

Necessary Means

by

Chazz Christopher

WGA Registration: 1575835
ChazzChristopher@gmail.com

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Absolute dead quiet. No sound.

CLOSE on MARLA (30's), pretty, blonde hair, classic beauty. A hand reaches over and musses her hair, causes it to fall in her face. She brushes it away and smiles.

Over the scene -

-- the SOUND of struggle. Three men moving, pushing, punching - breath exhaled, inhaled. The SOUND of the fist of one man meeting the fleshy cheek of another.

The SOUND of that man falling to the floor. The SOUND of more struggle. Then the SOUND of a gunshot. The SOUND of a man collapsing.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

In the dark, MARSHALL NELSON (45), short, stocky, good-looking with ever-vigilant eyes, stands -- breathing heavily, gun in one hand, flash light in the other.

Two men on the ground beside him.

Marshall looks either way, then moves further into the house.

GUNSHOT. Marshall instinctively dives to his left and rolls, spots the OFFENDING GUNMAN angling out of a doorway to his right.

Marshall rolls to a stop, shoots the man in the shoulder.

The man staggers out of the doorway and Marshall fires again. The man's head jerks back and he falls the ground.

INT. GREEN BERET CLASSROOM - DAY

Marshall stands at the front of a classroom of ten to fifteen BERET RECRUITS. A Digital projector projects an image of a Beretta M9 handgun on a screen at the front of the room.

MARSHALL

It's not pretty. It's not sexy. But this firearm will save your life more than any beautiful woman ever could.

A picture of a bikini-clad Kate Upton.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

If you want to have your heart broken,
take her home - cuz let's be honest,
she's out of your league. Buuut -- if
you wanna stay alive...

He switches back to the picture of the Beretta.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

...then keep this close. But, guys,
let's make it clear: gun oil is NOT
for personal pleasure.

The recruits burst into laughter.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Marshall stands up as two GUNMEN walk through the door.
Marshall immediately goes to one knee and fires. The first
man goes down. The second man fires back.

Marshall rolls behind a nearby couch and scurries away from
the gunman. The gunman turns the corner of the couch and
fires -- into open floor.

He rushes to the end of the couch -- empty space again.

He turns around -

-- to find Marshall's gun in his face!

MARSHALL

How many men?

GUNMAN 3

Enough.

Marshall pistol whips the man.

Marshall turns and runs towards the door, full-speed. As he
nears the door, two more GUNMEN appear in. Marshall launches
himself at the two men.

Before the men can lift their guns, Marshall is on them. He
punches the first, sending him stumbling backwards. As
Marshall plants his leg, he instantaneously kicks the other.

Marshall engages the first man, overcomes him quickly, jumps
behind the man, uses him as a shield.

Marshall swings his gun around looking for the other man.

MARSHALL
Where'd you goqqtz?

INT. BEDROOM - SAME AS BEFORE

Still CLOSE on Marla as she smiles. Marshall leans in and they kiss. Long, sloppy, wet. Leading to something.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

A PICTURE of a man in a bullet proof vest. Marshall points at the exposed neck, the exposed underarms, with a laser dot.

MARSHALL
An eighth of an inch can save your life and take the life of your opponent. Know the angles. Know them so well that in the heat of the battle, you aim and fire nearly off instinct. The more you study, the better your chance of fighting the next guy -- and the next.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Marshall, holds one gunman in a headlock, still searches for the other. He senses movement to his left, fires. But -

-- the man jumps from Marshall's right. Marshall pushes the man he holds into the other.

The two slam into each other and fall to the ground. Marshall shoots one in the back and runs over and kicks the other in the face.

INT. BEDROOM - SAME AS BEFORE

Marla smiles and her mouth opens to speak. Her voice sounds like it is miles and miles away.

MARLA
Come back to me. Safe.

Her voice dissolves into a cacophony of noise.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Marshall turns around and listens to the relative silence. He walks to the doorway and waits, listens. His eyes narrow as he hears something nearly inaudible -- a BREATH.

On the other side of the wall, a GUNMAN dressed in black waits, breathing short, shallow, quiet (nearly subsonic) breaths.

Suddenly Marshall's arms explode through the wall, wrap around the soldier's neck and pull him back against the wall. The man's head hits the wall with a sickening 'thunk'.

He slumps to the floor, unconscious.

Marshall appears in the doorway, enters the next room. Just as he does, two men pop up, guns pointed and shoot.

Marshall lets his gun fall to his side and rolls his eyes, then twirls his fingers in a circle in the air.

GUNNERY SERGEANT (O.S.)

All right! Lights up!

Bright, white light comes up to -

-- reveal Marshall stands in a warehouse training area. Above him, the house has no roof. All around, the Green Beret Recruits stand on the rail, pulling off night vision goggles.

Around the house, the men Marshall 'killed' stand back up and pull off their ski masks. All soldiers. All part of a training exercise.

Marshall looks up at the recruits.

MARSHALL

In real life, I'm dead. It's not a video game. I don't get to start over or come back. These two men put a bullet in my heart and in my head. Doesn't matter that I took out the first five or six. It's the last ones you face that count.

All of the Recruits look down at Marshall and nod, solemnly.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

But with a partner, I make it through this alive.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

Two men joined by a pride in these United States and the desire to keep each other alive - it more than doubles your chances. It's exponential. You need each other.

Corporal STERLING SHAW, JR. (25) average height and build, but muscular and carrying himself with natural confidence, raises his hand.

SHAW

Sir, you've told us time and again that you were never - and I quote - 'partner material'. I understand that this is part of training, but are we supposed to take you seriously?

Marshall grits his teeth, then smiles.

MARSHALL

Corporal Shaw, the stories I tell you about my career - my VERY successful career, I might add - are not for you to use against me later. They are to help you avoid the same mistakes I have made over the years. Okay?

(looks around)

Any other questions? No? All right, head to the mess hall, boys.

INT. HALLWAY - SAME

The recruits file out. Shaw laughs and walks with a couple of recruits.

Marshall spots Shaw and points.

MARSHALL

Shaw - can I have a word, please?

INT. TRAINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Marshall and Shaw step back into the training room. Marshall immediately pins Shaw to the wall with his forearm.

MARSHALL

What the hell was that?

SHAW

(sneering)

An honest question.

Shaw tries to push Marshall off. Marshall doesn't budge.

MARSHALL

Have I done something to offend you, soldier? Did I hurt your delicate feelings somehow?

SHAW

Sir, I'm not an idiot.

MARSHALL

Shaw, no more.

Shaw tries to push Marshall away again.

SHAW

Sir, I'm just pointing out the obvious. You're such a...

Marshall shoves Shaw firmly against the wall.

MARSHALL

You're a good soldier but you are not untouchable.

SHAW

You have no idea who I am, do you?

MARSHALL

I know enough. Don't put me in this position again, Shaw.

Marshall tosses Shaw to the side and walks back out into the hallway.

INT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

Shaw sits on his bed. A uniformed Marine carrying a stack of mail stops at Shaw's bed. Shaw sighs as he looks up.

SHAW

Again?

The Marine drops a folded-over piece of paper on Shaw's bunk and walks away. Shaw barely unfolds the piece of paper to find **'Your dad can't save you from me.'**

He opens the paper more to reveal a signature: **'Nelson'**.

He sighs, lays back on his bed, crumples up the paper and throws it straight into the trash can a few feet away.

EXT. NORTH CAROLINA ROAD - EARLY MORNING

Marshall runs, pushes hard, every other step forcing breath from his lungs, the next bringing oxygen back in.

Light begins to break across the sky above him, a cascade of sunrise shades coloring the horizon.

After a few short moments of running, someone else falls into place beside him. Marshall looks over to see Shaw. Marshall rolls his eyes, shakes his head.

SHAW

Just taking a run, sir.

They run side by side for a long moment.

SHAW (CONT'D)

Sir, I'd like to talk to you about what's been happening.

MARSHALL

I run to relax, Shaw, not to play 'just the tip' with newbies.

Marshall picks up his pace to a near sprint. Shaw tries to keep up with the older man, but in seconds realizes he can't keep up.

Shaw stops and watches as Marshall's pace takes him further and further away, out of ear shot. He bends over, panting.

SHAW

Sir, yes, sir.
(beat, sotto)
Asshole.

INT. BARRACKS - BATHROOM - DAY

The SOUND of someone being punched, echoing through the barracks bathroom.

FREENEY (O.S.)

Shit. Okay, hit me again. I told you - it's gotta look like I got the bejesus beat out me.

Around the corner, Corporal FREENEY (22), tall, sturdy, blood running from his nose, stands against the bathroom wall. Freenee hands the MAN punching him a fifty dollar bill.

FREENEY (CONT'D)

Hit me again.

The man hits him again. Freeney shakes his head, blood splattering the wall behind him.

INT. MARSHALL'S OFFICE - DAY

Marshall stands at his window drinking a cup of coffee. Through the window, on a training field, Green Beret recruits do jumping jacks in groups, spar, run.

Marshall turns at a KNOCK on his office door, sees Freeney, face bruised, nose broken, standing at attention.

Marshall gestures for the young man to enter and takes a seat at his desk. Freeney walks in and stands at attention a few inches from the desk.

MARSHALL
Have a seat, Corporal.

Freeney sits down, still rigid, still at attention.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)
At ease, Soldier. Lighten up.

Marshall opens up a file on his desk.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)
Your face says you had a run in with someone, Freeney - you wanna tell me what happened?

FREENEY
I ran into a wall, sir.

MARSHALL
Several times, it looks like. Does that wall have a name?

Nothing. Silence.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)
If you tell me who did this, no one will ever know you said a word. Does your wall have a name?

FREENEY
Sir, yes, sir. Concrete. Also referred to as Cinder Block.

Marshall laughs aloud. Freeney stays rigid, straight-faced.

MARSHALL

My job is to train and protect you.
Whatever this is -- it has to stop.

Freenev looks nervously over at Marshall, pauses. Then...

FREENEY

Shaw. It was -- Shaw.
()

Marshall rubs his jaw, takes a deep breath.

MARSHALL

Shaw. I -- I will take care of it,
soldier. I can promise you that.

INT. GREEN BERET TRAINING FACILITY - DAY

Marshall stands in the middle of a large, rubber wrestling-style mat as a group of RECRUITS, all in their mid-20's and wearing white t-shirts and short gym short, mill around.

MARSHALL

Attention! Let's go, soldiers!

The recruits quickly line up around the circular, lined mat. Shaw stands at the end of the line.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

Well, you schmucks have made it
through six weeks of ass-kicking, soul-
killing training. I'm almost proud.
(beat)

In the next fourteen days, we are
going to do everything in our power to
get you grunts to just give up.

The recruits nod with respect, except for Shaw who laughs out loud. Marshall looks up and down the line, in shock at the blatant disrespect. Focuses on Shaw.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

Corporal Shaw, is there something
funny you'd like to share with the
rest of the group?

SHAW

It just seems, sir, that...

Marshall punches Shaw in the stomach, doubles him over.

MARSHALL

I. Don't. Give a shit.

A Gunnery Sergeant moves towards the scuffle, but Marshall holds up his hand to the man.

Shaw stands back up, catches his breath, as Marshall stares at him with an icy cold stare.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

I think we're good here, right, Shaw?

SHAW

Sir, I...

Marshall punches him again. Shaw buckles over, the air driven from his already depleted lungs. He begins coughing.

MARSHALL

I. Don't. Give a shit. I don't like repeating myself, Shaw.

Marshall moves closer to Shaw. Whispers.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

You like kicking ass, Shaw?

SHAW

Sir, I don't know...

Marshall punches Shaw in the stomach again, driving him to one knee. Marshall stands over the recruit for a moment, then walks out into the center of the mat.

MARSHALL

A blue falcon, a bravo foxtrot - a buddy fucker -- a buddy fucker is not acceptable. Not on my watch. Not when I'm training you.

He turns back towards Shaw.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

Shaw, you're a damn good soldier. But your actions are unacceptable.

He turns back to the other recruits.

Shaw stands up, finally beginning to catch his breath. Murder and anger fill his eyes.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

No matter how badass you think you are, you fuck with a fellow soldier, and you become a disgrace.

Marshall turns to the recruits on the opposite side of the mat than Shaw.

Shaw sees his chance and runs out, tackles Marshall, drives him to the mat.

Marshall pushes him off easily and stands up, leans over the recruit, and screams.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

Get back in line, Shaw! Last chance.

Shaw stands quickly and takes another swing. With a chuckle, Marshall unleashes a bevy of blows on the recruit, who matches him blow for blow.

The kid is good.

Shaw comes hard at Marshall, but doesn't ever quite land a blow. Marshall blocks and parries and weaves around the recruit, till the recruit backs off...out of breath.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

Get back in line, Shaw. Seriously.
This is your last fucking chance.

Shaw bum-rushes Marshall.

Marshall goes off on Shaw. In seconds, the recruit is overtaken by the skill and experience of his instructor.

Marshall knocks Shaw down to the ground and in a blind rage continues to beat the man's face. The Gunnery Sergeant and other Recruits quickly run over and pull Marshall off Shaw.

Shaw's face is bloodied and beaten.

INT. GENERAL SPIELMAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Silence. Marshall stares out a window.

Suddenly, GENERAL SPIELMAN (55), blossoming alcoholic's nose, slightly balding and always a bit of a five o'clock shadow, storms into the office.

SPIELMAN

Dammit, Marshall, you and your fucking goddamn temper.

Marshall walks around the desk and sits down across from where Spielman plants himself.

SPIELMAN (CONT'D)

You just can't play well with others.
You broke up every partnership you
ever had. You have to try and right
every wrong...like a goddamn fool.

(a beat, a sigh)

You've got the political ability of a
shart in the middle of a blind school.

Marshall tries not to laugh but a chuckle slips out. It slowly blossoms to a full-blown laugh and Spielman joins.

SPIELMAN (CONT'D)

Oh, God - you've put me in an awful
position, Marshall.

Spielman stands up, opens a hidden wet bar in a table behind his desk and makes himself a drink.

MARSHALL

I'm sorry, Frank. I really am.

SPIELMAN

The kid's dad is a Senator.

MARSHALL

Ahhh, shit.

SPIELMAN

Yeah. Shit.

Spielman turns around, takes a gulp of bourbon to steel his nerves.

SPIELMAN (CONT'D)

I've known you for...God, too long.
You know I -- you've tied my hands on
this one, buddy. It's playing out the
only way it can.

(another gulp)

You're being asked to retire.
Effective, immediately.

He sets the glass down on his desk. Marshall looks shocked.

MARSHALL

Twenty-six years. I gave -- gave
everything to this country, to the
Army. And just like that? Gone?

SPIELMAN

You nearly killed a twenty-five year
old recruit, Marshall. You're lucky
you're not getting court-martialed.

Silence as Marshall tries to gain his bearings.

SPIELMAN (CONT'D)

Look, I called Mason Jones over at BlackStar this morning. He wants to talk to you. Take a meeting. Jones is a good man.

Marshall stands up and salutes.

MARSHALL

Mason Jones?

Spielman nods. Marshall turns and walks out of the office. After a moment, Spielman picks up the phone and dials a number.

SPIELMAN

Mason Jones.

INT. SAUNA - DAY

MASON JONES (52), tall, shaved head, sturdy like a brick, with an air of power, and unshakable confidence to match, sits naked from the waist up in a sauna, toned muscles gleaming with perspiration.

Across from him, sits SENATOR WILSON GILLIAM (50), African-American and a bit overweight, also naked from the waist up.

GILLIAM

The U.S. Government does not reply to power plays from anyone, Mason - not from other countries, not from other rulers, and certainly not from the CEO of a private security firm trying to milk America's teat for just a little more. This deal might be great for you - I don't think it's good for us.

Jones' steely gaze does not vacillate an inkling as silence engulfs the sweaty room. Finally, Jones stands up, his gaze never leaving the pudgy man across from him.

JONES

Okay, Senator. You *will* vote how we are asking you to vote because it's in the best interest of the country.

GILLIAM

I don't...

Jones holds up a finger to his lips.

JONES

You're not at a political junket right now, Senator. If I want bullshit, I'll ask for it. Now, listen to me.

He walks slowly towards the Senator as he speaks in perfectly measured beats. His voice never rises or falls, but stays steady, measured.

JONES (CONT'D)

I'm a man who gets what I want. Not every now and then. Not sometimes. Not even most of the time. Every god damn time. This is a new thing for me. I've take orders for a long time. Now I'm CEO of the biggest fucking private Security firm in the world. I give orders and shit gets done.

