

LITTLE MULE

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. DESERT - DAY

A small SCORPION travels across barren land.

In the distance, something approaches kicking up a trail of dust. Too far to tell.

The scorpion continues its course.

In the distance, a dirt cloud from a PICK-UP TRUCK approaching and getting closer.

The scorpion stops. Its tail curls up. Then it crawls ahead and in the cross hairs of the speeding truck.

But the scorpion continues.

A MEXICAN drives the truck. In the *truck bed* are four barrels and two more MEXICANS.

The scorpion's little legs methodically propel its body across the barren land packed down from years of sun-bake.

The spider and truck intersect. The tire rolls over the scorpion crushing it into the earth's crust.

The truck accelerates away. A dust storm fills the frame.

As the dust dissipates -- we STAY on earth covering the unfortunate dead bug.

A LOOK INSIDE THE BARRELS: POUNDS AND POUNDS OF COCAINE.

Back on the dry earth above the little eight-legger. The packed sand cracks. A miniature earthquake?

The scorpion miraculously wiggles out of the dead soil. It moves each leg slowly. Resilient.

Small, but tough, the scorpion shakes the sand off its exoskeleton and carries on across the sand.

TITLE APPEARS ACROSS THE SCREEN:

LITTLE MULE

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. CATTUSO TRAILER - NIGHT

The stars and moon fill the Texas sky over a neighborhood of neglected mobile homes.

NOVA (O.S.)
You can't make me go!

We hone in on one home in particular. A light in a window.

INT. CATTUSO TRAILER - NOVA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Goth posters. An ugly doll on bed. Photos line a mirror.

NOVA, 15 going on 20, storms in, slams the door, locks it.

Right after, *someone* tries the door knob.

PENNY (O.S.)
You better open this door!

Nova tries to ignore this by flipping through her phone.

PENNY (O.S.)
I'm gonna take that phone away from
you if you don't open this door
right this minute.

Nova huffs. A cell phone is like a lifeline for any teen. She turns the lock on the door.

PENNY CATTUSO, 36, pretty and thin, too thin maybe, walks in.

NOVA
Why can't you get a normal job?

Penny holds up a handful of envelopes: bills.

PENNY
Right now, my goal is to pay the
rent, the phone, these medical
bills. This will catch us up and
pay us ahead six months. Then I'll
try to get a 'normal' job as you
put it. One day you'll understand.

NOVA

What I don't understand is why you have to ship me off to HIM. If you're hooking or whatever I can handle it. I don't care what you do. I really don't.

This hurts. Penny shrugs, walks out.

INT. THORN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

In the darkness, a match is struck. A HAND guides the match where it lights a candle. The flame illuminates a wall of old photos. Family photos. Except in all the photos, one face has been scratched away, cut out of this family.

The hand brings match to a face. Prominent features. Nothing but muscle and bone. THORN, 48, blows match out.

As our eyes adjust, it's apparent that the room is more like a shrine of sorts with old toys, a kid's baseball glove, etc.

The sound of a fist hitting a punching bag brings us to another part of the room. This room only consists of a bed, the shrine area and the other half is a work out floor.

Thorn punches and kicks the bag. It's a normal work out until he punches faster and faster. Harder and harder. In a frenzy. Bap bap bap. His knuckles more bloody with each whack. Finally...He SCREAMS.

He pulls a bottle of whiskey out. Sits in a chair facing the window. Begins to drink. Clock on table reads: 09:31 PM.

He watches PEOPLE below his two story efficiency. Enter the convenience store on the corner. A man scratches a lottery ticket. Throws it down.

11:59 PM The bottle is almost empty. Thorn's eyes droop. He's still on the same wooden chair but now he's fighting sleep.

His eyes close. He mumbles. A dream?

DREAM/FLASHBACK

A drunk MAN beats a small BOY. A WOMAN screams. Tries to pull the man off the boy. If he does not stop, he could kill the boy.

The woman picks up a lamp, smashes it over the man's head. This is like using a .22 to kill a lion, because it just pisses the man off.

He leaves the boy and goes after the woman now. He beats her until he kills her.

He walks out leaving the boy there alone with his dead mother. An event like this will be forever ingrained on boy.

An ARGUMENT wakes Thorn out of the dream/flashback.

He looks down from his window.

A PIMP slaps a HOOKER around. She falls to the asphalt. She looks up with a bloody lip. Cheek bone swelling. Bruised.

EXT. HALL/STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Thorn marches down the steps. Anger growing with each step.

EXT. SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Thorn bursts from the brownstone. Races over grabbing the Pimp. About to break his neck when he looks down and sees the face of his mama(from pics on wall).

The distorted face of mama turns into that of the Hooker.

She stands up off the pavement. Brushes off.

THORN

You ok?

She nods.

THORN

Then go on, get out'a here.

She hesitates, then thankful for her freedom, she clips down the sidewalk her heels echo quickly away.

Thorn has Pimp pinned up against a brick wall. Raises pimp's feet off the ground. Pimp is turning blue.

Thorn is crushing the Pimp's throat.

An anger in his eyes. A killer. But a protector of women.

Just before death washes over. He release the Pimp who falls gasping on the asphalt.

PIMP

Why don't you mind your own
business man.

He coughs. His wind pipe trying to return to normal.

Thorn turns as if he's going to walk away from the pimp.

The pimp crawls to his feet.

PIMP

You didn't save her ya know. Just
made it worse for her later.

Thorn clinches his fist. Tries to maintain but instead explodes, spins around with a karate move--a kick that sends pimp down to the ground.

Thorn crouches over Pimp in a martial arts stance, then delivers the death blow with a strike sending the pimp's broken nose into his brain.

Thorn drags the pimp into nearby alley.

EXT. ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

Thorn picks up dead pimp and drops him in a dumpster.

As Thorn walks away from the dumpster, the sound of bullets being loaded into a clip methodically take us...

INT. THORN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

..into Thorn's efficiency where sunlight hits the chair by the window.

Thorn arms himself with a number of handguns. Then slides a knife holster onto his calf, neatly pulling his army green tactical cargo pants down over the hidden dagger.

He pulls up the corner of an oriental rug. Pries up a loose board in the floor.

Stacks of money in bundles. He grabs one of the bundles. Tucks it in one of his many pants pockets.

INT. BAKERY - MORNING

A short FAT BAKER woman looks up and smiles when the door bell rings.

Thorn meets her at the counter. Hands her a Starbucks coffee.

FAT BAKER
You are too good to me.

THORN
How's that water heater?

FAT BAKER
Working like a champ since you fixed her. Can you believe that plumber wanted three hundred and some odd dollars? Highway robbery.

She hands him a wrapped baguette.

He gives her a kiss on the forehead.

Hands her the wad of money.

THORN
For your sick daughter.

She is taken aback.

FAT BAKER
But this is too much.

THORN
If there's leftovers give it to a good charity.

She smiles. Shakes her head. He's so kind to her.

Thorn looks at his phone. A text reads: black crow. One way.

FADE TO BLACK.

Words appear on the screen:

Black Crow: drug mule on a last run. Oh, and all black crows are destroyed to ensure confidentiality.

Drugs continue to pour into the US and while a wall may stop a few, the cartels continue to evolve.

A MAP GRAPH APPEARS ON THE SCREEN WITH DOTTED LINES MAKING THEIR WAYS FROM SOUTH AMERICA AND MEXICO TO DIFFERENT DESTINATIONS IN THE US (SHOW TRAFFIC ROUTES)

THE SOUND OF A JET AND WE FADE IN ON ---

EXT. AIRPORT - DAY

-- a 747 landing.

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

NIKO, heavily tattooed, an army green backpack thrown over his shoulder, walks next to a GAL(29), tall and lanky with shoulder length hair, baggy sweatshirt and one of those pink four-wheeled rolling carryons. This girl is carrying the shipment. In fact she's full of heroin and seems a bit nervous. This is a DRUG MULE.

An OFFICER with a DOG approaches on routine rounds.

Niko hands the Drug Mule sunglasses which she puts on.

NIKO
Quit fidgeting. Just walk.

The Mule continues, but if I were DEA I'd say she definitely looks suspicious.

They near the dog.

As they pass, the dog stops and turns. As does the Officer.

Niko walks even closer to The Mule now.

That moment we're waiting on the dog to make a move --

-- but the dog turns and both dog and Officer carry on.

EXT. AIRPORT PICK UP - MOMENTS LATER

Niko and The Mule stand outside waiting for the car. OFFICERS mill about.

The Mule twitches. Acts like an addict jonesing.

An Officer approaches. Who knows if he's coming for them but when you're carrying heroine through an airport, well....I'd be paranoid, wouldn't you?

Finally, a black SUV pulls to the curb.

Niko opens the back door, pushes The Mule into the backseat. Throws her rolly bag in, then steps in, shuts the door.

The SUV pulls away from the curb without hitch.

INT. SUV - MOMENTS LATER

Niko pulls a pack of ex-lax pills from his backpack. Punches three pills out, extends them to The Mule.

The Mule is hesitant.

Thorn, who is driving, looks in the rearview. He and Niko lock eyes for a minute.

The Mule takes the pills from Niko. Grabs a water bottle from the seat's bin and washes them down.

THE MULE

This is one thing I won't miss.

She screws the cap on the bottle. Tucks it away.

THE MULE

This is my last run, ya know?

EXT. SEEDY HOTEL - DAY

Thorn waits in the SUV.

Watches as Niko walks The Mule into a hotel room.

Thorn taps on the steering wheel. Nerves?

INT. SEEDY HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Niko comes out of the bathroom.

NIKO

All ready.

The Mule knows the drill. She enters -

INT. SEEDY HOTEL - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

- a bathroom that hardly looks clean. Broken tiles. Dingy shower curtain.

The toilet lined with a plastic bag.

The Mule unzips her pants and sits on the commode.

THE MULE

Hey! What if I don't have to go?

NIKO (O.S.)

You can shit them out or get a sloppy c-section. Your choice.

EXT. SEEDY HOTEL - LATER

Niko walks out with a bag in his hand. He closes the door.

Niko walks across to the SUV, the window descends.

INT/EXT. SUV - CONTINUOUS

Niko hands the room key card to Thorn.

NIKO

She's all yours.

Niko starts off.

THORN

Why don't you leave the loot?

NIKO

What? You do the dirty work? You never have to deal with shit. I'm like the god damned plumber and you're the iceman. But, ok, if you wanna make the delivery, be my guest.

Niko steps back over, opens the back door of the SUV and sets the bag of shit/heroin in the floorboard.

Thorn screws a silencer onto the end of his gun.

Niko walks over to a truck and climbs in.

As Thorn steps out of the SUV, Niko waves as he drives out of the seedy hotel parking lot.

Thorn's gun hangs confidently from his right grip as he walks to the hotel room.

He slides the key card through the door.

And enters.

EXT. CATTUSO TRAILER - DAY

Out steps Nova, and she's irritated. And like any other teenager, she clutches a cell phone.

NOVA
(agitated)
This is friggin torture and you know it.

Penny follows her daughter.

PENNY
You know I hate that word.

NOVA
And you know I hate him.

PENNY
You shouldn't *hate* your father?

NOVA
He doesn't even feel like my father. He's more like--like just a sperm donor.

A rusted out 1972 El Camino pulls into the drive. The rims and tires are probably worth more than the old classic.

A bookbag thrown over her shoulder, Nova looks back to Penny with begging eyes. Shrugs 'do I have to do this'.

PENNY
Can't you just try to be nice?

Nova rolls her eyes. Ambles towards the car --

-- right past LUKE CATTUSO who shrugs at Penny.

LUKE
Wha'did you do to her?

PENNY
She's in one of her moods.

LUKE
Can't you send me a happy child
just once?

PENNY
If you'd spend more time with her,
ya know, form some kind of bond -

LUKE
-like you do? You buy her, Penny,
with the hair dye. Manicures,
pedicures. Cell phone.

PENNY
Please Luke. This is like what, the
second time in a year?

Luke turns and heads for the car. He climbs in.

