

THE JUDAS LINE

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

A dim, flickering fluorescent light buzzes overhead. Rain streaks the grime-caked windows. A RADIO murmurs low in Hindi behind the counter.

A BELL above the door JINGLES.

Three masked men burst inside-faces covered, soaked from rain.

HECTOR (21), stocky, sharp-eyed, leads with quiet intensity in a black hoodie.

MARCOS (19), thickest, tense-jawed, keeps a step behind in navy.

MICHAEL (17), wiry and twitchy, brings up the rear in army green.

All carry 8MM handguns.

The CLERK (40s), Silk shirt, brown-skinned, weary but proud, looks up. His eyes widen.

Hector points his gun directly at his face.

HECTOR
(low, venomous)
Fill it fast - or I fill you with
lead.

He tosses a black duffle onto the counter.

Marcos and Michael fan out-Michael's gaze bounces off every surface, heart in his throat.

The Clerk's hands tremble as he opens the register. Beneath the counter-his thumb taps the panic button.

CLERK
(shaky)
Just take it. All of it. I got a
family man...

Michael lowers his gun - just for a second.

MICHAEL
(quiet, uneasy)
This stinks. Like a setup.

HECTOR
(turns, icy)
Keep your fuckin' mouth shut.

The Clerk fumbles a wad of bills. They scatter. Hector SLAMS his palm on the counter.

HECTOR
(impatient)
Faster! You stall; you bleed.

Michael flinches. He clocks the small FAMILY PHOTO near the register-a little girl, smiling in pink pajamas.

His eyes glass over.

The last bill drops into the bag. Hector SNATCHES it.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
Let's move.

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Hector and Marcos BURST out.

SIRENS WAIL.

FIVE POLICE CRUISERS screech up-boxed in.

Floodlights splash red and blue across the pavement.

Cops flood out-guns trained.

POLICE OFFICER (O.S.)
(speaking on a PA system)
Drop your weapons! Down on your
knees!

Hector and Marcos FREEZE. They drop guns. Drop the bag. Drop to their knees.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - SAME TIME

Michael stands frozen mid-aisle, breath shallow.

He hears the sirens. Panic surges. Eyes flick to the back door. Escape.

He turns; eyes drift back to the family photo. The weight of it is almost suffocating.

He meets the Clerk's gaze. Guilt swells. His pulse quickens. Terror and confusion mirror in both their eyes.

MICHAEL
(whispers, shaky)
I'm sorry. I didn't want this.

He bolts out the back door.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND STORE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Michael slams through the back door and sprints into the darkness.

His SKI MASK flies off mid-run.

His breath ragged. Chest heaving. Rain pelts his face.

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Cops CUFF Hector and Marcos. Ski masks yanked off.

HECTOR
(gritted teeth)
Where's Mike?

MARCOS
(uncertain)
Maybe he made it out...

A beat. Hector lowers his head, disbelief settling in. He shakes it off, the betrayal hitting hard.

He lifts his head, eyes hardening, then turns, scanning the shadows for Michael-once a friend, now a threat.

HECTOR
(yelling)
Mike! Come out, you fuckin' coward!

EXT. DARK ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Michael hunches behind a dumpster.

Soaked. Shivering.

HECTOR (O.S.)
I'll get you for this, Mike! You
hear me?! This ain't over!

Michael's eyes brim with fear. Then resolve. He vanishes into the darkness.

INT. RECRUITING OFFICE - DAY

Distant sirens fade as Michael steps in. Fluorescents buzz. The air carries coffee and old paper.

He stops just inside, eyes sweeping the empty chairs, faded posters, neat stacks of brochures.

The room feels close-air thick, walls pressing in.

Behind the counter, a MILITARY RECRUITER, (mid-40s), clocks him.

Michael blinks, pulled from a memory, his focus shifting back.

He moves forward, offering a firm handshake. As they break, his sleeve slides, revealing a fresh tattoo—a triangle bisected by a line.

The Recruiter's eyes catch it. A brief recognition.

A beat. He gestures to a chair.

Michael sits, duffle bag at his feet. The Recruiter studies him, unreadable.

INT. PRISON CELL - NIGHT

Moonlight slices through the bars, carving hard shadows across Hector.

He touches his wrist: the same tattoo as Michael, crisp and dark. His gaze fixes on the thin strip of night outside. Jaw tightens.

MICHAEL (V.O.)
You'll always be my brother.

Hector's fingers linger on the ink—then the prison intercom BUZZ snaps the quiet.

INT. PRISON - VISITATION ROOM - DAY

TITLE CARD: 15 YEARS LATER

A hollow chamber inside a weathered Chicago penitentiary.

The Visitation Room is bleak—five booths, thick bulletproof glass between them, and chipped yellow paint clinging to the walls like old skin.

A ceiling fan groans overhead; its blades slow and rhythmic.

BUZZZZZZ.

A heavy steel door slides open.

FOUR INMATES shuffle in, chains dragging. A CORRECTIONS OFFICER (30s, no-nonsense) watches them with dead-serious eyes.

Among them-Hector (36). Hardened. Scruff clings to his jaw like regret. His gaze is fire in a cage.

He sits at Booth #3.

Across the glass, Javi (early 30s) drops into a seat. Gold chain. Crisp hoodie. Too smooth to be clean. His eyes never stop scanning.

Both lift their phones-clicks in sync.

HECTOR
(low, flat)
Talk.

JAVI
(casual smirk)
Remember Mikey?
(pauses)
The one who ghosted when it got
loud?

Hector's jaw ticks. A long beat. His grip tightens on the phone.

HECTOR
He still breathin'?

JAVI
(laughs under breath)
Like a fuckin' Boy Scout. Uniform.
Family. White fence. American
dream-front page shit.

The fan above creaks. The silence between them stretches, taut as wire.

HECTOR
(cold)
Where's he lay his head?

JAVI
Stepford suburb. Overseas right
now. But the nest?
(chuckles)
Wide open.

Hector's gaze cuts to the guard-she's busy tapping her tablet.

He leans in, voice a whisper through glass.

HECTOR
And when he's gone...?

JAVI
(smiling)
Wife. Kid. Just them.

Hector doesn't blink. His thumb taps slow against the phone.
Not rage-strategy.

HECTOR
Address?

JAVI
Give me twenty-four.

BUZZZZZZ.

The guard straightens. Time's up. Still, neither man moves.

HECTOR
(quiet, lethal)
Be ready.

They hang up. No goodbye. No glance.

Javi taps the glass once with a knuckle-a code. Then stands
and vanishes through the exit.

BEEP. The guard swipes her badge. Steel door unlocks.

Hector rises. No words. No flare. He walks out-face
unreadable.

But his eyes? His eyes say everything: It's already begun.

EXT. AFGHANISTAN - SKY OVER DESERT - DAY

TITLED CARD: Afghanistan

The sun is merciless. Heat ripples over endless sand.

A two-ship Apache patrol cuts through the sky like blades-
WHUMP-WHUMP-WHUMP.

INT. APACHE HELICOPTER - CONTINUOUS

LT. MICHAEL STONE (32) sits among three MARINES, all knitted
out and silent. His blue eyes are laser-focused beneath a
dusty helmet. A scar on his left shoulder.

Across from him-PFC JOBLIN (19)-nervous, trying not to show it.

 JOBLIN
 (low)
 Sir... what's the mission brief
 again?

 MICHAEL
 Eyes open. Confirmed bomber hiding
 near the convoy line. No
 collateral. Fast and clean.

Joblin nods. Swallows hard.

 MICHAEL (CONT'D)
 Stay tight. If I stop, you stop. If
 I move-?

 JOBLIN
 You move faster.

 MICHAEL
 Good Marine.

EXT. COMBAT ZONE - MOMENTS LATER

The chopper hovers just long enough. Michael and the team rappel out, BOOTS THUNDERING into the dust.

SFX: DISTANT GUNFIRE. POP-POP-POP.

Echoes of chaos ahead.

Michael gestures. Two fingers. Move.

As his hands brushes his wrist, the sounds of war briefly fade-his fingers graze the mark.

FLASHBACK - INT. RUN-DOWN TATTOO SHOP - NIGHT

The needle buzzes. Michael and Hector sit side by side, silent, tense. The artist works swiftly, marking their wrists.

A triangle split by a line-etched deep.

A brief glance between them, a bond sealed in silence, the pain transforming into something unspoken, something deeper.

BACK TO PRESENT - EXT. ABANDONED VEHICLE LINE - DAY

The chaos of gunfire returns. Michael's focus snaps back to the mission, his jaw tight. But the flash of the tattoo lingers, a ghost of his past.

The six-man unit, including Michael, spreads across the wreckage of a motorcade-burned Humvees, rubble.

Suddenly-

Gunfire rips from a half-collapsed building. They drop into cover.

MICHAEL
 (whispers into comm)
 Team Alpha, suppress. Bravo, with me.

Michael signals-three fingers. Countdown.

Three... two... one.

They rise. Return fire. Precise. Quick.

Two insurgents drop.

Then-CLINK.

Something rolls across the dirt.

GRENADE.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
 (shouting)
 Down!

He lunges-grabs it with gloved hands-YANKS the pin.

CLICK. Re-secured.

Breath heavy. He tosses it away safely. Silence after.

Joblin staggers over.

JOBLIN
 You good?

Michael shakes it off, refocused, he nods.

Until-BOOM!

An IED detonates 40 yards out.

Two Marines scream from behind a flipped truck. One drags the other behind cover, but-Joblin's hit.

Michael dives to him. Joblin blinks up-blood on his chest plate.

MICHAEL
You're alright. Stay with me.

JOBLIN
(weak)
Thought you said fast and clean...

Joblin tries to smile. Fails. His eyes fixed on Michael... then fades.

Michael closes his eyes gently with a trembling hand.

A breath. A beat.

Then: CRACK-CRACK-CRACK.

Michael flinches, grief breaking to steel.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
(into comm)
Target still live. Proceeding to sweep and clear.

He stands. Movements methodical. Purpose reborn.

EXT. NEARBY STRUCTURE - MOMENTS LATER

Michael and two Marines breach the rusted shell of a garage.

Inside-a FIGURE hunched over wires. SUICIDE BOMBER.

Michael fires two rounds. POP-POP. Center mass. He drops.

Red digits blink on a vest. 00:26... 25...

MICHAEL
(into comm)
Bomb vest. Active. Corporal Johnson-status?

JOHNSON (O.S.)
Rushing in-got tools.

EXT. OUTSIDE STRUCTURE - MOMENTS LATER

Johnson (mid-20s) kneels, sweating bullets. Michael keeps watch.

JOHNSON
Three wires. Could be decoys.

MICHAEL
Pick the wrong one and we're all
paste. You got this.

Johnson breathes. Snip. Snip.

00:04... 03... 02...

SNIP.

00:00.

Silence.

Everyone exhales at once.

Michael looks down at Joblin's body, being carried past.

A weight settles in.

MICHAEL
(to himself)
I'll make it mean something.

EXT. MARINE BASE CAMP - AFGHANISTAN - SUNSET

The desert wind stirs dust, laced with the sharp tang of burnt cordite. The sun bleeds low over the base, casting long shadows as soldiers move silently in the orange haze.

Michael, still in full gear, walks past tents and supply trucks. His boots drag. Each step heavier than the last.

Ahead, a green canvas tent flaps in the wind.

A weathered sign reads:

"COLONEL R. VANNATTER - COMMANDING OFFICER."

The flaps lifts-

COLONEL VANNATTER (50s) steps out. Square-jawed. Sharp eyed. Authority in silence.

COLONEL
(stern, spotting Michael)
Lieutenant Stone.

Michael halts, straightens, but his shoulders are slumped, his gaze distant.

MICHAEL

Sir.

The Colonel watches him for a beat, then motions inside.

COLONEL

Step inside. We need to talk.

INT. COLONEL'S TENT - CONTINUOUS

The tent is bare-just a cot, scattered papers, and a family photo on the desk.

The air feels heavier here. The past pressing in.

Colonel Vannatter sits behind the desk.

Michael stands at attention; eyes fixed on the photo-home, framed against the violence outside.

COLONEL

(soft but firm)

At ease.

Michael shifts, but it's a strained relaxation. His eyes don't leave the photo. The Colonel notices.

COLONEL (CONT'D)

(leaning forward)

You did good today. You led them.
You gave them a chance. But you
don't get to let that slip away.

Michael's lips tighten. His gaze drops.

MICHAEL

(quiet, heavy)

Three Marines dead. Joblin. He was
just a kid.

The Colonel's face softens but hardens with military resolve.

COLONEL

(steady)

Grief is a badge. You wear it, but
don't let it wear you. They
followed you because they believed.
And today, you saved more than you
lost.

A long silence. Michael swallows, his eyes still unfocused.

MICHAEL
(soft)
I'll be back, sir. For them.

The Colonel nods, the weight of the moment heavy in his gaze.

COLONEL
Tomorrow. Go home. Be with your family. You earned it.

Michael stands tall, salutes.

MICHAEL
(quiet)
Yes, sir.

He exits the tent, leaving the Colonel behind. His boots drag again, but this time there's a shift-a finality.

EXT. BASE CAMP - CONTINUOUS

Michael steps into the fading light. The sunset burns on the horizon-bright, but distant.

Like the weight he carries, it's slipping away.

He pauses. Hand clenched around his rifle.

Breath steady. Jaw tight. Everything else screams.

MICHAEL
(under his breath)
I'm coming home.

The wind stirs dust around him, but he doesn't move. The sun sinks lower-the day ending, but not what's inside him.

INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Afternoon light spills through plaid curtains, casting golden beams across a perfectly made bed.

The room is calm.

Sara (30), beautiful in a natural, unfussy way, folds laundry at the foot of the bed. Her hands move, but her eyes are far away.

On the dresser: a framed photo-

Michael in uniform, arms wrapped around Sara and Tyler, all laughter at the Marine Corps Ball.

Frozen joy.

From another room-

TYLER (O.S.)
Mom! I can't find my cleats!

Sara exhales-a tired but loving sound. She doesn't look up.

SARA
Hall closet, bottom shelf. Check
behind the vacuum.

TYLER (O.S.)
Got it!

She half-smiles. Just as she starts folding another shirt,
her phone BUZZES in her back pocket.

She checks the screen.

ON SCREEN: +93-555-7586

Her face softens. Then breath catches in her chest.

She answers quickly.

SARA
(quiet, fragile)
Hey, babe...

INTERCUT - MICHAEL / SARA / TYLER - SIMULTANEOUS

EXT. MARINE BASE - AFGHANISTAN - NIGHT

Worn by war, Michael grips the field phone. One word from
her, and the armor cracks.

MICHAEL
God, it's good to hear you. I miss
you both like hell.

Sara sits, folding a shirt. Her smile fades before it
begins.

SARA
We miss you too.
(beat)
It's been... hard. You being gone.
Tyler asks about you every night.

She trails a hand along the comforter, a subconscious act of
grounding herself.

MICHAEL (V.O.)
I know. But tomorrow it ends. I'm
coming home.

INT. HALL CLOSET - MOMENTS LATER

Tyler (7), bright-eyed and energetic, yanks his cleats from
behind the vacuum.

TYLER
Got'em!