He stands awkwardly close to the Senator and takes the man's ear between his thumb and index finger and slowly begins to pinch and turn.

JONES (CONT'D)

Now, I don't get my way because I'm a petulant child, Senator.

The Senator begins to squirm with pain.

JONES (CONT'D)

I get my way because I don't ask for anything I shouldn't get.

The Senator screams out in pain and tries to pull Jones' hand from his head.

JONES (CONT'D)

You will vote the way I'm asking you to, Senator. Please. Or...

(beat)

Well, I don't want to imagine what follows that 'or'.

He releases his grip and - as the Senator tries to catch his breath - walks out of the sauna.

EXT. GYM - LATER

Jones, now dressed in a \$5000 suit, emerges from the gym and heads for a stretch limo waiting at the curb.

LUTHER (40's) a stiff, over-muscled man wearing sunglasses opens the door to the limo, and Jones climbs in.

INT. LIMO - CONTINUOUS

Marshall sits in the limo, looking uncomfortable in an ill-fitted suit. Jones gets in, sits down, smiles and reaches his hand out to Marshall.

JONES

Mr. Nelson. Nice to finally meet you.

Marshall shakes the man's hand.

JONES (CONT'D)

You can nearly always tell the worth of a man by how well he shakes a hand.

MARSHALL

I'm afraid this is a mistake, sir.

JONES

Call me Mason.

MARSHALL

General Spielman has been a friend for a very long time - I wanted to respect that, and at least meet you. But -- I just don't think I could do this.

JONES

(smiles)

And what is *this*, Marshall?

MARSHALL

You get paid to shoot shit up.

JONES

You were a Beret for twenty-six years. Spielman says you were in the Black. Were you NOT paid to shoot shit up?

MARSHALL

I fought for the country. For the man next to me. Never for money.

JONES

I'd contend we do the same. We just get paid a little better. Or maybe a lot better.

Marshall smiles and holds out his hand to Jones.

MARSHALL

Mason, I just don't think this is for me.

Jones nods, pulls a card from his pocket.

JONES

Keep my card. You might wanna call me in a few months. I mean, what do you think a guy like you does? Work as a rent-a-cop?

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - SMALL OFFICE - NIGHT

CLOSE on Marshall. He forces a smile.

Come out to see Marshall sits, dressed in a rent-a-cop (private security) uniform next to RALPHIE (30's), overweight, bespectacled and curly-haired.

Marshall looks over at Ralphie, then across a metal desk to his new manager STAN (50's) African-American, tired-looking.

MARSHALL

Working with a partner isn't really my forte', Stan. Ralphie here seems awesome, I'm just not really sure...

Stan rolls his eyes and tosses two walkie-talkies across the desk.

STAN

I don't even give no shit. You ain't no Marine, no mo'. You work for America is Great Security. We work in pairs. *Everybody* works in pairs. Now, go on, get out of my office. You got boredom to get to.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - HALLWAYS - NIGHT

Ralphie and Marshall walk down a hallway. Ralphie is incredibly confident, cocky even.

RALPHIE

Twenty-six years in the Armed Forces, huh? You must be proud. I've been with America is Great here for eleven years and the good Lord knows I'm proud as hell.

Ralphie points over at an office.

RALPHIE (CONT'D)

Let's check this out.

Ralphie unlocks an office and walks through the door, turns on the light. He looks around.

RALPHIE (CONT'D)

This is Stoller Financial. One of the top twelve financial firms in the Raleigh-Durham area. Impressive, really. And WE keep it safe.

MARSHALL

Top twelve, huh?

RALPHIE

Well, number twelve, but still...

(sighs a happy sigh)

This is what we do. We're in the business of keeping companies like this safe. Not to make a direct correlation, but as much as you mighta saved some of them brownies over in the Afghan -- here, we keep *America* great, and that's what REALLY matters. Companies like Stoller Financial are what make this country great. I don't think I'm overstating when I say what we do is the backbone of America.

MARSHALL

Is that so?

They walk out of the office and walk down the hallway.

RALPHIE

You ever been married, Marshall?

MARSHALL

I was married for...

RALPHIE

I've been married eleven years, Marshall. This job is only the second best thing in my life. Mary Wilson - her maiden name, obviously she has the same last name as me now - Mary Wilson is the best thing to happen to me.

MARSHALL

Great. Congrats.

RALPHIE

I'm just saying that you have to have your priorities right in this job, Marshall. Where are your priorities?

RALPHIE (CONT'D)

Do you know Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, Marshall?

MARSHALL

Ralphie, look, I didn't ask for this, and if things work out, we're gonna have to be together on a daily basis. So, why don't we start off slow. Maybe a year, maybe five years from now -- maybe then we'll get to knowing each other. But, lets...

RALPHIE

Shhhh...Did you hear that?
(whisper)
Something isn't right.

Ralphie and Marshall walk down the hall and stop at the half-opened door of Stan's office. Marshall pushes the door open and looks in.

STAN'S OFFICE

The office is in chaos -

- file cabinets open
- files strewn about the office
- the chairs Marshall and Ralphie were sitting in turned over

-- Marshall focuses on Stan's legs protruding from the back of the desk.

RALPHIE

Wha...what happened?

Marshall walks over to the desk, looks down at Stan's body, then back at Ralphie.

MARSHALL

Ralphie, call this in. Now.

Ralphie pulls out a phone, then gets a look of surprise on his face and puts his hand up to his neck.

RALPHIE

What the...? Fuuuuck.

MARSHALL

Ralphie?

Ralphie removes his hand from his neck and looks down at his hand covered in blood. Blood begins to spurt from his neck. He falls to the ground.

As the overweight security guard hits the ground, Marshall takes off towards the hallway.

MOCKINGBIRD (30's), with a dark beard and dark, piercing eyes, and SWALLOW (20's), black haired, skinny and sinewy, step into the doorway, both carrying silenced hand guns.

As they enter the doorway, Marshall jumps onto them, knock them back into the...

HALLWAY

Marshall knocks the gun from Swallow's hand and kicks Mockingbird back. He picks up Swallow's gun and throws it down the hallway.

Swallows jumps on Marshall's back, claws at his face, as he trades blows with Mockingbird.

Swallow attacks his left side with some sharp object. Marshall screams out in pain and throws her down to the ground. He looks down to a torn section of his shirt and a wound seeping red.

MARSHALL

Shit!

Marshall throws Swallow against the wall. Before she hits the ground he picks her up and throws her into Mockingbird.

They crumple to the ground as Marshall takes off down the hallway. As he picks up the gun he threw down the hallway earlier, a shot fires from behind him and craters the wall at the end of the hallway.

He rolls and squeezes off a shot at the couple, then runs around the corner. The assassins get to their feet.

Marshall fumbles with his master key as he reaches the Stoller Financial offices. He drops the key.

He looks up just as the assassins round the corner. He looks at them, then back to the door -- and just kicks the door in.

STOLLER FINANCIAL OFFICE

Marshall shuts the door at the SOUND of bullets striking the outer door frame.

MARSHALL

So much for boredom to get to.

Marshall runs into the next room, an...

OFFICE SPACE

-- replete with wall to wall cubicles with a three-foot aisle-way down the middle. From the room next door, Marshall hears the door burst open, kicked in again.

He takes off down the aisleway between the cubicles on either side of the room.

The assassins come into the room slowly, guns aimed. They come into the office and open fire as Marshall dives behind the last set of cubicles.

MARSHALL

Are you after me, or you just trying
to rob the building?

Silence. Marshall turns around and thinks, then looks at the large eight foot by nine foot window in front of him. He pulls the magazine out of his gun, then pushes it back in - eight bullets left.

He looks around the cubicle and immediately ducks as Mockingbird fires at his head.

MOCKINGBIRD

Swallow, flank him.

Marshall turns and fires two shots down the aisle-way and Mockingbird dives for cover. Marshall turns back around and thinks for a moment. He fires a shot at the window. The shot ricochets off, leaving a pockmark where the bullet hit.

MARSHALL

Shit.

Marshall fires again at the same spot...

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

The fourth floor window explodes and shards of glass rain down onto the ground.

INT. STOLLER OFFICE SPACE - CONTINUOUS

Marshall turns to see the Couple slowly making their way down the aisle-way. He fires a shot off and they dive for cover.

MARSHALL

Take whatever you want...no reason for anyone else to get killed tonight.

Marshall looks around the edge of the cubicle and ducks just in time as a piece of the cubicle wall's padded board disappears from a gunshot.

He fires a couple more shots, then quickly crawls to the broken window, lets himself down over the side, hovering above a small strip of grass below.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

The Couple fire a few more shots from inside the office building that spark as they ping off the outer window.

Then Marshall simply lets himself fall to the ground, from thirty or so feet above. He hits the ground and rolls over onto the sidewalk. He lays on his back and points his gun up at the window.

The couple rush up to the window and look down, then disappear as Marshall squeezes off one last shot. The gun is empty. He tosses it to the side.

Marshall gets up and runs, limping slightly, across the parking lot to his car. The Couple fire a few shots that bounce and ping meaninglessly off the pavement.

Marshall gets into his car and - as he picks up his cell phone from the passenger seat - takes off.

INT. MARSHALL'S CAR - NIGHT

Marshall drives furiously, cell phone up to his ear.

MARSHALL

Yes, I need to report a shooting.
(beat as he listens)
There's been a shooting at 4950
Glenwood Drive in Raleigh. Get there,
now!

He hangs up the phone and throws it on the passenger seat.

EXT. MARSHALL'S HOME - NIGHT

Marshall's car stops on the street in front of his house. He warily looks through up at the house.

He parks on the curb, gets out. He walks up the driveway, cautiously, to the back of his house.

When he reaches the back door, he looks down to a piece of floss stretching across the bottom door jam. It's intact. He puts the key in the door and enters the house.

INT. MARSHALL'S HOME - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Marshall quietly shuts the door behind him and walks into the kitchen. He stops. Listens. Silence.

He relaxes slightly, then walks over to the counter and pulls out a first aid kit, begins to work on bandaging the wound on his abdomen.

Movement causes him to look up. Two men dressed in black, wearing ski masks, walk past the doorway to the kitchen, notice Marshall and stop.

MARSHALL

(sighs)

I guess they were after me.

He turns and pulls a knife from the drawer next to him as the two men move quickly towards him.

EXT. MARSHALL'S HOME - NIGHT

A car screeches to a stop, next to Marshall's car. The Assassins, bruised and battered, step out of the car and walk up the driveway.

They listen intently at the front of the house, then begin to make their way around the side of the house towards the back.

From inside the house, two gunshots backlight the kitchen. The Couple flinch, duck, then run back down the driveway.

INT. MARSHALL'S HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Marshall applies the bandage to his side.

Around him, the kitchen is in chaos --

-- table overturned
-- the knife is stuck in the wall
-- papers scattered all over
-- and in the middle of the kitchen the two men in black lay, dead, shot.

He finishes applying the bandage, then walks to the closet by the back door and retrieves a large backpack. He opens the bag to reveal several changes of clothes, various sundries and a 9mm Magnum.

He pulls the gun out and puts it in the back of his pants, then lifts the backpack to his back.

EXT. MARSHALL'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

Marshall exits his back door and rounds the corner of his home, dials 911 on his phone. As his finger hovers over 'send' button, a GUNSHOT sounds, and Marshall's body jerks left.

He dives to his left as another gunshot CRACKS, and a window behind him crashes. He throws the backpack off.

Marshall pulls his gun out and chambers a bullet. He scrambles to his right and rolls to a stop on his stomach, shoots at a pair of feet underneath his car.

Swallow screams, shot, and falls to the ground, her head barely visible from behind the car. Marshall fires again, and the top of her head disappears. She won't be getting up.

Mockingbird stands up and runs towards Marshall, yelling, and firing a semi-automatic rifle at him. Bullets chew up the ground around Marshall as he rolls away to his side.

He brings his gun up and fires at Mockingbird, hits him in the chest.

The round jolts Mockingbird enough that he stops firing for a split second, grimaces - but keeps coming. Bullet-proof vest. Marshall fires again and hits Mockingbird's gun-firing arm, the shooting stops.

Marshall shoots Mockingbird in the chest again, the impact of the bullet knocking him backwards. He lets go of his gun and Marshall runs over to Mockingbird.

MARSHALL

Who the fuck are you?!

Mockingbird spits up at Marshall. Marshall bends down and puts the gun to the Assassin's chin.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

She called you Mockingbird! Why are you here?

Mockingbird sneers at Marshall and smiles.

MOCKINGBIRD

Blue Falcon.

MARSHALL

Blue Falcon? Who? You?

MOCKINGBIRD

(sneers)

Blue Falcon.

Suddenly, Marshall's house explodes and Marshall and Mockingbird are thrown across the driveway and the world goes...

BLACK

Silence.

INT. A BEDROOM - DAY

CLOSE on Marla. Marshall's hand reaches over and musses her hair, causes it to fall in her face. She brushes it away, smiles.

Marla's mouth opens to speak. Her voice sounds like it is miles and miles away.

MARLA

Come back to me. Safe.

Her voice dissolves into a cacophony of noise.

EXT. MARSHALL'S HOME - NIGHT

Marshall jerks awake, looks around. Mockingbird is lying next to him, unmoving. Marshall shakes his head and looks over at where his house was -- it's a burning mound of wood and brick.

As sirens sound somewhere in the distance, Marshall stands up and stumbles over to his bag. He picks up the bag and then gets to his car as quickly as he can, gets in, drives off.

EXT. NORTH CAROLINA WOODS - EVENING

Marshall's car pulls off to the side of the road in the middle of a wooded area. He gets out of the car and paces back and forth.

He looks at his arm where he was shot, and finds just a flesh wound. He paces, paces, then goes around and opens his trunk. Reaches in...

EXT. SPIELMAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Marshall's car pulls up in front of a massive colonial mansion, lights blazing in the night.

Marshall gets out of the car as the front door opens. Spielman scurries on to the porch.

SPIELMAN

Marshall? Is everything okay?

MARSHALL

I'm sorry to bother you, General, but four men tried to kill me tonight. Called me Blue Falcon. I didn't know where else to go.

SPIELMAN

Of course, of course - come in.

Spielman waves Marshall up onto the porch.

INT. SPIELMAN'S HOUSE - STUDY - NIGHT

Marshall and Spielman walk into the study. Spielman shuts the door behind them, then pours two tumblers of bourbon. He holds one out for Marshall, who nods, takes it.

Spielman sits down at the desk with the bourbon as Marshall wanders, looking at the books on the shelves.

SPIELMAN

Tell me everything, Marshall.

MARSHALL

They came for me at work. Then at home.

Spielman refills his tumbler. Leans back in his chair.

SPIELMAN

Blue Falcon - how'd that come up?

MARSHALL

He just looks at me and says 'Blue Falcon'.

(beat)

I've lost everything. The house is gone. They killed my boss and co-worker. I don't...

As Marshall trails off, Spielman takes another drink.

SPIELMAN

Anything else? Did they say anything else?

MARSHALL

(shakes his head)

I don't know. I don't know, Frank.

SPIELMAN

Did you call anyone? The Cops? Anyone? Angel, maybe?

MARSHALL

No. No one. Not even Angel.

Spielman finally relaxes, though it goes unnoticed by Marshall. Spielman takes a drink, then reaches down and opens a drawer in his desk.

SPIELMAN

Why didn't you take the BlackStar job?

MARSHALL

Frank, come on - I've never fought for money.

SPIELMAN

There's nothing wrong with getting paid for your expertise. You've done your duty.

MARSHALL

I've never done anyone I've worked with wrong, General. Never. I'm not a Blue Falcon, not a Buddy Fucker. Where does this come from?

SPIELMAN

The kid?

MARSHALL

Shaw?

SPIELMAN
 You nearly killed him - that might
 constitute doing him wrong.

MARSHALL
 Training is different. It's
 different.

SPIELMAN
 Someone else might not think so.

Marshall paces back and forth, thinks out loud.

MARSHALL
 It doesn't make sense.
 (turns away)
 These people who came for me, they
 were good. Pros. This isn't just
 some...

Marshall turns around to the SOUND of a click and finds
 Spielman pointing a cocked gun at him.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)
 Frank, uh, what are you doing?

SPIELMAN
 I'm sorry, Marshall. I am.

MARSHALL
 Frank?

Spielman pulls the trigger. The bullet hits Marshall center
 mass, knocks him backwards, to one knee.

