

THE BORDER

An Original Screenplay

by

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FADE IN.

EXT. MEXICO/US BORDER - DAY

SUBTITLE: "Mexico/US Border - Five Years From Now"

Miles and miles of desert, shimmering in the sun and extending as far as the eye can see.

Buzzards in the sky, circling and looking for targets.

Beneath them, the smoking, flipped-over hulk of a black 1995 Buick LeSabre.

A bandaged hand reaches out of the driver's side window, grasps desperately for anything.

It gains purchase in the sand, grabs, digs.

Finally an arm follows it, then the bloodied, dirty body of BEN CAMPBELL (30s).

Ben pulls himself out of the car and up to a seated position.

On the US side, a rising ball of dust signals the approach of black Federal vehicles, while across the border a matching dustball does the same for Mexican National Police trucks.

Ben leans over, looks into the car.

BEN
Lucy! Molly! Lucy! Baby?

He sits up, his face shocked, and lapses into silence, tears welling in his eyes and rolling down his cheeks.

EXT. ATLANTA STREET - NIGHT

A beat-up old hooptie makes its way through empty streets.

The city's a run-down version of itself, with empty streets, burning tires and lots of people just milling around.

A skyscraper burns in the far distance.

SUBTITLE: "Atlanta - Two Weeks Earlier"

The car pulls into a side street and parks. There are no lights anywhere around.

INT. BEN AND LUCY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A tiny one-bedroom, neat and clean but spartan.

LUCY CAMPBELL (10), her eyes older than her years, cleans the kitchen. She puts her towel away and picks up a cup of water.

Her clothes are clean and neat but tattered and obviously old, maybe from a shelter or charity.

She walks around the counter and sits in front of a tiny TV connected by jerry-rigged wires to a hole in the wall.

Above the TV hangs a photo of ELIZABETH CAMPBELL (20), young and beautiful. Her resemblance to Lucy is startling.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

The four young men inside look out the windows and check the street.

Ben drives. He's athletic and sports a military haircut. The others are ROCCO (25), SEBASTIAN (20s) and ANGUS (30).

Rocco and Sebastian carry crowbars and hammers. All except Ben have pistols in their waistbands.

Ben looks nervous and desperate. The rest just look tough. All of them need a meal.

ANGUS
Okay, boys. We ready?

INT. BEN AND LUCY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Lucy turns on the TV.

ANNOUNCER
(from TV)
Next on History is Narco-State, how
the world's greatest superpower
became a drug-fueled cartelocracy.
Hosted by Bill Kurtis.

CAR

Behind the car is a turned-off neon sign for Lee Road Drugs.

ANGUS
Fast in, fast out. Masks on.

They all pull on ski masks.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The doors open and the four masked men get out and move through the shadows.

APARTMENT

Lucy holds a cup of water and watches the TV intently.

BILL KURTIS
(narrating over TV video)
The decline of America's economy precipitated the rise of the cartels and the descent of many American cities, particularly in the south, into abject poverty and violence.

ON THE TV

A shot of the same burned-out Atlanta vista, side-by-side with a shot before the destruction. The before picture looks alive, the after desperate and defeated.

APARTMENT

Lucy's hand goes reflexively to her mouth and she scoots closer to the TV.

ON THE TV

Scenes of violence and chaos, intercut with pristine walled communities and perfectly-cut baseball fields.

BILL KURTIS
While the 1% moved into walled compounds and created private armies to defend themselves, the rest fought for the scraps. Some moved into the leadership of the drug gangs.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Ben and Sebastian stand guard at the front of the pharmacy.

Rocco jams the crowbar into the door and bangs on it a couple of times. The door resists at first, but finally the lock pops and the door swings open.

ANGUS
Let's go, boys!

They pile into the pharmacy, Angus in the lead.

INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Lucy's enthralled by the images on the television.

ON THE TV

A photo of GENERAL SIMON (50), a phlegmatic autocrat in glasses wearing a faux general's uniform, with emblems in the shape of marijuana leaves in place of the usual stars.

BILL KURTIS
(over video)
The most dangerous of them all,
General Simon, the head of the
Southern Kings, was previously a
four-star general in the US Army.

INT. PHARMACY - CONTINUOUS

The thieves head to the secure section.

Rocco uses the crowbar to break the lock and the gate swings open.

Rocco and Sebastian head for the hard drugs, Angus for the safe. Ben, however, goes to the refrigerator.

He pulls his mask off, opens the fridge and starts looking frantically through the bottles and boxes.

BEN
No. No. No. Yes!

He finds his quarry- about 20 boxes marked "Insulin." He starts dumping them inside a small mesh bag.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Lucy opens a small pouch. Inside is a blood sugar machine, a syringe and a nearly-empty bottle of insulin.

BILL KURTIS
(from the TV)
And while the hard-working Federals
try to police the streets of the
southern US, the cartels' armies
and sicarios, or assassins, kill
innocent people daily.

Lucy checks her blood sugar. It reads "291." She picks up the insulin bottle and the syringe.

She puts the needle in the bottle, thumps the bottle.

LUCY
Come on.

She mostly gets an air bubble at first.

LUCY (CONT'D)
Shit, come on.

She thumps it again. Finally, after some effort, she gets a trickle of insulin into the syringe.

Lucy finally gets the syringe ready. From the tiny refrigerator she takes a bottle of vodka.

She pours a tinge of vodka on a napkin. Then she pulls up the bottom of her shirt, wipes the spot with the napkin, and gives herself the shot.

INT. PHARMACY - NIGHT

The thieves are in the middle of their work when suddenly there's the sound of TIRES SQUEALING from outside.

Angus checks the window.

ANGUS
Shit! Federals!

Floodlights strafe the window.

ROCCO
What do we do?

BEN
We've got to find another exit.
They've got this one covered.

ANGUS
No. We fight our way out.

BEN
You do that.

He turns and heads through the back door.

ANGUS
Ben! Get the fuck back here! Hey!
Where are you guys going?

INT. STORAGE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ben runs into the room, which is filled with boxes and cleaning supplies. Rocco and Sebastian follow him in.

ROCCO
Where to now, Ben?

BEN
This way.

He opens a back door and runs out into the:

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Ben steps out, looks both ways and sees a black Federal truck entering the alley from the far end.

To his left is a trash dumpster. Beyond that is a wall.

BEN
Shit, who picked this place?

ROCCO
Angus.

BEN
Idiot.

He takes a quick look around.

BEN (CONT'D)
Come on.

He opens the dumpster and dives in. The cover CLANGS shut.

Rocco and Sebastian share a look.

ROCCO
We going with him?

Sebastian shakes his head.

SEBASTIAN

Shit, no!

Instead, they run around the dumpster, duck behind it.

The Federal truck stops halfway up the alley. The back door opens and six FEDERALS (20s), clad in black SWAT uniforms, come charging up the alley with rifles out.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Lucy paces back and forth in front of the TV. She licks her lips as if trying to get rid of cottonmouth.

BILL KURTIS

(in the background)

Hundreds of Federals die every year
in conflicts with the narco armies.
The chief Federal is known only as
S and must stay anonymous to
protect his safety.

She checks her blood sugar again. The machine reads 388.

LUCY

Dammit.

She picks up her cell phone-- cheap, prepaid-- and dials.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Rocco and Sebastian cower behind the dumpster, while the Federals pin them down with volleys of bullets.

Rocco blindly reaches over the dumpster and squeezes off a shot.

It's wild and aimless but ricochets off a wall and hits a Federal in the neck. He cries out and falls to the ground.

The other Federals ignore him and keep moving forward.