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sara glances up as Tyler bounds in, holding his cleats like
a trophy. She gives him a quiet "slow down" gesture.

SARA
Daddy's on the phone.

Tyler's face explodes with joy.

TYLER
He is?

She hands him the phone with tenderness.

SARA
(gently)
Say hi, sweetheart.

Tyler grabs the phone like it's gold.

TYLER
Dad?!

Michael's smile breaks wide and pure. For one second, the
war melts away.

MICHAEL
There's my man. How's my champion?

Tyler starts pacing, beaming.

TYLER
I scored! Top corner, Dad - even
Coach freaked out!

MICHAEL (V.O.)
You serious? That's amazing, dude!
Proud of you.

TYLER
And Mom yelled like the world was
ending. Even the ref laughed.

Sara chuckles softly, the sound tinged with longing.

TYLER (CONT'D)
(quietly)
I wish you were there.

A beat.

Michael's expression tightens. He closes his eyes.

MICHAEL
Me too, buddy. But next game - I'll
be front row. I promise.

Tyler nods, but his smile is small now. He looks to Sara,
who gives him a brave wink.

MICHAEL (V.O.)
Alright, big guy. Time for you to
suit up for practice. Let me talk
to Mommy, okay?

Tyler hesitates, then he hands the phone back.

TYLER
Love you, Dad.

MICHAEL (V.O.)
I love you more.

Sara takes the phone.

SARA
(soto)
He needs you home.

MICHAEL (V.O.)
I know. And I will be.
(beat)
Give him a kiss for me. And tell
him I'll see him tomorrow.

SARA
(smile)
I will.

END INTERCUT

EXT. OUTSIDE SARA AND MICHAEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A serene suburban street under violet dusk. Porch lights glow. Roses rustle in the breeze.

Sara locks the front door.

Tyler marches ahead, soccer duffel slung proudly over his shoulder.

Across the street-A BLACK HONDA CIVIC idles in silence.

Hector watches from behind tinted shades, one hand on the wheel.

Javi chews gum, eyes locked on the boy.

HECTOR

You sure?

JAVI

(nods, low)

Positive.

They share a look. Hector kills the engine.

INT. SARA'S LAND ROVER DEFENDER - CONTINUOUS

Tyler hops into the backseat, door SLAMMING.

Sara slides behind the wheel, glancing one last time at their peaceful home. She starts the car.

The Land Rover backs out and rolls down the block.

Tyler hums to himself.

EXT. ACROSS THE STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Hector watches them disappear, silent and still.

HECTOR

(voice low)

Let's move.

They exit the car. The DOORS CREAK loudly in the quiet night.

Hector leads them up the driveway like a general storming enemy territory.

At the front door, Hector jiggles the knob - locked. He scans the ground, notices the small decorative rock bed.

Kneels. Grabs a rock.

JAVI
You're not seriously-

CRASH!

The rock SMASHES through the oval glass in the door. A cascade of shards rain onto the hardwood inside.

Hector reaches through, flicks the deadbolt.

The lock CLICKS. Door swings inward.

INT. MICHAEL & SARA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Moonlight filters through broken glass.

The living room is warm, lived-in-family photos, soft pillows on the couch.

Now tainted.

Hector steps in, removes his shades. Tosses them onto the couch-a quiet snap in the silence.

HECTOR
(scanning)
Cozy. Almost makes me forget the
cage I called home.

He picks up a framed photo on the inn table - the family: Michael, Sara, Tyler at the beach. Laughing. Whole.

His hand trembles... then tightens.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
(venom)
You're out here playing house...

He hurls the frame across the room. It EXPLODES against the wall, glass and joy shattered.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
I counted bars while you counted
birthdays.

Javi flinches. A silence follows - like the house itself is holding its breath.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
(low, commanding)
Kill the lights. I'll check the
rest.

Javi nods, exits.

Hector stalks down the hallway.

INT. TYLER'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lights still on. Soccer posters. A blue comforter. Trophies gleam on the shelf. It's a child's safe world - untouched.

Hector enters. Stops in the doorway. A small smile - something dark - tugs at his mouth.

EXT. HOUSE - SIDE YARD - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Javi pries open the breaker box with a screwdriver.

He snips two wires.

ZZZT - DARKNESS.

INT. TYLER'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The room goes black.

Hector chuckles under his breath, turns, and exits.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Javi returns. Closes the door behind him.

Hector steps out of Tyler's room.

JAVI

It's done. Anything?

HECTOR

Only vapor.

He stalks toward the hallway again, voice hardening.

HECTOR (CONT'D)

But they'll be back.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

They step inside. Hector rifles through drawers, tossing aside folded clothes with no respect.

Javi watches, uneasy.

EXT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT - LATER

Headlights pierce the quiet. Sara's Land Rover pulls into the driveway.

INT. LAND ROVER - SAME TIME

Sara reaches into her purse for the house keys. Tyler kicks off his cleats in the back seat.

Then Tyler stops - eyes widening.

TYLER
(shaky)
Mom...

She glances at him, still rummaging.

SARA
What is it?

TYLER
(points)
The window...

Sara follows his gaze. The broken oval glass. Her hand freezes in her purse. Her face goes cold.

SARA
(calm but urgent)
Okay... sweetheart...

She slowly pulls her hand out of her purse, her tone honey-sweet but eyes alert.

SARA (CONT'D)
Why don't you stay in the car,
okay? I'll check it out.

TYLER
Mom, I'm scared...

Sara fixes a soft gaze at him, brushes hair from his face.

SARA
It's probably nothing. Just... stay
here till I come and get you.
Promise?

Tyler nods, trembling. She leans back and kisses his forehead.

EXT. SARA'S VEHICLE - MOMENTS LATER

Sara pops the trunk, grabs a baseball bat. Slams it shut.

Takes a deep breath.

INT. HOUSE FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Sara steps inside, but raised. The glass crackles under her shoes.

The house is now silent. Alien. Predatory.

She flips the light switch. Nothing.

Her chest tightens.

SARA
(uneasy)
Hello?

A whisper in the void. No answer.

SARA (CONT'D)
(voice shaking)
Is someone here?

A sudden scrape of boots. WHAM!

JAVI
(launching at her)
Gotcha!

Javi hits her from behind-hard. She spins, instinctual, and-CRACK!

She SLAMS the bat into his face.

His nose shatters-blood sprays. He stumbles back screaming.

JAVI
Ahh! Bitch!

Hector lunges from the hallway, wraps her in a chokehold. She drops the bat, kicks, claws, struggling for breath.

Javi recovers, RAGES, and PUNCHES her square in the jaw.

Sara's head SNAPS back. She slumps.

TYLER (O.S.)
Mom?

They both turn. Tyler stands in the doorway, frozen in terror.

Javi grins, breath ragged.

Hector smirks.

SARA
(desperately, gasping)
Tyler! RUN!

Tyler bolts - feet pounding the pavement.

HECTOR
Get him!

Javi rushes after Tyler.

Sara headbutts Hector. His nose erupts in blood. He HOWLS, letting her go.

She stumbles outside-

EXT. DRIVEWAY - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Tyler is cornered.

Javi holds a pistol to his head, breathing heavily.

Tyler trembles.

Sara freezes - terror consumes her. Her lips quiver.

SARA
Please... let him go. Take anything
you want. Just don't hurt my son.

JAVI
Keep the house. We're not here for
stuff.

A cruel beat.

HECTOR (O.S.)
We're here for scars.

Sara turns - Hector approaches, gun drawn.

SARA
What do you want from us?

HECTOR
Michael owes me. This is how he
pays.

SARA
(trembling)
What... how do you know my husband?

A beat of silence.

Hector presses the muzzle into her back.

HECTOR
(sharp)
Move.

Sara raises her hands. Tears in her eyes. She walks.

Tyler whimpers as Javi shoves him forward.

They load them into the Civic. The DOOR SLAMS.

Tyler clutches his mom, sobbing.

TYLER
Where are they taking us?

SARA
(trying to remain clam)
I'm not sure, baby...

Sara stares ahead, her dilated eyes wide with fear.

EXT. THE SURBURBAN STREET - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

The Honda speeds off into the dark.

EXT. MILITARY BASE CAMP - DAY

A blistering wind kicks up dusts across the compound. Tents flap. Trucks, Humvees, MRAPS-parked in rigid rows.

Nearby a MARINE JEEP idles, engine growling under the desert sun.

Michael strides across camp in full combat fatigues, his last name patch crisp on his chest. A weathered green duffel slung over his shoulder-worn, like him.

A cluster of FELLOW MARINES stand by the Jeep. Some salute. Others just nod-quiet, solemn.

They've fought with him. Bled with him. Now they say goodbye-to a leader. A brother.

FEMALE MARINE
Safe travels, Lieutenant.

MALE MARINE
See you on the other side,
Stone.

Michael gives a soft salute-two fingers, a tight nod. No words. They've already been said.

He tosses his duffle in back, climbs into the passenger seat beside an OLDER MARINE, face stone-set behind aviators.

The engine ROARS.

The Jeep pulls away-dust trailing like smoke from a fading memory.

INT. CHICAGO O'HARE AIRPORT - BAGGAGE CLAIM - DAY

The baggage carousel whirs. Michael waits, steady amid the swirl of travelers.

In a Marine tee and black cargos, he spots his duffle, grabs it, moves out.

Phone to ear-Sara's voicemail. He redials. Still nothing. A frown. Pocketed phone. Eyes cut to the exit.

Voices, loudspeakers, children's cries blur to static. Only the silence on the other end matters.

Something's wrong-he feels it.

EXT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE - DAY

A silver Camry eases to the curb.

Michael steps out, duffle slung over his shoulder. The sky-blue house glows in the soft afternoon light-too still.

He stops. An unease grips him.

Sara's Land Rover sits in the drive, driver's door ajar.

Michael hesitates, a breath caught halfway. Eyes narrow. A chill crawls his spine.

He starts forward, slow, boots crunching gravel. The front door gapes, shattered shards clinging like jagged teeth.

The duffle slips from his hand-THUD. Heart pounding now.

He draws his SIG in one fluid motion, breath tight, and edges the door open.

INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE - ENTRYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Glass shards litter the hardwood. A baseball bat rests near the baseboard-dropped in panic.

A single small blood smear streaks the wood.

Michael's eyes lock on it. He steps inside, glass crackling underfoot.

He kneels, picks up the bat slowly. His fingers wrap around the handle. He studies the blood.

Something inside him snaps.

FLASHBACK - INT. SAME ENTRYWAY - NIGHT

Sara screams as she swings the bat.

Javi punches her. The bat drops.

Tyler cries out. Sara yells for him to run.

Javi chases him.

BACK TO PRESENT - INT. ENTRYWAY - DAY

Michael rises. Jaw tight. Shoulders squared. War-made activated.

He moves deeper, gun raised. Each room tells a story-a crooked pillow, a toppled chair, a shattered photo frame.

He enters the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

A serene kitchen - now surreal. The stillness is crushing. On the island counter, a landline phone suddenly rings.

RING. RING. RING.

Michael spins. The sound tears through the silence like an alarm bell.

He crosses to the phone and grabs it with urgency. His eyes are wild with panic, chest heaving.

MICHAEL

Hello?

A chilling silence.

A long breath. A voice, cold-venomous, creeps through the speaker.

HECTOR (V.O.)

Hello, Michael...

Michael's blood turns to ice.

INTERCUT - MICHAEL / HECTOR / SARA

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - SAME TIME

An echoing cavern of steel and rust. Light spills through cracks in the ceiling, pooling across the floor.

At the center-Sara and Tyler, hands bound behind them, black gags strapped tight.

Sara trembles, a bruise blooming on her cheek.

Tyler whimpers, barely holding it together, his small frame shaking like a leaf.

Behind them, two men in dark clothes stand still-M60s in hand. Silent. Waiting.

A few feet away, Hector stands with his back to them. One hand on his hip, the other gripping a burner phone.

MICHAEL
(voice like steel)
I should've buried you back then.

Hector slightly smirking. His tone never rises.

HECTOR
You got a family, a mortgage,
Sunday barbecues... I got iron rods
and a broken bond. I'm just evening
the score.

As he speaks, Hector turns-just enough to glance at Sara and Tyler from the corner of his eye.

Not enough to show his face.

Sara looks up, eyes locked on his back. Tears stream silently. She leans into Tyler-protective.

Tyler tries to stay still. Whimpers anyway.

A guard shifts his rifle. Pressure builds.

MICHAEL
(voice low)
Where are they?

A beat of silence. Hector walks over. Kneels. Yanks down Sara's gag.

She gasps, catching her breath - then locks eyes with him, defiant through the tears.

HECTOR
(cruelly)
Say hi, beautiful.

He holds the phone out, just inches from her mouth.

SARA
(raw, whisper)
Michael...

Michael closes his eyes - the sound shatters him.

HECTOR
That's enough.

He rips the gag back over her mouth. He stands and doesn't flinch.

MICHAEL
(voice shaking, furious)
Touch them, and you die.

HECTOR (V.O.)
You took everything from me. Now I
take what matters to you. Twenty -
four hours, Mike that's all you
get.

Hector stands over them.

Sara sobs quietly. Tyler buries his head into her side.

One of the guards' steps forward slightly, hand near the trigger.

Hector doesn't even look back. He speaks into the phone as he walks away-

HECTOR
Tick. Tock, Marine.

He hangs up. The line goes dead.

END INTERCUT

INT. MICHAEL'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Michael stares at the phone in disbelief. Slowly lowers it.

MICHAEL
(softly, to himself)
No... no, no, no... this can't be
happening.

Then-he explodes.

Slams the phone down, shattering it across the counter.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
(roars)
FUCK!!

He stares frozen, the tension fuming through his body.

EXT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE - SECONDS LATER

Michael bursts out the front door. Storms across the lawn. Everything in his body is rage and movement.

He stops.

His gaze drifts downward-a small oil stain on the asphalt across the street.

Fresh. Black. A trail.

Michael walks to it, kneels. Dips two fingers into it. Still warm.

FLASHBACK - EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Hector and Javi shove Sara and Tyler into a black Honda Civic. It peels away from the curb, tires screeching.

BACK TO PRESENT - EXT. STREET - DAY

Michael stands, storm gathering behind his eyes. He turns, heading back toward the house.

INT. MICHAEL'S GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

The garage door SLAMS open. The overhead light flickers to life.

Michael charges in-driven.

Inside:

- . A matte black H1 Hummer, hulking and still.
- . A dusty workbench, scattered with tools.
- . A rusted metal cabinet locked tight.
- . A gear bag slumped near the wall.

He moves to the cabinet, pulls a key from his belt-

Pauses.

A photo is taped to the door: Sara and Tyler. Smiling. Alive.

His jaw tightens.

Click. He opens it.

Inside: a personal armory.

Rifles. Handguns. Blades. Grenades. Ammo.

War in a box.

Michael suits up with silent precision:

- . Straps on a thigh holster.
- . Slides in his KA-BAR.
- . Holster the P320.
- . Loads ammo and smoke grenades into a duffle.
- . Clips frag grenades to his belt.
- . Slings a grenade launcher over his shoulder.

He zips the duffle. One firm slap. Like sealing a coffin.