Marshall looks down at the hole in his shirt, then back at
 Spielman, a look of abject betrayal across his face.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)
 You...you shot me?

SPIELMAN
 This is bigger than you and me,
 Marshall. If there were any other
 way, I...

Spielman walks around his desk towards Marshall. As he
 nears, Marshall reaches into the bullet hole and pulls out
 the bullet. Spielman's face relays cognitive dissonance.

SPIELMAN (CONT'D)
 You're wearing a vest?

Marshall throws the bullet at Spielman, hitting him in the face. Before Spielman can finish blinking, Marshall is on him, pummeling him.

Spielman tries to bring the gun up to Marshall's neck. Marshall knocks the gun from the General's hand. The gun clatters across the floor.

The older, out of shape General attempts, unsuccessfully, to keep up with Marshall. Grasping at straws, Spielman reaches up to his desk, grabs a massive paper weight and knocks Marshall across the head.

Marshall releases Spielman, who grabs his gun and tries to turn with it, but Marshall is back on top of him long before he can take aim.

They struggle, struggle --

-- Spielman brings the gun between them, aimed at Marshall's vest-protected abdomen
 -- a SHOT fires
 -- Marshall grimaces
 -- another SHOT, another grimace

Marshall struggles to gain control of the gun, turns it slowly back towards Spielman. Another SHOT....

The General cries out and his body relaxes, paralyzed by pain. Marshall helps the injured General to the ground.

A wound spills blood through the General's clothes and his eyes fade in and out of focus. Marshall looks down, with a mixture of anger and heartbreak.

MARSHALL

Oh, God, Frank, what the...?!

SPIELMAN

(coughs)

All I know is...

(a spasm)

I'm sorry, Marshall.

MARSHALL

The kid? Is this about Shaw?

Spielmen coughs up blood, takes a last gasping breath and expires. Marshall shakes his head and pounds the dead man's chest.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

Shit! Shit! Shit!

A long moment. He regains his composure.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

Shaw.

He let's the General's body down to the floor, then he runs over to the desk and begins rummaging through drawers. Finds what he's looking for.

Weekend passes with Spielman's signature.

INT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

Marshall walks through the barracks and spots Shaw sitting on his bunk. He walks over and drops a weekend pass in front of him. Shaw looks up and jerks his body as far away from Marshall as he can.

SHAW

Oh, shit!

MARSHALL

You and I are going to spend some time together. Grab your things.

SHAW

I...I didn't request a weekend pass.

MARSHALL

Life is full of all kinds of funny twists and turns.

He grabs Shaw by the collar and lifts him out of the bed.

EXT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

Marshall leads Shaw out of the barracks. Shaw carries a military issue duffel bag.

SHAW

Where are you taking me?

MARSHALL

R and R.

They reach the car, and Marshall takes Shaw's bag, throws it in the trunk. Marshall opens his door and starts to get in, before noticing that Shaw has paused outside the passenger door.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

Get in the car, soldier.

SHAW

I have a wife. And a little girl.

Marshall walks around the car and opens the passenger door.

MARSHALL

I'm not here to hurt you, Shaw. We're
in trouble. We're *both* in trouble
Now, get in the car. Please.

Reluctantly, Shaw does as requested. Marshall shuts the door
and walks back around and gets in the car.

INT. MARSHALL'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Marshall starts up the car, puts on his seatbelt.

MARSHALL

You're a Beret - don't be a puss.

Marshall puts the car in reverse.

SHAW

What is this about? You want to fight
me, teach me another lesson?

Marshall puts the car in drive.

MARSHALL

My lesson-teaching days are done.
This is serious.

INT. JONES' OFFICE - NIGHT

The opulent office is filled with war paraphernalia from
every war imaginable --

- a Roman sword and shield, bronze aged thousands of years
- an Arabic scimitar, featuring Arabic script across the
dull metal blade
- an ancient Greek dagger
- a German Luger P08 with a swastika carved in the handle
- a Russian AK-47, magazine in
- and many more weapons.

Jones sits behind a massive oak desk, reading glasses on,
looking through a file in front of him. He looks up at a
KNOCK on his door.

JONES

Yes?

RONNIE (40's) military cut, what he lacks in smarts he makes up for in muscle, and Luther walk in.

RONNIE
Sir, we've got problems.

Jones takes off his glasses and looks up at the two men.

RONNIE (CONT'D)
Three of the four we sent after Nelson - Swallow, Blue Jay and Redbird - ended up toe-tagged. Raleigh County Sheriff's Department is bagging them up now.

JONES
That's...unfortunate. Mockingbird?

RONNIE
Mockingbird made it out -- injured, but he'll live.

LUTHER
This Nelson guy's pretty good, right? Mockingbird's a bad ass.

Jones gives Luther a dirty look, turns back to Ronnie.

JONES
What else?

RONNIE
He got Spielman, too. His death is unreported -- at least till Monday, when his housekeeper comes in.

A long beat as Jones thinks. Ronnie looks over at Luther for courage, but continues.

RONNIE (CONT'D)
And Nelson took the Shaw kid off-base with a weekend pass signed by Spielman.

Jones slams his fist down on the table. After a moment of tense silence, he looks up and speaks in quiet, measured tones.

JONES
Take them out. Both of them.

LUTHER
The kid don't know nothing, boss. No need to kill him, too.

Jones looks at Luther then back at Ronnie. He calmly opens up a drawer in his desk and pulls out a gun and shoots right over Luther's shoulder.

One of Jones' prized war relics falls to the ground.

LUTHER (CONT'D)

FUCK!!!

Jones stands up behind his desk, straightens his suit and speaks calmly.

JONES

The kid knows enough. His father is a close ally of mine. Marshall Nelson is good enough to put it all together. Take them both out. Please.

LUTHER

You...you almost shot me!

Jones sits down at his desk again, puts the reading glasses on and looks down at the file below him.

JONES

Don't be a pussy.

Jones goes back to reading the file. After a long beat, he looks up at the two men.

JONES (CONT'D)

Is there something else?

INT. MARSHALL'S CAR - NIGHT

Marshall drives as Shaw looks warily over from the passenger seat.

SHAW

Where are you taking me?

MARSHALL

Four assassins came for me today.

SHAW

What does that have to do with me?

MARSHALL

That's what I'm trying to figure out, Shaw. One of the Assassins said something about a Blue Falcon.

SHAW

Blue Falcon...?

MARSHALL

Blue Falcon -- A Buddy Fucker, Bravo Foxtrot. The only Buddy I...you know, is you.

SHAW

I'm not your buddy.

MARSHALL

It means some guy - apparently me - screws or somehow gets another guy - apparently you - in trouble.

SHAW

You didn't just get me in trouble - you could've concaved my face.

MARSHALL

Listen to me. General Spielman tried to kill me. This is big.

SHAW

(confused)

General Spielman? Tried to kill you?

MARSHALL

I haven't had anyone come after me since my ops days.

SHAW

Ops?

MARSHALL

Black ops...never mind.

SHAW

What does any of this have to do with me?!

MARSHALL

No reason to get angry. We're on the same side here.

Shaw crosses his arms and looks out his window.

SHAW

We are *not* on the same side.

Out the passenger window, Shaw sees a Rest Area sign.

SHAW (CONT'D)

I have to pee - stop at the rest area.

Silence. Marshall punches the gas pedal as they roar past the Rest Area exit. Shaw sighs loudly.

MARSHALL

How many movies do idiots stop at Rest Areas only to have the Bad Guys try to kill them in the bathroom stall?
Yeah, I'm not dying in a bathroom stall.

SHAW

You're insane.

The lights of the next exit come into view.

MARSHALL

Civilization. No one's going to make a move on us in the middle of this.

Shaw circles his ear with his finger while whistling cuckoo sounds. Marshall rolls his eyes and shakes his head.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

Okay, hot shot. We'll see.

EXT. HIGHWAY EXIT - CONTINUOUS

Marshall's car takes the slight right onto the exit.

EXT. POPEYE'S RESTAURANT - MOMENTS LATER

The car pulls into the parking lot and parks.

INT. MARSHALL'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Shaw reaches for his door handle, but Marshall catches him, and shakes his head as he looks in the rear view mirror.

SHAW

I'm going to wet your seat.

MARSHALL

Hold on.

Marshall turns around in his seat and watches for a long moment. No cars follow them into the parking lot. Finally...

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

Okay.

EXT. POPEYE'S RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

They both get out of the car and walk to the restaurant.

SHAW

Popeye's? Really?

INT. POPEYE'S RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

They walk into the restaurant and nod to the couple of EMPLOYEES. They make their way back to the bathroom.

BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Shaw takes the urinal, Marshall the stall. Marshall reaches up with his foot and flushes the toilet.

MARSHALL

Ugh - someone left a surprise.

They both groan as they relieve themselves, then, in tandem, they zip up. Marshall gestures Shaw to the sink.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

No, you first, padwan.

Shaw washes his hands and dries them as Marshall washes his.

SHAW

How long do you plan on keeping me?

MARSHALL

Why did you challenge me that day?
You came at me like I was your worst
enemy or something.

Marshall opens the door to the bathroom and Shaw begins to step out -- only to stop, look up at two over-muscular MEN IN BLACK, wearing ski masks, each holding a needle.

Shaw looks confused. But surprise turns to terror quickly as the men jump towards him.

Marshall pulls Shaw back into the bathroom and shuts the door on one man's arm, knocking the needle from his hand. The hand disappears.

Then one of the men tries to kick in the door.

SHAW

What the...?

Marshall lets go of the door and steps aside as one of the MEN IN BLACK bum-rushes the door, and simply runs past Shaw and Marshall.

MARSHALL

Shaw!

Shaw looks confused until the attacker begins to lift the needle towards him. Shaw springs into action.

The two men fight each other, hard.

HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Marshall takes on the other MAN IN BLACK outside the bathroom. This one's good. Really good. Marshall pushes him back into the dining room as wide-eyed employees watch.

EMPLOYEE 1

I'm gonna call the POE-leece!

The Man in Black picks Marshall up and throws him over the counter. He follows quickly, as Marshall gets back to his feet. They engage again. The Man in Black is on the offensive, pushing Marshall back into kitchen.

Marshall picks up a pan from a counter and knocks the Man in Black over the head. Dents the pan. He pulls it back. The man is unfazed.

Marshall sighs and throws the pan to the side. They go back to fighting. The Man pushes Marshall back, back, back.

The door to the restaurant's freezer opens and a Popeye's EMPLOYEE walks out carrying a box of chicken. Looks shocked. Then jumps to the side as Marshall and the man continue fighting. Into the...

FREEZER

The door shuts behind them. Marshall pushes the man back into the closed door. Their breath fogs up around them.

MARSHALL

Who are you? How the hell did you find me again?

The man sneers and calmly pulls out a large knife. He comes at Marshall, swiping the knife left and right.

Marshall picks up a box from a shelf nearby. The Man slices the box again and again. Frozen chicken dumps out on the floor.

MAN IN BLACK

You have all of BlackStar after you,
Nelson. There is no escape. You
should just give up now.

Marshall drops the sliced up box and picks up a large brown bag as the man comes at him again. The man slices the bag open. A bit of flour pours out onto the ground.

Marshall drops the bag and a plume of flour explodes upward. Marshall and the man disappear into the cloud of finely-crushed grain.

The SOUND of a struggle. Of someone being beaten. Of someone being stabbed. Of a body falling to the ground.

As the flour clears, Marshall emerges, covered in white. He opens the door to the freezer to reveal the whole staff of the restaurant standing outside.

EMPLOYEE 2

Um...what's going on?

MARSHALL

Call nine-one-one. The man inside the
freezer is dead - and there will be
another dead in the bathroom.

(realization)

Shit - the bathroom...

Marshall runs towards the front of the restaurant.

BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Marshall enters the restroom quickly. Finds the door to the stall closed. He slowly makes his way over and pushes open the gently-swinging door.

In the stall, the Man in Black lies on the floor. Marshall warily pushes open the stall door to find -

-- Shaw, sitting on the toilet holding the large needle.

MARSHALL

Shaw?

He looks up at Marshall, holds up the needle.

SHAW
20 CCs of Ketamine. That could kill a horse.

Marshall nods to the dead guy.

MARSHALL
And him?

SHAW
Yeah, him.

Marshall takes a phone from the dead man's pocket, turns it on to find a text: "Text when it is done" from B.S. 1.

MARSHALL
Blackstar.

SHAW
Blackstar?

As sirens sound somewhere not so far away, Marshall quickly helps Shaw up.

MARSHALL
All right, buddy, we gotta get going. This would be a bad time to meet up with our friends in the local police force.

They exit the bathroom.

INT. MARSHALL'S CAR - NIGHT

Marshall drives quietly. Flour still cakes his clothes, but his face is cleaner.

Shaw watches the moonlit scenery fly by the car, depression masking his face. Marshall pulls out his phone and powers it down, returns it to his pocket.

MARSHALL
The phone is supposed to be secure, untraceable.

SHAW
This is real, huh?

Marshall doesn't answer. No need.

SHAW (CONT'D)
How old were you when you got your first kill?

MARSHALL

You did what you had to, Shaw.

Shaw's eyes don't leave the tobacco fields that shimmer in the lunar brilliance.

SHAW

His eyes were open. It was like his soul just got up and left his body. I watched it go.

Marshall pulls up his shirt, reveals that the wound in his side is bleeding again. Worse than before. He grimaces as he touches it.

SHAW (CONT'D)

They have to think I know something if they're coming for me, too. They showed up with two needles. They were coming for me. Right?

MARSHALL

I'm sorry I don't know, Shaw...

Shaw shakes his head in disbelief.

SHAW

If someone said to me, 'Sterling, you have to put your life in danger for one guy or else he will absolutely die', and then they lifted a curtain and showed you - I would literally turn and walk away. I hate you that much.

(beat)

Asshole.

Marshall drives.

INT. HOTEL BALLROOM - NIGHT

Enter on a massive, rowdy political crowd chanting, cheering, whistling, roaring as the lights come up on a small stage at the front of a hotel ballroom featuring a bevy of microphones displaying logos of every news outlet.

COLIN FRANKLIN (44), African-American, strong, proud, athletic-looking but relaxed, eyes brilliant, shining, as the crowd screams his praises.

He gestures for the crowd to calm and - though it is obvious they want to continue - his leadership is undeniable. They quiet down. And he steps up to the microphones -

-- and waits, looking around the room, with eyes that tell everyone in the crowd how very important they are to him.

And then...

FRANKLIN

I grew up in Newark, New Jersey. My father drove a bus for the MTA. My mother taught public school. We mighta been poor, but we had love!

He is undeniably charming. Presidential, even. The crowd cheers. He waits for the perfect in-between of cheers dying and actually disappearing, then continues.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

My life is your life.

(beat)

Unless you're Jack Foley and you're a rich fat cat on Capitol Hill -- then my life ain't nothing like your life!

The crowd laughs and cheers.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

I...am the new America. YOU are the New America! We don't need old rich men in Washington telling us that they should pay fewer taxes than the working man!

The crowd cheers!

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

We don't need a Washington that does things the same old way they always have! We need a New America! A New America! And you are the New America! I am the New America! WE are the new America!

The crowd goes nuts.

NEWSLINE SET - CONTINUOUS

The screen moves out to reveal three middle-aged NEWSMEN sitting around a table, watching the newscast. The video fades to black, morphs to a "NewsLine" logo.

NEWSMAN 1

That was Colin Franklin, first term Senator from New Jersey speaking at a rally for his supporters in Raleigh, North Carolina last night. So, guys, what'd we think?

NEWSMAN 2

Quite the orator, is he not?

NEWSMAN 3

He makes the common man feel like they are a part of his rise to power. A year ago, no one in this room - and I'd dare say any room - knew who Colin Franklin was. Yet today he's the frontrunner to win the Democratic nomination to run against incumbent President Jack Foley. It's an unbelievable story, really.

NEWSMAN 1

You see this so rarely -- the meteoric rise, the promise of so much good, the potential for a man to be great.

NEWSMAN 2

He's incredibly popular - let's hope it stays that way for good.

NEWSMAN 3

This man truly is a once-in-a-lifetime politician.

INT. MARSHALL'S CAR - NIGHT

Marshall drives and Shaw still stares out his window. The radio chatters in the background, just loud enough to be heard over the hum of the road.

NEWSMAN 2

We are the new America, gents!

The newsmen laugh together.

NEWSMAN 1 (V.O.)

That is it for our show tonight, folks. Thank you for joining us here at NewsLine...