The car starts and rolls out of the drive.

Penny waves. The hot rod **burns rubber** away from the house.

INT. EL CAMINO - CONTINUOUS

NOVA
(under breath)
That is so, not cool.

Luke smiles. Proud of his car. Nova huffs, ignoring him.

Luke slaps the steering wheel.

LUKE
Three hundred fifty horses under
the hood. How can you even say
that's not cool?

NOVA
Face it, you need a new car, Luke.

LUKE

Ah come on Nova, we on first name basis again? That hurts and you know it.

She holds up her hand 'shush'. He rubber necks around it.

LUKE

Shush. I'm not gonna shush. I'm gonna keep talkin' until you talk back. How bout that time I climbed to the top of the Ferris wheel when that thing ate your hair?

NOVA

You cut my hair off!

LUKE

I saved your life!

NOVA

And I looked like shit for a year.

He shakes his head.

LUKE

Come on, Nova, that thing would've scalped you alive if I hadn't done what I did. To save your ass I did it. Besides, hair grows back.

She buries her attention in her cell phone; avoids him like he isn't there.

EXT. HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

We stay on the El Camino as it travels down a long stretch of highway.

EXT. OPERA HOUSE - DAY

The black SUV from earlier pulls against the curb.

Thorn steps out, heads for the door. Right past a VALET ATTENDANT. In Thorn's right hand, a small plastic bag.

VALET

Hey man, you can't just leave that truck here.

INT. OPERA HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Thorn pushes right past the ticket ATTENDANT.

ATTENDANT
Sir. Your ticket.

Attendant shrugs at a CONCIERGE then follows after Thorn.

ATTENDANT
Sir!

The Attendant stops though when Thorn enters --

INT. OPERA HOUSE - TONY'S BALCONY SEATS - CONTINUOUS

-- a private balcony reserved on a regular basis by ANTHONY 'TONY' ROMANO, 45, wealthy and Thorn's boss, at least for now. Tony is that guy that wishes he was the Godfather but instead is only one leg of a cartel. It's a dirty job, but somebody's gotta do it.

The show goes on... *Madama Butterfly* on the stage below.

Two other guys sit in the box with Tony. BIG FRANK, because he's so fat you can barely see his eyes, and BIEBER, a tall skinny Cuban with hair like Justin Bieber.

Both Big Frank and Bieber stand at Thorn's untimely entrance.

TONY
This better be good.

Without a word, Thorn lifts the bag of shit and drops it right in Tony's lap.

Bieber covers his nose. Big Frank pulls a gun. Bieber follows suit. He's one of those follower types.

Thorn is not the least bit scared. Ever. Of anyone.

TONY
The fuck is this?

THORN
What's it look like?

TONY
Smells like shit.

THORN

Then you gotta good nose for it.

Big Frank and Bieber wait on nod from Tony. Guns staring at Thorn. With even a glance from the boss it'll be a bloodbath.

But instead there is awkward silence except the beautiful sound of 'One Fine Day' *Madama Butterfly's* most famous aria.

And then ...Tony chuckles.

Turns to Big Frank.

TONY

Give us a minute.

Big Frank and Bieber put their guns away.

TONY

And get it out'a here.

Thorn takes a seat beside Tony.

THORN

Should be a few prize eggs for each of you in the bag.

Big Frank bows up, hand back on his gun again.

THORN

Chill man, it'll be like huntin Easter eggs.

Big Frank wants to kick Thorn's ass, but the nod from Tony forces him to head out of the balcony box. Bieber follows.

TONY

Never pegged you for getting your pannies in a wad and getting soft.

THORN

Been killing crows all my life. No room for soft in that shit and you know it.

TONY

Then what do you call this?

THORN

A stipulation.

TONY

Like what? You want more money. A new piece. Better plastic bags. What could you possibly want?

THORN

Honor.

TONY

I always honor my contracts. Just like you take care of the crows. Boy crows. Girl crows. They're all crows, Thorn. This hang up you got killing jills-

THORN

Stipulation.

TONY

-it's not a stipulation, it's a weakness.

THORN

Yeah. Whatever.

TONY

They say the only way to get past your fears is to face them. Like if you are afraid of snakes, they put you in a room full of snakes and eventually you aren't scared of snakes anymore.

Thorn isn't buying any of this.

TONY

You *did* finish the job right?

THORN

You mean her.

TONY

You did finish *her* right?

EXT. OPERA HOUSE - SAME TIME

The camera shot passes through the glass doors of the entrance where we see the Drug Mule. She's alive and sitting in the backseat of the SUV at the curb.

TONY (O.S.)

Back to the crows. This one's going from Beaumont to Vancouver. Was gonna send Frankie but since he's gotta tie up your loose ends.

Big Frank walks out of the Opera House towards the SUV containing The Mule.

TONY (O.S.)

You're the best assassin I got. If you're smart, and I think you are, you won't let this stipulation come between you and the job.

INT. EL CAMINO - DAY

The El Camino chugs a bit. Sputtering.

Luke looks to the dash. The temperature gauge is nearing the red HOT mark.

Luke slaps the steering wheel.

LUKE

Shit!

NOVA

What's wrong, one of your horses left the herd?

LUKE

Shut up! Will ya!

EXT. GAS STATION - MOMENTS LATER

The El Camino pulls into a convenience station.

Luke steps out, walks around and pulls the hood open.

Steam hisses out around the radiator cap.

INT. EL CAMINO - CONTINUOUS

Nova sees the steam pouring from the hood of the car. Luke is concealed by the cloud and the raised hood.

She rolls her eyes. Types in a text message.

NOVA (TEXT MESSAGE)
Can't do this! Comin home!

INT. CATTUSO TRAILER - SAME TIME

Penny's phone vibrates on the counter. We see the message but for now, Penny does not.

EXT. GAS STATION - CONTINUOUS

Nova steps out of the car. She looks at her phone screen once more: Nothing is there.

Luke is cussing and trying to do something under the hood.

Nova skulks away towards the road.

As she reaches traffic, she barely has time to put her thumb out and a semi-truck pulls over. Nova climbs in.

INT. CATTUSO TRAILER - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Penny picks up her phone. Reads text from Nova, worry crawls across her face. She thinks for a few seconds.

Penny begins texting back when banging at the door stops her.

PENNY

Nova!?

She heads for the door. Into the

FOYER

PENNY

You've got to stop -

She reaches for the door knob.

PENNY

- doing this to your dad.

Opens the door to Niko, a briefcase in his hand.

PENNY

(shocked)

Sorry. You're

NIKO

Here to pick up a mule.

Penny nearly chokes on the thought. Not the thought of being the mule because she's got at least five runs under her belt, but the thought that any minute her daughter *could* walk into this shit makes her pulse rise.

An awkward silence.

NIKO

This the right address?

Penny still off guard.

PENNY

Of course.

NIKO

Well, aren't you gonna invite me in? I'm not a vampire.

He smiles. She does not but steps back for him to enter.

PENNY

Sorry, I was in the middle of texting my daughter when -

Niko takes her phone.

NIKO

No phones.

PENNY

But-

NIKO

You know the rules.

INT. SUV - SAME TIME

We can see the anger grow in Thorn's eyes over the fact that his next mark is also a female.

He stares straight ahead. Anger boiling inside.

INT. TRUCK - SAME TIME

Nova rides shotgun in the tall semi truck. COWBOY drives with a big cowboy hat on. He's red faced. Gold framed glasses. Looks like a mix between Ted Bundy and John Wayne Gacy.

She looks at her cell phone. Still nothing.

COWBOY

Which is it?

Nova looks up.

NOVA

Just let me out here. She's already gonna be pissed I'm home early. Sure don't want her to think I hitched a ride with some, well, someone I don't know.

COWBOY

Stranger. You can say it. Won't hurt my feelins none.

EXT. SIDEWALK - CONTINUOUS

The truck pulls to a stop a couple houses down. Nova jumps out. Slams the truck door just as....

EXT. GAS STATION - SAME TIME

The hood slams shut. Luke stares through the windshield at the empty front seat.

He rolls his eyes.

LUKE

Great.

Luke storms inside the station.

INT. GAS STATION - CONTINUOUS

Luke looks around. No sign of Nova. Walks to counter.

An ATTENDANT watches old reruns of *Two and a Half Men*.

LUKE

Excuse me.

Attendant almost acts bothered, but peels himself away from the tube slowly.

LUKE

Have you seen a girl, black hair,
nails.

Attendant cuts him off.

ATTENDANT

Listen man, no one's been in here.
Everyone pays with cards these
days. I sit in here. Mind my own
business. And watch-

He turns to the small TV playing.

LUKE

Have you seen her or not?

ATTENDANT

Nope. No girl.

Luke shakes his head. Storms out of the store.

We watch through the dirty glass door as Luke climbs in the old clunker.

The El Camino sputters to life and burns out of the station, fish tailing onto the paved highway out front.

The Attendant goes back to the screen of his portable TV.

INT. SUV - DAY

Thorn pulls off his sunglasses. Stares at this *teenager* approaching the house.

Coming up the very driveway he's parked in.

He puts his right hand on his weapon. Unsnaps the holster.

He locks eyes with Nova as she walks by the SUV. There is no smile. No wave. Just that stare.

EXT. CATTUSO TRAILER - DAY

Nova gets a key from under a hide-a-rock.

INT. CATTUSO TRAILER - KITCHEN - SAME TIME

Penny sits at the table. The briefcase open and full of tightly packed latex balloons of heroin.

A cell phone rings. Niko pulls his cell out. Sees it's Thorn. Dismisses call, tucking the phone away.

Penny picks up one in each hand. Time to get the job done.

NIKO

Can always appreciate a girl that swallows.

Penny cuts her eyes at Niko. About to swallow the packs when the sound of the front door opening.

NIKO

Expecting company?

FOYER

Nova shuts the front door.

NOVA

Just me!

She walks through.

NOVA

Some creep's outside.

KITCHEN

Nova enters. In a fluid motion, Niko steps behind Penny, grabs her putting the gun to Penny's right temple.

Nova freezes. WTF!

Eyes wide, she starts to dial 911.

NIKO

Phone on the table!

Seriousness washes the color right off Nova's face.

NIKO

Table. Now!

Nova drops her phone on the table. Steps towards her mom.

NOVA

Mom?

NIKO

Your mom's a bit occupied right now. Why don't you be a good little bitch and take a seat at the table.

Nova sits down. Her eyes wide with fear.

Niko points the gun at Nova. Then at Penny. Drags Penny back further away from the table. Whispers in gruff voice.

NIKO

What the fuck you thinking having your kid show up to our intimate appointment? Huh?

PENNY

(begging)

She wasn't supposed to be here, I swear. Please just let her go and let's do what we're here to do. Please!

Nova puts everything together. The small drug bags. The thug holding her mom at gunpoint.

NIKO

I think this is grounds for dismissal. Without pension.

PENNY

Fine then. Go. Please. Just go.

Fear building in Penny's eyes.

NIKO

I'd love to just go, but you know how kids are these days with Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat Tweet all that stuff. The boss has this thing about discretion.

A tear rolls down Penny's cheek.

PENNY

She won't put anything anywhere, I
give you my word. Right sweetie.
Tell him you won't post anything.

Penny starts sobbing. Uncontrollably.

NOVA

Swear to God.

Niko pushes the barrel of the gun into Penny's temple.

He squeezes the trigger...then--

Stops as...

Nova swallows the first drug balloon. WE follow it slow-mo
down her throat. This changes everything.

The gun retreats Penny's temple.

Niko moves towards Nova.

PENNY

What have you done?

Niko trains the gun on Penny to keep her in her place. Tears
stream down her face.

NIKO

Now I'd have never thought this was
a family affair.

Nova cuts her eyes at Niko.

NIKO

Swallowing I mean. Go on honey,
make like a pig, cuz we're already
behind schedule.

PENNY

Don't do it Nova!

Nova and Penny lock eyes for only a second. Penny's eyes beg
but Nova's already made up her mind to go through with it in
an attempt to save her mom.