He moves to the Hummer, pops the rear latch, and tosses the bag inside-

Followed by military-grade body armor-black, reinforced, unforgiving.

Leaves it for now.

INT. HUMMER - SECONDS LATER

Michael slides into the driver's seat, gripping the wheel.

A beat.

Then Hector's voice. Cold. Still in his head.

HECTOR (V.O., FLASHBACK)
(rage filled)
I'll get you for this Mike!

Michael blinks-snaps back.

Hits button overhead. The garage door groans open, daylight flooding in.

The Hummer growls to life. He throws it in reverse.

EXT. MICHAEL'S DRIVEWAY - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

The Hummer jolts back-SCREECH.

Michael punches it into drive. It ROARS forward, tearing down the street.

INT. HUMMER - CONTINUOUS

Michael's eyes locked in. Face like granite.

INT. WAREHOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

A rusted steel door shrieks open, echoing through the warehouse corridors.

Hector drags Sara by her bound wrist. Her eyes dart, terrified.

Marcos (34) - smug, sharp-eyed, AK-47 in hand - trails behind, shoving Tyler, who stumbles.

His gag slips beneath his chin.

At the end of the hall:

A towering rust-red vault door, twelve feet tall, bolted from within.

Hector unfastens the latch. The door groans open-revealing a pitch-black room, windowless. Lightless.

A void.

INT. EMPTY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The concrete floor echoes every footstep. Dust swirls in the stale air.

Hector rips the bandana off Sara's mouth and unties her wrists.

Her breath catches. She glances at him, trembling.

Without warning, he shoves her inside.

Sara stumbles, nearly falling.

Tyler cries out.

Hector unbinds the boy's wrist and hurls him in.

Tyler crashes to the floor with a whimper, he curls into a ball, clutching his knees.

Sara kneels beside him and cradles his head, her voice cracking.

SARA
Why are you doing this? Please...
Just let my son go.

Hector stares blankly, as if savoring her desperation.

Then-he SLAMS the door.

CLANG! BANG!

Sara bolts to the door and pounds her fist against the steel.

SARA (CONT'D)
(fearful)
No! No, no, no-please!

The locks CLICK into place.

INT. OUTSIDE THE ROOM - SECONDS LATER

Hector turns to Marcos, who stands like a shadow with his weapon in hand.

HECTOR
(low, sharp)
Make sure Mike never makes it.

Marcos nods, silent and grim. He disappears down the corridor.

INT. EMPTY ROOM - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Tyler sits against the far wall, hugging his knees. His lip trembles.

Sara lowers to the ground beside him. Her arm encircles him protectively.

A single tear slides down her cheek.

SARA
(softly)
It's gonna be okay baby. We'll
survive this.

She buries her face in his hair, her eyes glossy with fear-yet burning with survival.

EXT. OLD FACTORY - DAY

The sun glares over a weather-beaten industrial graveyard.

A whitewashed factory-massive, abandoned-looms behind a rusted, weed-choked chain-link fence.

A military H1 Hummer barrels into frame, engine ROARING like a beast off its leash.

It skids to a stop at the locked front gate. Dust swirls around the tires.

INT. HUMMER - CONTINUOUS

Michael, eyes like tempered steel, sits stone-faced behind the wheel. Jaw clenched. Breathing measured.

He cuts the engine. Silence creeps in-unnatural, heavy.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE GATED FACTORY - SECONDS LATER

Michael steps out of the Hummer.

Boots THUD against the gravel.

His fingers brush the grip of his SIG SAUER P320-M17 holstered on his thigh.

He scans the fence-padlocked tight with a thick, rust-caked chain.

Michael steps back. Raises his pistol.

BANG! BANG!

The PADLOCK EXPLODES, metal fragments clattering to the pavement.

Without hesitation, Michael shoves the gate open-CREAK-and strides through.

EXT. ENTERING THE FACTORY PREMISES - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

His gait is cold. Calculated. A soldier in predator mode.

He moves up a cracked concrete ramp toward the main entrance.

ANGLE - DOUBLE DOORS

Two THUGS swagger out.

MAN 1, wiry, mean-eyed.

MAN 2, bulkier, with a swagger built on a false sense of power.

They clock Michael-his presence halts them mid-step.

MAN 1
(half-joking)
Yo! You lost?

MAN 2
(smug)
Yeah, turn around. We ain't got no
time for strays.

Michael slows. He stands ten feet away. Calm. Emotionless.
But ready to kill.

MICHAEL
I'm here to see Lalo.

MAN 1
(snorts)
Lalo don't take walk-ins.

The tension sharpens-static in the air.

Both men unsnap their belts, revealing 8MM pistols tucked
into their waistbands.

Michael's eyes narrow. His voice like gravel scraping steel.

MICHAEL
Two choices. One-you let me pass.
Two-I break you both.

Beat.

They chuckle. It's their last mistake.

MAN 2
(sharp, tense)
How about you go fuck yourself.

Michael STRIKES.

BLAM!

He SLAPS the pistol from Man 2's hand.

FLIPS the weapon mid-air, and levels it at his face.

Man 2 backs up, eyes wide, hands trembling.

MAN 2 (CONT'D)

Whoa-!

MAN 1 FIRES.

Michael dives, rolls left, comes up on one knee.

POP-POP-POP!

Three rapid shots punch through Man 1's chest.

He collapses, eyes wide in shock.

INT. COCAINE PACKING FACTORY - CONTINUOUS

A cathedral of corruption.

Ten tables lined with tightly packed cocaine, scales, and vacuum sealers.

Men in gloves move with silent urgency.

Gunfire outside. Everyone freezes.

EXT. FACTORY RAMP - MOMENTS LATER

Man 2 makes a desperate grab for the fallen gun.

POP!

Michael puts a bullet clean through his forehead.

Blood splatters the wall behind him.

INT. THE FACTORY - CONTINUOUS

ANGLE - FAR BACK OF THE FACTORY

Seated at a desk like a general in a narcotics war, LALO (40s), slick, sharp-suited, unconcerned.

Two armed forces flank behind him.

LALO

(cool)

Don't stand there. Handle it.

Five WORKERS drop their baggies and rush to the wall where rifles hang.

They grab AK-47s and submachine guns, adrenaline rising.

BOOTS SCRAMBLE across the concrete floor.

EXT. FACTORY DOORS - SAME TIME

Michael exhales. Slow. Controlled.

He lowers the pistol, looks toward the doors. Determined. Relentless.

He steps over two bodies and approaches the entrance like he owns it.

The first GUARD charges out-gun raised.

Michael fires.

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

Three rounds rip through his chest. He drops like a puppet with cut strings.

Four more men rush out-screaming, spraying bullets.

Michale dives into a side roll, comes up quick, kneeling, and unloads.

Bullets rip flesh.

Men spin. Collapse.

Bodies THUD to the pavement.

Michael's out of bullets-pistol dropped.

INT. FACTORY FLOOR - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

The room ERUPTS in chaos.

Workers scatter.

Guns are drawn.

Tables overturn. Bricks of cocaine SPLIT like sandbags in a flood.

LALO
(shouting)
Hold your fire!

His voice booms, slicing through the panic.

The men freeze, weapons ready but still.

A beat.

Michael steps through the doors.

Blood on his forearm. Smoke trailing his boots.

Smoke from gunfire still clings to his clothes like war paint.

He lifts his P320-M17 from its holster.

He scans. Zeros in on Lalo.

LALO
(grinning, arms wide)
Mickey the Ghost. Thought you
vanished into suburbia and silence.

MICHAEL
(low, stern)
Where's Hector?

LALO
(chuckling)
Retired. We haven't spoken in
years.

Michael doesn't budge. Finger twitching near the trigger.

MICHAEL
Try again.

Lalo shrugs, steps forward like a showman.

LALO
Hector? Slippery as oil. Word, is
he vanished into the sandbox-
figured you'd you know the terrain
better than me, soldier boy.

Michael's jaw tightens. His gun doesn't move.

MICHAEL
He took my family.

Beat.

Lalo raises an eyebrow.

LALO
(snickers)
Guess they're ashes now..

Michael's world tunnels.

Blood pounds in his ears. His teeth clench. Eyes flash.

Suddenly-

Michael swipes his KA-BAR knife from his thigh holster-
-and HURLS it through the air.

THWIP!

It lodges deep into the chest of Lalo's right-hand man.
He drops without a sound.

Lalo flinches.

The second guard lifts his rifle.

Michael pulls the pin on a smoke grenade, drops it.

WHOOMPH.

A thick cloud pours in, swallowing the room.

Confusion erupts. Men cough, blind-firing in panic.

Michael vanishes into the fog.

Ghost in warpaint.

SHOTS echo.

Screams.

Bodies collapse.

When the haze clears, Michael stands alone-P320 raised,
barrel still hot.

Lalo backs up, hands raised. Pale. Shaking.

Michael stalks toward him. Slams him into the desk.

Gun to jaw.

MICHAEL
(deadly calm)
Stop wasting my time.
(beat)
Where is he, Lalo?

LALO
(stammering)
Old place... South Shore! He's been
seen there. That's all I know, I
swear!

Michael studies him. Cold judgement behind every breath.

He lowers the weapon.

Lalo exhales shakily.

MICHAEL
 If you're lying-
 (starting to turn)
 I'll make this place your tomb.

As he passes the body of the fallen guard, Michael leans, rips his blade free, wipes it clean on the man's jacket, and sheaths it.

He glances back over his shoulder.

MICHAEL
 Clean this shit up before the DEA
 catches up.

He looks forward and continues out the factory doors.

The doors CREAK shut behind him.

A beat.

LALO
 (to no one)
 Fucking psycho.

INT. MICHAEL'S HUMMER - SOUTH SHORE STREETS - DAY

Michael's Hummer glides through the battered streets of South Shore. Through the windshield, the city unfolds-

A slow-motion nightmare.

VISUAL MONTAGE:

- . Pre-teens dart through traffic, chasing a ball.
- . Prostitutes tap windows-lipstick smeared, eyes hollow.
- . Crackheads shuffle to dealers-cash for baggies.
- . Kids shove on a rusted playground. One chain. Creaking.

INT. MICHAEL'S HUMMER - SOUTH SHORE STREETS - MOMENTS LATER

Michael's hands rigid on the wheel. The past presses in-dark and familiar.

FLASHBACK - EXT. FACTORY GATE - DAY - 15 YEARS AGO

A beat-up Oldsmobile idles outside a locked gate.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - CONTINUOUS

A younger Michael (17), baby-faced and brittle, sits in the passenger seat, nervously cradling a pistol in his lap.

Hector (21) is at the wheel, calm but alert.

LALO (late-20s) - wiry, confident - leans into the passenger window, eyes darting around.

LALO
(quiet but firm)
Make sure this gets to Roland.

He hands over two bricks of cocaine, wrapped tight.

Hector nods solemnly, throws the car in reverse.

Michael stares ahead, soulless, dead eyed. A boy trapped in a world he doesn't belong in.

FLASHBACK CONTINUES - EXT. EMPTY PARKING LOT - NIGHT

A deserted parking lot bathed in orange streetlight.

An old school red Monte Carlo idles ten feet away.

The beat-up Oldsmobile sits on the opposite end, engine running.

Michael still seated inside, staring forward - blank, anxious.

Hector steps out, holding two bricks of cocaine.

ROLAND (20s) drifts out of the dark-baggy clothes, eyes flat and cold.

He approaches slowly.

They exchange a look. No words at first.

Hector hands Roland the bricks.

Roland leans in, whispering something cold into Hector's ear.

ROLAND
Saul betrayed the family-fifty
thousand gone. Handle it.

A long beat.

Hector doesn't flinch.

His face: expressionless. Numb.

They step apart.

Roland turns in slow motion, heading for his Monte Carlo. He vanishes into the dark.

A car door creaks. SLAMS.

Hector heads for the Oldsmobile. No words. No pause. Just fate.

Michael watches from the car. His eyes betray him: This isn't the life I chose.

Hector gets in.

HECTOR

Saul owes us. Its time he pays.

He reverses and drives off; Michael silently stares out the window. Trapped.

FLASHBACK - INT. DRUG HOUSE - NIGHT

The door BURSTS open - Hector leads with a shotgun, blasting twice into the air.

CHAOS.

HALF NAKED WOMEN scream and scatter.

DRUG RUNNERS dive for cover.

Michael follows behind, trembling with his pistol drawn.

Hector KICKS open a bedroom door - SAUL (late 20s) is mid-deal. He looks up - no time to react.

BOOM! BOOM! Two blasts. Blood hits the wall. Saul drops.

Michael freezes. Shocked. Gun lowered. Breathing hard.

MICHAEL

(soft, stunned)

I didn't know we were gonna...

Hector turns, locking eyes with Michael. Cold. Detached.

HECTOR
Come on. Let's go.

Michael hesitates, shaken. Then, with a sharp command, Hector yells.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
Mike!

Michael jolts, then runs after him, but the image of Saul's lifeless body stays with him.

BACK TO PRESENT - INT. MICHAEL'S HUMMER - DAY

Michael exhales - hard. Snapping free of the memory. His fingers twitch against the wheel.

As he passes a familiar corner - his eyes catch a faded neon sign.

The CONVENIENCE STORE.

Same one.

Every breath trembles. His chest knots. He's holding on by threads.

EXT. PROJECTS - DAY

Michael's Hummer rolls to a stop in front of a crumbling apartment complex-four stories of stained concrete and sagging balconies.

A place that used to be home.

A rusted basketball rim dangles from a crooked pole.

Laundry flaps from balconies like surrender flags.

Michael kills the engine. Still. Watching.

Kids peer from a third-floor window-curious, cautious.

At a nearby picnic table, five teens in hoodies freeze, eyes narrowing.

Michael steps out-calm, no hesitation. He opens the glovebox, slaps 9MM NATO mag into his P320-M17.

CLACK. Smooth. Efficient.

His boots crunch across broken glass as he heads for the stairwell.

EXT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

The stairs creak with every step.

On the second landing-three MEN block the hall. Tattoos. Machine guns. Fake swagger.

PABLO (20s), shirtless, muscles oiled and gleaming, steps forward with a toothpick twitching in his mouth.

PABLO
You're on the wrong steps, gringo.

Michael doesn't slow.

PABLO (CONT'D)
Pablo guards this building. You
don't pass unless Pablo says so.

Michael stops. Looks him in the eye.

He holsters his gun.

WHAM!

Michael grabs Pablo by the throat, spins him around, and HURLS him over the railing.

SCREAM. CRACK.

The other two freeze. Eyes wide.

Michael draws.

POP. POP.

Two rounds-one to the gut, one to the chest. Clean.

The hallway falls silent-except for the soft groan of dying metal.

Michael exhales, low and steady. Keeps moving.

MICHAEL
(to himself)
No time for games.

EXT. SECOND-FLOOR HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

The narrow hall is dim, shadows stretching from open doorways.

FOOTSTEPS. VOICES.

FIVE ARMED MEN appear at both ends of the walkway.

THUG (O.S.)
(shouting)
He's down here!

GUNFIRE ERUPTS.

Michael ducks behind a concrete pillar-plaster explodes beside him.

He swings out-BANG. BANG. BANG.

Three drop fast.