Marshall reaches down and turns off the radio. Looks over at Shaw.

MARSHALL

Kid, you gotta come out of it.

SHAW

I can't stand being in this car much longer. I'm just -- just going crazy.

Silence washes over the car as they drive through the nothingness of middle North Carolina.

MARSHALL

Why'd you come at me that day, Shaw?

SHAW

Oh, don't play dumb.

Confusion flutters across Marshall's face.

SHAW (CONT'D)

Come on - the notes?

MARSHALL

Notes? What notes?

SHAW

Every day for six weeks, you left them in my bunk.

MARSHALL

I never...what did they say?

SHAW

Every day was different. Usually something to do with my dad.

MARSHALL

Shaw, I didn't even know who your dad was till after our -- confrontation. Spielman told me. It wasn't me.

Shaw's paradigm begins to shift.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

Why did you beat up Freeney?

SHAW

What? I never touched that guy.

MARSHALL

What?! You kicked his ass!

SHAW

Oh, my God - that's why you made me an example. You got played. Holy shit...you got played.

MARSHALL

I'd say we both got played, Shaw.

Silence.

SHAW

We need a hotel.

MARSHALL

I feel like this is something big.

SHAW

I should call my dad.

Marshall looks troubled as he watches the road ahead.

SHAW (CONT'D)

My dad deals with BlackStar all the time.

MARSHALL

Why is BlackStar coming after us? It doesn't make sense. They tried to hire me.

SHAW

I should call my dad.

Marshall pulls his phone from his pocket and hands it to Shaw.

MARSHALL

Make it quick. We don't know who's listening.

Shaw turns the phone on. Dials.

SHAW

Blackstar are bad asses. Right?

INT. WASHINGTON D.C. BOARD ROOM - NIGHT

Enter on a proverbial smoky back room - a group of six Senators sitting in a board room, cigars in hand, tumblers of bourbon in front of them, all dressed in perfectly tailored suits.

They talk back and forth, voices raised, in between puffs on their cigars -

-- JIM DUNPHY (54), Alabaman, prematurely white-haired, giving him an air of Class.

-- AMIR NAZR (39) young, Arabic and very good-looking.

-- OTIS HELMS (72), bald, Southern, very white.

-- COREY BELL (47), young, African-American, good-looking.

-- STANLEY SMITH (67), head of the subcommittee, piercing eyes and far too heavy to be wearing the size suit he's wearing.

-- and, finally, SENATOR STERLING SHAW, SR. (55), elegant and classy, even in dress slacks and a sweater vest.

This is a private meeting of a sub-committee of Senators.

DUNPHY

I'm just saying that we're already on thin ice with the American people.

HELMS

Goddammit, I'm sick of defending war to the American people! This country was a better place when the constituents just let us do what the hell needed to be done to make shit right.

BELL

Oh, come on, Otis! You can't be serious! The American government took a shit in every country we could put our ass to for decades!

HELMS

Yeah, and the world was a better place for it, young'un! You can take your Communism and stuff it.

NAZR

(laughs)

How you still have office after all these years, I'll never understand.

DUNPHY

It's that deal he made with Satan back in his KKK years.

Everyone laughs as Helms gives Dunphy the finger. Smith raises his hands, taking control of the meeting.

SMITH

We are here to talk about BlackStar Securities and how they fit into our plans as we go forward. This sub-committee has to bring back some sort of suggestion to our peers.

HELMS

BlackStar is EXACTLY what this goddamn country needs. They're real men. This country has got pussies growing out our assholes - we need men! And BlackStar is a buncha men!

NAZR

Oh, come on! BlackStar is suspected of God knows how many atrocities. Everywhere they go, they leave a swath of destruction.

DUNPHY

They get the job done.

NAZR

At what cost, though?

HELMS

At what cost? This country is going to hell in a hand basket and a sand nigger is asking us at what cost the job gets done?

BELL

Watch your mouth, old man!

NAZR

BlackStar securities is nothing but a group of mercenaries. Mercenaries.

BELL

The question we have to ask ourselves is this: does America associate with mercs? Because that IS what they are.

SMITH

Sterling, you have been quiet thus far. What's your take on all of this?

All eyes turn to the Senior Senator from North Carolina.

SENATOR SHAW

The use of mercenaries, or hired soldiers - or Security Officers, as Blackstar calls themselves - has been around since the foundation of our country. Washington used them, for God's sake. There is a historical context for why they are used. *Because* their ultimate goal is financial it allows them to...take care of things that our military does not feel comfortable with. And, whether we like what that means in the comfort of our smoke-filled, bourbon-soaked back room on Capitol Hill, I can tell you that those things are taken care of because they must be. Freedom depends on hands getting dirty.

A beat of silence as Senator Shaw connects with every person in the room.

SENATOR SHAW (CONT'D)

We are working towards a New America, sure. A New America that can use good will and power based on trust to overcome evil. But we aren't there yet. And we won't be in this term, or the next. We *ARE* working towards it. Every step of the way, we rely on things like BlackStar Security less and less. But, for now - it feels like we need them.

Everyone thinks for a short while. Then heads start nodding.

NAZR

I can get behind that.

DUNPHY

I'm for it.

BELL

I'm for it, if there are guidelines for BlackStar to slowly be phased out of our plans.

HELMS

Shit, I never was against it.

SMITH

All right, I think we have our suggestion. Thanks, gentlemen.

They all begin to stand up as an aid comes and taps Senator Shaw on the shoulder.

AID
Sir, you have a phone call.

SENATOR SHAW
It'll have to wait.

AID
Sir, it's your son.

Senator Shaw pauses, looks at the Aid, then nods.

INT. SENATOR SHAW'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Shaw rushes into his office, sets down his things and picks up the phone.

SENATOR SHAW
Son?

INTERCUT the phone call as desired.

INT. MARSHALL'S CAR - SAME

Shaw holds the phone to his ear.

SHAW
Hey, dad.

SENATOR SHAW
Son, how are you?

SHAW
I'm in trouble.

SENATOR SHAW
Trouble?

SHAW
BlackStar.

SENATOR SHAW
(beat)
Okay, son. Where are you? We shouldn't talk about this here.

INT. JONES' OFFICE - NIGHT

Luther, now in a sling, and Ronnie stand next to Jones' desk, listening to a small digital recorder that is playing in front of Jones.

SENATOR SHAW (V.O.)
Can you get to Harrisburg-Raleigh
airport in two hours?

SHAW (V.O.)
Yes, sir. Two hours.

There is a click as the recorded phone call terminates.

RONNIE
You want us to send men, sir?

Jones allows a devious smile to creep up on his face.

JONES
Not this time.

EXT. HARRISBURG-RALEIGH PRIVATE AIRPORT - NIGHT

Marshall's car pulls out onto the tarmac of the small private airport towards a lone G6 Private Jet waiting. The car parks and Marshall and Shaw get out.

The door to the G6 opens and Senator Shaw runs down the stairs to his son, hugs him hard around his neck. He turns to Marshall, holds out his hand.

SENATOR SHAW
And who is this?

SHAW
This is Marshall Nelson.

Confusion skirts The Senator's face as he reconciles what that name meant to him in the past, and what it means now.

SHAW (CONT'D)
(nods)
Yeah, the dipshit that messed me up.
We're apparently on the same team now.

Shaw climbs the stairs into the plane.

Senator Shaw punches Marshall hard in the shoulder. Awkward silence as the two powerful men stare each other down. Then, Marshall just nods, as if what just happened was deserved.

The Senator then steps aside and gestures for Marshall to head up the steps.

EXT. AIRPORT - NIGHT

The plane lifts off the tarmac.

INT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT

Marshall sits across from The Senator on one side of the plane, while Shaw sits on the opposite side of the plane by himself.

SENATOR SHAW

(sighs)

You're sure all of this has been
BlackStar?

Marshall picks up his drink and nods.

SENATOR SHAW (CONT'D)

I have long supported BlackStar - I believe that Mason Jones and his men have made tough choices and risked their lives to make the world a better place for America.

MARSHALL

What, effectively, does BlackStar do?

SENATOR SHAW

BlackStar technically provides security for U.S. Forces overseas.

SHAW

And for real?

SENATOR SHAW

They...get shit done.

MARSHALL

Can you help us? Do you have any pull with these people?

The Senator smiles and picks up a phone from the wall next to his seat.

SENATOR SHAW

Mason Jones is a personal friend.
We'll figure this out.

(a beat)

Mason Jones, please.

INTERCUT between locales as needed.

EXT. BLACKSTAR SHOOTING RANGE - SAME

Jones walks/runs through a shooting range, a bluetooth in his ear. At each "station" targets pop up and Jones shoots them using a silenced nine millimeter pistol.

JONES

Senator. Sterling. How are you this fine Carolina evening?

An Arabic, turban-wearing target pops up holding an AK-47. Jones shoots the target in the head. The paper target explodes and immediately falls to the ground. Jones moves on to the next target.

SENATOR SHAW

I've been better, Mason.

JONES

I'm sorry to hear that. How can I help you make things better?

Another target. Another perfect shot.

SENATOR SHAW

I'm with Marshall Nelson and my son.

JONES

Met Marshall a while back after he was retired...for kicking your son's ass, if I remember correctly.

SENATOR SHAW

Mason, am I out of the loop to believe that BlackStar Securities does not have leeway to operate on U.S. soil?

JONES

I don't think you're out of the loop.

Another target. Another hit.

SENATOR SHAW

I am also fairly sure that you are aware of what goes on within your company. Not much gets past you - if anything.

JONES

You would not be wrong about that.

One last target. Jones puts three bullets through the target's head.

SENATOR SHAW

What can we do about this, Mason?

Jones lets the gun drop to his side and turns around, talks slowly, perfectly into the phone.

JONES

Senator, I'm sorry you have become involved in this.

SENATOR SHAW

Can we bring this to its logical end, then?

JONES

It will come to its only logical end, I can promise you that, Senator.

Jones terminates the call.

INT. AIRPLANE - CONTINUOUS

The Senator replaces the phone and smiles.

SENATOR SHAW

I knew we could figure that out.

EXT. AIRPLANE - CONTINUOUS

Behind the plane, two unmanned drones fall into place.

INT. DRONE STATION - NIGHT

A nerdy DRONE OPERATOR (30's), sits in front of a laptop computer featuring a joy stick. He eats a handful of cheese puffs then pushes up his thick-rimmed glasses, leaving cheesy remnants on the lenses.

DRONE OPERATOR

Shit.

He wipes his hands off on his pants, picks up a phone and dials a number, then sticks a blue tooth in his ear. A moment passes, then someone picks up on the other end.

DRONE OPERATOR (CONT'D)

Permission to engage, sir?

JONES (V.O.)

These are the new prototype, correct?

DRONE OPERATOR

These things are pretty bad ass - and completely ours. No one has this shit yet - not even the government.. Up to six hundred miles an hour, no propeller - just pure jet power. These things are gonna make the military jizz themselves. I can promise you that.

EXT. BLACKSTAR CAMPUS - SAME

Jones walks across the campus, a towel around his neck, phone to ear.

JONES

It must look like the plane went down on its own, like an accident.

INT. DRONE STATION - CONTINUOUS

The Drone Operator takes another huge bite of cheese puffs, then talks through the half-chewed puffs.

DRONE OPERATOR

Well, that's my specialty, boss.

He hangs up the phone and adjusts the controls on his computer.

DRONE OPERATOR (CONT'D)

(to himself)

Military's gonna be shitting themselves over these babies!

EXT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT

The drones speed up and fly past either side of the plane.

INT. AIRPLANE - COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Roger (The Pilot) (40's), black-haired, Ken Doll-esque, startles as the drones scream by the G6, then turn to the left and right respectively and out of sight.

INT. AIRPLANE - CONTINUOUS

The Senator's drink on the table ripples.

MARSHALL

What was that?

SENATOR SHAW

Ha! You don't fly much in a small plane do you, Nelson? Calm down. Everything is just fine.

EXT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT

The drones, now turned around, speed straight for the G6. The aircraft fly towards one another in an incredible game of aerial chicken.

The G6 gives first, nose pointed down, barely missing the two drones, who fade to the left and right, respectively.

INT. AIRPLANE - CONTINUOUS

As the plane dips, drinks go flying, and Marshall and the Shaws grab their seats, attempting to retain some sense of gravity.

SENATOR SHAW

Whoa!

MARSHALL

Oh, God.

SHAW

What is happening?

The door to the cockpit swings open.

SENATOR SHAW

Roger? What's going on?

ROGER

Drones, sir.

Senator Shaw's face goes white.

SENATOR SHAW

BlackStar...

MARSHALL

I guess we know now what Jones sees as the only logical conclusion.

They quickly work at fastening their seat belts.

EXT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT

The drones come back around and head towards the plane. The G6 suddenly heads upwards, climbing, then quickly leveling out.

The drones quickly turn back around and head back towards the private plane.

INT. DRONE STATION - SAME

The Drone Operator licks his fingers and looks down at the computer screen, takes the joy stick in hand.

DRONE OPERATOR

Shit - good move there, pilot boy.

Buuut...

(he types a command)

let's see what you can do about...

(he punches a button)

...this!

EXT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT

The drones head back towards the G6. Suddenly, the drones begin to weave across and around each other.

INT. AIRPLANE - COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

In front of the cockpit windshield, the drones begin to weave back and forth.

ROGER

Ah, crap.

He pulls the wheel to the left.

EXT. AIRPLANE - CONTINUOUS

The plane banks to the left, just as one of the drones pulls to the right and clips the right wing of the G6.

The drone immediately goes into a tailspin, smoke billowing from the unmanned aircraft.

Meanwhile, the G6 shudders left then right, then begins to shake uncontrollably.

INT. DRONE STATION - CONTINUOUS

The Drone Operator watches the Drone go down and disappear from his screen.

DRONE OPERATOR

Dammit!

INT. AIRPLANE - CONTINUOUS

Marshall and the Shaws bounce around in their seats. The plane begins to shake furiously.

EXT. AIRPLANE - CONTINUOUS

The plane shakes and descends, headed towards a forest below. Behind the plane, the lone Drone turns around and follows.

The plane keeps going down, shaking, until finally the bottom of the plane connects with the top of the trees beneath it.

INT. AIRPLANE - COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Roger fights with the controls of the plane, then turns back and look back into the passenger area.

ROGER

Senator, sir, we are going to have to bring her down. Sooner than later, sir.

EXT. AIRPLANE - CONTINUOUS

The plane bottom scrapes the trees, then - in an instant - the right wing catches the top of a taller tree, and the plane jerks and heaves.

Suddenly, with a horrific twist and scrape of metal, the wing rips from the plane.

The plane lists to the left and goes down quickly, through the trees, and hits the ground on its left side, slides. As it slides, the other wing is ripped from the plane's body.

The cylindrical body bounces then slides through the forest, finally coming to a stop between two trees.

The drone flies past, its onboard camera focusing on the crash below.

INT. DRONE STATION - CONTINUOUS

The Drone Operator pumps his fist and picks up his cellphone, dials a number, puts the phone to his ear.

DRONE OPERATOR

It's done. One of the drones went down. Send a team to clean it up.

INT. JONES' OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Jones hangs up the phone and allows, for a short moment, a smile to drift across his face.

Then he picks the phone up again and dials a number.

JONES

(into phone)

Get the team to the crash site. No one walks away.

RONNIE (O.S.)

They're two minutes away - they've been following as best they can.

INT. A BEDROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

CLOSE on MARLA. A hand reaches over and musses her hair, causes it to fall in her face. She brushes it away and smiles.

Marla's mouth opens to speak. Her voice sounds like it is miles and miles away.

MARLA

Come back to me. Safe.

Her voice dissolves into a cacophony of noise.

INT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT

Darkness has settled inside the injured private plane. The cabin is in chaos.

The passengers are alive (if not well), but covered with bumps and bruises.

Marshall unbuckles his seat belt and walks carefully up to the cockpit where Roger lies bloody, dead. Marshall turns to the Senator and shakes his head.

Shaw helps his father up from his seat.

SENATOR SHAW

We have to get out of here.

As they begin to walk to the front of the plane, the Senator walks gingerly, favoring his left leg.

SHAW

Are you okay?

Marshall pushes on the exit door. It doesn't budge. He rams into it with his shoulder. Nothing. Again. Again. Finally the metal screeches and the door opens a bit. Marshall forces it the rest of the way open.

Marshall runs over to his seat and picks up his bag, throws it over his shoulder, then grabs Shaw's duffel bag and makes his way over to the door with Shaw. He hands Shaw his bag.