INT. DUMPSTER - NIGHT

Ben squeezes against the dumpster wall, trying to make himself invisible.

He grimaces and wipes something off his hand.

His cell phone RINGS.

BEN

Shit!

He fumbles in his pocket, pulls out his phone. He jabs at the buttons, and the ringing finally stops.

BEN (CONT'D)

(whispers)

Luce? Now's really not a good time,
baby.

APARTMENT

Lucy sits on the floor, leans forward and chews her nails.

LUCY

Daddy, what are you doing?

INTERCUT BETWEEN LUCY AND BEN

BEN

Shopping in the bargain bin.

LUCY

I need insulin, Dad. My sugars are
high and going up.

BEN

I know, baby. But, um, can I call
you back in a few minutes?

LUCY

Fine. Whatever. I hope I'm not in a
coma when you finally make it back.

She snaps the phone shut.

ALLEY

The Federals close in on Rocco and Sebastian. The thieves try to hide, but they're pinned down by the relentless gunfire.

Rocco drops his gun, throws his hands in the air.

ROCCO

I surrender! I surrender!

But they don't stop firing.

His body shakes as he takes dozens of rounds, then finally drops to the ground.

Sebastian's eyes go wide. He drops his gun too, but the
Federals pump him full of bullets.

His corpse falls over to the ground next to Rocco's.

The Federals search the bodies. They don't notice the edge of
the dumpster cover lift up and Ben climb over.

He lands quietly and creeps away through the darkness.

As he nears the truck, the DRIVER (20s) sees him and honks
the horn. The other Federals look up, see him.

FEDERAL #1
Hey, you! Hey, come back!

He starts running.

The Federals start firing. Bullets pound into the side of the
truck and the wall.

Ben hits the ground, rolls and crawls around the truck.

The driver gets out, fumbling with his sidearm.

Shielded by the truck, Ben jumps up and drives his hand under
the driver's mask, knocking it off and staggering him.

The driver throws a haymaker, but Ben ducks and it misses.

Ben comes up with a solid punch into the man's chin, slamming
him back against the truck and knocking him out.

Ben picks up the gun and takes off.

The Federals give chase, but Ben's got a head start. He
disappears around the corner, bullets ricocheting behind him.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

The TV shows a scene at the US-Mexico border, with cars
backed up for miles-- on the US side.

BILL KURTIS
With unemployment nearing 40
percent, many Americans choose
immigration to Mexico as a way out.
There's jobs there, and a border
that's sometimes open, unlike
Canada, which has banned American
immigrants.

Lucy sips from her water. Her hand's shaking.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Ben sneaks down a side street, watching for Federals.

A street away, he sees Angus being led away in handcuffs.

He approaches the lone parked car on the street, jimmies open the door and hotwires it.

The engine turns over and the car roars off.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Ben pulls out his cell phone and dials.

BEN

Luce? Hey, it's- yeah, it's me. I'm-

But Lucy's gone. Ben glares at the phone, then snaps it shut.

He looks up and slams on the brakes.

EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The car squeals and skids toward a line of metal spikes, but the two right tires slide over the spikes and explode.

The car skids to a stop and is immediately surrounded by a dozen SOUTHERN KINGS (20s-40s), wearing fatigues and boots.

All have tattoos of crowns on the back of their left hands.

COLONEL DRAKE (35), wearing a uniform, strides to the car and opens the door. He also bears the crown tattoo.

He hauls Ben out of the car and throws him over the hood.

Ben turns, ready to scrap, but finds half a dozen guns pointed at him. He slowly raises his hands in surrender.

Drake smacks him across the face.

Ben runs his hand across his mouth but doesn't fight back.

DRAKE

Papers.

Ben slowly reaches into his jeans pocket and pulls out his ID, which he hands to Drake.

DRAKE (CONT'D)

Military?

BEN
Former.

DRAKE
What was your billet?

BEN
3rd Ranger Battalion.

Drake grabs Ben's left hand and checks it.

DRAKE
But you're not a King.

BEN
Nothing personal. I just didn't-

DRAKE
So you're too good to be one of us?

BEN
No, not at all. I-

He's interrupted by a punch to the stomach from Drake. He GRUNTS and doubles over.

Drake grabs Ben by the head and drives his knee into Ben's face. Ben sags to the ground, his eyes glassy.

Drake points at the car.

DRAKE
See what he's got.

He snaps at two of the other Kings, who pick up Ben by the arms and drag him roughly away from the car.

Two others open the doors and go through the car. One emerges with the mesh bag, the other with the Federal pistol.

KING #1
Sir, he had this in the car.

Drake grabs the pistol, smacks Ben across the face with it.

DRAKE
Are you a Federal, boy?

BEN
No.

Very deliberately, Drake puts the gun to Ben's head.

DRAKE
Then where'd you get the Federal
gun?

BEN
I took it off a Federal.

Drake cocks the pistol.

DRAKE
I'm not sure I should believe you.

BEN
Look, I'm just trying to get home
to my little girl. I'm not a King,
but I'm not a Federal either.

Drake backhands him.

DRAKE
Shut up.

Ben spits out some blood and gives Drake a defiant look.

Drake motions to the other King, who brings him the mesh bag.
He searches through it, pulls out one of the boxes.

DRAKE (CONT'D)
Insulin?

BEN
It's for my daughter.

DRAKE
No, it's for the Kings.

Ben slumps in the shoulders.

BEN
Please. She really needs--

Another backhand.

DRAKE
Shut up!

BEN
At least leave me a little bit for
her. She'll die without it.

Drake snaps at the Kings holding Ben. They stand him up,
shove him forward.

Drake pulls one bottle of insulin out of the bag, tosses it to Ben.

DRAKE
Because you were a Ranger.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

On the TV is a vista of an enormous marijuana field.

BILL KURTIS
California's economy is now fueled
by the San Fernando marijuana
fields, which span millions of
square acres and provide billions
of dollars in illicit profits for
the drug cartels.

Lucy's in front of the TV, but she's prone and motionless,
her eyes open but glazed over.

The glass is turned over on the floor next to her, the water
stain spreading.

The door opens and Ben bursts in. He sees Lucy on the floor
and rushes over to her.

BEN
Lucy? Lucy? Wake up, baby! Wake up!
C'mon. I'm here. It's Daddy, baby!

He opens a drawer, grabs a syringe and half-fills it with
insulin. He gets the vodka and another napkin.

He kneels on the floor next to her, cleans a spot on her arm,
and injects the insulin.

He holds her close.

BEN (CONT'D)
C'mon, baby. C'mon.

Her eyes start to flutter, then finally open. They flit back
and forth frantically, then finally settle on Ben.

LUCY
Dad?

BEN
Yeah, it's me, baby.

She sits up, rubs her face, takes note of the detritus.

LUCY
How much did you bring me? Please
tell me you got a lot.

BEN
I did, but I went through a King
roadblock on the way home.

She rolls her eyes, pushes him away.

LUCY
We need food.

BEN
I know. I talked to Amy's dad
today. He said he thinks there
might be a construction project
coming up. Maybe--

LUCY
Maybe? Seems like maybe's all we
have anymore.

BEN
What do you want from me, Luce? I'm
doing the best I can.

LUCY
The best? Charlie was telling me
that his dad joined the Kings. Now
they get food every week and
whatever medicine they need.

BEN
I can't do that, Lucy. Your mom
would have killed me.

LUCY
I bet Mom would have wanted you to
do whatever you needed to do to
take care of me.

She gets up and goes into the bedroom, slamming the door
behind her.