As Nova is swallowing one at a time. Ed Sheeran's "Perfect"
blares and Nova's phone vibrates across the table.

Nova stops. Glances at her mom. We can see it's Luke calling because it says *Sperm Donor* on the screen.

NIKO

Let's go. Swallow faster!

The cell finally stops ringing and then a generic iPhone ringtone sounds. This is Penny's phone and whoever was trying Nova is most likely trying Penny now. And Niko is no dumbass.

He points the gun right at Nova's forehead.

She stares the barrel down and gulps the last five down.

Nova stands up. A newfound courage.

NOVA

Now what? If we're going somewhere,
let's go.

Sobbing, Penny gasps at the thought of this!

Nova starts out hoping this has saved her mom.

Niko begins after her, then stops.

Points gun at Penny.

Nova hits Niko's arm.

BLAM! The shot rings out, alerting..

EXT. CATTUSO TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

Thorn takes his glasses off.

Jumps out of the SUV.

Runs up the metal steps. And into the trailer.

INT. CATTUSO TRAILER - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Nova clenches her eyelids as tight as she can.

Niko snatches both cell phones from the table. Pockets them.

Penny falls back against the wall. Slides down to the floor.

Nova tries to rush past Niko, but he grabs her by the arm. She pulls against him. He's got her by the arm and the gun is also pointed at her.

NIKO

I've gutted many a fish girl, so
you best get your shit together
right this minute!

Thorn steps in. Gun hanging in his grip.

NIKO

Meet our new black crow.

Thorn walks a circle around Nova who cuts her eyes at him. She either has about as much courage as Thorn or she's bluffing.

NOVA

Drug mule. Black crow. You guys are
pathetic.

Niko backhands Nova across the cheek.

She spits a glob of spit and blood on the floor near Thorn.

Penny drags herself over, props herself up. Blood oozes from a wound on her shoulder.

She presses her hand against it to stop the blood flow. She whimpers getting Nova's attention.

NOVA

Mama.

Niko jerks Nova by the arm. Drags her towards the door.

Penny looks to Nova. Penny is fading.

NOVA

You're gonna be alright.

NIKO

Take care of the big one. Then meet
me at the warehouse by the runway.

THORN

I'm not gonna be stranded.

NIKO

Uber. Or call one of the boys.

EXT. CATTUSO TRAILER - DAY

The El Camino pulls into the Cattuso driveway.

INT. CATTUSO TRAILER - KITCHEN - SAME TIME

Thorn has his gun trained on Penny.

She looks up with begging eyes. This messes with Thorn.

Penny's face morphs into his mama's face.

PENNY

(in his mama's voice)

Please. Don't hurt me.

Then back into Penny's. Then back to mama's face.

BANGING at the front door jerks him out of the moment.

PENNY

I'm begging you. Don't do this.

Thorn hesitates. Gun in hand.

He turns away. Heads for the front door.

INT. SEDAN - DAY

Niko watches Nova from the rearview.

Nova pretends innocent but we know her brain cells are running ninety to nothing for a way to kill this guy.

She eyes her and Penny's cell phones sitting on the front seat beside him.

He's keys in on this. Picks up the cell phones and tosses them out the car window.

INT/EXT. CATTUSO TRAILER- SAME TIME

Only a wooden door between them.

Thorn stands on one side, his gun is pointed right at Luke who stands on the other side.

LUKE

Penny!? If she's in there just say
so and I'll get in my car and go
home. Just wanna know she's
alright. Open the God damned door!
Please!

Thorn reaches down. Unlocks the door.

Luke bangs on the door again.

Finally Luke tries the door knob.

He opens the door, pushes it in slowly. Sticks his head in.

LUKE

Penny? Nova?!

As Luke passes through the foyer, Thorn slips out the front
door that is left open.

LUKE

It's just me! You girls in here?

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The sedan travels down a long stretch of road. Deserted
mostly.

INT. SUV - DAY

Nova puts a hand on her belt.

Unbuckles it.

Slowly she works the belt through the buckles all the way out
of her jeans.

She wraps both ends around her hands. Ready to choke the guy?

NIKO

Give me the belt.

She looks up surprised. WTF! How did he know!?

She grips the ends even tighter. It's now or never!

Just as she leans forward ready to wrap the belt around his neck, the SUV swerves.

Brakes squeal.

EXT. HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

The SUV skids to an abrupt stop!

We can see through the window as Niko nearly climbs over the backseat and snatches the leather belt from Nova's grip.

INT. SUV - MOMENTS LATER

Niko drives. Nova now sits in the front seat. The seat belt keeps her more in check and Niko can keep an eye on her.

NIKO

You will wanna remain as still as possible. None of this super teen shenanigans ya hear?

She ignores him.

NIKO

Because just one of those packs breaks in your belly and you're gonna die. First, all your veins will start shrinking up until they choke out the blood flow to your brain. Then you'll start seizing like a fish out of water. Flopping on the ground. Gasping for air until foam starts oozing from your mouth causing asphyxiation.

He looks at her. She stares straight ahead.

NIKO

I'm serious. It ain't a pretty site. You being a black crow, you just need to wait and get through -

NOVA

What's a black crow? That code for drug mule now?

NIKO

A black crow's what we call a packer on their last run. This was gonna be your mum's retirement party ya know. Mum's somehow find religion or guilt in all of this. Seen it happen a bunch'a times.

NOVA

Don't talk about my mom.

EXT. CATTUSO TRAILER - DAY

Luke stares in the back of an AMBULANCE window.

It pulls away from the house.

Luke watches until it fades away in the distance.

INT. SUV - DAY

Niko looks up at an old warehouse. He turns the car into the abandoned lot. Rusted junk all around.

NOVA

What's this?

NIKO

Just a stop along the way.

NOVA

I feel like I'm gonna puke. Motion sickness.

NIKO

Go puke beside the car.

He puts two fingers to his eyes then points at her 'I'm watching you'. Reconfirms by holding up his Glock.

Nova steps out.

Niko pushes a garage door opener attached to the visor. The rusty warehouse door opens slowly.

He pulls his cell from his pocket texts: At warehouse.

He checks his gun. Bullet in the chamber. Just in case.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Niko roles down all the windows to keep a good eye.

Nova walks towards the back of the car.

NIKO

Right by the car! Want me to come
hold your hair back?

She rolls her eyes.

NOVA

Can't I puke in private!?

He does that eyes on you thing again. She stomps around just behind the car.

Bends over. **And that's when she eyes a rock.**

Her sick stomach goes away. Adrenaline takes over. Because with this rock she has a chance. A thin one -- but a chance.

She picks up the rock. Starts to stand.

Sees his eyes in the rearview so she bends over, sticks her finger down her throat and gags puking up hardly anything.

She does it once more for the sound effects, and pukes a chunk of something. A pack? She picks it up from the dirt, pockets it, then tucks the rock under her shirt on the side stuffed just in her pants.

She walks back around and gets in the passenger side. Slams the door.

The SUV pulls into the warehouse.

INT. SUV - CONTINUOUS

Niko reaches to push the automatic door button but before he can...

THWACK!!

The rock guided by a determined Nova smashes into his right temple leaving a gash.

She backs out of the passenger door, falls on her ass getting out. Half in shock at what she just did. Is he dead?

She rummages around the warehouse. Looking for something. Anything that may help her escape this.

She finds an old garden hose coiled up in the corner.

She drags it over to the SUV. Shoves one end in the tail pipe. She finds remnants of an old coffee bean sack and stuffs in material around the hose.

She places the rest of the hose inside the SUV window.

She crawls across the seat near him.

Watches his chest rise and fall. Definitely alive.

She cranks the SUV. Rolls up the windows careful not to crush the hose coming in her side.

She grabs the warehouse door remote from his visor. Shimmies out of the passenger side.

She closes the door then shoves a rotted tarp through the small opening in her window where the hose comes in.

She backs away from the SUV never taking her eyes off it.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Nova continues stepping backwards right out of the warehouse.

She pushes the remote and the door descends slowly.

She stands there staring for what seems like minutes.

Shock? Second thoughts?

She drops the warehouse remote.

Turns.

Takes off running away.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

Beads of sweat cover her face. Her shirt wet with sweat as well as Nova walks down a dirt road.

She hears an engine coming.

In fear, she bolts for the line of woods along the road.
She tears through trees. Stops crouching behind a tree trunk.
She watches the road.

Catches the El Camino in a cloud of dust. WTF?

Instead of running away, now she races back in the direction
the El Camino is traveling...towards the warehouse.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

The El Camino skids to a stop just outside the warehouse.

Thorn steps out. Looks around. No sign of the SUV.

But on the ground, the remote.

He picks up the remote.

Presses the button.

The door slowly ascends.

THORN

What the-

His walk turns into a run towards the SUV parked inside.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Thorn rips the hose out of the tailpipe.

Opens the driver's door.

Drags Niko's limp body out of the car. Drops the remote in
the process.

Feels for a pulse. Beats on Niko's chest a few times, then
kicks the dirt.

He pulls his phone, walks out of the warehouse. He's talking
on the phone. We cannot hear him but see him.

NOVA (O.S.)

Dad!!

Thorn knows this voice. Ends his call. Tucks cell away.

He slips back into the warehouse just as --
-- Nova rounds the bend, sprinting for the warehouse.
She runs in.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Right into Thorn's arms. He restrains Nova.

She SCREAMS.

Grappling his grip, they turn. She stares down at Niko's dead body lying on the dirt, marbled bloodshot eyes.

She gags. Thorn mashes his hand over her mouth.

THORN
Deep breaths.

Her eyes plead.

THORN
You wanna die?

She shakes her head no. Her eyes filled with tears.

He opens the driver's door. Climbs over dead Niko's body.

Lifts Nova up and over. She crawls across the middle into the passenger seat.

Thorn pulls himself up into the SUV.

INT. SUV - CONTINUOUS

Thorn puts it in reverse and mashes the gas.

The SUV backs out of the warehouse. It hops like it hit a speed bump when it rolls over dead Niko.

Nova has her head buried in her arms.

Down the dirt road they go. Thorn hits a contact on his cell, puts phone to ear.

THORN

She killed Niko. Carbon monoxide,
the chick's crazy. And probably
gonna waste your packs any minute.

TONY (V.O.)

You get her to the field in
Beaumont, I have a plane waiting?

THORN

Vancouver?

TONY (V.O.)

You'll know where you are when you
land. She needs to disappear.
Yesterday.

THORN

The package?

TONY (V.O.)

We'll deliver after you get rid of
the girl.

Thorn ends the call. Pockets the cell.

NOVA

I can't take this anymore.

THORN

You can't take this? You caused
every bit of this.

NOVA

My mom. I didn't cause that. Think
I wanna be some foster kid the rest
of my life? My life is ruined.

For the first time, we feel Nova's weakness.

NOVA

I have a stomach full of drugs. And
you're about to fly me to who knows
where. If I'm about to die, may as
well be right here on my own soil.

She wipes her face.

NOVA

Shoot me! Just shoot me now! Go on!
I'm ready!

He shakes his head 'the kid never shuts up'.

THORN

You're not gonna die. Happy?

She huffs.

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY

Luke sits in a chair next to a HOOKER who's waiting to be booked. Busy place. Officers all doing something else.

DETECTIVE PERSONS (O.S.)

You Mr. Cattuso?

Luke looks up to see DETECTIVE JOHN PERSONS, clean cut, medium build. Luke extends his hand and shakes with the detective.

DETECTIVE PERSONS

Right this way and we'll get a statement.

Luke gets up and follows Detective Persons.

DETECTIVE PERSONS

Sorry about your wife.

LUKE

Ex. I'm more worried about my daughter. Nova.

DETECTIVE PERSONS

Right here.

Detective Persons motions to his desk. Luke takes a seat across from the detective.

DETECTIVE PERSONS

Do you have a photo with you? Nova.

He writes Nova on a yellow legal pad.

LUKE

Cattuso.

Luke watches the detective write the name out. Then hands him his cell phone with a picture of Nova from a few years ago.