One swings a pipe-Michael ducks, knees him hard, grabs the weapon and CRACKS it across his ribs.

Another attacker charges-

SLICE! Michael's KA-BAR blade flashes. Throat slashed. Blood mists the air.

More footsteps thunder up the stairwell behind him.

He spins.

POP-POP! One to the leg. One to the chest.

The last man raises a shotgun-Michael kicks him square in the knee, then elbows him in the face. Bone crunches.

THUD. The man drops like meat.

Michael stands alone. Breathing hard. Bloody. Alive.

MICHAEL
(low, sharp)
Anyone else?

INT. ROLAND'S APARTMENT - DAY - MOMENTS BEFORE

The door hangs crooked on one hinge.

Inside-haze and heat.

Smoke lingers. Cheap cologne clings. Low, sultry R&B hums from an old speaker.

ROLAND (mid-30s)-shirtless, wiry-slouches on a cracked suede couch. A pistol tucked in his waistband.

A sweating gin bottle sits half-empty on the table.

Beside him, a woman in a pink bikini. Two more drift near the walls-

One dances. One's sprawled on a stained loveseat, high and half-asleep.

EXT. APARTMENT DOOR #2B - MOMENTS LATER

Light R&B leaks through the peeling door.

Michael approaches, face blank, focused.

Laughter. Music. Women's voices.

He raises a boot-

BOOM. The door shatters inward.

INT. ROLAND'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

They all freeze when Michael steps in, gun raised.

MICHAEL
(low, determined)
You know why I'm here.

Roland exhales a plume of smoke. Smirks.

ROLAND
Mike... always dramatic. You ever
think about knockin'?

Michael glances at the pistol on Roland's waist, then meets his gaze.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Where's Hector?

Roland laughs. No fear-yet.

ROLAND
Man, I ain't seen that fool in
years. Try your mama's basement.

Michael takes a slow step forward.

MICHAEL
My wife and kid are gone.
(beat)
Don't make me ask again.

Roland leans forward, ashes his cigarette on the floor.

ROLAND

You think I give a damn about your family after what you did to ours?

BLAM!

The table lamp EXPLODES beside Roland. Sparks. Glass rains.
The women SHRIEK-duck and scatter like birds.
Roland flinches, hand hovering near the gun.

MICHAEL

That was a warning.

Roland locks eyes. A flicker of fear now.

Then-he lunges for the gun.

BANG! BANG!

Two rounds punch into Roland's chest. He jerks. Slumps.
His cigarette hits the carpet and smolders.
The music keeps playing. Soft. Mocking.
Michael lowers the weapon. Breath shallow.
He looks to the women-huddled near the wall, trembling.

MICHAEL

(softly)

Sorry for the mess, ladies.

He turns and walks out-shadows swallowing him as he disappears through the busted frame.

EXT. PROJECTS - WALKWAY - STAIRWELL - DAY

THUD. THUD. THUD.

A heavy, pulsing heartbeat.

Michael emerges from Roland's apartment, eyes cold, jaw clenched. Adrenaline surges through him.

Ahead, bodies lie scattered, blood pooling on cracked concrete.

He steps forward, boots crunching over glass and casings.

THUD. THUD.

No pause-only the weight of his actions in his gaze.

At the rusted stairwell, he grips the rail-CLANG-and descends.

THUD. THUD.

Step after step, swift and steady.

First flight. Then next.

The heartbeat fades, overtaken by distant traffic.

Final landing.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Michael strides off the bottom step, eyes fixed on his Hummer. He yanks open the driver's door and slides in.

INT. HUMMER - CONTINUOUS

JANGLE.

Michael fumbles through the keys.

A breath. A glare. Steady now.

CLICK.

Engine SNARLS.

A sharp glance back.

SCREECH!

The Hummer rockets in reverse, spins, catches-

Then he's gone, punching it hard, dust and debris in his wake.

The projects vanish. Urgency. Everywhere.

INT. EMPTY ROOM - DAY

The Hummer's roar fades.

Dim light glows, framing Sara and Tyler.

Sara sits against the wall, humming a soft lullaby.

Tyler's head rests in her lap. Her fingers move through his hair - slow, tender - as if brushing the world off his shoulders.

TYLER
(soft, pleading)
Mom, please tell me a story.

Sara looks at him, smiles faintly, holding in tears. She breathes.

SARA
(softly)
Beyond the mountains, in a realm
forgotten by time, a brave knight
rose...

Tyler looks up, interrupting her gently.

TYLER
No, Mom. I want to hear the story
about how you and dad met...

Sara hesitates, her chest tightening. She forces a smile.

SARA
(quietly)
Tyler, you already know this one.

Tyler sits up a little, eyes pleading. He reaches for her hand.

TYLER
Please, Mom... tell me again.

Sara nods, eyes wet. A tear slips free. She wipes it fast.

SARA
(voice breaking slightly)
Eleven years ago, I was a new
military nurse - scared, green,
trying to prove myself - when I met
your father.

FLASHBACK - EXT. MEDICAL CAMP - AFGHANISTAN - DAY

Dust hangs thick in the air. Michael sits on a cot, shirtless, his shoulder bleeding.

A young, focused Sara approaches, clipboard in hand. She pauses, taking in the severity of his wound.

SARA
(soft, professional)
You're Michael Stone, right?

Michael tries to smile through the pain.

MICHAEL
The one and only.

She sets the clipboard down and gets to work, carefully removing the bullet.

SARA
How long have you been in?

MICHAEL
Almost four years. Long enough to know what matters.

She glances at him, intrigued by his calm, despite the pain. Their eyes meet briefly, an unspoken connection.

SARA
(small smile)
And what's that?

MICHAEL
A life that counts. Not just fading away.

She works quickly, the needle moving with practiced hands.

SARA
(nods)
That's noble.

MICHAEL
(ginning)
Thank you.

She flinches and steps back, looking at him for a moment.

SARA
You'll be good as new.

Michael watches her, a brief, meaningful silence between them. He stands, slipping on his jacket, but then turns back.

MICHAEL
Hey... I didn't catch your name.

She smiles, a little surprised, but the moment feels real.

SARA
Sara.

MICHAEL
(smiling)
Well, it was nice to meet you,
Sara.

She watches him walk away, the connection lingering in her eyes.

BACK TO PRESENT - INT. EMPTY ROOM - DAY

Sara continues brushing Tyler's hair, her hands barely trembling.

A beat.

He sits up, meets her eyes. Sara holds his gaze.

TYLER
(quietly)
He's coming, right? He always keeps
his word.

Sara's smile falters, but she forces it, masking the fear in her eyes.

SARA
He's probably halfway here already.

INT. HUMMER - DRIVING - DAY

Michael drives through the intersection - knuckles white on the wheel, eyes fixed ahead.

INT. TAHOE - CONTINUOUS

Marcos grips the wheel at 80 MPH-twisted sneer locked in place.

EXT. INTERSECTION - SAME TIME

The TAHOE SLAMS into the HUMMER-

TIRES SHRIEK like nails on a chalkboard.

The Hummer lurches-metal buckling under the force.

INT. HUMMER - SAME TIME

Michael's head whips forward, smashing into the steering wheel.

A deep gash splits his forehead - blood trickling down.

Michael's vision fades - heart racing. He fights for control, the Hummer stabilizes.

Smoke billows from the Tahoe's crushed front end.

The Hummer holds - scarred, but solid.

EXT. INTERSECTION - MOMENTS LATER

Marcos stumbles from the wrecked Tahoe, pistol drawn, limping toward the Hummer, a sick grin on his lips.

INT. HUMMER - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Michael leans back, blood in his eyes, watching as Marcos approaches.

MICHAEL
(low, growl)
Marcos.

Michael exhales - calm, but deadly.

EXT. INTERSECTION - CONTINUOUS

CLICK-CLACK.

Marcos cocks the gun - smile widening.

MARCOS
(sarcastic)
Been dreaming of this ass-kicking
since County.

Marcos smirks - trigger finger twitching.

INT. HUMMER - SECONDS LATER

Michael's grip tightens, rage boiling over. With a violent kick-SLAM!

The door crashes into Marcos's legs.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Marcos stumbles, grunting, doubled over, gun wavering.

Michael steps out - cold fury in his movements. He SLAMS the door-metal groaning.

Without warning, he storms forward.

WHAM! A savage right hook crashes into Marcos's face.

Marcos staggers, clutching his eye. He drops to his knees, blood dripping, gasping.

His eyes lock on the fallen gun. He crawls for it, desperate.

Michael's boot stomps down-KICK! The gun skids away.

Marcos snarls, trying to rise.

Michael drives a knee into his face-CRACK! His nose shatters.

MARCOS
(screams)
AAAHHH!

Marcos falls flat - reeling - agony written across his face.

Michael looms, breath heavy, eyes cold. He drops to one knee, crushing Marco's chest-ribs cracking.

Marcos struggles to breathe.

MICHAEL
(steel)
Whose leash are you on, Marcos?

MARCOS
(coughing, raspy)
F-fuck you!

Michael's eyes narrow, patience gone. He leans in, pressing harder.

Marcos wheezes, panic in his eyes.

Michael grabs his collar, lifting him slightly, then delivers two brutal punches.

Marcos's head bounces off the pavement, blood oozing from his mouth, lips, and nose.

Michael lets go, rising, blood staining his knuckles.

Marcos lies still.

Michael drags him to the Hummer, shoves him in, SLAMS the door and moves to the driver's side and hops in.

The engine ROARS. Tires screech. The Hummer fishtails, tearing down the street.

INT. MICHAELS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Dim light flickers inside. A worn wooden chair sits center-frame.

Marcos, duct-taped to it, head slumped, sweat and blood matted to his face. His torn, filthy shirt clings to his skin.

His chest rises and falls with shallow breaths.

ANGLE ON - THE FRONT DOOR

The door creaks open. Michael enters, heavy-footed, grim determination in his eyes, a pail of steaming water in hand.

He approaches Marcos, towering over him.

MICHAEL
(aggressively, low)
Wake up.

Michael splashes boiling water onto Marco's face.

MARCOS
(screams in agony)
AAAH! What the hell?!

Marcos jerks awake, eyes wild, struggling to focus.

Michael doesn't hesitate. Another splash.

MARCOS (CONT'D)
(thrashing)
Fuuuck!

His skin reddens, blisters forming. He moans, sweat, tears, and blood mixing.

Michael sets the pail down, grabs his SIG P320-M17, and racks the slide with a sharp CLACK.

MICHAEL
(cold, unwavering)
Look at me. Answer wrong, and your
last word will be a scream.

Michael steps closer, gun raised, finger on the trigger.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
(voice tightening)
Where. Are. They.

Michael's patience thins, sweat beading on his temple.

MARCOS
(eyes narrow, voice rasp)
You're a little late to play hero,
Mike.

BANG!

Michael fires a round straight into Marcos's foot.

MARCOS
(howling in pain)
AAAH! You're fuckin' crazy bro!

Marcos jerks against the chair, eyes clenched tight. Blood pools beneath his shoe.

Michael lowers the gun, breathing heavy.

MICHAEL
(cold)
Next one goes in your skull.

Michael aims again, barrel centered between Marcos's eyes.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
You got three seconds. One. Two...

CLICK. Michael cocks the hammer back.

Marcos panics, gasping for breath, shaking violently.

MARCOS
(blurting, terrified)
Alright! Alright! Alright! Hector
stashed them - the old warehouse!

Michael holds a beat. Breathes.

CLICK. He decocks the gun and holsters it.

Without another word, Michael turns, heading for the front door.

MARCOS (CONT'D)
(desperate)
Mike - you can't leave me here like
this!

Michael doesn't turn back.

MARCOS (CONT'D)
(shouting)
MIKE!

EXT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Michael pushes through the front door - step by step, the weight of what's next burning behind his eyes.

SUNLIGHT blinds him for a second as he exits. The haze of smoke still lingers in the air.

Then-ROARING ENGINE.

A Jeep Wrangler with an open back, barrels down the street - tires SCREAMING.

Michael freezes mid-step, instantly alert. His eyes dart left-

FOUR ARMED MEN in the back of the Jeep - standing, guns raised.

SUB-AUTOMATIC MACHINE GUNS and an AK-47.

The Jeep accelerates - straight toward Michael.

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

Gunfire ERUPTS - rounds ZIP through the air, sending sparks off the sidewalk and chipping the brick around Michael's porch.

Michael's eyes widen - pure reflex.

He dives, executing a flawless front flip across the porch - bullets slicing the air inches behind him.

EXT. FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

Michael rolls hard, pops to one knee - gun already drawn.

Four men leap from the Jeep's open back - weapons hot.

NIGEL (30s), wears glasses, the driver - door FLINGS open, AK-47 in hand. He strides forward with calculated fury.

INT. MICHAEL'S LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Michael crashes back inside - back flat against the living room wall.

Gun up - focused breath. He quickly reloads - SLAP! RACK!

EXT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

The four attackers rush the house - boots punding the ground.

Nigel strides last - eyes burning.

INT. MICHAEL'S LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Michael peeks out - SHOOTS.

HEADSHOT. First man drops instantly - body limp before it hits the floor.

THE OTHERS - stunned for a split second - then open FIRE.

Bullets RIP through the wall - wood splinters explode.

Michael ducks - dives through the living room window.

EXT. MICHAEL'S YARD - CONTINUOUS

GLASS SHATTERS - rains down as Michael crashes out.

He rolls - lands hard - already grabbing a smoke grenade from his belt.

PIN - PULL - TOSS!

INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

WHOOSH. Thick SMOKE fills the house - a swirling gray cloud.

The attackers COUGH, gagging - visibility drops to near zero.

MARCOS
(shouting, choking)
Get me out of here!

EXT. MICHAEL'S YARD - CONTINUOUS

Michael pulls off his shirt and wraps it around his face, gaze fixed, focus.

He bolts - shirt over nose - reloading mid-run as he charges back through the front door.

INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

Boot to a attacker's back - CRACK!

The man spins - tries to raise his gun - too late.

TWO SHOTS - chest. Down.

Nigel lunges - punch incoming.

Michael blocks - KICKS him hard in the midsection - Nigel SLAMS into the wall.

Gunfire - third attacker unloading.

Michael rushes him - point-blank shot UNDER THE CHIN.

Blood splatters the wall.

Fourth man raises his weapon - TWO SHOTS. Chest, then HEAD.

Bodies lie scattered - blood misted through the smoke.

MARCOS

(pleading)

Mike, untie me! Hector will kill
me!

Michael glares back - face dark with rage. He turns away, stepping over the fallen bodies.

EXT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Michael walks out - yanks his shirt off his face-and puts it back on in one fluid motion.

Breath hot with fury.

The Jeep Rangler still idles out front - riddled with bullet holes.

Michael strides to his Hummer - rips the door open, climbs inside.

ENGINE IGNITES - headlights blaze.

REVERSE - BAM!

Michael RAMS the Jeep, pushing it aside.

SHIFT - TURN - Michael speeds off down the street.

INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Nigel stirs - battered, bloodied - pushes himself up from the floor.

MARCOS

Hey man, c'mon - cut me loose!

Nigel staggers over - face twisted in hate. He levels his gun at Marcos's head.