Ben watches her leave. He sighs and unrolls a sleeping bag.

The bedroom door opens, and Lucy sticks her head out.

LUCY (CONT'D)
I wish she was here.

BEN
I know, honey. I do too.

LUCY
What was she like?

BEN
She was the greatest girl I ever
met. Until you came along.

LUCY
She would have known what do,
wouldn't she?

BEN
She always knew what to do.

LUCY
Goodnight, Dad.

BEN
'Night, honey.

She closes the door. Ben lies down, tries to get comfortable.

INT. APARTMENT - MORNING

Early-morning sun peeks through the window. Ben still sleeps.

There's a sudden BANGING on the door. Ben jumps up, awake.
From the corner he grabs a baseball bat.

The bedroom door opens.

LUCY
Dad? What--

BEN
Go back in the bedroom.

She does.

He opens the door, bat at the ready.

Behind it, he finds ANTHONY ROSS (30), wearing the Southern
Kings uniform and a backpack, his hands in the air.

ANTHONY
Nice to see you too.

Ben drops the bat in surprise, engulfs Anthony in a huge hug.

BEN
Anthony! What the hell?

They come into the apartment. Anthony takes a look around and wrinkles his nose.

ANTHONY
Nice place you've got here.

BEN
It's enough.

Ben grabs two folding chairs from the corner and they sit.

Lucy opens the bedroom door and peeks out.

LUCY
Everything okay, Dad?

BEN
Lucy, come here! I want you to meet
my old Army buddy Anthony Ross.

She shakes his hand, but he just stares at her, speechless.

LUCY
It's a pleasure to meet you.

ANTHONY
Uh, yeah, you too. Nice to meet
you.

She smiles, disappears in the bedroom. Anthony turns to Ben.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
Holy shit. She looks--

BEN
Just like her, I know.

ANTHONY
How do you...? I know you miss her.

BEN
Every day.

Ben pauses as Anthony sits back and takes it all in.

BEN (CONT'D)
So...what are you doing here,
Anthony? I mean, you know I'm glad
to see you, but...

ANTHONY
Yeah. Sorry to drop in unannounced.
Mostly I wanted to check on you.
(MORE)

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
We heard about your run-in with the
Federals last night.

BEN
Not just the Federals.

ANTHONY
Yeah, I heard about that too. I
took care of Drake, don't worry.

BEN
Oh. Well, thank you.

ANTHONY
Least I could do. But, look, it's
not the only reason I'm here.

BEN
Oh?

ANTHONY
The General heard about it too.

BEN
The-- General Simon?

ANTHONY
The same.

Ben sits back, gives him a long look.

BEN
You want a drink?

ANTHONY
Sure.

Ben grabs two glasses and the vodka and pours two shots.

He hands one to Anthony, slams the other himself. Anthony
gives him a look, then drinks his.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
Strong stuff for 9:30 in the
morning.

BEN
I have a feeling you're about to
tell me something I don't want to
hear.

ANTHONY

Maybe. Or maybe I'm about to give you the greatest opportunity of your life.

BEN

Uh-huh.

ANTHONY

Look, I'm not gonna beat around the bush here. The General wants you. Anybody who stares down the Federals and lives to tell about it is somebody we can use.

BEN

I didn't exactly stare them down. Mostly I ran like a chicken.

Anthony laughs.

ANTHONY

He thinks you could be a leader in our organization, Ben.

BEN

I can't.

ANTHONY

Why not? Don't you want to provide for your little girl in there?

BEN

Of course I do.

ANTHONY

We take care of our people, Ben. We can do a lot for you. And for Lucy. There's schools she can go to, money for scholarships...

BEN

I know, Anthony. I do. And I appreciate it. But, and I say this with all due respect, I can't be a part of a narco gang. I'm sorry.

Anthony gives him a long, thoughtful look, then slaps his knees and stands.

ANTHONY

I understand. No hard feelings.

At the door, Anthony pulls Ben's mesh bag from his backpack and tosses it to him.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
From the General. He said to
apologize for Drake.

BEN
Thanks for this, Anthony.

ANTHONY
We're your friends, Ben.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Ben marches alone through an empty cemetery, carrying a clutch of sad-looking flowers and wearing a hoodie.

He stops in front of a solitary grave marked "Elizabeth Campbell - Loving Wife and Mother."

He kneels in front, puts the flowers on top.

BEN
Hey. It's me.

He picks up one of the flowers, smooths it, puts it back.

BEN (CONT'D)
Lucy's started up again about me
joining the Kings. She thinks it's
the only way I can take care of
her.

He sits back on his haunches, lets out a sigh.

BEN (CONT'D)
I'm beginning to think she may be
right. What do you think?

He sits quietly for a few moments.

BEN (CONT'D)
I miss you, Libby. And Lucy needs
you. I'm sorry. You know I don't
want to make you feel guilty.

A tear makes its way down his face. He reaches out, runs a finger along the headstone.

He stands abruptly, kisses the headstone, then turns away.

BEN (CONT'D)
I love you, Libby.

He turns and walks away.

EXT. BEN AND LUCY'S APARTMENT - DAY

As Ben reaches the building, he sees something's not right.
He pulls his hood up and heads to the back of the building.

EXT. BACK OF THE BUILDING - DAY

Ben jumps up on a dumpster and climbs up the fire escape.
He pulls himself up to the window and peeks inside.

INSIDE THE APARTMENT

Lucy sits on her bed, her face streaked with tears. A SWAT-suited FEDERAL stands guard in the hall. He holds an MP-4.

Ben taps lightly on the window. Lucy glances back, sees him, and her eyes go wide. The Federal doesn't hear.

INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Lucy waves down, and Ben's head disappears. She stands, crosses to the door, starts to close it.

The Federal puts his hand on the door.

LUCY
I need to use the bathroom.

He just looks at her.

LUCY (CONT'D)
Please.

He takes his hand off the door and allows her to close it.

She reaches inside the bathroom and turns on the water, then closes the bathroom door quietly.

She crosses the room on tiptoe, grabs her bag, opens the window and climbs onto the fire escape.

FIRE ESCAPE

Ben gives her a quick hug, then points down. She nods.

HALLWAY

The Federal knocks on the door.

FEDERAL GUARD
Hello?

Nothing. He knocks again.

FEDERAL GUARD (CONT'D)
I have to come in.

He opens the door, enters her room.

BEDROOM

He looks around, confused. He taps on the bathroom door.

FEDERAL GUARD
Are you in there?

Silence. He opens the door, sees it's empty.

FEDERAL GUARD (CONT'D)
Shit!

FIRE ESCAPE

Ben helps Lucy climb down from a landing to the ladder.

Her foot slips and she swings out, flailing wildly. He grabs her hand and pulls her back to the ladder.

Her bag swings wildly and BANGS against the fire escape.

BEDROOM

The Federal's head turns at the sound. He rushes to the window, looks down.

FEDERAL GUARD
Shit!

He opens the window.

FEDERAL GUARD (CONT'D)
You! Get back up here!

He swings the gun around and points it at them.

FIRE ESCAPE

Ben looks up, sees the Federal gun.

BEN
Crap. Lucy, we have to jump, baby.

She looks at him, terrified.

BEN (CONT'D)
I know. But we have to.

They move to the edge, keeping the higher platforms between them and the Federal.

BEN (CONT'D)
Jump to the dumpster, try to roll off and hide next to it.

She's terrified, but moves to the edge and readies to jump.

FEDERAL GUARD
Stop!

Lucy jumps.

She hits the dumpster, bounces and flops over the edge.