LUKE

She was supposed to be with me for the weekend and then my car took a shit. While I'm under the hood, the kid disappears.

DETECTIVE PERSONS

Had you been fighting?

LUKE

Well, yeah, guess we had. My daughter and I have I guess you could say a strained relationship.

DETECTIVE PERSONS

And you think she hitchhiked?

LUKE

Back home. I mean I guess she could be at a friend's house. But I get home and Penny's shot lying in a puddle of her own blood. The door's open. Nova's nowhere to be found.

DETECTIVE PERSONS

So you're thinking that whoever shot Penny has your daughter?

LUKE

Just putting the pieces together detective.

DETECTIVE PERSONS

But you don't even know for sure that she went back home?

LUKE

Yeah that's right.

DETECTIVE PERSONS

Was your daughter into any drugs? Drinking maybe.

LUKE

She's a teenager, so you tell me.

Luke sits back. Doesn't want to give this up...

LUKE

Penny, on the other hand, I caught her hanging around some real bad people. Ya know. Gang types. She'd been out'a work. Could'a been turning a trick.

DETECTIVE PERSONS

Your wife into drugs?

LUKE

Oh no. Penny. She's as square as they come.

DETECTIVE PERSONS

But you think she'd turn a trick. Hmm. She ever pack you think?

LUKE

Pack? Like packing a gun?

DETECTIVE PERSONS

No like swallowing bags of drugs and transporting them across the border.

Luke taken aback.

LUKE

No way. I really don't think she'd be into that kinda stuff.

DETECTIVE PERSONS

People'll do a lotta things you don't think they'd do when they're hard up for money. I've seen all kinda things. Could you meet me over there? Let me take a look maybe?

Luke nods quickly.

LUKE

I would but my car's gone. I go in to check the house. When I come out, my Camino has vanished.

DETECTIVE PERSONS

You can ride over there with me.
Need to get on your daughter's
Facebook... message her friends to
see if she's just hiding out or
anything.

Detective Persons stands up. Grabs his keys off the desk.

DETECTIVE PERSONS

Let's also get your Vin down so
they can put it in the national
data base and be on the look out.

EXT. LONE STRETCH OF HIGHWAY - DAY

Nothing but sand and asphalt as far as the eye can see. The
SUV travels along this lone stretch. Nothing but crispy
bushes and stray tumbleweeds.

INT. SUV - CONTINUOUS

Thorn drives. Nova sits shotgun.

NOVA

My stomach's cramping. Think one of
those things has busted. Seriously.

THORN

Drink this.

He pops the glove compartment, hands her liquid Imodium.

She takes it, screws off the cap and chugs a couple swallows.

SUV goes off road. She drops bottle into the floorboard.

NOVA

Where we going?

THORN

We got tickets for a private
flight.

NOVA

Not stupid. I know there's no
airport way out here. You're gonna
kill me aren't you? Pop a cap in my
ass just like that.

(MORE)

NOVA (CONT'D)

Or cut me up into little tiny pieces. Or decapitate me even.

She crosses her arms. Mumbles.

NOVA

Friggin kid killer.

THORN

Do you ever shut up?

NOVA

No, not really.

EXT. BOONFUCK EGYPT ARIZONA - DAY

A small single-engine plane comes into view. It sits out on the barren land waiting.

The SUV makes it over near the plane. Rolls to a stop.

EXT. SUV - CONTINUOUS

Thorn gets out and walks around opening the passenger side.

Nova has her head back with her eyes closed. She puts one of her hands on her cramping belly.

CLICK.

She opens her eyes to see Thorn has clicked a handcuff around her right wrist.

NOVA

Hey! What's this shit? You think I'm gonna run? I love flying. I've always wanted to be a pilot or an astronaut. Been to NASA at least ten times.

Thorn stares into her eyes sarcastically.

NOVA

Seriously.

He clicks the other cuff onto his left wrist.

NOVA

And what if I have to take a crap?
What if that magic potion you gave
me doesn't stop the cramps? Huh?

THORN

You still got one hand to wipe.

NOVA

But I'm right handed. Have you ever
tried to wipe with your left hand?

Thorn opens the door.

Pulls Nova down. Slams the door shut.

EXT. BOONFUCK EGYPT ARIZONA - CONTINUOUS

Thorn and Nova walk to the small plane. Climbing inside is a
bit awkward being handcuffed together but they manage.

The door is closed.

The plane begins down the desert, a vortex of sand behind it.

Up up and away. The plane takes off.

We stay on it until it's just a dot in the big blue sky.

EXT. CATTUSO TRAILER- DAY

A police CRUISER out front.

INT. CATTUSO TRAILER- KITCHEN - DAY

Luke leans against the wall in the kitchen.

Detective Persons examines the blood pattern on the wall
where Penny was shot.

Detective Persons pulls his cell out and makes a call.

DETECTIVE PERSONS

I need to get someone over here to
pull prints (pause) The front door
area. All over the kitchen.

INT. NOVA'S BEDROOM - DAY

LUKE (O.S.)
This is Nova's room.

Luke steps in first followed by Persons.

Luke flips light on. A blacklight as the bulb throws a purple hue on everything.

Detective Persons looks through dresser drawers.

Studies the photos lining the mirror over the dresser.

DETECTIVE PERSONS
She close to any of these? Maybe a boyfriend.

Luke shrugs.

LUKE
We had a strained relationship.
With the divorce and all.

Detective Persons goes back to checking the room.

Finds a journal in the bedside table. Tucks it in his jacket.

INT. PENNY'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Detective Persons searches an adult room.

Luke picks up a photo of Penny and Nova on the dresser.
Persons watches Luke in a suspicious way. Never know.

Persons opens the closet. Nothing out of the ordinary there.

He takes brush off dresser. Pulls hair out of it. Puts hair in a Ziploc.

He thumbs through the dresser drawers. The first drawer is her underwear and intimates.

LUKE
It's kinda creepy, you looking through her stuff like that.

DETECTIVE PERSONS
I know. But one leaf left unturned can mean solving a case or not.
(MORE)

DETECTIVE PERSONS (CONT'D)

You want me to find whoever's responsible, right.

LUKE

Of course.

Persons finds a tablet in the bottom drawer. He pushes the power button. Nothing happens.

DETECTIVE PERSONS

Dead. I'll charge it up when I get back to the station.

INT. SINGLE ENGINE PLANE - MOMENTS LATER

Cessna 172. One of those planes you feel every bump of air current. Two seats in the cockpit. Two seats behind. Straps and backpacks hang from hooks along the interior walls.

The PILOT turns looking to Nova.

PILOT

No funny business up here or we crash and we all die. Comprende?

Thorn holds up his hand to show she's attached to him.

Pilot turns back in his seat.

NOVA

You know, I've always wanted to be a pilot. It is sort of my life long dream.

Thorn gives her this stare that says 'here we go again'.

NOVA

I've been to Nasa, you know in Port Canaveral. Watched every launch since I was eight.

PILOT

Ever flown a plane?

NOVA

No way, but I'm dying to try it. I guess I'm a dreamer but there are things I want to do. Ya know like a bucket list.

(MORE)

NOVA (CONT'D)

Mom says I'm too young to have a bucket list, but I don't think there should be an age limit on living your dreams.

She gets saddened at the thought of her mom. Whispers to Thorn.

NOVA

Can you please just call. Find out if she's -

Thorn tries to ignore this.

NOVA

Please. Please. Please.

She thinks for a minute.

NOVA

You were in Luke's car.

THORN

Who's Luke?

NOVA

My dad, or sperm donor.

Thorn looks confused.

NOVA

He's my dad ok, but we don't get along. I mean I put up with him but we don't see eye to eye. On anything. I hate him sometimes. Does that make me so bad?

THORN

I hated my father.

NOVA

See so you can understand. I say something's white. He says it's black. Like our DNA was switched or something. But there was this one time -

Nova's face changes. Guilt? Fear? Anger?

THORN

He hurt you?

NOVA

Saved my life actually. I was on this Ferris wheel and my hair was like this long-

She holds her free hand down her back.

NOVA

And the gear thingy on the side that holds the buckets. That thing was twisting my hair as it went around. Didn't realize it until I was at the top of the ride, so I did what any other little girl would do.

Thorn furrows his brows.

NOVA

I screamed. Really loud. Loud enough for them to stop the ride and then my dad, Luke, climbs up the side like spiderman and cuts my hair out of the thing.

Thorn nods. Impressed even though he does not show emotion.

NOVA

Still, I hated him for years after that. They made fun of me at school. Hair looked like crap.

Nova leans back, grabs her stomach.

THORN

Lay back and get some rest. You gotta hold those packs about one more hour.

NOVA

I swear, I don't know if I can.

THORN

You can.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Establishing shot of big medical center.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - DAY

A cold and sterile place. Detective Persons walks down the hallway. A tiny legal pad and pen in his shirt pocket.

He stops when he gets to a certain room. Enters.

INT. HOSPITAL - ROOM 336 - CONTINUOUS

As sterile as the hall except this space contains more gadgets. An IV drip and one of those forever beeping machines that is hooked up to vitals.

Detective Persons walks in, pulls his little note pad and pen out. Ready to ask some questions.

A NURSE walks in to check vitals.

NURSE

Are you related?

DETECTIVE PERSONS

No. Detective Persons. Just want to ask Ms. Cattuso some questions.

NURSE

They've got her pretty heavily sedated. I don't think you'll get anything out of her today. But in the morning around eight when they make rounds. You'll have a better chance then.

She smiles at Persons. He smiles back.

CLOSE IN ON: Penny's face. So peaceful. So weak. We stay on this wanting her to wake up.

Detective Persons finally tucks his note pad away and exits the hospital room.

INT. SINGLE ENGINE PLANE - DAY

The engine is loud. The ride is rough.

Nova looks to the window. Land below.

She glances at the wall where cords, straps and backpacks hang. The packs are strange in that they have more a harness built around the front. Parachute bags?

NOVA

I went skydiving once.

PILOT

Yeah? I take jumpers up now and then. A Cessna is good for that.

NOVA

I see you got some parachutes right there.

She waits for his answer.

PILOT

Old ones. Those aren't certified, been hanging there since I bought'er.

NOVA

I gotta go to the bathroom.

Thorn roll his eyes.

He lays back his head and closes his eye.

NOVA

Yeah, you got me, the old fake bathroom trick followed by a daring escape at eleven thousand feet.

PILOT

No facilities on this flight less you use that five gallon bucket.

THORN

(with his eyes closed)
She can hold it.

PILOT

Another forty minutes to Guatemala.

NOVA

I thought we were going to Vancouver.

PILOT

I just fly the plane, they told me
yours was a one way ticket to
Guatemala.

She looks to Thorn. Whispers.

NOVA

One way ticket?

Thorn remains still. Eyes closed. But he has heard
everything.

PILOT

But I can offer drink service. That
cooler, there, to your left.

Nova reaches for a small igloo cooler big enough for a six
pack. She puts it in her lap. Cokes. Diet cokes.

She glances at Thorn who's eyes are still closed. Sleeping?

Her eyes move down his body.

A tattoo of a black crow on his forearm.

His gun, neatly tucked into a body holster.

The handcuffs tightly attached around her wrist and his.

And the pilot. She hones in on the pilot in particular. A
million ideas running through her mind.

She opens up a coke for herself.

PILOT

Pop me a diet would ya?

She pulls out a diet coke. Leans over behind the pilot where
he cannot see her.

She pulls the pack out of her pocket.

Slits it with her fingernail.

Dumps the full pack of heroin into the diet coke.

And hands it to the pilot.

She takes a deep breath as the pilot takes a big gulp.

She glances over at Thorn who still has his eyes shut.

She spills some of her coke on his pants.

NOVA

Sorry.

His eyes open now. That sense - something's up.

Nova keeps her eyes on the pilot.

NOVA

These things are killin me.

She holds up the hand that's cuffed.

NOVA

Can't you just loosen them up?

Not fast enough because --

-- the pilot begins seizing.