EXT. NORTH CAROLINA WOODS - CONTINUOUS

Marshall and Shaw jump down to the ground, look back up the Senator.

SENATOR SHAW

I'm only gonna drag you down. Jones knows that if he comes after me he'll have a hell of a lot to explain. A plane crash is one thing - he can say it's an accident. Killing a Senator in cold blood is quite another. You two have to get out of here. Now.

SHAW

Dad, I'm not leaving you here.

SENATOR SHAW

Son, I'm a Senator. I'll be okay.

Suddenly, the Senator gets a confused look on his face and a small hole in his forehead begins spilling blood, and blood and brain matter sprays into the airplane behind him. He slumps over. Dead.

SHAW

Dad? Dad!

Marshall pushes Shaw down just as a barrage of bullets hit the airplane near where Shaw's head just was.

Marshall points at a group of six BLACKSTAR MEN wearing night vision goggles, carrying silenced automatic weapons, making their way through the dark of the woods. The leader of the group is Mockingbird.

Marshall and Shaw get up and run in the opposite direction. The soldiers spot them immediately and begin firing.

As Marshall and Shaw run, the trees around them explode as bark and wood are chewed up by BlackStar bullets. They run as the wood chips float around them in a strange ballet of carnage.

The BlackStar men stop firing and the woods fall back to silence. They methodically search, trying to catch some glimpse of Marshall and Shaw.

They move forward slowly, carefully, guns cocked and ready. They stop next to a stand of trees bunched together. Mockingbird points to his eyes, then points inside the stand of trees.

He pulls out a silenced hand gun and stalks into the darkness of the stand of trees. He comes around one tree, pistol aimed. Finds nothing. Another tree. Nothing. Another.

He exits the stand of trees and almost immediately - seemingly out of nowhere - Marshall has his arm around the man's neck. He brings the man's firearm up and uses it to shoot one of the other men.

Before the other men can react, Shaw falls from a tree branch above and knocks three of them to the ground.

Marshall uses Mockingbird's gun to shoot a BlackStar man raising his gun towards Shaw, killing him instantly.

The three men on the ground struggle to bring their guns up, but Shaw kicks one of them in the head, knocking him out, then points his gun down at the other two, who pause.

MARSHALL

Back for more, I see.

MOCKINGBIRD

The job's not finished.

Marshall pushes Mockingbird away. The Blackstar man stumbles back and assumes a defensive pose.

SHAW

Marshall?

MARSHALL

Stay where you're at, Shaw.
 (to Mockingbird)
 Why are you after me?

MOCKINGBIRD

Why do you think?

Marshall lifts up his gun and shoots Mockingbird in the head, spraying Shaw with blood and brain matter.

Shaw looks down at the mess, in shock.

SHAW

Oh, my God.

The man Shaw knocked out (EAGLE) begins to stir. Marshall walks over and pulls the man up to his knees, as Shaw struggles not to gag while trying to clean the body matter from his face and chest.

Marshall pulls off each of the Blackstar men's night vision goggles. He squats down next to the first man.

MARSHALL

Why are you after me?

EAGLE

You heard Mockingbird.

Marshall punches the man.

EAGLE (CONT'D)

You don't even know what you're into.
 You should just let me put a gun to
 your head and pull the trigger.
 You're just a dead man walking.

MARSHALL

You're the second person to say that
 to me today. I'm sick of people
 saying that to me.
 (to Shaw)
 Tie them up.

SHAW

With what?

MARSHALL

Good point.

Marshall hits Eagle in the forehead with the butt of his gun, knocks the man out instantly. He raises his gun to knock out the next one.

SHAW

Kill these assholes! They killed my dad!

Marshall hits the next man, knocks him out.

MARSHALL

Killing these guys won't do for you what you want it to do.

SHAW

And what if I just want them dead?

Shaw walks quickly to the third man, aims his gun and begins to squeeze the trigger. But looks at Marshall. Who shrugs.

MARSHALL

If you think that will make you feel better, then pull the trigger.

BLACKSTAR MAN 2

No! Please, no! I do this for a fucking pay check, not to get killed.

Marshall bends down to the man.

MARSHALL

Why are you after us? What is this all about?

BLACKSTAR MAN 2

Come on, man - you have to know we don't have that info. All we know is that we are to take the two of you out at any cost.

MARSHALL

At any cost?

BLACKSTAR MAN 2

When BlackStar says collateral is acceptable, then whoever is being chased has no chance. None.

He gestures towards the first man Marshall knocked out.

BLACKSTAR MAN 2 (CONT'D)

That's what Eagle was trying to say. Jones has his sites on you. They're willing to clean up messes after the fact -- as long as you're dead. It's not a situation you want to be in. Mortality rate is certain.

SHAW

Why the hell does Mason Jones...

Marshall knocks the third man out.

MARSHALL

He doesn't know. None of them will.
Only Jones will have answers.

Marshall quickly frisks all of the BlackStar men - both dead and unconscious - for weapons. He takes Shaw's duffel bag and divides the weapons between it and his bug-out bag. He hands the duffel bag back to Shaw.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

This is where we split up, kid.

SHAW

What?!

MARSHALL

I think it's for the best right now.

SHAW

What the...?! You got me into this
shit and now you're just gonna discard
me? They - they killed my father
right in front of me.

MARSHALL

You're gonna be better off by
yourself. Trust me.

SHAW

You know that isn't true.
(beat, realization)
You think you'll be better off without
me.

Marshall sighs, turns to the kid.

MARSHALL

Shaw - we're in deep shit. I most
likely won't make it alone. I sure as
hell won't make it with you tethered
to me like a fifty pound bag.

SHAW

You said it: a partner more than
doubles your chances to make it out
alive. It's exponential.

MARSHALL

I was talking about two guppies
teaming together. Not -- me and you.

SHAW

No. Hell, no. You got me into this -
now get us out. You're the badass,
remember? I'm just the stupid recruit
you beat the shit out of to make a
point.

(beat)

A misguided point, I might remind you.
You owe me, asshole.

Marshall thinks for a long moment.

MARSHALL

I'm not going out of my way to keep
you alive, kid.

(beat)

But you can tag along.

The first of the unconscious men begins to stir. Marshall
takes off running into the woods.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

High-step it - those goons won't be
out for long!

Shaw takes off after him.

EXT. HIGHWAY - SAME

Marshall and Shaw run up an embankment to a quiet highway. A
lone SUV lumbers towards them slowly.

They stand in the middle of the road and wave the vehicle
down. The driver's side window rolls down and they talk to
the driver a short moment. After a moment, they climb into
the vehicle and it takes off.

EXT. TOBACCO FACTORY - DURHAM - SAME

The SUV pulls to a stop outside an abandoned Tobacco Factory,
drops Marshall and Shaw off, then pulls away.

Marshall and Shaw turn and look at the abandoned factory for
a moment.

MARSHALL

This looks like about as good a place
as any to hide out.

Marshall takes off towards the abandoned building. Shaw shakes his head and follows.

INT. TOBACCO FACTORY - NIGHT

Marshall and Shaw enter the dark factory and look around. Marshall takes out his phone and turns it on, uses the flash from the camera as a flashlight.

SHAW

Is your phone on?

MARSHALL

They have followed us every single place we've been, just steps behind us. They haven't been tracking the phone - it's been off. If we're going to take Jones down, we have to have the element of surprise. We have to figure out how they're following us.

Marshall drops his bug-out bag on the ground and dumps out the contents. He picks up his phone and opens up an application, then slowly waves his phone over all the gear.

SHAW

What's that?

MARSHALL

I had a friend put together a bug sweeper app. Reads any extra electronic pulses.

He runs the phone over the gear, but nothing makes a sound. He looks confused.

SHAW

What happens if there's a bug?

MARSHALL

A buzzing sound.

He runs the phone over the gear again.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

I don't understand. It - it has to be in my stuff. They've followed me from the beginning - before I got to you.

(beat)

Here, give me your stuff.

Shaw puts his bag on the ground. Marshall opens the bag and runs the phone over Shaw's stuff. Nothing.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

What the...? I, I don't understand.
There *has* to be something.

He looks at his phone's screen and shakes his head. The screen is dirty. He breathes on the screen, fogging it up.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

I don't know...

He rubs the screen on his shirt to clean it off, when the phone begins to make a buzzing sound.

SHAW

Is that...?

Marshall looks even more confused. He puts the phone back down on his abdomen and it buzzes again, then pulls up his shirt to reveal the bandage on his abdomen.

SHAW (CONT'D)

Did someone do that to you?

MARSHALL

Shit.

EXT. TOBACCO FACTORY - NIGHT

Five blacked out Escalades quietly park outside the abandoned building. Twenty BlackStar Heavies pour out of the vehicles, all heavily armed, all dressed in black. They burst through the door and into the factory.

INT. TOBACCO FACTORY - CONTINUOUS

The Heavies run through the building, guns aimed and ready. Eventually they all end up in one place, looking down.

One of the Heavies shines his flashlight down on a small microchip on the ground, surrounded by blood and a note that reads: "Who's got their sites on who now, Mason?"

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Crappy room with two double beds. Shaw's gear sits unpacked on one bed while Marshall sits on the other bed, reading.

Shaw emerges from the bathroom, hair dyed blonde and spiked. He pulls up his sleeve to reveal fake tattoos now covering his arm.

MARSHALL

You look like more of a douche than usual - and that's saying something.

SHAW

How can you possibly be so glib after all of this? You're reading a book?

MARSHALL

I had four tours in the Black, Shaw. You learn to cope.

Shaw sits on his bed, opens his bag and pulls out a picture of his wife and little girl. He reaches down and touches their faces in the picture, then returns the picture to the bag.

SHAW

I dunno what I'm gonna do.

MARSHALL

You have to put the crap out of your head for now, Shaw. You don't get to mourn till it's over and everyone's safe.

SHAW

How do you...
(he shakes his head)
...do that?

MARSHALL

You just do it. How long you been married?

SHAW

Five years. Four year old little girl. They're everything to me.

MARSHALL

Didn't wait long for kids, huh?

SHAW

Why do you have fake I.D.?

MARSHALL

Fake I.D.?

SHAW

You checked into the hotel with fake I.D., fake credit card...all fake with a fake name. Why?

Marshall stands up and walks into the bathroom.

MARSHALL

I was married for nine years. What made you wake up and decide to go into Special Forces? With a family...

SHAW

My C.O. tried to talk me out of it. Over eighty percent divorce rate. But we both knew what we were getting ourselves into. I think we'll be okay...hope we'll be okay.

Marshall picks up a set of hair clippers and begins to shave his head.

MARSHALL

I was in the Black for ten years. Nicaragua, Panama, First Gulf War, Afghanistan.

SHAW

That's why your marriage didn't work?

MARSHALL

My marriage didn't work because it didn't - she met someone else. I'm saying that I have fake materials because I was in the Black. When you're in long enough you make enemies that don't go away because you're training newbies now.

SHAW

You ever done all this before?

MARSHALL

I've had the bug-out bag waiting, in some form or fashion for twenty years. Never used it till today.

SHAW

Bug-out bag?

MARSHALL

Three changes of clothes, three different identities, toiletries, MRE's, all that stuff, ready to go at a moment's notice. Gives you time to get your shit together and think.

Marshall's head is completely bald as he walks out of the bathroom.

SHAW
(chuckles)
You've done *this* before, I see.

MARSHALL
(rubs his bald head)
A few times, yeah.

Marshall sits on the edge of the bed.

SHAW
I don't know what's next.

MARSHALL
They're trying to kill you, they
killed your dad. You're a part of
this somehow or another. But it's
big. The rabbit hole doesn't just
stop with us. It's something --
deeper than just you and me.

SHAW
So, what is it?

MARSHALL
For the first time in a long time, I'm
lost.

INT. BARN - DOG FIGHTING RING - NIGHT

Open on a crowd of people standing around a dirt ring as two pit bulls go at each other. The crowd cheers and cries out as the dogs fight.

Suddenly a cry rises from the crowd, then quiet murmuring. The fight is over.

In the ring, one pit bull lays dead while the other limps around the ring in a sad victory lap. Attendants quickly get in to pick up the dead dog, while corralling the winner out of the ring.

Mason Jones, standing in a roped off area outside the ring, groans and throws a piece of paper down on the ground.

JONES
Dammit! Every goddamn time!

Ronnie and Luther make their way through the crowd to the roped-off area and enter as two new dogs are set up in the ring by their owners.

JONES (CONT'D)

I hope you have good news for me. I'm losing my shirt here!

Ronnie simply hands Mason the bloody piece of paper from the tobacco factory. Jones opens it up and reads it. He calmly closes the piece of paper.

JONES (CONT'D)

What is this?

RONNIE

We, uh...found this next to the GPS chip Swallow implanted in Nelson.

Mason closes his eyes and takes a deep, long breath.

JONES

So we have no eyes on Nelson and Shaw?

LUTHER

They could be anywhere.

Mason straightens out his suit and walks out of the roped-off area and through the crowd. Ronnie and Luther follow closely behind.

EXT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

Outside the barn, Mason dials a number on his cell phone and puts the phone to his ear.

JONES

It's Mason. Sergeant Major Nelson is becoming quite the fly in the ointment. We may have to escalate this.

VOICE (V.O.)

(almost a whisper)

How the hell do you escalate beyond killing a U.S. Senator?!

JONES

A sad day for Capitol Hill, but life moves on - we'll make sure of that. As far as Nelson and baby Shaw -- collateral may become beyond what we first projected.

A long beat of silence.

VOICE (V.O.)

Nelson must be erased. There's no other option now. It's gone too far.

JONES

And baby Shaw?

VOICE (V.O.)

(sighs)

Unfortunate - but do what it takes.

The phone call clicks off and Mason lets the phone drop to his side.

RONNIE

What now, sir?

JONES

For now - we clean up the mess we made with Senator Shaw.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Marshall sits back against the headboard of his bed, reading. Shaw looks restless. Marshall looks over his book.

MARSHALL

Problem, son?

SHAW

I'm just -- I don't usually have free time, sir. I, uh, I wish I could call my wife. And...my mom is gonna be just demolished.

(beat)

I just feel cut off.

MARSHALL

Watch some TV.

Marshall goes back to his book as Shaw picks up the remote and turns on the television, flips through channels before landing on CNN.

CNN ANCHOR

Sad news out of Washington, D.C. this evening.

BREAKING NEWS pops up in the corner of the screen. Then a picture of Senator Shaw pops up on the screen.

CNN ANCHOR (CONT'D)
Senator Sterling Shaw, Sr. was found
in the middle of Fort Washington Park
in D.C., dead from what is being
reported to be a self-inflicted gun
shot wound.

Tears spring into Shaw's eyes.

SHAW
What? Self-inflicted? How...how did
his body get to D.C.?

Marshall immediately puts down his book and watches the
newscast, face coiled in horror.

CNN ANCHOR
More information on this breaking
story as we have details, but for now,
several in the Washington D.C.
community are already speaking out
about this tragic news.

On the screen, cameras catch up with Colin Franklin, and
microphones are thrust in his face.

REPORT (O.S.)
Senator Franklin, any comments on the
sad news of Senator Shaw's passing?

Franklin turns to the camera and look straight into the lens,
then back at the person asking the question off-screen.

FRANKLIN
Senator Shaw has been a good friend
and mentor to me in my first two years
here on the hill. He was a good man
with a good family and will be sorely
missed. He was one of my biggest
allies working towards a new America.
We will continue fighting for a New
America as a legacy and an honor to
such a great man - we *ARE* the New
America. God bless his family in this
difficult time.

MARSHALL
Barry? What the...?

Marshall mutes the television and sits down next to Shaw and
puts his arm around the crying man's shoulder.

SHAW
They made it look like a suicide?

MARSHALL

Shaw, I'm so...

Shaw pushes Marshall off of him and stands up.

SHAW

No! This is your fault! You did this! You did this to us!

MARSHALL

You were in this long before I got you a weekend pass.

SHAW

He's dead because of me! Because of you! Everyone will think he...like, like this?! Fuck you! Fuck you!

Shaw walks across the room and into the bathroom.

After a long moment, the bathroom door opens up and Shaw splashes water on his face, then walks back into the room. Marshall stands up.

MARSHALL

You okay?

Shaw punches Marshall across the face, knocks him into the desk against the wall.

SHAW

That is for bringing me into this.

Marshall holds up his hands to Shaw.

SHAW (CONT'D)

Oh, God.