She hits the ground with a loud GRUNT, then flings herself against the side of the dumpster.

Ben moves to the edge. But before he can jump, bullets start bouncing off the railing around him.

He ducks, still protected by the higher platforms, and flings himself off the edge.

He hits the dumpster more smoothly than Lucy and rolls over, landing next to her.

BEN
Good job, baby. C'mon.

He takes her hand and they run off, keeping to the wall, cringing at the sounds of bullets ricocheting around them.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Ben and Lucy sprint around the corner and dart between the parked cars. Ben looks for the right one.

They stop at a Camaro.

BEN

Here we go.

He jimmies the door and slides in. Lucy follows him.

INT. CAR

LUCY

Um, Dad...what are we doing?

He ignores her as he hotwires the car.

It roars to life just as a group of Federals come running around the corner. He pulls out and zooms away.

Bullets rain around them, breaking the windows of the parked cars.

BEN

Get down!

He pushes her head down as a round smashes the window.

STREET

The car squeals and accelerates down the street.

Behind them, two Federal cars pull out of an alley and give chase.

CAR

Ben watches the mirror. He drives expertly, smoothly shifting gear and accelerating.

BEN

Shit.

LUCY

What?

BEN

Nothing. Don't worry.

LUCY
You're worried.

BEN
It's my job to worry.

LUCY
Don't be condescending.

BEN
Not a good time for attitude, Luce.

She rolls her eyes, crosses her arms over her chest, and looks defiantly out the window.

STREET

The car swerves around a corner and into traffic. Ben darts between two buses, leaving inches on both sides.

The Federal cars split and go around the buses.

Traffic ahead comes to a stop. Ben accelerates ahead of the bus and cuts on to the sidewalk.

He lays on the horn and cuts back and forth between pedestrians and trash cans.

The lead Federal follows him on the sidewalk and plows right through the trash cans.

The other Federal parallels Ben on the far sidewalk. Two guns point out the window and start firing.

Behind Ben's car, windows shatter and bullets ricochet.

CAR

Ben pushes Lucy's head down again and ducks a little himself.

STREET

Ben has to slow to avoid a pedestrian, and the Federal car smashes into his back bumper.

The car spins off the sidewalk back into the street, then heads down an empty side street.

The chase car executes a tight turn and follows. Across the street, the second car turns hard and cuts across the intersection to follow.

In the intersection, a bus plows into it, crushing it and sending it rolling over and careening into the waiting cars across the street.

Ahead, Ben's car flies up the street with the Federals close behind.

A gun comes out of the window of the Federal car and fires at Ben's- once, twice, three times.

The first shot goes wild.

The second destroys the passenger-side mirror.

The third blows out the back right tire.

Ben's car swerves a little, fishtails up onto the sidewalk, but Ben keeps it under control.

At the next intersection, he runs a red light and swerves between two crossing cars.

The Federal car plows through, knocks both cars out of the way like bowling pins and keeps after Ben.

Ahead is a gate bearing a home-made sign saying "Southern Kings Only." Beyond is an old office building, the crown logo visible near the top.

CAR

Ben points ahead.

BEN
There it is.

LUCY
We're running to the Kings?

BEN
This time you get your wish.

STREET

Ben plows through the gate, surprising the two guards standing on either side of it.

They fumble for their weapons, but before they can pull them out, Ben's car squeals to a stop.

He jumps out, hands up.

BEN
Don't shoot! I'm here to see
Anthony Ross. The Federals are
after me.

The Federal car slams on its brakes and slides to a stop a few feet outside the gate.

The guards turn their attention to the Federals. They point their guns at the black car.

After a moment, the car backs up and turns away.

The guards turn back to Ben. Lucy gets out of the car and stands near him, hands up.

GUARD #1
Who the fuck are you?

Ben extends a hand to the guard, but it's ignored.

BEN
Ben Campbell for Anthony Ross.

INT. SKTV STUDIO - DAY

A fully-equipped modern TV studio. A sign near the set says "SKTV."

PRODUCERS (20s) and STAFFERS (20s) mill around. The DIRECTOR (30s) stands next to the camera and watches the set, where General Simon waits.

Ross stands to the side with COLONEL BLISS (40), a hardbitten former military man who thinks he's still a soldier.

The director points at the General.

Ross and Bliss watch on a monitor as General Simon speaks directly into the camera.

GENERAL SIMON
(on the monitor)
And that is why, citizens, you
should know that you can count on
the Kings. When the government
fails you, when the Federals take
your land or your money, we will be
there to assist you. Meet your area
warden and remember- the Southern
Kings are here for you.

He stares into the monitor for a few seconds.

DIRECTOR

And we're out. Thank you, sir.

Simon unclips his microphone and walks over to Ross and Bliss.

BLISS

Well done, sir.

Simon just nods in his direction and turns to Ross.

SIMON

Anthony, what's on the docket today?

ROSS

Mostly meetings, sir. I'm trying to get you a conference call with the Texas cartel to talk about distribution routes, but they're being difficult again.

Ross' phone RINGS. He answers.

ROSS (CONT'D)

(to Simon)

Excuse me, sir.

(into the phone)

Yes? Who? Interesting. Bring him up. No, to the General's office.

He hangs up, looks at Simon.

ROSS (CONT'D)

Remember my old friend Ben Campbell?

INT. SIMON'S OFFICE - DAY

A lushly-appointed, leather-bound office, could be in the headquarters of any Fortune 500 company.

Simon sits behind a grand desk, while Ross sits across from him. Bliss looks out the window down at the city below.

The door opens, and the guard leads Ben and Lucy into the office.

Ross stands. Simon does not.

ANTHONY

Ben! Come to chat, have we?

He gives Ben a hug. Ben returns it, then crosses to the desk. Lucy stands behind him.

BEN
General Simon.

Simon smiles at him bloodlessly.

BLISS
So you're the Army Ranger we keep
hearing so much about, eh?

Ben half-turns and nods at him.

BLISS (CONT'D)
Not as impressive as we've been led
to believe.

Ross shoots him a glare. Simon chuckles.

SIMON
So how can we help you?

LUCY
My dad is here to join the Kings.

Simon leans over, looks around Ben at Lucy.

SIMON
He is, is he? And you are...?

BEN
That's my daughter, Lucy. Who
hasn't learned yet when to keep her
mouth shut.

SIMON
My friend, they never do.

BEN
I understand you're looking for men
with military experience.

SIMON
Always. And what sort of role do
you see yourself in?

BEN
Security, perhaps?

Bliss laughs derisively.

Smoothly, with just a flick of his wrist and seemingly without even turning to face him, Ben flings a small throwing knife an inch past Bliss' ear.

It imbeds itself in the wall behind him. Bliss' eyes go wide and he ducks, pointlessly.

Ben turns back to Simon, who's smiling.

SIMON

Bliss, I think Mr. Campbell here
may have some usefulness in him.
Find something for him, would you?

BEN

Sir, if I might.

Simon just cocks an eyebrow- *there's more?*

Ben looks at Lucy, leans over the desk.

BEN (CONT'D)

(quietly)

Sir, I can't be involved in drug
trafficking.

Simon throws his head back and laughs.

SIMON

Well, son, that's kind of what we
do here.

BEN

I just mean, if I could do
something away from the drugs.

Simon shoots a glance at Ross, who looks horrified. But Simon just shrugs.

SIMON

Bliss, you heard the man. Keep him
away from the drugs, would you?

BLISS

Sir.

Simon turns away from Ben, dismissing him.

Ben gets up, takes his throwing knife from the wall and puts it away. Bliss looks at him with no expression.