THORN

What's happening man?

He leans over into the cockpit.

Nudges the pilot's shoulder.

The pilot's eyes roll to the side. Blood shot. Glassed over.
His face quivers.

Foam starts oozing from his lips like a rabid dog.

His head begins violently banging against the seat.

Jarring turbulence!

NOVA

We gotta jump!

THORN

Are you crazy?!

The plane drops altitude!

NOVA

We have no choice! Hurry!

She grabs a parachute pack off the wall. Tosses it to Thorn.

THORN

You poison our pilot and don't know
how to fly the plane!?!??

He straps the pack on his back. His gun is knocked out of his body holster. It clatters down somewhere on the floor.

No time to look. Thorn pushes the door open. Wind whips through the cabin.

NOVA

Wait! What about me!?!??

EXT. BLUE SKY - CONTINUOUS

Someone jumps out of the Cessna.

Sailing through the blue sky! Descending FAST!

Is it Thorn?

Move in closer to see it is Thorn... and he's got Nova wrapped around him. She looks up at him as they tandem spiraling down. (use go-pro on diver's helmet & can film with rope in a gym)

The sky is almost peaceful.

A drug mule. An assassin. The plane plummeting. Life is good. But the ground is coming fast. And it's a mix of rocky cliffs against ocean. Where will they end up?

A THUD takes us --

EXT. BEACH - DAY

-- on a sandy beach with rocks and big waves.

The parachute ripples in the ocean breeze.

Finally, movement under the chute as Thorn comes out with Nova still attached at his wrist. He drags her a few feet, reaches in his pocket for the key.

He unlocks the handcuffs. Drops them in the sand. Rubs his wrist where they'd cut into him.

She stands there watching him. Doesn't run this time.

He wraps what's left of the parachute up in his arms. All the while watching his surroundings.

Nobody else around. For now.

He pulls a knife from a hidden sheath attached at his calf.

Then turns to see her still standing there.

THORN

Go.

She just stares at him. He waves the knife at her.

THORN

You're free! Get on!

Thorn marches towards the wood's line. Nova follows him.

NOVA

Whadda you mean free? I don't feel free. I just fell out of the sky onto some beach God knows where.

THORN

We fell out of the sky cuz you poisoned the pilot.

NOVA

One way ticket to Guatemala. Did you not see Hostel? Or Taken? That shit's real. And you said I wasn't gonna die. How can you just lie like that?

He doesn't like being called a liar. Stops and turns to her.

THORN

What is this? You bitchin and complainin. YOU got **us** into this mess. Going vigilante on Niko like that. Takin down the plane.

NOVA

Us.

THORN

What?

NOVA

You said 'us'.

THORN

So.

NOVA

So that means WE are in *this* together.

He huffs. Rolls his eyes.

EXT. JUNGLE - CONTINUOUS

Thorn hides the parachute remnants under a palmetto bush.

Checks his phone. Pulls up MAPS on the screen.

THORN

Salina Cruz.

NOVA

Sounds like a resort.

THORN

It's fucking Mexico.

NOVA

There are resorts in Mexico.

THORN

And Salina Cruz ain't one of them.
We're only a hop skip and jump to
Guatemala. And only one thing I
know happens in Guatemala.

When she doesn't say anything back, Thorn turns to see Nova bent over at the waste, clutching her stomach.

He walks over.

THORN

You gotta keep up.

NOVA

I can't.

She unbuttons her jeans.

NOVA

Can't hold it any longer.

THORN

We need to get out'a here. I'm sure
someone had to spot us coming in.

She squats down.

NOVA

Jesus! I'll hurry. Don't be a perv,
man, turn around.

Thorn pulls cell from his pocket. Call coming in from Tony.

Thorn answers the phone. Paces away from Nova.

THORN

Yeah.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Tony sits back with his feet on the desk. Smoke wafts the
office as he sets one of Cuba's finest in an ashtray.

TONY

What the hell happened?

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

THORN

What happened is you sent me on a
babysitting adventure.

TONY

You can't handle the girl?

THORN

Well, let's see...one, she's a she
and you know I have a stipulation-

TONY

Weakness.

THORN

Whatever. And she's a...kid. Since
when do we use kids in this shit?

TONY

Little bitch is gonna pay for what
she did to Niko.

THORN

I didn't sign up for the skin trade, Tony.

TONY

May be time for us to diversify.

Tony takes his feet off the desk. More serious now.

TONY

I know we lost the plane. Where the hell are you?

Thorn hesitates. To tell him will hinder their escape but not telling will have them sending in the dogs.

THORN

Sali-

RAT-A-TAT-TAT bullets spray, splitting brush and small trees.

THORN

Get down!

Nova falls trying to pull her pants up and dive down at the same time.

Looks like two gooks coming out of a Vietnam rain forest! Except this is Mexico and anything can happen in Mexico.

Thorn grabs Nova by the arm. Drags her to her feet. His cell phone falls into the tall grass in the process.

They run.

Dodging brush.

They stop behind a downed tree.

Thorn peeks around to see just how many are after them.

Two natives. JUAN and PEDRO. One with a BIG gun, the kind that shoots rapid fire. The other with a handgun.

They crouch down where Nova had been squatting.

JUAN

Droga mula mierda llena de paquetes! HEROIN!

Thorn whispers under breath.

THORN

There go the goods.

He pulls Nova in another direction.

THORN

Run!

They run. Deeper into the jungle. Nova falls behind.

Their feet pound the ground. Her breathing, heavy.

Branches crack under foot.

She SCREAMS.

Thorn looks over his shoulder. Where did she go!?

THORN

(a loud whisper)

Nova!

NOVA

Down here!

Thorn crouch-runs in the direction they just came from.

Stops fast because he nearly falls into the trap that contains Nova.

TRAP

Earthen walls. Lined with broken roots like snake bodies. This place looks like death.

Thorn looks over the side. Sees two sharp carved branch spikes sticking up from the base.

THORN

Are you hurt?

NOVA

I think I twisted my ankle.

Thorn looks up. *Something* has alerted him. He holds up a finger 'be right back'.

She stares up. Begs.

NOVA

Please! Don't leave me!

Thorn disappears.

Nova shrinks down. Defeated. Dirt and tears stain her face now. Everything hits her at once. Her mom. What she's been through. And now she's caught like a lion in a trap. Sadness. Blame. And shame. Hopelessness.

EXT. COCAINE FACTORY - CONTINUOUS

Guatemala Cocaine Lab

A giant makeshift lab smack dab in the middle of the jungle. MASKED WORKERS lined up along tables, each doing their part of the production process.

Through a bay window of plexi-glass we can see a guy sitting behind a big desk. He has the phone pressed to his ear. This is the cartel leader aka BANNION O'DOYLE, (40's).

INT. O'DOYLE'S HEADQUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

O'Doyle taps on a laptop while talking on phone.

O'DOYLE

Pinging him right now.

He watches the screen waiting for something to come up.

O'DOYLE

We got him.

O'Doyle writes down GPS coordinates on a piece of scratch paper. Along with the words: SALINA CRUZ.

O'DOYLE

I'll send The Georgian. He never comes back empty handed.

O'Doyle pulls a wad of big bills out of an envelope. Tucks it back in the envelope.

O'DOYLE

Got you a good price on the little bitch.

EXT. COCAINE FACTORY - MOMENTS LATER

O'Doyle walks out into the open air where strategically placed armed guards stand in the ready.

He walks up to one bad ass. Guy looks Russian with tight crop crew cut. Like some sort of steroid monster. This is THE GEORGIAN and named so because he's from Georgia and has put more human bones in the Black Sea than any other assassin from over there.

We see O'Doyle telling The Georgian something. Cannot hear it.

Then The Georgian walks to a small hut.

INT. HUT - CONTINUOUS

Where he sticks his head in the door. Four MEN play cards around a small table. Two GUYS asleep on cots. This is the guards quarters.

THE GEORGIAN

Scarface. Chee Chee And Bender.
Let's go! You are being deployed on
special mission.

SCARFACE is called this because he has a huge scar across his right cheek, he prefers a knife as choice weapon. CHEE CHEE is the oldest and the shortest and the best shot of the bunch. A big mustache that curls at the sides. And BENDER is tall and thin as a pencil, looks like Gumby with an M16 and a camo army helmet.

The guys hem-haw trying to tie up the card game. There's money on the table.

RAT-A-TAT-TAT The Georgian fires a round at ceiling to move their asses! And they jump and are ready in seconds. Guns thrown over their shoulders. Knives sheathed.

SCARFACE

Shit G, I was winning that round.

BENDER

He's bluffin'.

CHEE CHEE

Need a scar on the other side so we
can read him betta.

Chee Chee spins his butterfly knife.

BENDER

One day you gonna cut them digits
off doin that shit.

THE GEORGIAN

Going to Salina Cruz. Picking up a
mule and her handler. He's supposed
to be a bad ass but he let the girl
crash the plane so--

SCARFACE

I got the bitch. You guys can fight
over GI-Joe.

EXT. HUT - MOMENTS LATER

The Georgian and his three men pile into an old JEEP. The
Georgian hands a tablet with the GPS tracker to Scarface who
rides shotgun.

The Georgian puts it in gear. They spin out and are gone.

EXT. JUNGLE - SAME TIME

Thorn's doing Tai chi? He goes through forms like a master in
a Chinese garden, but in reality he's getting ready for a
massacre. If only they knew.

Crouched over the dung, Juan who has the big gun says.

JUAN

Vamos a por ellos!!

Pedro takes off, his gun leads the way.

He paces through trees.

Stops by the trap. Smiles big.

PEDRO

Los tenemos en la trampa hombre!
Americanos tontos!

He laughs wildly. Waves gun. Shooting rounds into the sky.

TRAP

From within the trap, Nova looks up to see her captor celebrating with laughter when suddenly --

-- his voice stops. His eyes widen. It's like he's frozen.

And then he is jerked out of view.

JUNGLE

Where Thorn does some bad ass martial arts movies just with his hands only and Pedro falls down either dead or asleep but he's a threat no more.

Thorn grabs the handgun up off the jungle floor.

TRAP

Nova waits. Filled with anxiety over the silence until Thorn comes into view. He peers over the side of the trap.

Holds the gun out in view. Motions he's gonna throw it.

She nods yes. Holds her hands out to catch it.

Thorn tosses the handgun.

She fools with the piece until it's comfortably in her grip and she has it pointed. Ready.

NOVA

(whispers)

What about you?

Thorn holds his fingers over his lips 'shhh'. He disappears from view.

JUNGLE

NOW Juan is coming after him and Juan has the big guns.

Juan travels gun first, on guard through the trees.

He notices his partner in a heap on the ground ahead.

JUAN

Pedro? Estas bien?? Pedro!?

Pedro is not ok... it's obvious.

Juan walks on past the trap in pursuit of Pedro.

He's scared.

He counter spins around with his rifle pointed out front of him. Spraying bullets every time he turns in a new direction.

Bullets rip through vegetation. Thin tree trunks.

Where is Thorn?

Juan finally arrives where his friend lies in a dead heap on the dirt ground.

JUAN

Pedro? Levántate!

He takes one hand off the big gun to reach down and turn Pedro over to see if he's alright but --

-- it's Thorn!! And before Juan can get his gun back up in position...

Thorn hits him with the quickest throat punch crushing Juan's windpipe. At least 50 balloon packs containing heroine fall out of Juan's jacket pocket.

He steps on them, staggering about. Thorn's attention is on the fight not the drugs this minute.

Juan holds his throat, gasping for air.

Thorn throws a fish hook, spinning Juan around.

Grabs Juan around the back of the neck, pulls his head forward/down while giving him an up knee HARD.

During this fancy footwork, Thorn's boots crush the drug packs into the forest floor.

Juan falls to his knees. His hands reaching for the M16 just a foot away. His hands scrape the earthen floor.

Finally! He gets the butt of the gun.

Pulls it towards him.

Thorn waits. Watching his every movement.

The calm before the storm. And when he moves it's like a premeditated killing machine.