MARCOS (CONT'D)
 (fearful, desperate)
 No! I didn't tell him anything! I
 swear!

BLAM!

Nigel fires - Marcos's body slumps.

Nigel glares down at the corpse, then stalks silently down the hall - exits.

TITLE CARD: 20 YEARS EARLIER

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

Michael (12) drags his feet on a swing, lost in thought. Hector (16) leans against the frame-arms crossed, eyes far away.

MICHAEL
 (soft, unsure)
 We'll always be brothers... right?

Hector looks at him, his gaze cold but steady. He pulls a pen from his jacket and grabs Michael's wrist, marking it with a swift, deliberate motion.

A triangle split by a line-etched deep.

HECTOR
 (quiet, final)
 The Judas Line. Our bond
 unbreakable.

Michael stares at the symbol, the weight of it sinking in. Hector's gaze is distant, his mind elsewhere.

Without another word, Hector turns and walks away. Michael watches him go, the swing creaking in silence.

BACK TO PRESENT - INT. WAREHOUSE OFFICE - DAY

Hector stands at the window, arms locked behind his back, posture rigid. His jaw is a knot.

A burn scar mars his wrist, faint ink ghosts beneath it-history seared away.

Silence hums.

The door creaks. Javi enters, slicing through the stillness.

JAVI

Hector.

No response. Then Hector turns, composed.

JAVI (CONT'D)

They're here.

Hector nods and walks past him, the past still echoing behind his eyes.

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

A cavernous industrial shell. Shafts of daylight slice through grimy windows.

Hector stands cold and commanding on the second-story catwalk, gripping the rusted railing.

His gaze locks on 12 armed men below, rifles, machine guns, and pistols ready.

Beside him, Javi stands ruthless, cradling a Caliber pistol.

HECTOR

(assertive, projecting)

Listen up! Mike's sharp, strong-willed, and military trained. He's already one step ahead of us.

Hector lifts both hands as if balancing fate. Lowers them slowly back onto the railing.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE WAREHOUSE - SAME TIME

A Jeep Wrangler roars into view, kicking up dust.

A dent scars the driver's side, a reminder of Michael's last encounter.

Two guards man the 8-foot gate, exchanging a glance before quickly sliding it open.

INT. JEEP WRANGLER - CONTINUOUS

Bloodied and furious, Nigel grips the wheel, an AK-47 beside him. He floors the gas, the jeep skidding to a stop, tires digging into dirt, dust swirling.

He leaps out, gun in hand, his face burning with vengeance.

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Hector continues, unaware.

HECTOR

One thing we have... that he does
not. An army.

He raises a single finger for emphasis. Then dramatically
flares his arms wide.

HECTOR (CONT'D)

(commanding)

Remember... he's just one man. But
trust me, keep your eyes peeled-
watch your backs.

The 12 men exchange grim nods, eyes flicking with unease.

Javi casts a subtle glance at Hector-he senses what's
coming.

DOORS BURST OPEN.

Nigel storms inside - eyes wild. The soldiers part
instinctively, six dispersing left, six to the right.

Nigel stomps forward - AK-47 clenched, breath ragged. He
halts center stage, glaring up at Hector and Javi on the
balcony.

NIGEL

(shouting, voice raw)

They're DEAD! They're ALL DEAD!

Hector freezes - eyes narrowing.

HECTOR

(icy)

Who?

NIGEL

My men! He killed them- ALL of
them!

Javi glances sidelong at Hector, the gravity of the
situation sinking in.

Hector's pupils dilate with restrained panic.

HECTOR

(tight, controlled)

What about Marcos?

NIGEL

Dead!

A muscle twitches in Hector's jaw. His grip tightens on the railing.

HECTOR
(explodes, violently)
FIND HIM! KILL HIM!

The 12 men SNAP into action - guns readied, adrenaline spiking.

They pivot as one and RUSH OUT of the warehouse.

Nigel follows at a dead sprint.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
(to himself, anxious)
No more mistakes.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE WAREHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Two SUVs peel away from the warehouse - tires churning gravel.

The guards scramble to slide open the gate.

Four men pile into a NISSAN ARMADA, speeding off at breakneck pace.

Nigel dives into his Jeep, shoving the AK aside.

Foot slams on the gas. Tires SCREAM as he rockets away.

The gate SLAMS shut behind them.

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

Hector watches the empty floor below - breathing shallow, heart racing beneath his cold exterior.

EXT. DESERTED STREETS - DRIVING - NIGHT

The sun dips below the skyline. The moon rises, casting silver across the empty road.

A stray dog runs across the street.

INT. MICHAEL'S HUMMER - CONTINUOUS

Michael grips the wheel, eyes locked forward. His knuckles whiten.

The engine hums beneath him, but the silence inside is thick. Charged.

MICHAEL'S POV: Headlights trail him. Too close.

MICHAEL
(under his breath)
You've got to be kidding me.

His jaw clenches. He presses the gas-so does the SUV behind him.

A dark grin curls on his lips. He checks his mirrors. The headlights stalk him-engine purring like a predator.

He slows at the intersection. Another SUV blocks him from the front.

To his left: Nigel's Jeep.

To his right: a Nissan Armada.

Michael scans the vehicles, eyes sharp, calculating.

The street is dead quiet. No traffic. Just them. Engines rumble low and steady.

Michael weighs his options.

Then-RING.

His eyes dart to the glove compartment. The burner phone buzzes.

UNKNOWN CALLER.

He answers it.

MICHAEL
(voice low, tense)
Who the hell is this?

HECTOR (V.O.)
(cold, amused)
How's it going Mike? Still
breathing? My guys find you yet-or
should I remind them how?

Hector's voice oozes satisfaction. A smirk you can hear.

HECTOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
You really thought you had a
chance, didn't you?

The words hang-cold, deliberate. A threat wrapped in smugness.

Michael's grip tightens. Rage flickers in his eyes.

MICHAEL

(low, intense)

You've underestimated me, Hector.

(pause)

I'm not that scared kid anymore, scrapping by on the streets. I've been to war. Fought-and survived-worse than you can imagine. I've hunted down killers. I've saved lives.

He exhales.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

And now? You took my family.

(beat - voice icy)

You just made the biggest mistake of your life. You unleashed a man with nothing left to lose. And that makes me more dangerous than anything you've ever faced.

INT. WAREHOUSE - EMPTY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Hector stands silently in the room.

Sara and Tyler, bound and gagged, sit in the corner, fear etched across their faces.

Hector glances at them, then back to the phone.

His breathing shallow, controlled. He masks the tension in his voice.

HECTOR

(cold)

Fifteen hours left to save your family... But let's be honest- You won't make it.

He checks his watch.

HECTOR (CONT'D)

My men have you surrounded, Mike. No exits. No escape. Your trapped.

His tone shifts-mocking, almost gentle.

HECTOR (CONT'D)

Unfortunate. Looks like your luck finally ran out.

INT. MICHAEL'S HUMMER - SAME TIME

MICHAEL
(gritting teeth)
Hector, I'm gonna find you. And
when I do. I'm gonna kill you.

Michael tosses the phone onto the passenger seat.

The engine snarls-deep, aggressive. He locks his gaze on the vehicles closing in.

INT. WAREHOUSE - EMPTY ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

CLICK. The call drops.

Hector lowers the phone, fury masking rising panic.

Sara works the gag free, chest heaving. She lifts her head, locking eyes with him.

SARA
(voice trembling)
My husband will find us, and when
he does. You'll be the one with the
tail tucked between your legs.

His fists clenches-then strikes. Her head snaps sideways, cheek flaming red.

Tyler trembles, sobbing as his gag slips loose around his neck.

TYLER
(yelling)
Don't hurt my mom!

He stands stiff, fists tighten behind his back.

Hector grins-dark, twisted. A low, cruel chuckle slips out.

INT. MICHAEL'S HUMMER - DAY

Michael checks the rearview-an SUV inches off his bumper. His breath quickens, the engine growls.

He slams the gas. The Hummer jolts in reverse-TIRES SCREAM.

Quick glance over his shoulder-

Headlights blind. A looming shadow.

He slams back-

The Hummer plows the SUV, shoving it away. Metal grinds. Glass explodes.

Michael drops it in drive-

The Hummer lunges forward, a beast unchained.

It SLAMS the SUV ahead-BAM!

The vehicle spins.

Nigel's Jeep swerves hard.

Gunfire ERUPTS-shots CRACK through the night.

SLOW MOTION

Michael spins the wheel-

The Hummer WHIPS a full circle, tires SCREECHING. In one motion he draws his gun.

The Hummer SKIDS to a stop.

Michael locks eyes with Nigel. Gun raised.

BAM.

INT. NIGEL'S JEEP - SAME TIME

A shot blasts Nigel's shoulder, tossing him back.

A second grazes his neck-blood sprays. He groans, clutching the wounds, still in the fight.

END SLOW MOTION.

EXT. CITY STREETS - SAME TIME

The Hummer CRASHES into the SUV ahead -

The SUV lurches. Michael powers through. Behind him-TIRES SCREECH.

The first SUV whips around, chasing.

The second follows.

A Nissan Armada cuts in from the right.

INT. NIGEL'S JEEP - CONTINUOUS

Nigel grips the wheel one handed, shoulder bleeding. He winces but floors it.

EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

One SUV pulls left, another right, Armada behind.

Michael's boxed in.

INT. MICHAEL'S HUMMER - SAME TIME

Eyes scanning. He guns it, slicing in front of the Armada.

EXT. CITY STREETS - CONTINUOUS

The left SUV's passenger lowers the window-

A light machine gun slides out. The gunman smirks.

BUDDA! BUDDA! BUDDA!

Gunfire shreds the air, rounds CLANG off the Hummer.

Michael flinches but stays locked in. He slams the brakes.

The two SUVs shoot past-CRASH! They collide.

Nigel swerves left, barely missing him.

The Armada slams his rear-METAL CRUNCH.

Michael doesn't blink. He rams the SUV on the right-It spins out, tires SQUEALING into the dark.

He raises his gun, fires twice.

The left SUV's tire blows: it flips into a ditch.

Michael watches in the rearview, steady.

INT. NIGEL'S JEEP - CONTINUOUS

Nigel tightens his grip, groaning, then jerks hard right.

EXT. CITY STREETS - MOMENTS LATER

Nigel cuts across Michael's path-SLAMs into the Hummer's passenger side, metal jars.

Michael tenses, fury rising. Gaze fixed on Nigel.

INT. NIGEL'S JEEP - CONTINUOUS

Nigel pulls his gun, aims it through the window.

Michael swerves-

SMASHES into Nigel's driver side. The AK-47 clatters to the floor.

NIGEL
(shouting)
Shit!

Nigel's rattled, scrambling to regain control.

Michael SLAMS him again. The jeep spins.

EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Michael floors it, rams the bumper.

INT. NIGEL'S JEEP - SECONDS LATER

Nigel braces, hand on roof.

EXT. CITY STREETS - CONTINUOUS

The Jeep flips twice, landing upside down with a sick THUD. Smoke rises as the wreckage settles.

INT. MICHAEL'S HUMMER - CONTINUOUS

Michael stays on the gas, eyes ahead.

EXT. CITY STREETS - SAME TIME

The Armada closes in.

Without looking, he fires three quick shots.

One shatters the headlight, second hits the passenger, the third pierces the windshield-

The driver swerves, crashes into a wall.

Michael brakes hard, throws the Hummer in reverse. Tires SCREECH as he speeds toward Nigel's wreck.

The Hummer stops, engine idling.

Michael stares at Nigel-bloodied, barely moving.

He grabs his gun, jumps out, strides over. Rips the driver's door off, hauls Nigel out.

Nigel crumples to the pavement, groaning.

Michael snaps-

SLAMS Nigel in the face-BAM, BAM, BAM.

Grips his collar, eyes dark. One final brutal kick. Nigel's head hits the concrete, blood streaming.

Gravel CRACKS behind him.

Michael turns.

Four men from the Armada charge, guns raised. One limps, clutching a bleeding side.

Gunfire ERUPTS. Bullets hiss past Michael. Another SUV skids to a stop-four more men spill out.

Michael bolts for the Chicago City Mall. Bullets pepper the street as he sprints up a ramp.

EXT. MALL ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Rain pours. Thunder CRASHES like a warning.

Michael ducks behind a concrete pillar, drenched, blood streaked.

Eight armed men sweep by-fast, tactical.

Michael waits.

Then STRIKES-

CRASH! One-man smashes through the glass doors. Sirens WAIL.

Michael dives into the chaos, vanishing inside.

EXT. MALL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The rain intensifies. Lightning rips the darkness. The crumpled Jeep steams beneath a flickering parking light.

Nigel lies beside it, blood pooling. A twitch. A breath. Then-his eyes snap open.

NIGEL
(guttural)
Ghh-fuck...

He winces, pain stabs through him. Right knee - dislocated. He grabs his thigh-braces.

POP!

A scam of tears as he snaps the joint back into place.

He crawls to the jeep, grabs his AK, limping toward the mall - a silhouette of rage in the rain.

INT. SPORTS STORE - NIGHT

Dark. Shelves overturned. Mannequins shattered. Michael ducks behind a rack, reloading, blood seeping from a cut.

His eyes land on a skateboard.

A beat.

A plan.

INT. OUTSIDE SPORTS STORE - MALL - SECONDS LATER

Michael rockets out, sideways on the board. Gun aimed.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Three drop-clean headshots.

LEAD GUNMAN
(shouting)
He's sliding-TAKE HIM OUT!

Gunfire lights up the mall.

Two bullets hit Michael-thigh and abdomen.

MICHAEL
(grunting in pain)
GHHAHH!

He crashes, skids across tile, bleeding. He scrambles toward the escalators - Both frozen. Yellow caution tape, under construction.

Bullets pinging around him.

INT. ESCALATOR AREA - CONTINUOUS

Michael tears the tape and climbs.

Shouts below-men leap onto the escalator, closing fast.

He claws upward, blood streaking the steps.

A fight erupts.

Elbows. Headbutts. One thug over the side-THUD. He jabs his gun to another thug's chin. BANG. Blood sprays.

Michael staggers to the top, vision dim.

INT. SECOND LEVEL - WOMEN'S DEPARTMENT STORE - MOMENTS LATER

Michael, soaked in blood, collapses behind a kiosk, clutching his thigh.

He hauls himself up, rips a mannequin's shirt, and ties it tight-grimacing, breath ragged.

INT. ESCALATOR AREA - MOMENTS LATER

Nigel reaches the base; eyes locked on the blood trail.

NIGEL
(grinning, breathless)
Still alive, huh...

He steps over the men and boards the escalator.

NIGEL (CONT'D)
(spits blood)
Count your minutes, Mike.

INT. WOMEN'S DEPARTMENT STORE - CONTINUOUS

Michael hears him. His grip tightens on his gun. He waits.

INT. MALL - SECOND FLOOR - SAME TIME

Nigel limps off the escalator, smirks at the trail.

NIGEL (CONT'D)
(calling out, casual)
You're bleeding out, Mike. Don't be stupid.

INT. WOMEN'S DEPARTMENT STORE - SAME TIME

Michael listens, silent, pale, blood leaking from his side.