HALLWAY

Lucy looks up at Ben.

LUCY
Dad, the thing with the knife?

BEN
Too much?

She giggles.

LUCY
No, it was awesome!

ROSS
Yeah, it kinda was.

INT. TATTOO PARLOR - NIGHT

Ross watches as Ben gets a small crown tattooed on the back of his hand.

INT. BLISS' OFFICE - MORNING

Bliss sits behind his desk. There's a KNOCK at the door.

BLISS
Come!

The door opens, and Ben walks in. He's wearing a freshly-pressed suit and his new tattoo.

BEN
Sir.

BLISS
Sit down.

Ben sits across the desk from him.

BLISS (CONT'D)
So. Welcome to the Southern Kings.

BEN
Thank you, sir.

BLISS
I'm sure your pal Anthony already told you, but the first requirement of a King is complete loyalty.

BEN

Yes, sir.

BLISS

I don't know you yet, so I don't totally trust your loyalty. I'm sure you can understand.

BEN

Of course. But I am loyal.

BLISS

I'm sure. Loyal to your daughter, for example. Or your friend Anthony. Though sometimes I'm unsure where his loyalty lies.

Ben starts to say something, but Bliss dismisses him with a wave of his hand.

BLISS (CONT'D)

But that's neither here nor there. You work for me now, so I'll give you a chance to prove your loyalty.

BEN

Thank you, sir.

Bliss reaches over the desk, hands him a slip of paper.

BLISS

On that paper is an address. At that address is a young man who does some important technical work for us. I need you to drive him to our server farm outside of town.

BEN

Yes, sir.

BLISS

Excellent. Pick up a car downstairs.

He turns back to his computer. Ben waits uncomfortably for a second, then stands and leaves.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Ben drives a black Lincoln Towncar through the city.

EXT. STREET - LATER

The car pulls up in front of an apartment building. Ben gets out, walks to the front door and rings.

ALLEN
(over intercom)
Yeah?

BEN
(into intercom)
Allen Porter?

ALLEN
Who's asking?

BEN
Your driver. Colonel Bliss sent me.

ALLEN
You have ID?

BEN
I do.

ALLEN
Have it ready.

The line clicks off.

Ben walks back to the car, leans against it and waits.

The front door opens, ALLEN PORTER (24) exits. He's clean-cut, with glasses, an out-of-style jacket and a briefcase.

He comes down the walk, stares at Ben.

ALLEN (CONT'D)
You're new.

BEN
I am.

ALLEN
ID?

Ben shows him the tattoo.

ALLEN (CONT'D)
Lots of guys have tattoos.

BEN
You can call Bliss if you want.

Allen stares at him for a moment, then grins. He slaps Ben on the shoulder, opens the back door.

ALLEN
Just fuckin' with you, man. Let's go.

He climbs in, closes the door. Ben shakes his head, gets in. The car drives off.

EXT. I-75 - DAY

The Towncar drives through burned-out downtown Atlanta.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Porter pulls a netbook out of his briefcase, starts tapping on the keyboard.

BEN
So you do tech stuff, huh?

Porter glances up, grins, looks back down.

ALLEN
Something like that.

Ben just looks forward.

After another moment of typing, Porter looks up.

ALLEN (CONT'D)
Sorry, man. I shouldn't be like that. My therapist keeps telling me I need to be nicer to people.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The car drives through open country road.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Porter points out the window at a lonely brick building.

PORTER
Over there.

BEN
That's the server farm?

PORTER
It's just a backup. And it's more
secure than it looks.

Ben pulls the car into the drive.

PORTER (CONT'D)
Stay here. I'll be back in a while.

BEN
You don't want me to check it out
first?

PORTER
Nah, man. Just a quick software
upgrade and we're outta here.

He hops out and heads to the building, where he punches a
code in the box next to the door and disappears inside.

Ben watches the building, taps absentmindedly.

INT. CAR - LATER

Ben's half-asleep. He glances up in the mirror and comes to
attention.

IN THE MIRROR

Two SUVs pull in behind him, blocking the car.

The doors open and four MEN (20s-30s) get out, dressed in
suits and carrying TEC-9s. All look like killers.

CAR

BEN
Shit.

The men fan out and point their weapons at the car.

Ben slams the car into reverse and aims at the pair to his
left.

The men scatter and start firing at the car. Rounds PLINK off
the side and shatter the back passenger window.

The car slams into one of the attackers, sending him flying
through the air. He collapses against the side of the SUV.

His partner moves to cover behind the edge of the SUV.

Ben slams the car into gear and heads for the front door of the building. He fishtails the car to a stop in front of the door, passenger side out.

He dives out of the car and takes cover behind the bumper.

He leans out, fires his Glock at the attackers.

The remaining three use the SUVs as cover. They lean out, rain bullets on the side of the car, shattering the windows, blowing out the tires and pounding the doors.

Ben hides behind the tire as rounds fly over his head and slam into the front of the building.

When there's a break, he leans out again and zooms in on one of the attackers, who pokes his head out.

He squeezes off a shot, and the man falls.

The other two open up again, pounding the car and the building with bullets.

Ben pounds on the door.

BEN (CONT'D)
Allen! Open up! C'mon! C'mon!

ALLEN
(muffled through the door)
Are you fucking crazy?

BEN
We have to get out of here!

He leans back out and takes a shot, missing wildly.

One of the attackers pulls out a grenade. Ben sees him lean out to throw it and shoots.

He misses, but the guy recoils and drops the grenade.

He scrambles to pick it up, but it EXPLODES, killing the attacker and blowing up the SUV, which flips over.

The fireball knocks the other SUV sideways a few feet, but doesn't destroy it.

Ben pounds on the door.

BEN (CONT'D)
Allen, come on!

The door opens and Allen crawls out next to Ben, carrying his briefcase.

ALLEN
What's the plan?

Ben opens the door, pushes Allen inside.

BEN
Drive.

ALLEN
This piece of shit?

BEN
Come on!

He gets in the backseat. Allen climbs in the front, ducks, puts the car into gear and starts driving.

ALLEN
Where am I going?

BEN
Out. But keep the passenger side facing him.

The attacker keeps firing, raking the car with bullets.

Ben fires off enough shots to keep the attacker behind the door of the SUV.

The car accelerates, rolling unsteadily on two flat tires. It goes around the fireball and heads for the road.

As the car gets to the road, the attacker leans out and fires another volley. The back window shatters and Allen GRUNTS.

He grabs at his side and slumps against the window. The car starts to slow.

BEN (CONT'D)
Allen!

There's just a moan for a response.

BEN (CONT'D)
Shit!

He dives over the front seat and lands in the middle.

He reaches over Allen, grabs the steering wheel and stomps on the gas with his left foot.

The car jumps forward and speeds up.

BEN (CONT'D)
Allen? Allen!

ALLEN
(low)
Yeah.

BEN
You dead?

ALLEN
Not yet.

BEN
Can you move over?

Allen slides over while Ben climbs over him. He's got a growing bloodstain on the side of his shirt.

BEN (CONT'D)
Where are you hit?

ALLEN
My ass. Where do you think?

BEN
Okay. Let's get you to a hospital.

Allen shakes his head. It's a struggle.

ALLEN
It won't matter. They'll find me
and kill me.

BEN
What are you talking about?

The car is hit by more bullets. Ben looks up and sees the SUV trailing them.

ALLEN
This was going to be my retirement.
But I guess that's fucked.

BEN
What are you talking about?

The bullets come again. Ben looks up, sees the SUV getting ever closer.