A quick eye gouge then a twisting neck break lock.

Throws Juan into the kubi kudaki snapping his neck -- an instantaneous DEATH.

Thorn gathers himself. Slows his breathing. Calms.

Then picks up the M16.

He walks over to the trap.

TRAP

Nova is happy to see Thorn. Tears of joy.

She wipes her dirty face.

THORN

Get it together.

NOVA

They're tears of joy and that is so not right.

THORN

Gotta get you out.

NOVA

Just leave me here. I'd rather die in this hole than --

She chokes up at the thought of becoming a sex slave.

With the big rifle in one hand, Thorn scales down the side of the steep trap, using roots and his boots to crawl down.

He checks her over visually.

THORN

Alright, let's go.

NOVA

If I could crawl out'a here you know I wouldn't still be sitting down here!

Thorn pulls her over to the wall of the trap.

THORN

Grab the roots. I'll be right
behind you, well, right under you
so you can't fall.

NOVA

But my ankle.

THORN

Is it broke?

NOVA

Well, no, but

THORN

Then you can do this. You wanna
live right?

NOVA

I dunno anymore.

She grabs roots above her. Pulls her way up.

THORN

I'm a lotta bad things but the one
thing I'm not is a liar.

Up about four feet. Her ankle weak. She slips. Slides down
past his shoulder.

He catches her from falling.

He struggles to help her while holding the gun and pulling
himself out.

THORN

Let's go. No giving in. Buck up.

NOVA

You sound like a drill sergeant.

Decision time. It's the girl or the rifle. Thorn drops the
rifle. We see this but Nova does not. She is up over his head
grappling to pull herself to the surface. He's pushing her
and trying to get out as well.

Up the wall of earth they go. Slowly. Struggling. A foot
slipping here and there.

Nova nears the top. He gives her a push. She is up and over.
Made it!!

JUNGLE

Nova climbs out of the earthen grave. Wipes sweat and dirt
from her face. Turns to see --

-- Scarface, Bender, Chee Chee and The Georgian surrounding
her with automatic assault rifles all trained on her.

Scarface motions her over with his gun. She complies with a
slight limp.

THORN (O.S.)

Told ya, we had this.

Thorn's arms first breach the trap. He looks up the same time
Bender and Chee Chee grab him by each arm.

They drag him out. Before he can get his arms loose, the butt
of a gun smashes into his temple rendering him unconscious.

Bender and Chee Chee drag Thorn towards the jeep.

Scarface wrestles Nova dragging her to the jeep. She kicks
and screams all the way.

We see what's left of the packs, most completely destroyed,
as they drag Nova by.

The Georgian follows. This was almost too easy.

EXT. JUNGLE - MOMENTS LATER

AERIAL OF JEEP LEAVING. RISING OVER VAST FOREST TREE CANOPY.
SUN BEGINNING TO SET.

INT. BUNKER - NIGHT

Dark. Earthen walls and floor. Underground holding cell.

Moving down scratched legs. Dirty bare feet. Nova is on hands
and knees beside Thorn.

She wets a small rag in a bowl of dirty water and wipes the
gash on his head.

Will he ever come to?

She continues patting his gashed forehead. Goes to wet the rag when -- Thorn's eyes spring open.

His hand finds her neck.

HIS POV distorted.

She is choking. FAST.

HIS POV her face changes from the dark skinned captors to that of Nova. It's like PTSD or something.

He releases his grip.

She rolls away from him. Clutching her neck. Gasping for air.

Her color returns. She rolls back over facing him.

No words needed. His eyes say 'he's sorry'.

She slides up beside him, props her back against the wall.

He notices she has a fat lip and bruised left cheek.

THORN

Did I -

He reaches up, touches her bruised face softly.

She shakes her head 'no'.

THORN

I'm goin to get us out'a here.

She looks at him. Her eyes show disbelief. Or doubt.

THORN

Did you see where they took us?

She shakes her head 'no' again.

NOVA

They blindfolded me. Counted up to thirteen hundred twenty three.

THORN

About twenty miles, give or take,
if they didn't stop any.

NOVA

No stops.

A moment of silence.

A tear rolls down her cheek.

NOVA

What's really gonna happen to me?

Thorn looks at her. Hesitates saying anything at all.

NOVA

Tell me.

THORN

They call it seasoning.

Nova stares. Wants more.

THORN

Psychological manipulation,
intimidation, beatings, deprivation
of food and sleep, isolation.
Seasoning is designed to break down
a victim's resistance and to ensure
compliance.

The chills come over her.

NOVA

You sure seem to know a lot about
the--process.

THORN

Same tactics the Iraqis used.
Five tours in the sand.

Thorn stands up slowly. Gets his balance.

THORN

Get up.

NOVA

Can't we rest?

THORN

There'll be time to rest when we
die, now get up, I wanna show you a
few things.

She stands up. They are each chained by one ankle to a ring anchored into the floor.

THORN

Things I have not ever shown anyone else. Krav Maga.

NOVA

Sounds like some kinda monster.

THORN

It's a method of fighting that promotes finishing a fight as quickly as possible. Attacks are aimed at the most vulnerable parts of the body, and training is not limited to techniques that avoid severe injury; some even permanently injure or cause death to the opponent.

He helps her get in a defensive stance.

THORN

The things I teach you here are only to be used when you are under attack. Do you understand?

She nods. But he waits for an answer.

NOVA

Understood.

THORN

This is a neutral or passive stance. Like, if you were unaware.

He stands loose. Not ready.

THORN

But *this* stance means you're ready to defend yourself against an attacker.

He shows her the stance. She follows his lead.

THORN

Now some punches and strikes.

Thorn shows her some punches.

THORN

We'll start with the eye strike,
for close combat or when your
attacker has you trapped.

He goes through an eye strike move. She follows.

Nova follows his every move. He stops to correct her form.

We watch as they go through the deadly movements.

THORN (V.O.)

At some point, they are going to
come.

Nova is a fast learner. She moves with him like his shadow.

THORN (V.O.)

And they are going to take you.

They continue going thru forms.

THORN (V.O.)

You must never give up. Never give
in. *This* is why I teach you krav
maga. I give you the tools to
defend yourself.

INT. BAKERY - NIGHT

The clock reads 8 PM. The lights flick off.

The Fat Baker Woman waddles to the door. Flips the open sign
to read closed in the window.

She exits.

EXT. BAKERY - CONTINUOUS

Fat Baker Woman locks the door and waddles down the sidewalk
carrying a bag in one hand.

INT. BROWNSTONE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Knock. Knock. Knock. Fat Baker Woman stands at Thorn's door
waiting for him to answer.

FAT BAKER

Mr. Thorn. It's me! From the Bakery!

She stands there. Listens for anything.

FAT BAKER

You didn't come by for your baguette today so I figured I'd drop it off on my way home.

She knocks three times more.

Waits. But no one is home.

She hangs the bag over the door knob. A freshly wrapped loaf of bread sticks out of it.

She waddles down the hallway and enters an apartment down the hall. Closes her door.

INT. BUNKER - NIGHT

Thorn and Nova go through forms. Deadly moves. Looks more like a graceful dance.

O'DOYLE (O.S.)

Think it's time we transport our investment. Take a few with you, Tony said that guy's the baddest ass they got North of the border.

Can only see them as silhouettes in the dark containment.

THE GEORGIAN (O.S.)

I like a challenge. Besides, she was his mark.

And even though deadly, the art of the aggressive, Israeli Defense Force, Krav Maga is beautiful.

O'DOYLE (O.S.)

Yeah, some crazy shit about him having a softie for the bitches.

THE GEORGIAN (O.S.)

Bet it's a hardy. Big guy likes'em small. Can't say I blame him.

We can hear laughter between O'Doyle and The Georgian.

INT. DETECTIVE PERSONS BEDROOM - NIGHT

Detective Persons is asleep until his phone rings. He grabs his cell from the bedside table.

DETECTIVE PERSONS

Yeah.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)

We got a hit on those prints pulled from the Cattuso trailer.

DETECTIVE PERSONS

And.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)

Niko Martinez. Thought that name rang a bell, so checked around and the guy is at county.

DETECTIVE PERSONS

He's locked up?

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)

He's dead Detective.

INT. BUNKER - NIGHT

Thorn and Nova sound asleep.

The sound of VOICES.

Thorn's eyes spring open. He nudges Nova awake.

The sound of a door opening.

He holds his hand up 'shh'. The sound of voices. He whispers in a VERY serious voice.

THORN

Here they come. Remember -

The sound of more than one set of footsteps echo from the dark stairwell.

NOVA
 (whispers back)
 Krav maga.

The Georgian and Bender enter with guns pointed.

Chee Chee and Scarface enter without guns. They are here for one thing -- the girl.

The two men go straight for Nova, grabbing her by the arms.

She grapples, kicking and swinging.

Thorn jumps up ready for a fight. But the chain attached to a shackle around his left ankle stops him!

One of the men fires a warning, bullets spray around Thorn's bare feet. He does not flinch but this keeps him subdued.

THORN
 Si te lastimas un pelo en la
 cabeza, te mataré a cada uno de
 ustedes.

English subtitles(If you hurt one hair on her head, I will kill everyone of you.)

The Georgian chuckles to himself.

Thorn stands helpless as they drag Nova up the narrow stairwell leading out of the bunker.

INT. SLAVE BARRACKS - NIGHT

Nova is thrown down on a cot. They hold her down while a guy they call THE PHYSICIAN taps the syringe for air bubbles.

Nova fights for everything she's worth. But she's stuck like the *Tar Baby*. Can't move a muscle.

She SCREAMS. And SCREAMS again.

The Physician ties a rubber band around her upper arm.

Scarface shove a bandana in her mouth. She bites.

Scarface jerks his hand back. Blood leaks out of bite mark.

SCARFACE
 Little bitch bit me!

He backhands her. His blood smears across her face.
The Physician taps her arm. Finds a hungry vein.
She fights to pull her head up, see what's going on.
The Physician guides the syringe.
The needle sinks into her healthy vein. It drinks the heroin.
Nova's eyes roll back. Dopamine floods her brain, instantly
giving her that feeling of intense pleasure. Euphoria.

THE PHYSICIAN

That's better.

The Physician removes the rubber band from her arm.
NOVA'S POV The room distorts. The ceiling swims.
Her eyelids droop. Breathing shallow.
The Physician walks out of the small room.

HALL

As The Physician passes down a narrow hall, we get quick
glimpses(FLASHES) into each small world of sex SLAVES:

- One girl out. Asleep or dead.
- Another stares without emotion. Statuesque.
- Another trembling. Jonesing for her next dose.
- Another eyes rolled back in her head.
- One moaning as if she were dying.

The screaming and moaning echoes as we --

INT. BUNKER - NIGHT

Thorn contorts his foot. It's bent in an unnatural manner.
He closes his eyes. We move in on his face and then --
-- CLINK. The ankle shackle lays on the hard dirt floor
beside him.

INT. COUNTY MORGUE - MORNING

Another sterile place of stainless steel and white walls.
Examination tables. Sinks. Wash hoses. And drains.

Detective Persons walks in the door, a coffee in one hand,
his note pad in the other.

A short guy with a hair bonnet on walks out. This is the
county CORONER.

DETECTIVE PERSONS

Niko Martinez.

CORONER

Oh yes, someone stopped by
yesterday to pull prints.

The Coroner walks over to a cold storage.

Pulls a body out.

CORONER

Mr. Martinez.

Coroner looks at Persons.

DETECTIVE PERSONS

Have you established cause of
death?

CORONER

Mr. Martinez died from carbon
monoxide poisoning.

Detective motions at marks on the arm of the corpse.

CORONER

Those would be from coyotes. If it
weren't for them, Mr. Martinez may
have not been discovered but they
drug him out where he could be seen
from the road. Couple called it in.

DETECTIVE PERSONS

I need to follow up on that report.
Thanks Lonnie.

CORONER

You got it.

INT. HOSPITAL - ROOM 336 - MORNING

Bright light. Blinding. Penny squints, blinking her eyes.