INT. MALL - SECOND LEVEL - CONTINUOUS

Nigel scans the corridor, then stops.

NIGEL (CONT'D)
(louder, acidic)
You're living up to Hector's review.

INT. WOMEN'S DEPARTMENT STORE - SECONDS LATER

Michael watches, fire in his eyes.

MICHAEL
We all answer for our choices.
Hector's no different.

INT. MALL - SECOND LEVEL - SAME TIME

Nigel's eyes narrow, listening for Michael's voice. He grips his gun, breath sharp.

NIGEL
(amused)
You're a hard one to shake, I'll
give you that.

Nigel lets out a dry chuckle, the sound echoing in the confined space.

He draws a Karambit knife, blade gleaming.

INT. WOMEN'S DEPARTMENT STORE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Michael moves, gun steady.

BANG!

A shot shatters the window.

INT. MALL - SECOND LEVEL - SECONDS LATER

Nigel jerks as the bullet hits his thigh. He drops to his knees, blood steaming.

Knife and gun clatter. Snarling, he grabs his wound, eyes burning as he staggers toward the store.

NIGEL
(grimacing)
Motherfucker...

Wincing, he grabs his gun, raises it-

RAT-TAT-TAT!

Glass shatters as bullets slam into the window.

INT. WOMEN'S DEPARTMENT STORE - CONTINUOUS

Bullets tear through mannequins.

Michael rolls, barely dodging the shots.

Glass shards slice his legs as he hits the floor, gritting in pain.

Breathing hard, he pushes up, hand braced against the wall, blood streaking his thigh.

INT. MALL - SECOND LEVEL - MOMENTS LATER

Nigel stumbles to his feet, picking up the Karambit knife. He rises slowly and lets out a mocking laugh.

NIGEL

You'll drop to your knees soon enough. Beg for their lives. Beg for a second chance.

(beat)

But thou shall not be forgiven.

Before Nigel can say another word... Michael charges, landing a powerful right hook.

Nigel crashes to the floor.

Michael kicks him hard-once, twice.

Nigel coughs, rolls, crawling toward his gun.

Michael grabs his ankle, dragging him away.

Nigel twists, kicks WHAM-

Michael stumbles back, breath knocked out. He grips his side, blood escaping his wound.

Nigel scrambles to his feet, swings his knife.

Michael dodges twice, then catches his wrist.

SNAP.

Nigel screams, drops the knife.

Michael locks eyes-

BAM.

A brutal front kick into Nigel's gut, hurling him back. He crashes down, coughing blood.

Michael advances, slow, deliberate, gun drawn.

Nigel looks up, fear edging his glare.

NIGEL

(weak)

You better pray you're not too late.

Michael cocks his gun. BANG!

The shot rings out.

MICHAEL
(cold, lethal)
Thou shall stay quiet now.

Nigel's head snaps back, blood bursting from his forehead.

Michael stares coldly, holsters the gun, and steps over him toward the escalators.

INT. ESCALATOR AREA - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Michael steps onto the escalator, boots echoing through the quiet.

At the bottom, he steps off with purpose.

INT. MALL - FIRST FLOOR - SAME TIME

Michael passes the fallen, presses a hand to his stomach, leaving a trail of blood as he limps toward the exit.

INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Pre-dawn. Wind howls. The room is dark, washed in ghost gray. Streetlight slashes the tile.

Michael stands shirtless at the sink, blood spattered across his torso, breath fogging in the cold.

A half-empty vodka bottle waits by the faucet. He opens the cabinet, grabs a battered first-aid kit.

He swigs the vodka, limps to the tub. Each step grinds pain. He lowers to the edge with a grunt.

Peeling a bloody cloth from his thigh, he stifles another groan. Fresh blood wells.

Vodka down. Kit open: gauze, tweezers, scissors, needle, thread.

Another swig.

He douses the wounds. His body jerks-muscles locking, teeth clenched.

MICHAEL
(through clenched teeth)
Ahhh... shit.

Sweat slicks his skin. Pain in his eyes. Vodka clinks down. Hand shaking. Tweezers. A ragged breath-stab into his gut.

Grunt.

Metal slides free. Blood-slick 8MM. Flick. Clatter on porcelain.

Jaw tight. Neck veins corded. He digs into his thigh. Second round ripped out. Drops beside the first.

Tweezers fall. Crimson spills. Vodka. Shaky inhale. He pours.

Body jerks. Muscles lock. Eyes shut.

MICHAEL
(grunting, through teeth)
God...

Vodka down. Fingers slick with blood.

Needle. Thread. A hitching breath-stab into torn gut. Tie. Cut.

No pause.

Thigh next. Raw flesh stitched. Bloody tools drop.

Gauze tight around his abdomen, then the thigh-white turning red.

Exhale. Brace on the tub. Vodka in hand. He limps out, leaving faint blood smears behind.

INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Michael heads for the open door. One last swig. He hurls the bottle-

SMASH!

Glass sprays, amber streaking the floor. He wipes his mouth and limps on, muscles hard with resolve.

EXT. MICHAEL'S DRIVEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Michael steps into pale sunrise, warmth grazing blood and bruises.

He climbs into the Hummer, SLAMS the door, engine ROARING. Tires SCREECH as he tears away, vengeance in his wake.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - 100 YARDS FROM THE GATE - DAY

Michael stands atop the Hummer, binoculars up. Sun blazes over the dusty yard and battered warehouse. Heat ripples off the ground.

Through the lenses:

- . Three armed men pace the warehouse roof, guns raised.
- . Two guards stand outside the eight-foot gate.
- . Four men linger inside, lined up in formation.

Michael lowers the binoculars, sweat beading on his brow. He winces, jumping off the Hummer, his injured leg almost buckling.

AT THE HUMMER'S REAR

He opens the trunk, revealing a duffle bag and bulletproof vest.

Breathing hard, he straps on the vest.

He unzips the bag.

One by one:

- . Six grenades click into place.
- . Four smoke grenades vanish in pockets.
- . An M2A1 machine gun slings over his shoulder.
- . A belt of ammo disappears into a pocket.
- . The grenade launcher settles on his back.

Michael SLAMS the trunk shut, heads to the driver's door, throws it open, and grabs the PA mic.

MICHAEL
(low, tense)
Hector, you've got two options.

INT. WAREHOUSE - SAME TIME

Hector stands on the stair landing, flanked by Javi. Three-armed men approach, ready.

HECTOR
(sharply, finger to lips)
Shhh...

Silence falls. Michael's voice echoes:

MICHAEL (V.O.)
Option one-you let my wife and son
walk out unharmed.
(beat)
Option two-you fight. You lose. And
you die. Your call.

INT. EMPTY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sara stands tense. Tyler clinging to her waist.

TYLER
(eyes wide, hopeful)
That's Dad! I knew he'd come!

Sara's eyes glistens as she forces a smile, holding him closer.

INT. WAREHOUSE - BACK TO HECTOR - MOMENTS LATER

Hector wipes sweat from his forehead. He turns to Javi.

JAVI
What do you want us to do?

HECTOR
(deep, dark)
Get to the armory. Load up. Let's
give that son of a bitch everything
we've got. He ain't walking out of
here alive.

Javi snaps his fingers.

Six men head toward the armory.

Hector watches them go, then pivots and storms upstairs into a cluttered office.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Michael waits, listening. No response. He tosses the mic onto the passenger seat. Simmering with wrath.

Leaning into the driver's seat, he slams the gas and roars toward the warehouse.

EXT. ON THE ROOF - GUARDS - SAME TIME

One lookout squints, spots the dust cloud. Alarmed.

ROOF GUARD
(yelling)
Incoming!

Guns swing toward the fence.

Michael charges, barreling through gunfire, crashing through the gate.

INT. INSIDE THE COMPOUND - CONTINUOUS

Guards scramble.

Michael skids to a stop beside burn barrels. He kicks open the door, hauling out his machine gun and grenade launcher.

ARMED GUARD (O.S.)
(yelling)
Over here!

Three men charge. Michael opens fire, dropping them.

He spots a steel pole on the warehouse, climbs it. Bullets spark off the steel.

EXT. ROOF TOP - CONTINUOUS

Michael rolls onto the roof, spotting a five-foot gap. He jumps, lands hard, clutching his abdomen in pain.

He glances at a dock and a boat, then down at a 15-foot drop.

Shouts echo, then he runs to a ladder and climbs down.

THUD - He hits hard, but stumbles to his feet.

EXT. COMPOUND - SAME TIME

Six men charge.

YANK.

Michael grabs a rifle from the roof top shooter, tosses it aside as they open fire.

BANG-BANG-BANG!

He dives, then fires his machine gun.

RAT-TAT-TAT!

Two men drop. The rooftop shooter retreats.

Michael rises, steady.

MICHAEL
(calm, deadly)
Drop your weapons.

The men hesitate.

ARMED GUARD
(smirking)
How about you drop yours?

BANG!

Michael hits him in the throat. Blood jets.

The man stumbles, choking, hands clutching his neck.

Two men on Michael's left raise their rifles.

Michael pivots, firing in a blur.

RAT-TAT-TAT!

Bullets SLAM into their chest, blood exploding.

They drop, blood pooling fast.

INT. WAREHOUSE - ADJACENT ROOM - DAY - (CONTINUOUS)

Javi storms in, followed by seven men, adrenaline high.

Twenty men sit at battered tables, glancing up as Javi rushes in.

JAVI
(barking)
Gear up! Move it! Move it!

Chairs SCREECH.

The men spring to their feet, rushing to the armory.

INT. ARMORY - SAME TIME

Men grab weapons, loading mags, adrenaline high.

One by one, they rush out, weapons ready.

EXT. BACK OF WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Michael crouches, sweat trickling down his temple.

He pulls a grenade from his vest, clicks it to a tripwire, and stakes it to the ground.

Quick. Precise.

Voices. Getting closer.

He bolts to the side of the warehouse, climbing the rusted ladder fast, breath ragged.

EXT. WAREHOUSE ROOFTOP - MOMENTS LATER

Flat on his stomach, Michael scans below.

A ROARING Dodge Cummins truck rounds the corner.

Two armed men in the cab.

A third stands in the bed, manning a mounted machine gun.

Michael lines them up with his grenade launcher.

THUMP! THUMP!

One grenade hits the grill-

The other hits mid-chassis-

BOOM!

The truck ERUPTS into flames, flipping.

A man is hurled from the bed, skidding across the ground.

Men scream inside the wreckage.

Michael slowly stands, watches, cold eyed, then drops the launcher with a hollow CLANG.

He turns, heading for the building's edge.

INT. WAREHOUSE - UPPER OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Hector watches the fire, jaw tight. He spins, heading for the stairs.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - BACK ENTRANCE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Armed men pour out. Javi slams the door behind them.

The men round the corner, too late.

EXT. SIDE OF THE WAREHOUSE - SAME TIME

Michael burst from cover.

Pulls a pin-

TOSS!

A grenade slices through the air.

Then another.

ASSAILIANT
(panicked)
GRENADE!

The men freeze. Realizing.

Two EXPLOSIONS rip through the group, sending four men into flames.

EXT. BEHIND A VEHICLE - CONTINUOUS

Michael ducks behind a truck.

Smoke clears, revealing bodies and panicked shouts.

INT. EMPTY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sara paces-tense, on edge.

Tyler sits on a cold slab, knees to chest. His wide eyes track her every move.

Footsteps. Getting closer.

The lock clatters.

CREAK-

The heavy steel door groans open. Hector steps in-calm, unreadable.

Javi and a thick-set THUG follow.

A long beat.

HECTOR
(low, precise)
Go.

Javi moves for Sara. The thug crosses to Tyler.

SARA
(firm)
You're not taking my son.

Javi grabs her arm-she spins-KNEES HIM HARD.

JAVI
(retching)
Agh-!

He stumbles back, gasping.

Sara lunges-punches the thug across the face.

Tyler breaks free.

SARA
Run, baby! Go!

She grabs his hand. They bolt and push past Hector.

INT. WAREHOUSE HALLWAY - SAME TIME

Sara and Tyler sprint down the corridor.

Footsteps thunder behind them.

SARA
Keep going! Don't look back!

They round the corner-

A massive man steps out, grabbing Sara mid-run. She screams, thrashing in his arms.

Javi appears-cuts Tyler off.

TYLER
Let me go!

He bites Javi's hand-hard.

JAVI
(snarling)
You little shit!

Javi drops him, clutching his hand.

Tyler scrambles-the thug grabs him from behind.

Tyler kicks, punches, screams.

Sara fights harder-desperate.

Hector enters like a blade through satin.

Sara spots him-blood boiling in her eyes.

SARA
(spits in his face)
You're a coward.

Without a word-SLAP.

His hand cracks across her cheek.

Sara drops. Out cold.

Overhead, the light flickers-faint as the hope in the room.

TYLER
(screaming)
MOM!

He fights wildly-but the thug hauls him backward.

INT. EMPTY ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The door swings open. Tyler is shoved inside-he crashes to the floor.

SLAM. CLICK. LOCKED.

He crawls to the door, banging his fists against steel.

TYLER (CONT'D)
Where are you taking my mom?! MOM!

EXT. HALLWAY - SAME TIME

Hector zip-ties Sara's wrists. She stirs-barely. Blood trickles from the corner of her mouth.

HECTOR
(to the thug)
Lock the boy. Move her.

The thug nods.

Hector lifts Sara like dead weight-turns-and walks into the shadows.

INT. EMPTY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tyler backs into the corner, shaking. He hugs his knees.

TYLER
(broken)
Dad... please hurry...

Darkness creeps in.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - DIRT YARD - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Outside, chaos reigns.

Michael skids to a stop, surrounded. Sixteen guns drawn.

The front man smirks, pacing.

FRONT MAN
(low)
This war? You were never meant to
win.

He paces twice, casual, smirking. His eyes-dark now. Rage
stewing.

FRONT MAN (CONT'D)
Look at you.

He chuckles. Gestures mockingly.

FRONT MAN (CONT'D)
A one-man band. We've got the
numbers. And you? You've got no
one.

Michael narrows his eyes-voice low.

MICHAEL
I've never faced a battle I
couldn't bury.

He steps forward, voice rising with fire.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
You call this a war.
(beat)
I call it your grave.

The men charge.

SHLUNK!

Michael drives a knife deep into the front man's throat.

He drops.

Michael then grabs a rifle mid-air, slamming a knee into another's chest.

CRACK!

Michael head-butts him hard, then fires.

BANG!

A clean shot-straight through the man's eye.

Another man grabs Michael from behind.

Michael kicks the dazed man forward, jerking free.

He hurls the man over his shoulder.

THUD!

The man crashes. Michael stands over him-cold, unflinching. He fires two shots, hitting him in the chest.

Then- he spins left.

BANG!

A bullet tears through the skull of another.

BANG! BANG!

Two shots hit another in the chest.

Three men tackle Michael to the ground.

Fists pound his face. One kicks his ribs.

Another ties a rope around Michael's neck, pulling tight, attaching it to the 4Runner's tow hitch.

A man jumps in the 4Runner. Engine ROARS. Tires spin.

The men bellow with frenzy and pride, pumping their fists into the smoky air.

Michael's body shudders, fingers wedged between the rope and his throat, gasping for air.