ALLEN

I downloaded a bunch of stuff from the Kings' servers. Stuff they don't want anybody knowing about.

The car shivers as the SUV slams into it.

BEN

We're never gonna outrun this guy.

He turns, squeezes off a poorly-aimed shot. It misses, but it forces the SUV to drop back a bit.

BEN (CONT'D)

What kind of stuff?

There's a moan, and Allen's breathing becomes more labored.

ALLEN

Emails, financial records, that kind of stuff. But I found one thing that would completely fuck the Kings. That was my trump card.

BEN

What?

He looks up, sees the SUV closing in again.

BEN (CONT'D)

What are you talking about?

But Allen doesn't answer. He lets out a long groan.

BEN (CONT'D)

Allen?

ALLEN

If I die, you can't let them fuck with my body.

BEN

What?

Allen's head turns fractionally, and he taps his torso.

ALLEN

The answers are all in here.

He coughs, sending blood spattering all over the seat. His eyes go wide and he stiffens.

BEN

Allen?

But it's too late. He lets out one last breath, then slumps to the seat.

There's another THUMP from behind.

BEN (CONT'D)

Shit!

He looks up, sees that the SUV is on his bumper again.

He reaches up, squeezes off another shot, and accelerates. The SUV falls back a bit.

Ben grabs his seatbelt and clicks it on.

Suddenly, he jams on the brakes and wrenches the wheel.

The car turns and skids to a sudden stop.

Ben slams his foot on the emergency brake, gets in the crash position and covers Allen's body.

The SUV can't stop. It hits the suddenly-parked sedan at speed, flipping over it and crashing to the ground upside down.

It slides another twenty feet before finally coming to a stop.

The sedan is thrown to the side like a rag doll and slides off the road.

After a moment, Ben gets out, Glock at his side. He walks purposefully to the SUV.

The attacker tries to crawl out of the overturned vehicle, but he's caught. He struggles and pulls to no avail.

He sees Ben approaching and grabs frantically for his gun.

Ben walks up, raises the gun.

BEN (CONT'D)

Who are you working for?

The attacker looks up, realizes it's hopeless. He smirks at Ben.

ATTACKER

Just get it over with, asshole.

BEN

Sure thing.

He puts two rounds in the guy's head, finishing him off.

He comes closer, checks the attacker's hand.

Sees a crown tattoo.

BEN (CONT'D)

Oh, shit.

He sits heavily on the ground, staring at the dead body in front of him.

INT. CAR - LATER

Porter's body slumped against the passenger door, blood all over the place.

Ben opens the passenger door, and Porter's body slides out onto the ground.

Ben grabs the body and drags it a few feet away.

He pulls a knife out of an ankle sheath and cuts away Porter's shirt.

He sits for a moment, stares at the body in front of him.

BEN

(to himself)

Oh, this is gonna suck.

With that, he plunges the knife into Porter's abdomen, letting loose a stream of blood and a meaty SQUISH.

BEN (CONT'D)

Gross.

He slices upward, through Porter's torso, making a ragged, foot-long incision.

Blood squirts up and onto Ben's suit shirt. He wipes his forehead with the back of his hand, leaving a bloody streak.

He reaches into the opening and feels around for a moment.

He pulls out an organ, inspects it and realizes it's an intestine. He discards it and reaches back in.

BEN (CONT'D)

The answer's in here, huh, Allen?

He keeps digging. After a moment he pulls out another organ.

Porter's stomach.

BEN (CONT'D)

Yes!

He cuts away the soupy mess tying the stomach to the body, lays the stomach on the ground.

He slices into the stomach, creating another jagged opening and letting loose a stream of unidentifiable fluid.

He closes his eyes, reaches into the stomach.

BEN (CONT'D)

Man, you better not have AIDS.

He feels around, then his eyes light up. He pulls his hand out.

He's holding a USB drive wrapped in a condom. The condom's got a split in it, though, and the USB is damp.

He gives it a long look, then rips the fluid-covered condom off. He blows on the USB, inspects it, puts it in his pocket.

He grabs Porter's shirt and tries to clean some of the blood off, but he still looks like a post-frenzy serial killer.

He glances at the Towncar, but it's totaled, so he heads over to the SUV and retrieves the TEC-9.

He checks the magazine, verifies it's loaded, then heads up the road.

EXT. ROAD - LATER

Ben trudges along, gun at his side.

Suddenly his head picks up.

In the distance he can see swirling dirt and a disturbance in the hazy air.

He moves to the middle of the road, points the gun up the road.

A black 1995 Buick LeSabre emerges from the haze, windows down. It's dirty and dusty, a little beat up-- sort of the Millennium Falcon of cars.

Behind the wheel is MOLLY PAGE (30), her hair unruly and blowing in the wind. She's singing along to the radio.

Ben points the gun at the car. Molly's surprised at first, but narrows her eyes and speeds up.

Ben fires off a few rounds over the car, which angles toward the side of the road.

He kicks up the dust with a few rounds into the ground in front of her.

She slams on the brakes and the car skids to a stop a few feet from Ben.

He walks to the passenger door, keeping his gun pointed at her.

BEN
I need a ride.

MOLLY
You gonna shoot me if I say no?

BEN
I'd prefer not to.

MOLLY
Well, that's polite of you.

BEN
How about I buy your gas?

MOLLY
How about next time you hitchhike with your thumb, not a TEC-9?

BEN
You know your weapons.

MOLLY
That's how you flirt?

BEN
Usually I carjack Navy SEALs.

She rolls her eyes, but the anger's gone.

MOLLY
Fine, get in. You heading for Alabama?

Ben gets in, smiles at her.

BEN
That's the other thing.

MOLLY
Shit, I gotta go back to Atlanta?

Ben sticks out his hand.

BEN
Ben Campbell.

She looks at him incredulously, then shakes his hand.

MOLLY
That should make the police report
easier to fill out.

He laughs.

MOLLY (CONT'D)
Molly Page. Nice to meet you, I
guess.

She starts up the car.

MOLLY (CONT'D)
What the hell are you doing
hitchhiking all the way out here in
BFE?

BEN
Wanna see?

MOLLY
Sure.

BEN
Keep going. It's about half a mile
up.

EXT. CRASH SCENE - DAY

They stand in the road near the destroyed vehicles and
Porter's body. Molly's mouth is wide open.

MOLLY
So who'd you piss off?

BEN
Apparently everybody from the
Southern Kings to the Federals.

MOLLY

Well, you can't be all bad if
you've got the Federals trying to
kill you. Maybe I won't file a
police report after all.

INT. CAR - DAY

They cruise on the highway, pass a sign that says "Atlanta -
50 miles."

MOLLY

So what'd you do to piss off the
Federals?

BEN

Robbed a pharmacy.

MOLLY

Why? You an addict?

BEN

No, nothing like that. I needed
insulin for my daughter.

Instantly her demeanor changes. She glances sideways at him.

MOLLY

You have a daughter?

BEN

Yeah. Lucy. She's ten going on
forty.

Molly smiles, but it's sad, a little distant.

BEN (CONT'D)

And you? What's your story? Why
were you busting ass to get out of
Atlanta?

MOLLY

Making a delivery.

BEN

A delivery? Of what?

He looks around at the empty car.

BEN (CONT'D)

I hope your trunk's full.

She laughs.

MOLLY

Not exactly. The stuff I deliver would get me in your kind of trouble with the Federals if I got caught.

BEN

You're a narco?

MOLLY

Please. Do you see a crown on my hand? I like yours, by the way.

He covers it with his other hand.

BEN

It's new. I'm not sure it's a fit.