Shaw points to the television, where a picture of Marshall is blown up full-screen. Then a picture of Shaw. Marshall unmutes the television as quickly as he can.

CNN ANCHOR

...retired Sergeant Major Nelson has taken Corporal Shaw hostage. Both men are wanted for questioning in the strange circumstances of Senator Shaw's suicide. It is not known at this time if either are suspects and if so, what they are suspected of.

(beat)

Now, in other news...

Marshall mutes the television and sits down on the edge of the bed, defeated.

SHAW

Everyone will be looking for us...if we get caught, we're...dead.

MARSHALL

Advantage: BlackStar. Shit.

EXT. LIBRARY - THE NEXT DAY

Marshall and Shaw both wear overly-baggy clothes and sunglasses. Shaw opens the door to the library and enters.

As Marshall follows him in, a middle-aged WOMAN stops and looks at the pair, thinks for a moment, then pulls out her cell phone, dials a number.

WOMAN

Hello, yes? I think I saw those two men - you know, the ones wanted for questioning about Senator Shaw's death? They were walking into the Library on East Franklin Street.

INT. LIBRARY - COMPUTER LAB - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Marshall and Shaw walk in and sit at two side-by-side computers facing a door and get on the internet.

MARSHALL

Okay, you look up everything you can about BlackStar. I'm gonna look up everything I can about Jones.

They each begin typing.

MONTAGE

Information rolls across the screen as certain sentences jump out to them. At the end of each piece of information, respective party write the information on their pads.

-- Shaw reads BlackStar's wikipedia page. "...formed in 2001, after 9-11 by three former U.S.

Military Special Forces officers"

-- Marshall reads a bio of Mason Jones: "...though little is known about Jones' involvement in black ops, it is thought he spent at least twenty years deep under cover."

-- Shaw reads from Blackstar's website: "Since forming in 2001, BlackStar securities has received multi-million dollar contracts in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kurzikstan, and Libya.

-- Marshall watches a video of Mason Jones speaking at a college poli/sci open forum.

JONES

BlackStar Securities, as you might deduce from the name, is technically-speaking a Security company. We give the U.S. Military an added dose of protection. But we do more than that. We also do things that add to the security of America.

(he laughs)

We never do anything illegal, mind you. We just do what it takes to keep America good and safe.

-- Shaw sees that BlackStar's HeadQuarters are right down the road in Leesville, NC.

Both Marshall and Shaw have note pads in front of them filled with information when Marshall pulls up Senator Colin Franklin's website.

Shaw looks over at Marshall's computer screen and nods.

SHAW

What do you want with him?

MARSHALL

He's not connected with this at all. I knew him a long time ago. He, uh...

SHAW

Good guy.

MARSHALL

You know him?

SHAW

Had dinner with him and his wife with my parents a coupla times. Dad was a sort of mentor to him.

MARSHALL

(shakes his head)

Well, enough nostalgia...

Marshall types in a website, when suddenly the power goes off in the entire library.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

They're here.

EXT. LIBRARY - SAME

Six BlackStar men dressed as electricians, walk into the front of the Library, carrying large bags.

Ronnie and Luther, both dressed in electrician uniforms, stay at the front door, helping people get out -- making sure none of them are Marshall or Shaw.

RONNIE

Here you go, ladies and gentlemen -
we'll have the lights on as soon as we
can. Sorry for the inconvenience.

EXT. BACK OF THE LIBRARY - SAME

Two men in electrician uniforms stand at the back door. As the door opens, they hold up their hands.

ELECTRICIAN 1

Sorry - this exit is closed.

The people head back into the library.

INT. LIBRARY - SAME

The "electricians" open up their bags and pull out night vision goggles, put them on their heads.

Through night vision, the library is a milky, green hue. Library patrons stumble their way through the inky darkness, trying to get out.

The "electricians" walk slowly, surely, scanning the face of every person in the dark (via night vision). Shaw and Marshall are not milling around in the dark.

BlackStar men climb the steps up to the second floor (where the computer lab is).

INT. LIBRARY - COMPUTER LAB - SAME

Seen through night vision, the computer lab is eerily quiet. No one is in there. One of the men wearing night vision speaks into his radio.

ELECTRICIAN 2

Get the lights back on. They're not here.

EXT. LIBRARY - SAME

People file out of the library one by one, each person scanned over by Ronnie and Luther.

INT. LIBRARY - SECOND FLOOR - SAME

The lights come on, illuminating the now-empty building.

Three of the "electricians" exit the Computer lab, night vision goggles propped on top of their heads. They walk over and push the button, call the elevator.

The elevator doors open and they get on.

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

The doors slowly shut and the old elevator shudders to a start, headed down.

One of the Electricians looks up at the ceiling of the elevator and, then points up to one of his companions. The two other soldiers get the gist and aim their guns up at the ceiling.

The elevator reaches the bottom floor and the doors open, but the three soldiers stay on the elevator.

The first reaches up and, as quietly as possible, removes the hatch that opens to the top of the elevator. One of the other soldiers helps lift the first up through the hatch.

INT. TOP OF ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

The Electrician's head pops up and looks around. No one.

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

He drops back down and all three men relax.

ELECTRICIAN 1

(chuckles)

I thought just maybe they might be up there.

They exit the elevator.

After a long moment, the elevator doors close.

INT. TOP OF ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

The top of the elevator is empty. But -

-- on the side of the elevator, Marshall and Shaw pin themselves between the elevator and the shaft wall.

The elevator starts moving and they walk themselves up the elevator shaft with the old, slow elevator.

EXT. LIBRARY - DAY

The last patron exits the library. Ronnie pulls out a cell phone, dials a number and puts it to his ear.

JONES (V.O.)

Good news?

RONNIE

False alarm, sir. They aren't here.

Ronnie hangs up and scans the area again.

INT. TOP OF ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Marshall and Shaw sit on top of the elevator. It begins to move up. Shaw looks at his watch.

SHAW

It's been three hours. Surely, we're good by now.

MARSHALL

Soon.

SHAW

Why do partners never work out with you?

MARSHALL

All my partners are idiots like you.

Shaw looks hurt, Marshall notices.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

Oh, come on, Shaw - I'm joking with you.

(thinks a beat)

My first partner ended up with my wife. You're supposed to trust two people with everything - your spouse and your partner. Look how that turned out.

INT. ELEVATOR - SAME

An elderly woman walks slowly onto the elevator, turns around and looks ahead as the door shuts and the elevator shudders to a start. Muzak plays in the background.

The hatch at the top of the elevator opens and Marshall looks down at the old lady, puts his index finger up to his mouth, then cautiously lowers himself down into the elevator behind the woman.

The woman stares straight ahead, not realizing what's happening behind her. Marshall gestures to Shaw who drops quietly down into the elevator.

The elevator pings that it has reached its destination. Marshall steps up and holds his hand in front of the door.

MARSHALL

All right, here you go.

OLD WOMAN

Oh, thank you, young man.

The old woman walks off the elevator, thinking nothing of her companions or how they got there.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Marshall and Shaw sit at an old, dark, decrepit bar, glasses of beer in front of them.

SHAW

So, we know that Jones is behind everything so far. Right?

Marshall stands up.

MARSHALL

Darts.

SHAW

Come on, Marshall.

Marshall walks over to the dart board and pulls the darts out and walk back to the oche (the throwing line).

MARSHALL

Your brain always works better when you're doing something physical. Here...

Marshall throws the first dart. It lands in the middle ring.

SHAW

Ah, finally -- something physical you won't kick my ass at.

MARSHALL

Pretty big talk for a guy whose ass I routinely kicked pretty soundly.

Shaw puts on a serious face.

SHAW

That's not funny.

He holds the serious face for a moment, then laughs out loud.

SHAW (CONT'D)

Give me the damn dart, you jerk.

Marshall hands him three darts. Shaw stands at the oche and throws -- near perfect bullseye.

SHAW (CONT'D)

THAT is how it's done, Sir.

MARSHALL

(chuckles)

Well done, soldier.

Marshall stands at the line and takes aim.

SHAW

Okay -- so, unless Jones has some secret vendetta against you or me or dad, then there's some other reason all of this is happening. Right?

Marshall throws the dart, hits just below bullseye. Shaw goes up to the line and prepares to throw.

SHAW (CONT'D)

Were you in the Black with Jones?

MARSHALL

No. The first time I met Jones was when he tried to hire me.

Shaw throws. Near perfect bullseye.

SHAW

So, it all starts with the notes...

MARSHALL

Dammit - you are good at this.

SHAW

(smiles)

Where did it start for you?

Marshall steps up to the line and prepares to throw, looks over at Shaw and shrugs.

MARSHALL

I'm, uh, shall we say 'well-known' for my temper - could never keep a partner. I've always been that way. I got passed over for promotion after promotion.

SHAW

Who would know all that?

Marshall throws. Just inside the bullseye. He pumps his fist, proud of the feat.

MARSHALL

Yes! Spielman obviously knew me the longest. He was my first C.O. He had to have been in on all of this from the beginning - though I can't...won't believe he could have known that it would blossom into all of this.

SHAW

So, Spielman starts the ball rolling, someone writes these notes to me. I build resentment towards you. Whoever it was knew that eventually we wouldn't put up with each other's bullshit, you'd kick my ass - because that's what you do - and, because my dad's the Senator -- you'd finally get kicked out...

Shaw tosses his last dart. Another bullseye. Marshall walks up to the board and pulls out the darts, walks back to the line and hands Shaw his three darts.

MARSHALL

And angled right into the arms of
BlackStar Securities.

SHAW

Why wouldn't you take a job there?
You're a Green Beret, Special Forces,
a Black Ops guy...of course you'd take
the job.

MARSHALL

But I didn't. You go first. You
kicked my ass last round.

Shaw steps up to the line and throws another bullseye.

SHAW

That's where their plan went off.

Marshall steps up to the line.

MARSHALL

Everything about this plan feels so
iffy -- so much could go wrong.

Shaw thinks long and hard as Marshall throws.

SHAW

From what I've seen, I think for a guy
like Jones, the possibility of failure
is never really equated into plans.

Marshall thinks, then shakes his head as Shaw throws.

MARSHALL

I knew of Jones. He was pretty well-
known for being a badass, a cowboy.
Took the law in his own hands. A lot.
But I never knew him. He never knew
me. I just don't think any of this
has to do with Jones, at least not
personally -- not between him and me.

SHAW

Ugh! I just can't connect the dots.

A long silence as they both think.

MARSHALL

So, the only choice is to get the
person who CAN connect the dots.

SHAW

Jones?

(Marshall nods)

We'll need more weapons.

MARSHALL

Well...I can get us weapons. We'll just need a vehicle to carry them in.

Marshall throws his last two darts at the same time. They nail the wall outside the target. Shaw throws both and they both hit bullseye. He turns to Marshall and shrugs.

INT. AIRPORT LONG-TERM PARKING GARAGE - DAY

Marshall jimmies open the door of an F150 heavy duty truck. Once in, he unlocks the door for Shaw, then gets to work getting the truck started.

EXT. DURHAM PROJECTS - DAY

Marshall and Shaw get out of the stolen F150 and walk down a Durham street. As they look around, Shaw realizes they are the only Caucasians in the near vicinity.

SHAW

Hey, uh, are we gonna be okay?

Marshall just nods and turns into a yard, up a sidewalk, then up a set of steps. The rickety old house groans as they walk up onto the porch. Marshall looks around and then knocks on the door.

A peep hole pops open.

ANGEL (O.S.)

You know I got gun aimed right at your dick and balls right now, right?

MARSHALL

Last I heard, at least I have a balls. Plural. Ballsssss.

ANGEL (O.S.)

You stupid ass mother...

The peep hole shuts, but Angel's voice can still be heard inside cursing, though no words can be distinguished.

The door suddenly opens to reveal ANGEL (45), Hispanic, very brown-skinned, corn-rows and ugly like a pug. He holds a shotgun pointed at Marshall's crotch.

ANGEL (CONT'D)
 You don't joke about testicular
 cancer, man! I can't help it I got
 one ball - it was cancer!

MARSHALL
 Just give me a hug, asshole.

Angel lets the gun drop to his side, then gives Marshall a hug.

ANGEL
 You're the asshole. Who's the kid?

Shaw reaches out his hand to Angel as Marshall grimaces and shakes his head. Angel looks at Shaw's hand, gives Shaw a dirty look, then turns and walks into the house.

ANGEL (CONT'D)
 Well, come on - don't waste my air
 conditioning.

MARSHALL
 (to Shaw)
 No handshakes. Germaphobe.

SHAW
 And hugs are okay?

INT. ANGEL'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Shaw enters the house, and Marshall closes the door. For however old the house looked outside, the interior is immaculate, shiny and new.

They follow Angel into his kitchen, which is a germaphobe's dream. Every surface in the kitchen - every wall, every counter - is stainless steel.

Across many of the counters are large gun cases, lined up end to end.

ANGEL
 So, you need guns, huh?

MARSHALL
 A few, yeah.

ANGEL
 Trouble? Actually, no, I don't even
 want to know.

MARSHALL
You work with BlackStar?

Angel's face goes white.

ANGEL
Shit, yo. You in deep, huh?

MARSHALL
Long story.

Angel opens a large black case laying across one counter. Inside is a large black rifle. Marshall and Shaw both take a deep breath. Impressive.

ANGEL
Heckler & Koch HK WSG2000. This is one heavy duty mother. This'll cut through an engine block in milliseconds. It'll make mince meat of any person you shoot. Mince meat.

He closes that case and moves to the next case, which holds a smaller black rifle.

ANGEL (CONT'D)
Ceska Zbrojovka CZ805 BREN. One of the baddest automatic machine guns you can get. Czech. Never really caught on with our boys...but this will put some assholes on the ground. Fast.

He opens up the next case to reveal the same thing. He gestures to Shaw.

ANGEL (CONT'D)
Another one of the same for your pretty girlfriend, there, Marshall.

Angel opens another large case to reveal eight handguns.

ANGEL (CONT'D)
Eight Heckler & Koch SOCOM MK 23 mods. Semi-automatic.

He pulls one out to reveal a longer magazine.

ANGEL (CONT'D)
Modified to hold twenty-two rounds instead of nine.

MARSHALL
Did you get what I asked for?

ANGEL
(smiles)
For your lady friend? Yes.

Angel leads them into the living room, where a massive case lays on the couch. He opens it up to reveal a massive sniper rifle. Shaw reaches down and touches the weapon.

SHAW
Damn.

ANGEL
Barret M107. Shit speaks for itself, yo.

MARSHALL
Plenty of ammo?

ANGEL
If you use *half* the ammo I got for you, bro, you will be in deeper shit than any ops we ever did together.

EXT. DURHAM STREETS - DAY

Marshall, Shaw and Angel load the cases and boxes of ammo into the bed of the recently-stolen F-150.

MARSHALL
Shaw, stay here - we'll get the rest of the stuff.

Marshall and Angel head back into the house.

ANGEL
Crazy about Barry, right? Doing good for himself, huh? Going by his middle name now - Barrett Colin Franklin.

MARSHALL
Yeah...saw him on the TV. Doing well for himself.

ANGEL
You ever told anyone about all the shit he did in Iraq?

MARSHALL
What? No. Of course not. In the black stays IN the black.

INT. ANGEL'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

They walk through the living room.

ANGEL

Of course you haven't. B.F. Is one
B.A. M.F'er.

MARSHALL

(stops walking)

What'd you say?

ANGEL

Isn't that what we used to say? B.F.
was one B.A. M.F.'er? Guess he's
gonna be a Badass in the White House!

Color drains from Marshall's face.

ANGEL (CONT'D)

What's wrong, bro?

MARSHALL

I was never the Blue Falcon.

ANGEL

What you talking about, Blue Falcon?

MARSHALL

B.F. Blue Falcon. Bravo Foxtrot.
Barry Franklin. God dammit - Blue
Falcon was never me!

ANGEL

What the hell are you talking about?

MARSHALL

Angel, Barry or Colin -- whatever - he
is why they're after me. Shit!! How
did I not see it before?!

Marshall punches one of the stainless steel walls in the
kitchen, leaving a massive dent.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

I gotta go.

Marshall picks up the last box of guns and runs out of the
house. Angel reaches up and rubs the dent in the wall.

ANGEL

Uh...good luck.

INT. STOLEN CAR - DAY

Marshall and Shaw drive down the road, speeding quietly along. Marshall is deep in thought, staring at the road ahead.

After a long moment of silence, Shaw looks over at Marshall.

SHAW
Everything okay?