He's dragged across dirt and gravel.

The remaining twelve men stalk forward-slow, steady, merciless.

Michael fights. He slices the rope with a knife.

Gasping, he stands.

The 4Runner SCREECHES to a halt.

The driver steps out, pistol raised.

DRIVER
(low, sharp)
You just won't die.

Michael glares- drained, bloodied, both locked in.

The driver raises his pistol-

THWIP!

Michael hurls his knife, burying it deep in the driver's skull.

The man falls.

MICHAEL
(under his breath)
Semper Fi, asshole.

Michael, shaky, faces the approaching twelve men. He braces, legs trembling.

One-man charges. Michael SLAMS him into the 4Runner.

Another lunges. Michael drives a knee into his chest, he pivots, unleashing a fury of jabs, hooks, and elbows.

One against eleven. He doesn't stop.

He spots the tripwire, planted and ready.

Turns-sprints-jumps over the wire.

Michael dives behind a rusted vehicle.

One man freezes, eyes widening as he sees the trap.

ARMED MAN
(yelling, frantic)
GET BACK!

Too late. Grenades detonate, throwing men like ragdolls.

The Armed Man is taken out.

Michael emerges from cover, smoke drifting. He strides forward.

A man legless, reaches out. Stumps soaked in blood.

MAN WITHOUT LEGS
(raspy, weak, trembling)
Help me...

Michael looks down, eyes empty. He raises his gun.

BLAM! A single shot to the head.

Michael lowers his weapon. He moves on, pain flaring through his body. His wounds burn as he limps forward.

Six men remain, scattered behind cars, trees, and the warehouse walls.

Michael stands still, scanning the area.

He fires two rounds in the air.

MICHAEL
(yelling)
Hey!

A man peeks out from behind a car, rifle aimed at Michael.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
(calm)
There's two ways y'all can handle
this.

The men shift, nervous.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
(icy)
One-tell me where Hector stashed my
family.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
(dark humor)
Two-well, I'm no psychic... but
something tells me this won't end
well for any of you if you don't
comply.

Silence. Then-

BANG! BANG! POP! POP! BOOM!

Gunfire ERUPTS. Michael sprints behind the warehouse, back against the wall.

He slams his gun into the holster, searching for movement.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

(grim)

Fine. Have it your way.

He reloads his machine gun.

He steps around the corner, three men charge. The lead man sprints straight for Michael.

Michael grabs him by the throat, wrenching him back, locking an arm around his neck.

RAT-TAT-TAT!

The other two men fall, riddled with bullets.

ABOVE-

Two men on the roof fire machine guns.

BRRRRRRRT!

Tracer rounds beat the ground around Michael.

Still holding the man, Michael swivels, unloading one-handed.

Both shooters drop.

He glances up at the roof, jaw tight.

Michael uses the man as cover as fiery pellets slam into his chest.

Michael keeps pushing forward.

He watches the life drain from the man, letting the body drop.

The body hits the dirt.

Michael eyes the roof, no hesitation.

BANG! One clean shot.

The rooftop shooter convulses back, hit in the chest.

Michael adjusts and fires again.

Three quick rounds. The second man drops, dead.

Breathing heavy, Michael lowers his rifle.

Three more charge. He pivots, firing rapidly.

POP! POP! POP!

All three drop, bodies sprawling.

Without pausing, Michael swings his rifle back down, scanning the yard.

It's empty. For now.

He strides toward the warehouse entrance, pulling a black face mask from his pocket.

He slips it on, securing it tightly, and pulls two smoke grenades.

Twisting the pins, he hurls them inside.

FSSSSHHH!

Thick smoke engulfs the entrance.

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Michael bursts through the door, the thick smoke swirling.

A man rushes down the steps, rifle raised.

Michael strikes fast, driving a fist into his face.

CRUNCH.

The man's nose explodes in blood. He grabs Michael, trying to wrestle him.

Michael snarls, snapping his hand to the man's throat, slamming him into the wall.

The man chokes, gasping for air, struggling to break free.

Michael drives two brutal punches into his face.

CRACK! CRACK!

The man's skull splits, blood splattering the wall. He crumbles, gasping.

Three more men charge down the stairs.

Michael spins, eyes burning with fury.

The men shield their faces from the smoke.

Michael fires his weapon.

Bullets rip through them. Their bodies jerk violently, collapsing.

Michael lowers his barrel, pivots, stalking down the smoke-filled hall.

He tosses two more smoke grenades into the room beside the armory.

FSSSSHHH!

The smoke surges in, swallowing the shadows.

FROM INSIDE

COUGHING. PANIC.

ASSAILIANT #2 (O.S.)
(coughing, furious)
What the hell-?!

Michael rounds another corner-five men charge.

He steps forward, kicks one in the gut, sending him back into his teammates.

Michael lunges, smashing a fist into a man's jaw. He crumbles.

The remaining four lift rifles, coughing, eyes watering from the smoke.

Michael raises his machine gun.

BRRRRRT!

Four men drop, riddled with bullets.

The fallen man reaches for his weapon. Michael fires.

BLAM!

A single shot to his skull.

Michael exhales, sweat dripping, eyes cold as stone. He pulls another smoke grenade, tossing it down the hall.

He moves forward, steady, rifle lowered.

Men cough and shout in the haze.

INT. WAREHOUSE - SIDE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Michael shifts into the hallway.

At the far end, a massive man looms-6'8", 450 pounds of muscle and menace.

Two others charge out of the smoke, weapons raised.

One swings a sledgehammer. One swings an axe.

Michael ducks, landing two punches into the sledgehammer man's chest, then drives a knee into his gut.

The man gasps and crumbles.

Michael shoves him aside, focusing on the axe-weilding man.

He swings violently, Michael jumps back, stomach tight, barely avoiding the blade.

THUNK!

The axe buries itself deep into the wall beside Michael's head.

Axe Man yanks it free-snarling.

AXE MAN
(grinning)
Time's running out!

He swings-aiming for Michael's gut-metal whistling through the air.

Michael evades again, sweat dripping.

AXE MAN (CONT'D)
(snarling)
Only thirty minutes left... until
the death bell tolls.

Axe Man swings again, the axe slashing through the smoke.

Michael leaps back.

AXE MAN (CONT'D)
(sinister)
I'll carve your bride into tiny
pieces-make sure your son
watches... fantasizing every
second.

He swings one final time, all his weight behind it.

Michael's rage boils over. He snatches the axe handle mid-swing, drives three brutal punches into the man's ribs.

CRACK. CRACK. CRACK.

The man staggers, gasping.

Michael shoves him hard into the wall, driving the axe under his chin, pressing it to his throat.

Michael's eyes burn.

MICHAEL
(low, lethal)
Bet you didn't fantasize this!

The man's eyes widen as Michael drives the axe deep into his throat. Blood gushes like a fountain.

The man gurgles, choking.

Michael releases the axe, stepping back. The man hangs on the wall, pinned by the blade.

Blood spills onto the concrete floor.

Michael takes one last look, then turns, scanning the hallway.

He stalks forward, boots crunching debris.

Reaching the corner, he creeps around it, eyes sharp.

INT. WAREHOUSE - SECOND HALLWAY - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

A large man blocks the door at the far end. Michael tightens his jaw and steps forward.

MICHAEL
(whistles, shouting)
Hey! Over here, big man!

The man turns, eyes burning.

LARGE MAN
(roaring)
What the fuck did you just say?!

MICHAEL
(smirking)
Pull that giant cock out of your ear, maybe you'd fuckin' hear me!

The man growls and charges.

Michael shifts aside, the man barrels past.

Michael spins, taunting.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
(mocking)
What's wrong? Mama didn't hug you
enough?

The man sneers, swinging his massive num chucks.

WHOOSH. WHOOSH.

Michael dodges each strike, then kicks the man in the head.

The man stumbles back, then lunges again. Michael blocks with his forearm and lands a vicious right hook.

The man's head swims, but he recovers and swings faster.

CRACK!

The num chucks slam into Michael's ribs.

Michael staggers but refuses to drop. Blood drips from a split eyebrow.

The man drops the num chucks and punches Michael in the face.

His cheek splits open, but he stands firm, eyes blazing.

Three more brutal punches to his ribs and gut. Michael grits his teeth, refusing to fall.

The man lunges one last time.

Michael catches his fist, twisting the arm back.

The large man screams in pain.

Michael forces him lower, then drives a savage kick into his side.

The man gasps.

Michael grabs his head and presses his thumbs into the man's eyes.

He screams, blood and tears streaming down his face.

Michael shoves him away, the man crumbling, whimpering in agony.

INT. EMPTY ROOM - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Tyler sits, scared. A shadow crosses the door.

INT. OUTSIDE THE DOOR - SAME TIME

Michael rattles the locked door, frustration on his face. He steps back, gun in hand.

BANG! BANG!

Metal EXPLODES from the frame.

INT. WAREHOUSE - EMPTY ROOM - SECONDS LATER

The door cracks open, light spilling in.

TYLER
(shouting)
Dad!

Tyler runs into Michael's arms.

Michael hugs him tight, relief washing over him.

MICHAEL
(breathless)
Thank God... you're okay.

He sets Tyler down and scans the room.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Where's your mom?

TYLER
(voice trembling)
I don't know. They took her.

Michael crouches, gripping Tyler's shoulder gently.

MICHAEL
It's okay. We'll get her back.

Tyler nods, fighting tears. Michael pulls him closer, resolve hardening in his eyes.

He pulls a small black mask from his pocket.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Here. Put this on.

Tyler slips it over his head. Michael helps secure it, then places his machine gun carefully on the floor.

He unstraps his bulletproof vest and places it on Tyler, tightening the straps.

MICHAEL

Come on. Get behind me. Stay close.

INT. WAREHOUSE - SECOND HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Michael peeks through the doorway. The hallway is still, smoke swirling in shafts of light.

He aims his machine gun, sweeping ahead. Tyler follows closely, eyes darting.

Tyler freezes at the sight of a large man sprawled lifeless on the floor.

Michael glances back, reading his son's fear.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

(soft)

It's okay. He's not waking up for a while.

Tyler nods, swallowing hard. They move around the body, careful not to step in blood.

Ahead, Michael spots the man pinned to the wall by an axe. He slows his pace.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Hey buddy... why don't you close your eyes for me?

Tyler nods squeezing his eyes shut, gripping the back of Michael's belt.

Michael turns forward, face hardening. They pass the corpse, his gun shifting side to side, scanning for threats.

Smoke curls through the warehouse, shadows flickering in the haze.

They reach the end of the hallway. Two armed men round the corner from the armory.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

(urgent)

Cover your ears, Ty.

Tyler obeys, Michael glancing back before focusing on the men.

He fires in rapid bursts.

The two men jolt back, dropping to the floor, dead.

INT. WAREHOUSE - FIRST HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Michael turns just as the large man's eyes snap open.

His pulse quickens. He looks at Tyler.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
(gritting teeth)
Gotta keep moving.

Tyler nods, determined. He reaches for the back of Michael's belt, but the large man lunges, grabbing Tyler from behind.

TYLER
(screaming)
DAD!

Michael spins, eyes burning. He drops his machine gun and draws his pistol in one fluid motion.

Tyler struggles, wild.

Michael cocks his gun.

BANG!

The shot tears through the man's head. He releases Tyler, and Michael catches him before he hits the floor.

MICHAEL
(urgent, eyes searching)
Are you okay?

Tyler nods quickly, breath shaky.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Let's keep moving.

Michael holsters his gun, grabs his machine gun, and sweeps ahead.

Tyler takes one last look at the dead man, shutting his eyes tight and clinging to Michael's belt as they push forward into the smoke.

INT. WAREHOUSE ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Michael and Tyler turn left, heading toward the warehouse doors.

He scans the staircase; bodies scattered across the steps.

He lifts his gun, aiming up the stairs, checking for movement.

Satisfied, he pushes the door open and steps outside. Tyler follows close behind.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE WAREHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Tyler blinks in the daylight, eyes wide.

Three armed men sprint toward them.

Michael glances at Tyler.

MICHAEL
Cover your eyes.

Tyler slaps his hands over his face.

Michael spins, unleashing a hail of bullets.

Two men drop instantly. The third charges, weapon raised.

Michael's gun clicks, empty. He tosses it aside and rushes at the man.

He pulls his knife free, leaps, and drives the blade into the man's temple.

The man collapses. Michael wipes the knife clean, breathing hard.

He turns to Tyler, who slowly lowers his hands.

Michael removes his face mask and tosses it. Tyler does the same, eyes searching his father's

MICHAEL
Come on.

Michael signals for him to follow. Tyler hurries to his side. He scans their surroundings, alert and focused.

Tyler carefully descends the steps.

Michael reloads his P320-M17, covering every angle.

Suddenly, a scream cuts through the air.

SARA (O.S.)
(screaming)
AHHHHH!

Michael freezes, eyes wide. He spins to Tyler, urgency in his gaze.

TYLER
(trembling)
Mom...

He grabs Tyler with one arm and takes off, rushing around the warehouse.

EXT. BACK OF WAREHOUSE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

A lake stretches behind the warehouse, a rickety bridge leading to a small boat.

Michael gently sets Tyler down. He presses a finger to his lips.

Tyler looks up, trembling.

MICHAEL
Shhh...

Tyler nods. Michael moves around the corner, eyes afire.

FROM MICHAEL'S POV-

Hector presses a gun to the back of Sara's head, forcing her toward the boat. Javi and another man follow closely behind.

HECTOR
(furious)
Move!

Hector shoves Sara, making her stumble dangerously close to the edge of the bridge.

Michael's fist clench, rage surging. He turns to Tyler.

MICHAEL
(voice low)
I need you to be brave.

Tyler's lip quivers. Michael kneels, gripping his shoulders.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
(gently)
Braver than you already are.

Michael locks eyes with him.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Think you can handle that soldier?

Tyler blinks away tears, nodding.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
(smiling faintly)
I knew you could.

Michael gestures to a thick bush nearby, then takes Tyler's hands.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Listen to me. Stay here. Stay
hidden. It's safer this way.

Tyler's eyes dart nervously.

TYLER
Please... don't go.

Michael lowers his head for a moment, then lifts it with resolve.

MICHAEL
I know you're scared, and that's
okay. But right now... your mama
needs me.

Tyler hesitates, then nods. Michael releases his hands and draws his knife. He offers it, handle first.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Here. Take this.

Tyler recoils slightly.

TYLER
No Dad. I don't want it.

Michael presses it into his hands.

MICHAEL
Take it. Just in case.

TYLER
I don't know how to use it...

MICHAEL
Like this.

Michael demonstrates a quick slash and stab, then hands it back to Tyler.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Stay here. Don't let anyone see
you. I'll be back. I promise.

Michael rises, giving Tyler a salute.

Tyler wipes his tears and returns the salute and crouches low, hiding in the bush's shadows.

Michael steels himself, eyes burning and turns back toward the bridge.

EXT. SIDE OF WAREHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Michael bursts around the corner, sprinting hard. He presses his back against the warehouse wall, chest heaving.

A beat. His heart pounds, ears throbbing. He scans the yard, the faces of the men he's taken down still lingering in his mind.

Then, Sara's voice slices through the silence, snapping him back to reality.