MOLLY

Judging by the matching tat on your dead amigo back there, I'd say not. But no, to answer your question, I'm not a narco.

Ben thinks for a second, then the lights come on.

BEN

You're a smuggler.

MOLLY

You're not as dumb as you look.

BEN

I might be. I've managed to get myself caught between the Kings and the Federals. That can't be smart.

MOLLY

What are you going to do?

He puts the gun on the floorboard and pulls the USB out to show her.

BEN

I don't know yet. I need to look at this USB before I make a decision. Porter seemed to think the information on it would protect him. Maybe it can protect me and Lucy.

MOLLY

What about Lucy's mom?

BEN
She died when Lucy was born.

MOLLY
Ah. I'm sorry.

She pulls the car over.

BEN
What are you doing?

MOLLY
There's a checkpoint coming up.

BEN
So we're just stopping?

MOLLY
Maybe you are as dumb as you look.

She hops out, opens the back door and leans over the seat.
She pushes a hidden button and pulls the seat belt.

The top of the seat pops open and reveals an empty space just
big enough for a person. It's half full of bundles of cash.

Molly grins at Ben, who's staring at the money.

BEN
Making a deposit, are we?

MOLLY
Part of the job.

BEN
I'm not a big fan of tight spaces.

MOLLY
You a big fan of Federal torture
chambers?

BEN
So you expect me to trust that
you're not gonna just turn me over
to the Federals at the first
opportunity?

MOLLY
I don't expect you to do anything.
But if I did turn you in, then your
little girl would grow up without a
mom or a dad. And that would make
the world a little worse of a
place.

(MORE)

MOLLY (CONT'D)

And anyway, I don't see how you have much choice. You think the Federals don't have your face posted at every checkpoint? Hell, you're probably up in the Post Office.

Reluctantly he gets out of the car and opens the back door. He climbs into the hiding space and balls up inside it.

He doesn't notice the TEC-9 he's forgotten on the floorboard.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

See that latch? If you need to make a quick escape, push it and the box will pop open.

BEN

For the love of God, after we go through the roadblock please let me out.

She laughs, closes the seat top back down and locks it back into place, then climbs back into the driver's seat.

She doesn't notice the gun either.

EXT. FEDERAL CHECKPOINT - DAY

The LeSabre pulls up to a regular Federal checkpoint, manned by four GUARDS (20-30) and a SENIOR GUARD (40).

The guards circle the car, while the Senior Guard approaches the window.

SENIOR GUARD

Papers.

She hands him her ID papers. He sifts through them suspiciously.

INT. HIDING SPACE - CONTINUOUS

It's dark and silent. Ben shifts his ass uncomfortably. From outside come the muffled sounds of conversation.

CHECKPOINT

The senior guard looks through the papers.

Molly, bored, looks around the scene. She glances toward the passenger seat and notices the butt of the TEC-9 sticking out from under the seat.

She starts to reach over and move it, but it's too late.

The guard hands back the papers.

SENIOR GUARD
Papers are in order. We need to
search your car.

MOLLY
Why?

SENIOR GUARD
You have something to hide?

MOLLY
You guys. No, Robocop. I've got
nothing to hide. But I have my
papers, you've got no probable
cause, why do you need to search
the car?

He glances up and instantly the other guards point their
weapons at her.

She raises her hands.

MOLLY (CONT'D)
Okay, okay. Can I put the papers
away first?

He shrugs and nods. The guns go down.

Molly reaches over toward the glove box and drops one of the
documents.

MOLLY (CONT'D)
Oh, shit.

She reaches down to pick up the document and surreptitiously
slides the gun under the seat.

She puts the documents in the glove box, then gets out as the
guards descend on the car.

HIDING SPACE

Ben cowers as he hears all the doors open. The voices of the
guards drift in and out.

There's sounds of items being picked up and put down and corners being checked.

CHECKPOINT

Molly stands to the side, chewing her fingernails and watching with trepidation as the guards go through the car.

The guard looking in the front passenger door stands up.

HIDING SPACE

Ben cranes his neck as he hears:

GUARD #1
(muffled)
Sir, I found something!

His eyes close.

CHECKPOINT

Molly's terrified.

SENIOR GUARD
What?

GUARD #1
Check this out.

Molly closes her eyes. This is it...

...but the guard just holds up a pair of lacy red panties and grins.

GUARD #1 (CONT'D)
Pretty hot, huh sir?

Molly opens her eyes, sees the guard holding the panties and another giving her the slow up and down.

SENIOR GUARD
Jackson! Put those away!

Jackson cowers a little and puts the panties back in the car.

JACKSON
Uh...that's it, sir.

The others shut the doors. The Senior Guard turns to Molly.

SENIOR GUARD
Thank you, ma'am. You can go.

HIDING SPACE

Ben strains to hear and notes the sound of the doors closing.

A moment later, the engine roars to life and the car starts moving.

Ben lets out a long sigh and lays his head back against the wall behind him.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The LeSabre is the only car on the highway--

-- until it comes around a corner and happens upon an impromptu Southern Kings roadblock. Two cars block the road and three KINGS (20s) point their AKs at the LeSabre.

Molly slams on the brakes and the car skids and slides to a stop a few feet from the roadblock.

The Kings descend on the car.

KING #1
Out of the car! Out of the car now!

Molly raises her hands and starts to get out, but the Kings grab her and yank her out, flinging her to the ground.

INT. HIDING SPACE - CONTINUOUS

Ben leans forward and listens to the sounds of struggle penetrating the hiding space.

He hears a feminine SCREAM.

BEN
Shit.

He fumbles for the release button and finally pushes it.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

The seat top pops up and Ben jumps out.

He exits the car to find two of the Kings holding Molly down, while the third stands and watches.

Her shirt lies in tatters next to her, and they're ripping at her pants.

She's SCREAMING HER HEAD OFF.

Ben reaches the first King before anyone knows he's there. With one quick wrench, he breaks the man's neck.

The other two Kings turn in surprise.

Molly pulls a knife from an ankle sheath and jams it into the side of one of the remaining Kings. His eyes go wide and he turns back toward her.

But it's too late for them.

Ben draws a pistol from the corpse's holster and shoots both the remaining Kings in the head.

Their dead bodies flop into the dirt.

Ben drops the pistol and goes to Molly, who's crying and covering up.

BEN
Are you okay?

He starts to help her up, but she puts up her hands and resists.

BEN (CONT'D)
Okay, sorry.

He picks up her shirt and hands it to her, then backs away.

She calms down and tries to cover herself, then disgustedly throws the shirt away.

MOLLY
Shit, it's useless.

Ben pulls off his dirty, torn jacket and tosses it to her.

BEN
Try this.

She puts it on and buttons it over her bra.

BEN (CONT'D)
Perfect.

She gives him a look, rolls her eyes. He holds out a hand and helps her up.

MOLLY
Thanks.

BEN
Don't mention it.

MOLLY
I guess I owe you.

BEN
I think we can call it even.

They close the hatch and doors and get into the car.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Molly starts the car and takes off.

MOLLY
Y'know, for a Southern King, you
sure do kill a lot of those guys.

BEN
Until I joined up yesterday, I had
never killed any.

MOLLY
I'm guessing you're not gonna be
Member of the Month.

EXT. BEN AND LUCY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Molly's LeSabre pulls up at the end of the street facing the
apartment building.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Ben reaches out, puts his hand on Molly's arm.

BEN
Wait.

MOLLY
What?

He points to a car sitting alone at the far end of the
street.

BEN
They're watching.

MOLLY
Who? Federals?

BEN
Does it matter?