No response.

SHAW (CONT'D)
Marshall, is everything okay? What's going on.

MARSHALL
It's time. We go for Jones. Today.

INT. SAUNA - DAY

Jones sits in the sauna, naked from the waist up, muscles gleaming with perspiration. Across from him, Senator Gilliam sits again.

JONES
Sad to hear what happened with Senator Shaw. I guess sometimes a man can't outrun his own demons.

GILLIAM
No. Sometimes you just can't. No matter how hard you try.

JONES
Well, you might can them, but you can't hide from them. For long.
(beat)
Now, what is this I hear about you voting against me on the defense bill? I thought we talked about this.

GILLIAM
I'm not gonna be intimidated anymore, Mason. Kill me if you want, make it look a suicide, even. But I'm done being your errand boy.

Jones visibly starts to fume. He slams his hand down on the bench next to him. He waits a moment, as he calms himself.

JONES

(calmly, quietly)

I have had a BAD couple of days,
Senator. So, let me make it plain and
simple for you, because the rigmarole
is getting tiresome for my brain.

(beat)

I will take a knife and split your
whole fucking family into pieces.
Then I will go out and find myself a
nice little Senator to do the things I
need them to do. Is that what you
want?

Jones stands up as his voice finally begins to raise, both in
pitch and in volume.

JONES (CONT'D)

Or I could kill you right here and now
-- put my hands around your throat and
watch the blood clot in your pupils!
How hard is to just vote how the FUCK
I want you to vote?

The door to the sauna opens up and Ronnie steps in. He looks
out of it.

RONNIE

Boss...

JONES

(screams)

What?! What the fuck could you
possibly want RIGHT NOW?

RONNIE

Problems...

He falls over, dead, a knife protruding from his brain stem.
Marshall and Shaw enter the sauna, wearing black ski masks
and carrying newly-acquired weapons.

JONES

What the hell is this?

MARSHALL

The only logical conclusion.

Marshall hits Jones in the face with the butt of his rifle
and the world goes...

BLACK

INT. TOBACCO FACTORY - NIGHT

Marshall and Shaw push a shackled and gagged Jones down into a chair. Shaw pulls out a roll of duct tape and quickly tapes Jones' legs together and then duct tapes the man to the chair.

MARSHALL

We need supplies. I'll start working on him here, you go get what we need...

SHAW

No! I want to be here for this.

Marshall shakes his head, then turns to Jones and tears the gag from his mouth.

JONES

(chuckles)

Hey, guys, thanks for taking care of Ronnie for me. I just never had the heart to kill him myself. God, he was a moron, wasn't he?

MARSHALL

Shaw, please go. A bucket, several gallons of water, towels, mops...

JONES

Waterboarding! Sounds like fun!

SHAW

No - I've earned this as much as you have. If you're gonna work this asshole over, I want my shot, too.

JONES

Oh, Marshall, come on, let your girlfriend have his chance.

Shaw walks over and punches Jones across the face. Jones just laughs, spits out blood, as Marshall shakes his head.

MARSHALL

You aren't ready.

SHAW

Fuck you! I'm ready.

Marshall's doesn't budge.

SHAW (CONT'D)

(pained)

Marshall, he killed my father.

JONES

Let him stay, Marshall. He's right, I killed his dad. I mean - I had him killed! By law, it's all the same!

MARSHALL

Shaw, I need you to listen to me. To get the information we need, I need supplies.

JONES

I'll tell you everything, Marshall! You don't need to waterboard me!

SHAW

I can do this, Marshall! Come on! Let me be here.

MARSHALL

(yelling now)

Dammit, Shaw! Just get me the supplies I need! That is what I need you to do! Now!! Now!!!

SHAW

I'm not twelve, you asshole. If I walk out that door, I will not be back. You can handle this shit by yourself. I'll figure it out on my own from here!

MARSHALL

Come on, Shaw.

SHAW

No! Do not fucking condescend to me! I've held my end of this partnership!

MARSHALL

I JUST NEED SOME SUPPLIES, SHAW!!!

Long silence.

SHAW

Get your own fucking supplies, asshole.

Shaw shakes his head in disgust and exits the building. From inside the building, Marshall and Jones hear the F150 start up and pull out.

JONES

Well done. You just added hours -
literally, hours to his life. Or who
knows? Maybe he'll forgive you and
come back before my men get here.
Fingers crossed. You know, if I could
cross my fingers right now.

(beat)

You were really hard on the kid.

Marshall pulls a chair close to Jones and sits down.

MARSHALL

Says the guy who's tried to kill the
kid for the last two days.

Jones smiles deviously and nods.

JONES

You could've made all of this so much
easier if you'd JUST taken the job I
offered! We'd have shipped you off to
somewhere deep in the Middle East,
you'd have met an IED on the side of
the road, or you'd have gotten caught
in a cross fire. This all...has been
so messy.

MARSHALL

Operation Blue Falcon, right?

JONES

Wow...I'm impressed.

(beat)

Shit, well -- I thought it was clever:
you thought YOU were the blue falcon.
It was a red herring. You think
YOU'RE the buddy fucker, all the
while, you're the buddy getting
fucked. You think it's about beating
the shit out of the kid - good job
bringing the kid along, by the way.
You literally put a bullet in his
brain when you gave him that weekend
pass. Not to brag, but the plan was
kind of genius.

MARSHALL

(grits his teeth)

Impressive.

JONES

Are you getting angry, Marshall? I've
heard of that temper of yours.

JONES (CONT'D)

We knew you'd eventually lose it...the kid -- Freeney -- you having to just try and make everything right. We knew you'd go after Baby Shaw eventually and with his dad being a Senator you'd end up right where I wanted you to.

(beat)

But you just had to follow your dream to be a rent-a-cop. How'd that go for you, by the way?

MARSHALL

All for Barry.

JONES

(smiles widely)

Well done. I honestly didn't think you'd figure it out.

(beat)

Every now and then a politician comes out of nowhere. Six months, a year before, no one knew who the hell the guy was and now everyone thinks he's the future of the party, of the country. You've seen that happen, right?

MARSHALL

(sighs)

Barry's the future of the country?

JONES

You think that stuff happens by accident, Marshall? And the correct answer is that, no, it does not happen by accident. There are corporations who want to -- make sure their bets are hedged, so they hire teams of people to slowly - but surely - slip their guy into the collective consciousness of the American public. They make you think about Colin Franklin in your sleep. They come up with catchy slogans like "We are the New America". They get guys like Colin ready for prime time. Then - behind the scenes - they hire guys like me to clean up the past.

Marshall stands up and chuckles.

MARSHALL

Clean up?

JONES

We all have skeletons in our closet. Some people's skeletons are that they smoked pot in college - but didn't inhale. Other people's skeletons are walking into a café in Iraq and personally killing thirty-six people to make an Iraqi Congressman try and escape from the building next door. NATO wouldn'ta been on board with killing the Congressman - Lord knows what they'd think of the civilians.

Somewhere in the distance a car door slams.

JONES (CONT'D)

Sounds like your boy forgave you.

MARSHALL

Mason, at some point every Ops man - every one of us - goes off the reservation. I did. You obviously did. Barry did - so, what?

JONES

Marshall, you can't be that naive. We can't just have little loose ends running around. This is the next President of the United States we're talking about.

MARSHALL

Would you ever tell anyone about what happened in an operation?

JONES

I wasn't with the future President when he killed thirty-six civilians by himself. Just luck of the draw, buddy. Sorry.

A SOUND from outside. Marshall makes his way over towards the sound.

MARSHALL

Shaw! What are you doing?! Get in here!

Marshall pulls open the door and is overrun by BlackStar men. They throw him to the ground, yelling a war cry, as several run over and release Jones.

After he's freed, Jones walks over to Marshall, who strains against his captors.

JONES

I win, Marshall. I always do.

One of the BlackStar men reaches down and punches Marshall.

EXT. ACROSS THE STREET - NIGHT

Shaw watches the BlackStar men, lead by Jones, pull Marshall out of the Tobacco Factory. They pile into cars and leave.

INT. A BEDROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

CLOSE on MARLA. A hand reaches over and musses her hair, causes it to fall in her face. She brushes it away and smiles.

Marla's mouth opens to speak. Her voice sounds like it is miles and miles away.

MARLA

Come back to me. Safe.

Her voice dissolves into a cacophony of noise.

INT. BLACKSTAR HQ - HOLDING ROOM - NIGHT

The room is bare - concrete walls, floor, no windows. The only way in or out is the large, thick metal door that opens to Marshall's body being thrown into the room. He's followed closely behind by BlackStar MAN 2 and MAN 3, then Jones.

JONES

It's your lucky day, Marshall. I'm thinking we might give peace a chance.

MARSHALL

Why don't you and I just go outside and take care of this like men?

JONES

(laughs)

We'll see what we can do about that.

Jones leaves the room. The two BlackStar men remain in front of Marshall. One of them punches Marshall in the stomach. The other punches him in the face. They walk out of the cell.

Marshall, back against the wall, slides to the ground. The door slams behind the BlackStar men.

MARSHALL

All right, good talk. Let's do it again sometime.

INT. JONES' OFFICE - NIGHT

Jones walks into the office and around to his desk. The two men from the cell follow after him.

BLACKSTAR MAN 2

Sir, why don't we just waste this guy?

JONES

Not yet.

BLACKSTAR MAN 3

Sir, with all due respect, this asshole has killed how many of our guys? Kill him! Now!

Jones turns and looks sternly at the men.

JONES

Do we have a misunderstanding on how our organization works? Do we?

BLACKSTAR MAN 2

Sir, we are just...

JONES

(screams)

I fucking run this organization and the moment I need advice from you stupid fucks, I'll ask for it. All right?!

Silence. Jones calmly straightens his clothes.

JONES (CONT'D)

It's always good to have an understanding of how your organization works. Tell me when the car arrives.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Shaw sits in the hotel room in complete dark, holding tight to a handgun. A car door slams outside and Shaw flinches. He looks around, wide-eyed. Someone knocks on a door nearby, causing Shaw to nearly jump out of his socks.

After a moment of silence, Shaw pulls out his phone and dials a number, puts the phone to his ear.

SARAH (V.O.)
Sterling? Baby, is that you?

Long moment of silence.

SARAH (V.O.)
Sterling?

SHAW
It's me, baby.

SARAH (V.O.)
Oh, my god! Are you okay? Does that man have you hostage? Your family is freaking out!

SHAW
He never had me hostage -- well, he had me hostage at first, but then we were working together. It's a long story.

(beat)
Baby, I'm scared.

SARAH (V.O.)
Where are you?

SHAW
They took him, they took Marshall.

SARAH (V.O.)
They? Who's 'they'? And where did they take him?

SHAW
Blackstar. They took him to their Headquarters, I guess. I'm alone. They're after me and I'm alone. I don't know what to do.

Long silence.

SARAH (V.O.)
You're a good man, Sterling - the best man I know. Do the right thing. Whatever it is, do the right thing.

INT. BLACKSTAR HQ - HOLDING ROOM - NIGHT

Marshall sits on the ground, weary, worn from the last few days. Suddenly the large metal door scrapes open and Jones enters, followed by two armed men.

JONES

I have a surprise for you, Marshall.

Colin Franklin enters the room, spots Marshall and stops.

FRANKLIN

Jesus, Mason.

Jones laughs maniacally.

JONES

Genius, right? This is for you! Old friends reunited -- YOU get to make the final call, look him in the eyes and tell him yourself if he gets to live or die. I'd have you pull the trigger, but we can't have our next President get his hands TOO messy.

Colin walks over to Marshall and stops a few feet away.

MARSHALL

Barry.

FRANKLIN

Haven't seen you in, what, twenty years?

MARSHALL

I saw you on TV today.

FRANKLIN

You've put me in some interesting positions the last few days.

MARSHALL

Not sure you can blame any of this on me.

FRANKLIN

Fair enough.

Colin looks at Jones, thinks for a moment, then turns back to Marshall. He grabs Marshall's shoulder and pulls him into a hug, then pulls away.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

I have a vision for this country. Some day, shit like this will no longer be needed...or acceptable. This country was built on the lives of patriots who gave their lives for freedom.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Every time we went into the Black, we knew that our blood could be the next to spill for freedom's sake.

Colin pulls Marshall's face close, looks him in the eye.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

This is your day, brother. Today you are the Patriot, the hero. This is your time.

Colin releases him and looks at Jones.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Make it fast and clean. He's a good man. He deserves a good death.

And then he walks out of the room.

JONES

Now, that. That was...

(shakes his head)

Impressive. I've seen him give some speeches, but that...I mean, I almost wanna die tonight, that shit was so good.

Jones snaps his fingers and the two men grab Marshall on either side, pull him out of the holding room.

EXT. BLACKSTAR HQ - NIGHT

The two men lead Marshall from the Headquarter building and throw him into a blacked out Escalade, get in on either side of him

Jones gets in the driver's seat.

Nearby, Franklin sits in his SUV, waiting to leave, watches the whole scene go down. He sighs and rubs his temples.

EXT. BLACKSTAR CAMPUS - WOODED AREA - NIGHT

The Escalade pulls up next to a wooded area and stops. Everyone empties out of the vehicle.

The two men push Marshall to the ground, holding either side of him, as Jones walks around, a hand gun in his hand.

JONES

You know, I'm actually glad you took out the men I sent for you.

JONES (CONT'D)

This is just...so much more fun for me. I haven't gotten my hands this dirty in years. God, I've killed two of my own goddamn men today. And the Senator! Now, you! It's ops all over again.

Jones suddenly turns and shoots the Man next to him in the head, then the other Man. They both fall, dead before they hit the ground.

JONES (CONT'D)

Well, NOW I've killed two of my own goddamn men. That's what they get for questioning my authority. Let's take of business.

MARSHALL

What the...?

JONES

Get up. We're gonna handle this like men. You've at least earned that.

Marshall stands up.

MARSHALL

What are you doing, Mason?

JONES

Just me and you, Marshall. No one will interfere out here.

MARSHALL

What about...?

JONES

Ah, who gives a shit?

Jones punches Marshall in the head, drives him to the ground. Marshall jumps up quickly as Jones punches where Marshall just was.

Marshall rolls over and jumps up. Jones comes at him with all his might. Marshall weaves and parries and bobs in and out. Jones never quite lands a punch.

JONES (CONT'D)

This! This is why we wanted to hire you in the first place. You're good.

MARSHALL

You tried to hire me so you could blow me up. Remember?

Jones pulls out a large Bowie knife.

JONES

But while you worked for us, you would have done a great job.

(re: the knife)

Sorry about this -- have to hedge my bets a bit here. Failure isn't really an option, since you just killed two of my men and everything. But I still wanna give you some semblance of a chance. For my conscience.

Jones comes at Marshall with the knife. Marshall tries to evade, but Jones cuts the outside of his right arm, opening a massive cut. Blood flows freely.

JONES (CONT'D)

Oops.

Jones goes on the attack again, pushing Marshall back, back towards the stand of trees.

Marshall turns and runs in a full sprint towards the trees. As he reaches the first tree, Jones' knife flies past him, barely missing him, and sticks into a tree.

Marshall turns and looks behind as Jones pulls out two more knives. Marshall reaches up and tries to pull the knife out of the tree when the next thrown knife drives itself into the back of Marshall's right shoulder.

Marshall screams out in pain, turns to face Jones. Just as he turns, another thrown knife stabs him in the front of the same shoulder.

Marshall falls to his knees, his breath driven from him, as Jones ambles slowly towards him, shaking his head.

JONES (CONT'D)

All the potential in the world. But you just had to beat the shit out of a twenty-five year old. Sad, really.

Jones reaches into the back of his pants and pulls out a small handgun. He puts the gun to Marshall's head.

JONES (CONT'D)

Any last words?

MARSHALL

Yeah. Surprise.

JONES

Surprise?

A gun slowly reaches out and touches the back of Jones head.

SHAW (O.S.)

Surprise.

Jones smiles.

JONES

Now, this! This could be interesting!

Jones turns and knocks the gun away from his head and open palms Shaw in the chest, knocking him backwards several feet.

He moves towards Shaw, but before he can take a step, Marshall pulls the knife from the front of his shoulder and slices Jones' Achilles tendon. Jones falls to the ground and Marshall stabs him in the chest.

Jones smiles and laughs as blood dribbles from the side of his mouth.

JONES (CONT'D)

They'll just find someone else. Kill me. Kill Franklin. Tomorrow they'll have suitors lined up around the block to do the exact same thing. Someone else will do the job. That's capitalism. Why not have two heroes do it?

