires into the obscurity.

FRANKIE

C'mon, fight me like a man!

He throws away his gun.

FRANKIE

No guns, no swords! Just our bare hands!

Jack emerges.

They maneuver around each other.

Frankie strikes first with a left punch, but misses. Frankie tries again. Jack blocks the punch and counters with a series of blows to the head and chest.

Jack waits as Frankie composes himself.

Frankie lunges forward. Jack hits him square in the chest. The breaking of bone can be heard.

Frankie falls to his knees grabbing his chest. Jack stands a few feet in front of him.

Frankie reaches for the revolver in the back of his pants.

FRANKIE

Okay, okay. You win.

Frankie draws his gun.

Jack unsheathes his sword.

WAREHOUSE - LIMOUSINE

A single GUNSHOT catches Angelo's attention. Sweating with fear, he looks out the passenger window.

A TAPPING sound comes from the driver-side window. Angelo turns around and sees Frankie's decapitated head held up by Jack.

Jack drops the head. He reaches inside his jacket and pulls out a block of C4 explosive with a remote detonator. He holds it against the window for Angelo to see.

Jack places the C4 on the roof of the car. He holds the detonator up to the window. The detonator reads "00:30."

Jack activates the detonator. A countdown begins. He backs away from the limousine as he waves goodbye to Angelo. He disappears into the fog.

In a panic, Angelo exits the limousine. He runs and trips over one of his dead guards.

Jack appears. He stands over Angelo. Jack tosses the detonator to him.

"00:03... 00:02... 00:01... 00:00."

No explosion.

ANGELO

Who the hell are you?

Jack kicks him in the face. Angelo is unconscious.

WAREHOUSE - SMALL ROOM

Angelo sits in a chair with his hands tied behind his back.

He opens his eyes.

A single lightbulb hangs in the middle of the room.

Jack, still wearing his ski mask, sits across from Angelo.

ANGELO

Who are you?

Jack removes his ski mask.

ANGELO

No. No, no, my men killed you.

JACK

Do you believe in Heaven and Hell,
Maroni?

Angelo doesn't answer.

JACK

I didn't believe. I thought it
was just something we tell
children to keep them in line.
When you murdered me and my wife,
I realized I was wrong. She went
to Heaven and I... I went
somewhere else.

Jack gets up. He points his gun at Angelo's head.

JACK

Because of you, I'll never see my
wife again. Because of you, I'll
never know what it's like to be a
father.

ANGELO

Yeah, that's it. Lie to yourself,
Jack. You wanna blame me for your
misfortune go ahead, if it'll make
you feel better. But, deep down
you know you're the one
responsible.

Jack lowers the gun.

ANGELO

You're the one that didn't have faith. You're the one that tried to be a hero and put a guy like me behind bars. You're the one that put yourself in this situation. All I did was pull the trigger. So, point that gun at the one who really deserves it.

JACK

Maybe we're both to blame. But, you see, I'm already paying for my mistakes.

Jack raises his gun at Angelo's head.

JACK

Now, it's your turn.

Jack pulls the trigger.

END OF ACT FOUR

TAG

EXT. CAFÉ - DAY

Jack and Soranus sit at a table. Soranus reads a newspaper with the headline "Angelo Maroni Found Murdered."

SORANUS

You certainly have a flair for the dramatic, Jack. Not very creative, though.

JACK

He got what was coming to him. That's all that matters.

SORANUS

Indeed. Now, to business.

Soranus hands Jack a picture.

JACK

Who's this?

SORANUS

Randall Cox, local curator for the Seattle Museum of Arts. He has a private collection of highly obscure artworks. One of them is a painting called dark paradise. It may hold a clue in finding Lucifer's scepter.

JACK

I'll look him up.

Soranus leans in.

SORANUS

Jack, there are other... forces looking for the scepter. Old and ancient forces that have been in hiding for many centuries that want to seize it for themselves. So, tread lightly and trust no one.

A car horn BEEPS. A black smart car parks in front of the café.

Peebo exits the smart car.

PEEBO

Well, what do you think? It was the last one they had in black.

Jack shakes his head.

PEEBO

Uh, hello, Soranus, sir.

SORANUS

Peebo.

JACK

I better be going. It's a long drive to Seattle.

Jack stands up.

SORANUS

Was it worth it? Killing Maroni? Do you feel more at peace?

Jack stares at Soranus, then turns to leave.

SORANUS

Don't worry, Jack. I'll give Maroni my special attention.

Jack and Peebo drive off.

ZEPHON (O.S.)

I see you found yourself another hound dog, Soranus.

Soranus turns around and sees ZEPHON (21) dressed in a white suit.

ZEPHON

I wonder how long this one will last?

Zephon sits across from Soranus.

SORANUS

If you angels would simply stop interfering, Jack's chances would significantly increase.

ZEPHON

Of that, I have no doubt, but we angels want the scepter just as badly as you.

SORANUS

Why? The scepter has no practical use for angels.

ZEPHON

We're just trying to return it to its rightful owner. It was never Lucifer's to begin with.

SORANUS

You, Zephon, along with the rest of your ilk, are dreadful liars.

Zephon laughs.

SORANUS

Speaking of hound dogs, I understand that yours sparred against a couple of witches somewhere in New England. What happened to him?

ZEPHON

We're looking into it. In the meantime, allow me to introduce our new agent.

A woman walks up to the table. It's Carolyn.

ZEPHON

We believe she'll bring a unique quality to the hunt.

FADE OUT.

THE END