Everything slowly comes into focus.

A Nurse hurries into the room.

NURSE

Ms. Cattuso. I'm Brenda, your
nurse. How are you feeling?

Penny is still taking it all in.

NURSE

You are in the hospital. Do you
remember what happened to you?

Penny still out of it. Amnesia?

NURSE

You were shot, Ms. Cattuso. Right
beneath the collarbone.

QUICK FLASH

BLAM!!! Nova fading out of focus as she is led out.

Penny sits up.

PENNY

Nova!

Nurse tries to calm her.

PENNY

Nova! Nova!!

Nurse quickly puts a sedative into the IV port.

NURSE

You need to stay calm Ms. Cattuso.

PENNY

My daughter. Nova. Is she ok? Just
tell me. Please tell me she's ok.

Penny still frantic but the sedative is beginning to work.

NURSE

She's not here Ms. Cattuso. A detective has been coming by to talk to you about everything. I'll call him and tell him you are awake. But now, you need to rest. So you can heal.

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

A busy station. OFFICERS coming, going. A woman in DISPATCH walks over with a message.

She stops at Detective Persons desk. Hands him the message.

DISPATCH

That lady you've been wanting to question. She's awake.

DETECTIVE PERSONS

Great. I'll get my stuff together and head over there right now.

He remembers one thing.

DETECTIVE PERSONS

Marge, do you think you could be a doll and get me one more thing?

Smiles. Thinks he's flirting.

DETECTIVE PERSONS

Yesterday a couple called in a body out by Old Beaumont Crossing. Can I get a copy of that report?

DISPATCH

I'm on it. Stop by my desk on your way out. I'll have it waiting for you.

He smiles. That was easy.

MOMENTS LATER

Detective Persons swings by the Dispatch Desk on his way out. Picks up the promised report.

DETECTIVE PERSONS

Thanks Marge. You're a doll.

Persons looks at the report and a red flag stares him in the face: Older El Camino about twelve feet from body.

INT. BUNKER - MORNING

Thorn sits cross legged. Meditation style. His eyes closed.

The shackle appears to be around his ankle.

He waits. Focused. Almost in a trance he's so focused.

INT. SLAVE BARRACKS - MORNING

The Physician is making his rounds.

He weaves in and out of each slave quarter only separated by walls of curtains.

He delves out pills.

He gives shots.

Sets up an IV drip.

Nova lays in a cot trembling when The Physician comes in.

Her eyes open. She looks as if she's still drugged up.

The Physician pulls a fresh syringe out of his pocket. A rubber band is coiled up on the floor beside the cot.

He picks up the band. Ties it around Nova's upper arm.

He sets the syringe on her belly while he wipes the dried blood off the previous injection site.

Before he can retrieve the syringe, Nova in a fluid motion, grabs the syringe jabbing it into The Physician's neck.

He staggers backward.

She chops him with a high elbow to the neck. Pulls his head down into a high knee. He's out!

The Physician falls about against the curtain wall pulling one row of curtain down.

The SEX SLAVE next over, doesn't even flinch when this happens. But Nova is fully alert.

INT. BUNKER - SAME TIME

Voices coming. Thorn remains in his meditation form.

The lock behind the door turns.

Sounds are amplified right now because Thorn is so focused.

Footsteps echo from the stairwell. Thorn's lips move with each step. He is counting knowing of how many steps it takes to make it down the steps.

And when he gets to one, BENDER steps out into the Bunker. He carries a small bowl of slop(food).

He walks over where he thinks it's 'safe' to leave the bowl. Because he thinks Thorn is still shackled.

Thorn waits patiently until Bender leans over to set the bowl down and that's when he attacks.

He rolls forward, leaping to his feet. He moves with beauty.

A side kick to the face. WHACK.

Followed by an elbow smash to the face.

A roundhouse kick to the groin.

Bender falls down on his knees.

One last shuto to the throat.

Bender falls on his back.

Where Thorn finishes him by stomping his throat and neck.

Thorn disappears up the dark stairwell.

EXT. BUNKER. - MOMENTS LATER

A GOON is sitting by the door.

Thorn thrusts the door open smashing the guy in the face. He stammers backwards.

Thorn follows with a heel palm-heel strike, driving the heel of the palm into the Goon's nose so hard bone penetrates brain. The Goon falls down dead!

Outside, he ducks and dodges his way towards the cement block building unsure this is where Nova is.

He enters through an unguarded door.

INT. SLAVE BARRACKS - MOMENTS LATER

Nova moves through the barracks like a seasoned ninja.

Someone's coming. She crouches down in a fighting stance. Ready.

She throws a high right elbow strike.

Stops it just in time.

Thorn surprised to see her.

They both scurry to the exit.

EXT. SLAVE BARRACKS - MOMENTS LATER

Thorn and Nova run for the wood's for cover.

A GUARD runs out shouting in another language.

Scarface runs over. Sprays bullets from his M16.

Scarface gathers Chee Chee and The Georgian. They pile in the jeep out front.

It takes off. The Georgian at the wheel.

EXT. JUNGLE - CONTINUOUS

It's a life or death race now. Thorn and Nova bolt through the thick forest terrain.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

A WRECKER GUY loads the El Camino onto a flatbed.

Wrecker Guy locks it into place. Climbs up into his wrecker.

WRECKER GUY (V.O.)
Dispatch I got that El Camino. In
transport to impound yard now.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Thorn and Nova are deep into the thick of the jungle.

THORN

They are gonna come for us. If we run, they'll keep chasing us forever. We have to prepare, get ready for a fight. Are you ready?

Fear washes over Nova. She starts to sob.

NOVA

I can't. I'm freaking out here.

THORN

Your mother needs you to get through this.

NOVA

She's alive?

THORN

I'd bet my life on it. If something happens to me, see Rose at the Beaumont Bakery. Everything you will need will be in my flat.

Her lip quivers.

NOVA

Why are you even telling me this? You have to get through this. You can't leave me in a foreign country. I can't speak the language. I can't

THORN

You can. You can do anything you put your mind to. With this.

He points at her heart.

THORN

Let's get into form. Krav maga.

NOVA

Krav maga.

They begin going through the moves. Like a secret dance.

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY

Luke walks into the station. Looks around for Detective Persons. Spots him near the coffee machine.

Persons notices Luke. Waves him over.

DETECTIVE PERSONS
I think we found your El Camino.

LUKE
That's great. Is it here? Can I pick it up?

DETECTIVE PERSONS
Let me see if they're done pulling prints.

LUKE
Really need my ride.

DETECTIVE PERSONS
Let's go see.

They walk to a desk where another DETECTIVE MARCI BYRD sits.

DETECTIVE PERSONS
Marci, are the guys all done with that El Camino?

She shuffles through a stack of papers. Her desk is messy.

Finally she finds what she was looking for.

MARCI
Yes Sir, it was completed and checked off about two hours ago.

Marci points out to a little guard shack on the far lot.

MARCI
Alls you have to do is see the gate keeper, and show your ID. He has the keys out there.

Luke nods 'thanks' to Marci then turns to Persons.

LUKE
Now I can get to the hospital. They called. Penny's awake and allowed visitors now.

DETECTIVE PERSONS

I won't be long behind you. I need to ask a few questions. And get a statement from her.

Luke waves as he heads out of the police station.

DISPATCH

Detective?

DETECTIVE PERSONS

Yeah Marge.

DISPATCH

A single engine went down in Mexico just over the border. We got a call from a source over there. They say it may be related to the missing Cattuso girl.

DETECTIVE PERSONS

You are a doll. See if you can find out anything else and keep me posted will ya.

EXT. JUNGLE - MUDDY TRAIL - DAY

The jeep splashes through muck. The road/path is becoming too wet to drive further in.

The jeep comes to a stop.

Chee Chee, The Georgian and Scarface pile out. All of them have big guns this time. And little guns too for backup.

SCARFACE

I get the girl. Owe her a little payback for biting me.

CHEE CHEE

Probably got rabies.

SCARFACE

Shut the fuck up man. You're just jealous.

THE GEORGIAN

Spread out. Let's take this shit seriously.

(MORE)

THE GEORGIAN (CONT'D)

GI-Joe took out Bender and two guards. And the girl, well, let's just say that girl has a knack for killing. Damn natural.

CHEE CHEE

See. Rabies. Told you.

He laughs kind of like a hyena.

The three men push into the --

EXT. JUNGLE - MOMENTS LATER

-- thick woods. Brush. Hard to sneak up on anybody when every step they take, sounds like Rice Krispies. Branches snapping.

A noise to the left. Chee Chee veers away from the group to investigate the sound.

A sound like a man-made hoot owl. Scarface is on it. He veers off to the right.

Chee Chee presses on. Assault rifle perched out in front. Leading the way.

A sweeping leg parallel the ground, trips him. He scrambles on his knees trying to get up when --

-- Nova, face camouflaged with mud, serves a swift kick to the groin. Chee Chee grabs his privates throwing him off balance.

She uses her elbows to come down on him while he's down.

As he struggles to stand, she does a fish hook, spinning around behind him, puts him in the sleeper.

Her arms are small but she has him from behind. Not much he can do. Except - squeeze the trigger. Bullets pepper the forest. The sound catches Nova off guard.

RINGING in her ears.

She pushes through with a side kick to the throat thrusting him back enough so she can jerk his gun away.

She points the gun. Presses the trigger. Fills Chee Chee full of holes.

The Georgian turns. Heads for the sound of the rapid fire.

Nova tries to find a place to hide.

Scarface still after his noise.

SCARFACE

Come out come out wherever you are.

He steps forward. Hesitates.

Another noise. He steps several times in the direction.
Stops.

Thorn drops down from a tree. Lands behind him. Wraps his arm around Scarface pulling his chin up, neck extended backward.

Scarface uses the butt of the gun to beat his way loose. He spins firing but Thorn isn't there.

SCARFACE

Why don't you come out and face me
you fucking GI-Joe!

Scarface just looks meaner because of that big scar. His teeth are stained. His lips dry and crusty. This is a weathered cartel guy.

Thorn sweeps with his leg below. But Scarface doesn't go down. It's as if a calm passes over Thorn.

Scarface has enough time during this peace, to point his assault rifle right at Thorn's heart. Doesn't seem to phase Thorn though.

Thorn methodically, does a FAST number of moves, just with his hand, and then pulls the heart right out of Scarface's chest. Thorn wipes the blood under both his eyes.

He collects himself once again. Breathing slows. Until he hears bullets fly.

He takes off in the direction of the gunfire.

Racing through high grass, over rough terrain something stops him dead in his tracks.

The Georgian has Nova pinned up against a tree. A knife to her throat.

THORN

Why don't you pick a fight with
someone your own size.

The Georgian smiles at this. But with a knife at Nova's throat in one hand, and his automatic rifle in the other, he's pretty busy until --

-- Thorn drops his gun. Fist pumps his chest 'come on'.

The challenge is too good to pass, but he slices Nova's flesh before throwing his gun down. Nova falls back. The blood scares her but the wound inflicted is not fatal.

Thorn and The Georgian are a pretty even match, except The Georgian has a knife.

They spar. Both good at martial arts. The fight goes Thorn's way. Then flips to The Georgian. It's close until finally The Georgian pulls a dagger, to finish this once and for all.

He straddles Thorn. Has the dagger pressed against Thorn's heart. Ready to thrust it in when --

RAT-A-TAT-TAT bullets rip through The Georgian's torso. He falls over DEAD on top of Thorn.

He rolls the corpse off him. Sits up to see Nova standing there, bloody but bad ass with the assault rifle in her grip.

INT. COCAINE FACTORY - DAY

Thorn and Nova step inside the production line. Bullets pepper the makeshift lab. Cocaine WORKERS dive under tables. Coke dust fills the air.

Thorn and Nova step outside.

EXT. COCAINE FACTORY - CONTINUOUS

Where O'Doyle is running from a back entrance. AWAY.

THORN

That's how you flush out a rat.

They both start firing. Bullets rip all around O'Doyle who dives into the wood's line. They continue firing.