He pulls a fresh mag from his pocket and reloads his machine gun with practiced ease.

MICHAEL'S POV-

Hector forces Sara toward a small boat bobbing in the lake.

HECTOR
(snapping)
Get down there.

Sara stumbles, nearly tipping into the water. She turns, eyes hard, battling tears.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
(sharp)
Don't move... or I'll put you down.

Michael's jaw clenches. His fingers tighten on the trigger.

Smoke drifts across the lake as Hector's pistol glints off Sara's back.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - LAKESIDE - CONTINUOUS

Michael storms from the warehouse, sprinting toward the water. He skids to a stop near the lake's edge, stance locked.

MICHAEL
(shouting, fierce)
Let her go, Hector!

Sara's head snaps toward Michael, relief flashing, but fear still haunts her eyes.

Hector turns slowly, a smirk on his face. Javi and another man stay tense, ready.

HECTOR
(low, mocking)
I'm afraid you're too late, Mike.

MICHAEL
(sharp)
Bullshit! I've still got three
minutes! Let. Her. Go. Now!

Sara's eyes fill with tears as Hector steps into the boat, Javi revs the throttle.

Hector levels his gun at Sara's head, scornful.

HECTOR
(smug)
Not happening.

Javi cranks the boat's engine, its howl drowning out everything around them.

The other man stays on the bridge, eyes locked on Michael, rifle raised.

RAT-TAT-TAT-TAT!

Bullets rip through the air, missing Michael entirely. He ducks low, ready to engage.

EXT. LAKESIDE - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Michael takes a step back, then charges forward fierce. He raises his machine gun and fires.

BRRRRRT!

Bullets slam into the man's chest. His body twitches violently before collapsing on the bridge.

Michael's gaze shifts to the boat, now picking up speed.

He turns and sprints down the bridge. At the end, he leaps, diving into the lake fully clothed.

He hits the water hard, vanishing beneath the surface, then emerges, swimming with relentless strokes, a predator in pursuit.

EXT. LAKE HOUSE - DOCK - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Javi steers the boat, cuts the engine, and jumps out, securing the rope to the dock post.

Hector stands in the boat; gun pinned to Sara's head.

HECTOR
(grim)
Get out.

He jams the barrel harder. Sara flinches, shaking.

Javi pulls her out of the boat.

Hector steps onto the dock behind them, searching the lake. Nothing. Only ripples gleaming under the sun.

He tightens his jaw, then glares at Sara as they force her up the dock toward a small lake house.

One of Hector's men stands guard by the door. He steps aside as Javi opens it.

Hector pushes Sara inside, Javi follows, examining the dock one last time.

EXT. LAKE - CONTINUOUS

Michael surfaces quietly, breath ragged. He turns, surveying the shoreline.

He spots the boat docked about fifty feet away. He paddles hard toward the lake house.

EXT. LAKE HOUSE - BOAT RAMP - MOMENTS LATER

Under the dock's shadow, Michael emerges silently. He spits water from his mouth and grabs the ramp's edge.

Muscles straining, he pulls himself out, dripping wet. He moves fast, pressing his back against the lake house wall.

He flips his machine gun, draining water from the barrel.

After checking the chamber, he slides along the wall, low and quiet. He peeks through a window.

Inside, Hector talks with Javi and four other men. No sign of Sara.

At the front door, a shotgun guard stands vigilant.

Michael drops to a knee, reaching into his sock for a small pocketknife.

He lunges forward, driving the blade into the guard's ankle.

The guard yelps, crumbling to the ground.

INT. LAKE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Hector's head snaps up at the scream. The other four men tense, hands hovering over their weapons.

HECTOR
(snapping)
Javi-go check it out.

Javi clutches his semi-automatic.

JAVI
(grumbling)
Why me?

HECTOR
(furious)
Quit being a little bitch. Go look.

Javi glares but obeys. The other men exchange wary glances.

Javi opens the back door and slips outside, closing it behind him.

EXT. LAKE HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - SAME TIME

Michael strikes again, burying the knife into the guard's thigh.

The man howls, buckling. Blood spills across the dock.

The guard swings his shotgun at Michael-but Michael rises fast, slamming the knife repeatedly into his abdomen.

STAB. STAB. STAB.

Each thrust pulls a wet gasp, from the guard as blood splatters across Michael's chest.

The guard drops the shotgun.

Michael shoves him into the lake, watching as the body floats facedown beneath the surface, red bubbles rising.

EXT. LAKE HOUSE - BACK DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Javi steps outside, inspecting the dock. Silence hangs heavy.

He creeps forward, eyes darting over the water-and spots the body drifting in the lake.

His breath catches. He spins around-

Michael steps into his path, machine gun aimed.

MICHAEL
(low)
Where's my wife?

Javi hesitates, then smirks, glancing at his watch.

JAVI
She'll be dead in thirty seconds.

Michael's eyes narrow. He lunges, grabbing Javi by the throat, slams him against the wall, squeezing tight.

MICHAEL
Wrong answer.

Javi's eyes widen in panic. Michael twists his head sharply.

CRACK.

Javi goes limp, eyes frozen in shock.

Michael shoves him aside and strides toward the back door.

INT. LAKE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Hector paces, unease flickering across his eyes.

HECTOR
(to his men)
Go see what the hell's taking so long.

The men exchange looks and move toward the door. Hector heads for a closed bedroom door.

One man grabs the door handle, but Michael kicks it open, crashing in, machine gun leveled.

MICHAEL
(roaring)
Back the fuck up!

The four men jump back. One raises his hands.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Drop your weapons!

One man tries to stay cool, spinning his pistol by a finger.

Michael grabs it, rips the magazine free, and tosses it aside.

The others drop their rifles.

One man hesitates, eyes shifting as he reaches for his gun.

Michael fires a single round, blasting through his hand.

BANG!

The man howls, cradling his bloody fingers.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
(cold as ice)
Try that again, and the next one
goes between your eyes.

Silence. The men freeze, wide-eyed and shaking.

Michael kicks the scattered guns across the room, clearing his path and strides toward the bedroom door.

One-man lunges, swiping a gun from the floor. He aims it at Michael.

Michael spins and fires.

BANG!

The man jerks as the bullet hits his head, dropping him like a sack of bricks.

Michael glares at the remaining men, eyes cold.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
(low, lethal)
Anyone else feeling bold? Because I
swear-it'll be the last move you
ever make.

The three men shake their heads, eyes wide, shaking.

Michael turns back and eases the door open.

INT. LAKE HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Hector stands a few feet away; gun pressed to Sara's head. Her eyes are swollen, tears streaking her cheeks.

Michael meets her gaze-guilt etched deep in his face. He silently mouths.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
I'm sorry.

Then his eyes harden with fury.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
(cold)
It's over Hector. Let her go.

He keeps his gun trained on Hector.

HECTOR
(snapping)
It's over when I say it's over.

He moves sideways, dragging Sara with him toward the door.

Michael matches his pace, steady, focused.

Hector opens the door and backs out of the room, still holding Sara.

EXT. LAKE HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - MOMENTS LATER

The lake shimmers beneath the sun.

Hector steps outside, Sara locked tight in his arm, his gun waving wildly between her and Michael.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
(low, hurt)
We were supposed to be brothers,
Mike. You severed the Judas Line-
the one we swore in blood.
(eyes dark with betrayal)
You broke it. You walked away like
it never meant anything.

Sara winces as Hector tightens his grip. Gun pressed to her head.

MICHAEL
(voice heavy with guilt)
I was just a kid, Hector. I was
scared... so I ran.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
(eyes lowered, haunted)
I know I broke it. I know I severed
it. And I'll carry that for the
rest of my life.

Michael swallows hard, never breaking eye contact.

Hector stands at the edge, back against the railing.

Sara trembles, tears coursing her face. Her hands are bound
in front of her.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
(steady)
If revenge is what you want, then
let her go.

Michael slowly lowers his weapon, letting it hang loosely by
the sling.

He raises his hands, palms open, non-threatening. Each step
toward Hector is slow, measured, closing the distance.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
(quiet but firm)
We can settle this here. Right now.

He takes another step forward, his gaze unwavering, calm.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
No more blood. Just you and me.

Hector leans down, brushing his face against Sara's hair.
She turns away, sobbing.

He chuckles low and malicious.

HECTOR
You want her?
(beat, sinister)
Then go save her, hero.

Without warning, Hector pushes Sara off the dock.

SLOW MOTION

She tumbles backward, arms tied, a silent scream-SPLASH-she
hits the water hard.

END SLOW MOTION

EXT. UNDERWATER - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Silence. Cold. Murky darkness.

Sara sinks fast, her hair floating like tangled seaweed.

Her legs kick frantically, as bubbles stream from her lips, rising and popping in the void.

She's fighting, but the struggle is weakening, fading.

EXT. ON THE DOCK - SAME TIME

Michael freezes, horror cutting through him.

Then, instinct.

He plunges into the lake's black depths, vanishing beneath the SPLASH.

EXT. UNDERWATER - CONTINUOUS

Michael pushes through the black water, eyes locked on Sara.

She's deeper now, limbs slowing.

He reaches her, grabs her waist, and pulls her toward him.

EXT. SURFACE - CONTINUOUS

They burst through the water.

Michael gasps.

Sara coughs, choking on water, barely conscious.

He holds her tight, scanning her face, fear scorching behind his eyes.

Then he swims hard for the shore.

EXT. BOAT RAMP - MOMENTS LATER

Michael slogs out of the water, cradling Sara in his arms.

She shivers, face buried in his chest.

At the top Hector waits. Calm. Gun lowered, but ready.

Michael meets his gaze, then looks down at Sara-soaked, rattling.

His expression softens. Then hardens.

He lays her gently on the dock...

... And charges.

BLAM!

Hector's finger jolts the trigger as Michael tackles him.

The shot misses.

The pistol skids across the dock and vanishes into the lake.

Michael mounts him.

Unleashes hell.

Punch after punch. Cheekbone cracks. Nose shatters.

Blood pours. Hector's face becomes pulp.

On the edge of the dock, Sara turns away, tears in her eyes.

SARA
(pleading)
Mike! Stop! Please!

Michael's fist freezes mid-air.

His chest heaves. Knuckles dripping red.

He hears her.

Slowly, he lowers his hand. Wavering.

Michael grabs Hector by the collar, hauls him upright.

Hector's face is destroyed. His body limp.

Michael glances back at Sara-watching him, terrified, his gaze softens.

He looks back at Hector... a long cold beat.

Then lets go.

THUD. Hector crumbles.

Michael rises, standing over him-breathing hard, fists trembling.

MICHAEL
(low, dangerous)
You come after my family again... I
will fucking kill you! You won't
get a second chance.

Hector groans, rolling in pain. Bloodied. Broken.

Michael turns away-

Rushes to Sara. Drops to one knee. He snaps the zip ties
from her wrist.

She exhales, fluttering with relief.

He stands, takes her hands, lifts her gently.

Then-he hugs her. Tight. Desperate. Alive.

A beat.

They part. He holds her by the waist.

MICHAEL
Baby... are you okay?

Sara nods, breathless, a smile trying to break through-

Then snaps to panic.

SARA
Where's Tyler?!

MICHAEL
(reassuring)
He's safe. I promise.

Sara exhales. Tears well.

Michael kisses her forehead. They hold each other again-
soft, grounding.

SARA
You've got some explaining to do.

MICHAEL
I will. When we get home.

They trade weary smiles and turn toward the boat.

Behind them-

Hector moves.

Finger crawling. He grabs his pistol.

CLACK. COCKED.

Michael freezes. He turns slightly-then WHIPS around, drawing his sidearm.

SLOW MOTION

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

Bullets tear into Hector's chest. His body convulses-

Blood sprays. The gun drops from his limp hand.

Stillness.

END SLOW MOTION

Michael lowers his weapon. Breathing hard. He turns to Sara and holsters it.

MICHAEL

It's over.

She nods. Tears flowing.

Glancing one last time at Hector's body, then back at Michael.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Let's go get our son.

She nods.

They reach the boat. Michael unties it. Helps her in, then jumps in after her.

Sara settles into a seat.

The keys are already in the ignition.

Michael turns them-engine ROARS to life. He grabs the throttle.

Sara looks out at the lake... Finally calm.

EXT. BOAT - LAKE NEAR WAREHOUSE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Michael hits the gas. The boat tears off across the water, heading for the warehouse.

Michael and Sara lock eyes.

They smile-relieved, raw, full of love.

Michael turns back to the wheel, guiding the boat under the blistering sun toward the warehouse.

He pulls up to the boat dock, cuts the engine. Grabs the rope-loops it over a rusted hook-ties it off.

Then he turns, offering his hand.

Sara takes it. He helps her ashore.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - DIRT YARD - SAME TIME

Sara immediately steps forward, scanning the horizon.

SARA
(shouting)
Tyler! Tyler!

Michael limps after her, just a few paces behind.

MICHAEL
It's okay Ty. You can come out.

From behind a bush-Tyler rises.

Eyes wide. Knife in hand. When he sees them-

His whole face lights up.

TYLER
Mom!

He drops the knife, sprints toward her.

Sara drops to her knees as he launches into her arms. They hold each other tightly.

Michael walks over, crouches beside them, arms wrapping around both.

Tyler looks up at him.

TYLER (CONT'D)
Thank you, Dad.

Michael nods, choked up. Smiles.

Tyler hugs his mom tighter. They slowly let go. Michael ruffles his hair.

MICHAEL
Let's go home.

Tyler walks ahead.

Michael slides his arm around Sara's shoulders. She pulls him close at the waist.

He limps slightly as they walk off into the sun light-together.

INT. LARGE WHITE BUILDING - DAY

Lalo tapes down a package-then stops.

SIRENS.

He looks up, frozen.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Police cruisers swarm the building. A helicopter hovers above, spotlight sweeping the roof.

Seconds later-

Lalo is dragged out in cuffs, stunned.

Behind him, a line of men are led out and loaded into waiting cruisers.

Justice finally arrives.

EXT. BEACH - 7 WEEKS LATER - SUNSET

A calm breeze drifts through the warm evening air.

Michael and Sara sit on a blanket under a beach umbrella. A picnic basket rests between them.

Tyler builds a sandcastle a few yards away, lost in his world of toys and waves.

Sara gazes at Michael.

SARA

So... do you go back next week?

Michael looks out at the ocean, then back at her.

MICHAEL

I've been thinking about extending my leave.

Sara perks up, hopeful.

SARA

Really?

Michael smiles softly.

MICHAEL

Talked to the Colonel. He said I
earned another month. Maybe two.

Sara beams. Michael leans in. They kiss.

Tyler suddenly runs up, grinning ear to ear.

TYLER

Dad come on-let's go play!

He grabs his dad's hand.

MICHAEL

Alright, alright.

Michael laughs, standing. He offers his hand to Sara-she
takes it, and he lifts her to her feet.

Tyler tugs his father toward the water, excited.

Michael picks him up, spins him high in the air. Tyler
squeals with joy.

Sara watches, smiling - more at peace than she's ever been.

Michael sets Tyler down, he bolts for the water.

The sun dips below the waves. Michael and Sara hold each
other. Tyler's laughter echoes over the tide.

FADE OUT