(beat)

So go fuck yourself.

Shaw stands over Jones and Marshall as Marshall lifts his knife up to finish the job.

SHAW

Marshall! No! He's mine.

Marshall looks down at Jones, then back at Shaw and nods. Shaw leans over Jones.

JONES

You got a pretty mouth, Shaw.

SHAW

I'm not gonna be able to say the same about you, Jones - sorry.

Shaw puts the gun into Jones' mouth and pulls the trigger. Then turns to Marshall, who makes his way over to the Escalade and opens up the trunk door.

SHAW (CONT'D)
Are you okay? You're bleeding.

Marshall pulls out the first aid kit from the back of the SUV and begins to patch himself up.

MARSHALL
I'm fine. I'll worry about it when this is finished.

SHAW
I saw Senator Franklin. What was he doing here?

MARSHALL
Blue Falcon.

SHAW
What?

MARSHALL
I saw him kill thirty-six civilians in Iraq twenty years ago. That's what all of this is about. His past was being cleaned, so no skeletons ever fell out of the closet.

SHAW
Shit.

Marshall limps to the driver's side of the Escalade and climbs in.

MARSHALL
The only way this ends is to take Franklin down.

Shaw rolls his eyes and shakes his head as he climbs into the SUV. Marshall starts the vehicle up.

EXT. BLACKSTAR CAMPUS - GATE - NIGHT

Franklin's SUV drives slowly off campus through the gate.

EXT. BLACKSTAR CAMPUS - SAME

The SUV Marshall is driving speeds across the campus grass.

MARSHALL
I'm sorry - if I'd known I would have never brought you into this.

SHAW

You didn't bring me into this. I was
in this long before you walked into my
barracks.

The SUV rams through the gate Franklin's vehicle just exited.

They drive quickly and look for the Franklin's SUV. They
scream past a street and Shaw spots Franklin.

SHAW (CONT'D)

There! Take the next right!

Marshall takes the next right at breakneck speed, nearly
turns the SUV over. He takes the next right, speeds, then
slides to a stop at the intersection.

He looks to his left. Franklin's vehicle drives slowly, two
or three blocks ahead. Marshall pulls out into the road and
drives slowly, following Franklin at a safe distance.

EXT. FRANKLIN'S RENTAL HOME - NIGHT

Franklin's Escalade pulls slowly through a large, iron gate,
then up the driveway to garage door in the midst of opening.

The SUV waits for the garage door to open fully, then pulls
slowly in and to a stop.

INT. GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Two BlackStar men step out of the car on either side. The
one on the passenger side opens the back door and lets
Franklin out.

As Franklin steps out of the car, the other BlackStar man
hits the garage door controller and the garage door slowly
closes.

As the door heads to the ground, there is a SHOT from
somewhere in the distance, and man who was driving falls to
the ground, dead.

Before the man with Franklin can turn, or even pull out a
gun, he is also shot in the head and falls, dead.

As the BlackStar man falls to the ground, Marshall slides
under the nearly-closed garage door. Once in the garage, he
jumps to his feet and he immediately engages Franklin.

They trade hard-fought, heavy blows. Marshall pushes the
Senator back into a work bench.

Franklin reaches down and picks up a socket wrench and swings it, connects with Marshall's head. The blow gives Franklin some space, and he goes on the offensive.

FRANKLIN

You are a disease that just will not go away!

He swings the wrench around and around, and Marshall ducks. They re-engage. Marshall blocks the wrench, punches Franklin in the face, knocks him back.

EXT. FRANKLIN'S RENTAL HOME - SAME

Shaw, gun in hand, hits the garage door, nothing. He runs around to the front door and tries to open it, then turns, runs away, looking for another entrance.

Through the window, a red light on the alarm system engages.

INT. GARAGE - SAME

Marshall and Franklin go back and forth, back and forth. Franklin's training has not faded with the years passed.

Franklin pushes Marshall back into the SUV, and then turns and runs into the house. Marshall slowly makes his way into the home.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Marshall tip-toes, vigilantly looking for Franklin.

FRANKLIN (O.S.)

You could never understand how the means justified the end. You had to right every wrong. You had to defend every underdog. It's small-minded, small world thinking, Marshall.

MARSHALL

I protected you, Barry, never told anyone about that cafe. Not back then, not now.

Marshall looks around the corner of the fridge. Clear.

FRANKLIN (O.S.)

This wasn't my decision. I have advisors telling me there is too much at play to just let lying dogs lie.

FRANKLIN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I just went along with it for the good
of the country.

Marshall looks into the living room and takes a step out when a SHOT craters the wall inches from his head. He dives behind the couch, which is instantly shot several times.

Quiet returns to the house as pieces of down blown from the couch float wistfully through the air.

Franklin steps out of the shadows, gun in hand. He points the gun towards the couch.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

You okay, there, Marshall? Did I
bring a gun to a fist fight?

Nothing.

Franklin jumps around the couch and aims at the floor where Marshall should be...but isn't. A trail of blood lines the marble-tiled floor.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Did I get you, Marshall? Are you
hurt, buddy?

Marshall raises up stealthily behind Franklin, his hands fisted together. He tenses as if to come down on Franklin's neck, when, out of the darkness...

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Colin, what is going on?

Marshall and Colin, turn to MARLA (40's), older but still as stunning as the wedding pictures.

MARSHALL

Marla?

Colin swings his gun and pistol whips Marshall, knocks him to the ground.

MARLA

Colin, what is he doing here?
Marshall, what are you doing here?!

Colin stands over Marshall, gun raised, aimed at his head.

COLIN

Marla, baby -- I need you to go back
into the bedroom and forget you ever
saw him here.

MARLA

What? No.

She walks over and stands in between Marshall and Franklin.

MARLA (CONT'D)

Colin, you left this behind. You are a good man. Marshall is a good man. This ends here.

At that moment, Shaw appears at the back sliding glass door. Without realizing Franklin is nearby, he pulls on the glass door. He cups his face and looks through the glass into the house.

Shaw and Franklin make eye contact as - off pure instinct - Franklin raises his gun and fires. Shaw jumps out of the way just as the glass door shatters.

Before Franklin can turn around, Marshall jumps past Marla and tackles Franklin, sending the Senator's gun scattering across the floor.

Marshall punches Franklin, hard, in the face several times. Franklin makes one last ditch effort and throws Marshall off, but Shaw comes around the corner of the sliding glass door holding a gun.

Franklin, out of breath, gives in, simply sits down on his butt, his arms stretched out over his knees.

MARSHALL

Marla, I've spent the last forty-eight hours running from men trying to kill me -- because of your...your husband.

MARLA

No - Colin would never do that.

Colin looks away from Marla in shame. Marla looks confused.

MARLA (CONT'D)

Colin?

COLIN

You knew they would have to clean up my past, Marla.

MARLA

I knew they'd clean up your past, yes! But I thought that would mean paying some people you pissed off to say nice things about you if reporters came around! Sign a non-disclosure.

MARLA (CONT'D)
 Something like that! Not...not --
 this!

COLIN
 Marshall was the exception, baby.

MARLA
 Why?

Colin looks away from her again, ashamed.

MARSHALL
 Because I saw him do something
 horrible in Iraq twenty years ago.

MARLA
 How horrible?

MARSHALL
 Horrible enough that the people he's
 in bed with need me dead.

MARLA
 Oh, Colin. God dammit, Colin.

EXT. FRANKLIN'S STREET - NIGHT

A stream of police vehicles come screaming around the corner,
 lights blazing, sirens blaring.

INT. FRANKLIN'S RENTAL HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The SOUND of sirens close by. Shaw keeps the gun trained on
 Franklin, but looks back.

SHAW
 Shit.

FRANKLIN
 (bitterly)
 Shit is right. You two are fucked.

Shaw walks over and puts his gun against the Senator's head.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)
 What?! What are you doing?

SHAW
 We're out of options here, Marshall.

FRANKLIN

You're going to kill a U.S. Senator?
Are you fucking crazy?

MARLA

Marshall, what is happening? What is
he talking about.

MARSHALL

(shakes his head)
I'm lost. I just -- dunno.

SHAW

The only way this stops is to end
this. Here. Now.

FRANKLIN

(yells)
This doesn't stop with me, you idiots!
They'll just find another me, and
another, and another! That's how this
shit works! One star falls and they
just pick another one out of the sky!

SHAW

Shut up, you bastard.

FRANKLIN

Kid, look -- I never knew it was going
this way. They said they were going
to take out Marshall...they said
nothing about you. You weren't
supposed to be involved.

MARLA

Marshall, you can't do this. You
can't. Please. He's an asshole right
now -- but I love him. If we ever had
anything, please...don't do this.

MARSHALL

Shaw, are you ready to never be with
your wife and kid again?

Shaw walks away from Franklin.

SHAW

The possibility of being with them
went away a long time ago, Marshall.

Marshall puts the gun to Franklin's head. Franklin slowly
shifts to his knees, clasps his hands together in front of
him, as if praying for mercy.

MARSHALL

Dammit, Barry -

FRANKLIN

Guys, I can make a difference, I can change America. You're in trouble now, sure -- but when I am President, I will pardon you, make sure you're set free. I swear to God...just...let me live. I can change this country for the better. I can. Trust me. Let me go.

A KNOCK on the front door.

POLICE

Police! Open up! Is there anyone in there? Open up!

FRANKLIN

This is your last chance. Let me go.

Marshall's finger tenses to pull the trigger -- when he lets the gun drop to his side and walks towards the front door.

SHAW

What the...

EXT. FRANKLIN'S RENTAL HOME - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Police begin to fan out around the house, when Marshall opens the front door.

OFFICER 1

Get in there! Get in there!

They rush into the house, and overcome Marshall, then Shaw, throw them to the ground.

INT/EXT. COP CAR/RENTAL HOME - NIGHT

Shaw and Marshall in a squad car. The car's lights bounce red and blue off the house.

SHAW

You shoulda pulled the trigger.

MARSHALL

I may spend the rest of my life in prison, but for once I did the right thing.

Long silence.

SHAW

Why didn't you tell me he took your wife?

Marshall puts his forehead against the window as Shaw looks out the window on his side of the car.

And watches as the police escort Franklin and Marla from the home. Marla mouths "thank you".

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

Marshall and Shaw sit next to each other at a metal table across from two DETECTIVES, both in their 30's, hard-nosed.

DETECTIVE 1

(sighs)

So we come in, the Senator's beat up, you two assholes are there. Is there any other conclusion we should come to besides the fact that you came to kill the Senator and his wife?

Silence.

DETECTIVE 2

Sounds like they don't wanna talk.

DETECTIVE 1

Four hours of this shit. Who the...

The door to room opens and ARTIE FEINSTEIN (50), good-looking and well-dressed, carrying a large briefcase enter the room, flanked by two well-dressed FBI agents.

ARTIE

Hello, Detectives. My name is Artie Feinstein.

He presents them his card.

DETECTIVE 1

Special Investigator, Federal Bureau of Investigations?

ARTIE

This is an FBI case, men. The moment it involved a U.S. Senator. You should know your boundaries.

ARTIE (CONT'D)

Now, please let my men escort you from the room - I have some questions for Mister Nelson and Corporal Shaw.

The two Detectives quietly leave the room and the FBI agents shut the door behind them.

Marshall and Shaw are alone with Artie.

ARTIE (CONT'D)

As far as we can tell, you've taken out close to twenty men, including the head of the largest private security firm in the world -- and you broke into the rental home of a U.S. Senator with intent to kill him and his wife. Who happens to be your ex-wife, Mister Nelson. Yeah. You guys are in big trouble. BIG trouble.

SHAW

Thanks for the update. We were wondering exactly what was going on.

ARTIE

Sorry about your father, Corporal. He was a good man. And believe me, I would know.

MARSHALL

We would like a lawyer. Please.

ARTIE

You haven't heard everything I have to say.

He reaches into the briefcase and pulls out two files. He opens one up and turns it around so the captive men can read. A picture of Mason Jones.

ARTIE (CONT'D)

We've been building a case against Mason Jones for five years. Very quietly, mind you - but his day was coming. Ultimately, you guys did us a favor.

He shuts that file, pulls it back, then opens the other and turns it so they can see. A picture of Colin Franklin.

ARTIE (CONT'D)

Senator Franklin is part of a plan whose endgame was to put a man in the White House who could be controlled.

MARSHALL

Yeah, we figured that one out on our own.

ARTIE

Good. Then you also know that the entities who cultivated Franklin will stop at nothing to get their man in the White House. Even if it isn't Franklin. There's gonna be some scandal from all of this -- no one knows yet where Franklin will fall after the shit hits the fan.

SHAW

What does this have to do with us?

ARTIE

Well, I'm sorry to tell you guys that - unfortunately, any evidence that ties you to any of these murders has been misplaced or compromised.

Marshall and Shaw look confused.

MARSHALL

I'm sorry, compromised?

ARTIE

Yes. There will be some circumstantial stuff that will have to be overcome, but we're pretty sure whatever judge this comes in front of is going to feel lead to throw out the case.

SHAW

Are you saying...Marshall, is he saying what I think he's saying?

ARTIE

It's a colossal cluster fuck how evidence has been handled here in the great state of North Carolina. It's unfortunate, really, because the FBI had SUCH an ironclad case against you.

(beat)

Now, the media pressure with a case like this is going to be insane, and with such public notoriety, it might be difficult for accused killers, like yourself, to find a job. I'm pretty sure that Corporal Shaw is going to be quietly dismissed from the Army.

ARTIE (CONT'D)

And, Marshall, how can you go work at America is Great Security after letting your boss and partner get killed in the line of duty?

MARSHALL

What...what are our options here?

ARTIE

Well, I just so happen to be able to offer you both a job with a brand new FBI task force that is charged with going after...these entities who might be inclined to conjure up the dark art of political magic, behind the scenes.

SHAW

Are you saying we will not only be set free...

ARTIE

Records completely purged...

SHAW

...but you want to give us jobs?

Artie nods, smiles.

MARSHALL

Sounds too good to be true.

ARTIE

Marshall, you took down ten years of the bad guys' work in one evening when you took out Jones. And you might've killed a perfect candidate's chances of being the next President. Believe me, they WILL have back up plans. And they will not be big fans of the Shaw and Nelson show.

MARSHALL

Do we have a choice?

ARTIE

You always have a choice, Marshall. But I'd hate for some of that evidence to suddenly be found to be un-compromised.

MARSHALL

Looks like we've got new jobs, Shaw.

SHAW

And we're partners.

(beat; sarcastic)

Yay! Dreams do come true.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Artie walks out of the building with his two FBI Men. Marshall and Shaw exit the building close behind Artie. They are both now dressed in perfectly-tailored black suits.

They both stop and stare ahead.

SHAW

Only in America. Try to kill a Senator and get a promotion.

MARSHALL

The greatest country on earth.

BLACK SCREEN

SHAW (V.O.)

Let's go make a new America.

CREDITS

INT. A LIVING ROOM - DAY

Close on a television. Turned off.

Super: 3 months later.

Someone enters the room and sits down nearby. The TV turns on. CNN. An anchor/talking head sits at a desk, talking straight into the camera.

CNN ANCHOR

After all the political fallout surrounding Senator Franklin, everyone wondered where the man would fall in his run for the presidency. Well, there is no more wonder, as Franklin confirmed that his campaign will continue. Here's what our polls tell us --

A poll comes up on the screen.

CNN ANCHOR (V.O.)
 Sixty-six percent of people say they would still vote for Senator Franklin over incumbent Jack Foley, while twenty-eight say they'd vote for Foley. Six percent are undecided.

Cut back to the Anchor.

CNN ANCHOR
 It looks like the blue party can quit singing the blues. Let's go to Senator Franklin at a rally of his supporters:

The program cuts to Franklin speaking to a large group of voters, Marla at his side.

COLIN
 We have had some bumps along the way, haven't we? But that is what life is all about! Hitting the bumps and forging on! I am human. You are human. I am the New America. YOU are the NEW AMERICA! Let's go make a NEW AMERICA!!!

As the crowd goes nuts...when suddenly Franklin's body buckles and he falls to the ground, dead -- a bullet in his head.

As Security, his aids and Marla run to him, Franklin's lifeless eyes stare out ahead.

SMASH CUT TO:

BLACK

Long moment of silence.

ARTIE (V.O.)
 (filtered, as if
 through phone)
 Nelson, Shaw - you ready? We will protect America -- by all necessary means.

THE END