Thorn walks around where O'Doyle fled the plastic building.

INT. O'DOYLE'S HEADQUARTERS - MOMENTS LATER

Thorn plunders through a lavish office with AC and cigars.

He finds a safe in the corner. Fires rounds into it until the door pops open. Thorn takes a couple stacks of cash out. Hands the cash to Nova.

She sets her gun down to tuck the cash away.

ONE SINGLE SHOT coming from a sawed off shotgun wielded by O'Doyle sends Thorn flying backwards. The force knocks Nova down on her ass.

She grapples for her gun but it's lodged under Thorn.

Shot and bleeding out. He crawls slowly up.

O'Doyle is moving in on them.

O'DOYLE

Two vigilantes. Isn't this cute.

THORN

This was never part of the plan.
The girl was never part of the
plan.

O'DOYLE

Seems she's pretty thick in the
action, killed nearly everyone
she's come in contact with.

THORN

Let her go home. You got me.

O'DOYLE

She won't have anywhere to go
seeing as Tony's holding her Ma
hostage. Get out'a the way and let
me kill the little bitch.

Thorn continues crawling up. Blood pours from his torso. He pushes Nova's gun back behind him as he does.

Thorn crumples over in pain. Nova fumbles to get the gun up and pointed.

O'Doyle steps closer. Pumps the shotgun.

His last ounce of life, Thorn stands up.

BOOM!

Takes the shot that was meant for Nova who SCREAMS.

NOVA
NOOOOOO!!!

She presses the triggers filling O'Doyle with holes as he does the bullet dance and falls back DEAD.

She rushes to Thorn. He's fading fast.

NOVA
You are gonna be fine.

He coughs up blood.

NOVA
Stay with me. We have to get back home. You can't leave me here.

THORN
You have what it takes Nova.

NOVA
You. My mom. I can't do this.

THORN
You can and you will. Go see Rose when you get back. Money. Contacts. Weapons. Everything that was mine, is yours now.

He coughs up some more blood. Eyes glassing over.

THORN
Go now. Hurry.

Tears roll down her face.

She leans down. Kisses Thorn on the forehead.

MONTAGE

- Nova walks through a town.
- She buys something to eat. Wolfs it down.
- She asks questions. Offers money to VENDORS at market.

- Nova climbs into the back of a moving van. Sits among ILLEGALS about to make the journey.

- The moving van goes through the border check point.

INT. HOSPITAL - ROOM 336 - DAY

Detective Persons walks in the room to find an empty bed.

He hurries out into the hallway.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

DETECTIVE PERSONS

Excuse me, do you know where this patient has gone?

Nurse acts confused. She looks in the room. Then hollers to the Nurses' desk.

NURSE

Call for lock down.

An alarm sounds. Staff runs about. Chaos.

EXT. BAKERY - DAY

Nova looks up at a sign in the window. Beaumont Bakery.

INT. BAKERY - MOMENTS LATER

Nova walks in. A COUPLE is just leaving with their items.

Nova walks to the counter. She's not tall enough to see over it. But through the glass she locks eyes with the Baker Woman, ROSE.

ROSE

Well, hello there.

EXT. BROWNSTONE - DAY

Nova stands in front of a neglected apartment building.

She enters.

INT. STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER

Nova walks up the stairs. Her hands slides along the railing. She's probably thinking that Thorn's hands have been here.

When she gets to the top of the stairs, she turns and goes to a front door. The number on it matches the number on the key tag in her hand.

She puts the key in. The door opens.

INT. THORN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nova walks in. She goes first to the wall of photos.

She takes a couple of them off. Holds them near her heart. Then puts them in her pocket.

A shoebox on the bottom shelf. She opens it on the bed. Pictures of men. She recognized one -- NIKO! She thumbs through the other photos. Each has an address and other information on the back of the photo.

She opens the closet and it's like a weapons store.

She gears up taking a few guns and one knife.

She walks across the floor and it creaks. She bends down, turns the carpet back and lifts the loose board to find the bundles of cash. More than her eyes have ever seen.

She covers it back up.

INT. HALL/STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER

Nova locks the door and heads down the stairs.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Nova walks down the sidewalk. There is an heir of confidence in her stature now.

INT. BIG FRANK'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Big Frank leans over a plate full of spaghetti. He forks the saucy pasta in his mouth. He's a glutton this Frank guy.

A knock at the door interrupts his dinner.

BIG FRANK
Ok! Ok! I'm coming!

He grumbles as he slides away from the table. His phone sits beside his plate.

INT/EXT. FRONT DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

The door opens. Nothing between them.

BIG FRANK
What're ya selling? We don't need
any girlscout cookies.

NOVA
I was just wondering if I could
borrow your phone.

He lets her in.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

She follows him into the kitchen. Walking behind him, it's tempting. But then she wouldn't get the satisfaction of seeing his face AND she needs information.

BIG FRANK
Here you go. Don't use up too many
of my minutes though.

She thumbs down the list of names on the cell phone.

NOVA
Let's see, no need to call Niko,
because he's DEAD!

She looks up and before he can pull his gun, she has her Glock trained on him.

BIG FRANK
Ah come on now.

NOVA
You tell me where my mama is being
held and I won't kill you.

Big Frank smiles. Knows he can't give that information.

NOVA
Maybe this will spark your memory.

BLAM!

He looks down to find blood leaking out of his thigh. It's like a delayed reaction. He hops around. Wincing in pain.

BIG FRANK
What the fuck!

She throws his photo down on the table.

BIG FRANK
You are one sick little twisted b-

BLAM!!

NOVA
I hate that word.

He grabs his chest. Another leak with blood seeping out.

Big Frank staggers then falls down against his kitchen cabinets.

NOVA
Gonna ask you one last time.
Where's my mama being held?

He squirms but there is no where to go.

BIG FRANK
Maybe Bieber's I dunno! I swear!

BLAM!! Lights out for Big Frank.

EXT. SIDEWALK - MOMENTS LATER

Nova walks down the sidewalk. Blood spatter on her face.

INT. CAB - DAY

Nova slides into the backseat of a cab. CABBIE smiles.

NOVA
Twenty fifth and Roosevelt.

He stares at her thru the rearview until she stares back.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Nova steps out. Hands the CABBIE fare with a fat tip.

She carries on down the sidewalk. Stops in front of a house.

She pulls the photo out labeled Justin Bieber. She laughs when she looks at the photo.

Flips the photo over to check the address on the back.

EXT. RANCH HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Nova walks up the flower-lined stepping stones to the front door. This house is nice. In a nice neighborhood.

She rings the doorbell.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - SAME TIME

Bieber stands by the door, peering through the peephole.

EXT. RANCH HOME - CONTINUOUS

Nova pulls out a cell phone. Scrolls down contacts and clicks CALL on Bieber.

When the phone starts ringing, IT IS RINGING RIGHT ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR.

She puts her gun up to the door.

BLAM!

One more shot kills the door knob/lock and the door swings open and Nova enters.

INT. RANCH HOME - CONTINUOUS

Nova follows a blood trail through the house. Into a -

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gun out, she cases the room.

Bieber's POV: her feet walk by. The closet door opens. Then her feet appear to be leaving until --

She drops to the floor pointing the gun under the bed!

BIEBER

Don't shoot me again!

He slides out from under the bed.

NOVA

Where's my mama?

BIEBER

Shit! I know who you are. You're the kid that killed Niko.

NOVA

And the pilot. And several wankers in Guatemala. Oh and that big guy.

BIEBER

(shocked)

Big Frank??

NOVA

Yep. And it's not like I enjoy killing or anything it's just you fucked with my family. Then you made me a drug mule. Then you were gonna sell me to some trafficking ring.

BIEBER

Wait a minute. Listen. I had nothing to do with any of that.

NOVA

Isn't your name Bieber. Cuz of the

She motions to his haircut.

BIEBER

Yeah, that's me but I swear, I just do like I'm told.

NOVA

And I'm telling you that if you don't tell me where my mama is being held, I'm gonna kill you too.

BIEBER

Big Frank had her. And said she was getting an infection so he took her to Tony cuz Tony's wife is a nurse. Well, she used to be.

Nova starts out.

BIEBER

You're not gonna kill me?

NOVA

Nope but you might wanna get that hole checked out.

He looks down at the wound from the door. It's just a graze on his side but it's soaked his shirt in blood.

EXT. RANCH HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Nova walks out. Leaves the door open behind her.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Nova walks following the GPS on google MAPS on the cell phone, Big Frank's cell phone.

EXT. COUNTRY HOME - DAY

A more rural area. Bigger lots. Nicer houses. Go figure this is where the boss lives.

Nova walks up a winding driveway. Past a fountain.

She rings the doorbell. No one comes to the door.

She scrolls down the contacts. Hits SEND on Tony.

This time she does not hear the other phone on the other side of the door.

She sees a screened porch on the second floor.

Nova takes her knife out, puts it in her mouth.

She climbs up the side of the house via gutter system, slices a strip of screen away and crawls in.

INT. SCREENED PORCH - MOMENTS LATER

Nova tries the door. Locked. It's a glass door (half a french) so she kicks it in.

NOVA

Oh! Tony!

She tucks her knife away. Pulls out two guns, one in each hand.

NOVA

Want to see how we chase out a rat?!

She starts firing wildly into the ceiling. She turns to watch outside, hopefully to see him running OUT but instead --

-- a gun finds the base of her skull from behind.

TONY

Put the fucking guns down.

He presses the gun into her flesh harder.

TONY

NOW!

TONY

You are one crazy little bitch!

NOVA

Where you keeping mama?

He laughs to himself. She puts the guns down on the floor.

NOVA

If you let me take mama, I won't kill you. We will leave and that will be that.

He smiles big.

TONY

You. Kill me?

NOVA

Yeah. That's what I said.

He laughs again.

TONY

You are good.

NOVA

Why don't you put down your weapon
and fight like a man.

He smiles big again.

TONY

Listen, I don't want to hurt you.
But you and your mama cost me a
lotta dough. So-

He puts his weapon down.

She takes in a deep breath. Tries to calm her breathing.

TONY

Aren't you even gonna put your
hands up.

She is calm. Arms by her side. The calm before the storm.

He puts up his fists. Ready to beat her ass and with his
first punch, she blocks. And punches him in the throat.

He coughs, gasping for air.

NOVA

Where is she?

She drops back in fight stance.

TONY

What is this? You some kind of
ninja?

NOVA

Something like that.

She gives him a high knee, and a swift kick in the groin.

NOVA

Where is she?

She kicks him in the chest. He stammers back. Wind knocked
out of him.

TONY

Right below us, in the guest room.

NOVA
If you hurt her.

TONY
I had no need to hurt her. She was
only the bait.

He smiles.

TONY
And you took it. Hook. Line. And
sinker.

NOVA
I didn't take shit.

TONY
You're here are not you?

NOVA
In the flesh.

She spins around landing an elbow in his ribs.

TONY
And I'm going to enjoy killing you.
And after I kill you, I will slit
your mom's throat and laugh.

That was the straw that broke the camel's back. In a fluid
almost graceful batch of moves, she breaks him.

She finishes him with the damaging eye gouge.

He wanders like a drunken sailor. Falls down --

A FLIGHT OF STAIRS.

Nova runs down the stairs behind him.

HALL

Runs down a hall. Opening doors. One after the other until
finally she opens one containing her mom.

BEDROOM

Penny lies in a bed. Unmoving. Is she dead?

Nova walks to her bedside.

NOVA

Mama?

Penny's eyes open. Nova hugs her. Jumps up in bed beside her.

NOVA

Oh mama.

Nova cries tears of joy.

SIRENS ECHO in the distance.

EXT. COUNTRY HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Nova and Penny walk out of the two story home. Into protection. Two cop CRUISERS and an AMBULANCE all arrive about the same time.

We pull back for an aerial shot of the turn out.

NOVA (V.O.)

Mama, you're not gonna have to do
no more jobs like that. In fact,
you may never have to work again.

FADE OUT.