MOLLY
I guess not.

Ben pulls out his cell phone, dials.

BEN
(into the phone)
Luce? Hey, it's Daddy. You're at
home? I need you to do something
for me.

EXT. APARTMENT - DAY

The door opens and Lucy comes out, carrying her backpack. She
locks the door behind her and heads for the stairs.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Lucy walks down the sidewalk, the building disappearing
around a corner behind her.

She pretends not to notice when the LeSabre pulls up next to
her and the window rolls down.

MOLLY
Lucy!

LUCY
I'm sorry, I don't know you.

She gasps as Ben leans over and she sees his face.

BEN
That's good not to talk to
strangers. But get in the back.

She's confused but complies, and the car drives off.

INT. CAR - DAY

Ben stays down while Lucy leans over and glares at him.

LUCY
Seriously, Dad. What's going on?

BEN
Lucy, Molly. Molly, Lucy.

MOLLY
Nice to meet you, Lucy.

LUCY
Sure.
(to Ben)
Dad?

BEN
It's complicated, Luce.

LUCY
Everything always is. Who is she?

BEN
Also complicated.

LUCY
Is she your girlfriend?

BEN
We just met.

LUCY
Then why are we in her car?

BEN
We had some problems with the
Kings.

LUCY
Already? I thought they were gonna
take care of us.

BEN
Me too.

LUCY
Crap.

BEN
Lucy!

Lucy crosses her arms over her chest, sits silently in the
back, pissed as only a 10-year-old girl can be.

Molly watches her in the mirror, and smiles to herself.

But it's a sad smile.

EXT. MOLLY'S HOUSE - EVENING

The car pulls up to a small, pretty brick house in the suburbs.

INT. MOLLY'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Like the house itself, pretty but modest. Bookshelves, a TV, cute furniture.

A picture of a girl about Lucy's age sits on a bookshelf.

Molly leads Ben and Lucy into the living room.

MOLLY
I'm sorry I don't have a ton of
space for you guys. But the couch
is comfortable.

BEN
That's perfect. Luce, you take it.

Sullenly, Lucy dumps her bag on the couch and plops down next to it. She pulls out an MP3 player and blocks out the adults.

Ben just shakes his head.

MOLLY
You know how kids are.

BEN
I know how she is.

MOLLY
Come on.

BEN
Where?

MOLLY
The bedroom. Where else?

She disappears down the hall. He's surprised, but follows.

INT. MOLLY'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Pretty but plain. A laptop sits on a computer desk against the wall.

Molly sits down in front of the laptop. Ben grabs a chair and sits next to her.

MOLLY
Let's check out that USB.

She plugs it in, brings up a file folder.

MOLLY (CONT'D)
Wow. He was an organized dude.

BEN
What do we have here? Emails,
financial documents, and...what is
this?

He points to the screen. One folder is named "GH^&VJ##."

MOLLY
I don't know. But hold on, let's
look at the financial stuff. I'm
pretty good with spreadsheets.
Maybe I can decipher them.

She opens the "Financial Documents" folder and clicks on an
Excel spreadsheet.

Ben's confused, but Molly leans forward, puts her finger to
the screen.

MOLLY (CONT'D)
Whoa. Your buddy wasn't kidding.

BEN
What do you mean?

MOLLY
It looks like the Kings and the
Federals have moved money back and
forth to each other. Well, that's
not totally true. It looks like the
Federals have moved money to
Southern Kings accounts.

BEN
You mean the Federals fund them?

MOLLY
Well, there's definitely a
relationship.

BEN
Holy shit.

MOLLY

So the Kings try to present themselves as modern-day Robin Hoods, but they're getting funding from the same government they claim they're trying to replace? Wow.

She closes the spreadsheet.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

Let's try that goofy-looking one.

She clicks it, but instead of opening the folder, she gets the blue screen of death.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

What the--?

BEN

What happened?

MOLLY

I tried to open this folder and it crashed my computer.

BEN

I bet the USB is damaged.

MOLLY

What? Why?

BEN

Let's just say that it had been soaking in stomach acid for a bit before I found it.

MOLLY

Ewww!

She tosses the USB to Ben.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

So now what do we do?

BEN

Run.

He gets up and puts the USB in his backpack.

MOLLY

Wait. What do you mean, run?

BEN

I mean, run for the border.

MOLLY
Taco Bell?

BEN
Very funny, but no. Mexico.

He picks up his bag, heads out the door. She jumps up and chases him.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ben bustles into the room.

BEN
Lucy! Come on, baby. Time to go.

But she's sound asleep on the couch, headphones on.

He stops for a moment and just watches her sleep.

Molly comes rushing out of the hallway, not paying attention, and runs into his back. She stops and stares, as taken by Lucy as he is.

MOLLY
They're beautiful when they're asleep.

BEN
And a pain in the ass when they're not.

She laughs, then grabs a blanket from a nearby chair and covers Lucy, who grumbles and rolls over.

MOLLY
Come on. You can't wake her up.
Let's have a drink and talk this through. You can leave in the morning if you still want to.

He's torn. He looks at her, looks at Lucy, finally shrugs.

BEN
Why not? You're kind of a wildcard anyway. It'll take them till at least tomorrow to find you.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ben sits at the kitchen table. Molly brings a whiskey bottle and two glasses to the table.

She pours them each two fingers, and they clink glasses.
Molly sips hers; Ben pounds his. She pours him another.

MOLLY
Okay, so what's your plan?

BEN
I'm a dead man if I stay here.
Worse, Lucy's dead too.

MOLLY
So you're just gonna give up and
run?

BEN
All the way to Mexico.

MOLLY
And then what?

BEN
There are jobs there. I can work
construction, maybe gardening.
Something outside. I've always
liked working with my hands, and
the millionaires down there need
good people. Maybe security.

MOLLY
But you won't be able to work.
You'll be an illegal.

BEN
I'll bet I can find papers that say
I'm not.

Ben pounds his whiskey again and pours himself a third.

BEN (CONT'D)
But here's the really funny part
you haven't figured out yet.

MOLLY
What?

BEN
You have to come too.

She chokes on her whiskey.

MOLLY
What?

BEN
They'll find you, Molly. You're in
as much danger now as me and Lucy.

She puts the whiskey glass on the table and gives him a long,
appraising look.

MOLLY
Shit.

BEN
Exactly. I'm sorry about that, by
the way.

She fills her glass and downs it with a grimace.

MOLLY
Ah, what the fuck? It's not like I
have anything to stay for anyway.

But he's lost in thought. She sips her whiskey, watches him.

BEN
What happened to your daughter?

She's caught off guard and shows it.

MOLLY
She died.

BEN
I'm sorry.

MOLLY
The Kings killed her.

Now he's the one who's surprised.

BEN
What happened?

MOLLY
Drive-by. A group of street dealers
trying to eliminate the
competition. Anna was in the way.

BEN
Oh, my God. I'm so sorry.

MOLLY
Thank you. It was an accident, you
know. Even the Southern Kings don't
kill eight-year-old girls for fun.

She drains the whiskey, pours another.

MOLLY (CONT'D)
But still.

She drains her glass one more time, then starts to cry.

Ben leans over, puts his arms around her neck.

She reciprocates and leans against him. He strokes her hair as she buries her face in his neck.

Then something changes.

They pull apart briefly and look at each other. She runs her finger along his face and touches his lips.

MOLLY (CONT'D)
This seems like a bad idea.

Then she leans forward and kisses him.

They kiss, gently at first, then passionately. He pulls her to his lap.

They start to pull each other's clothes off.

INT. MOLLY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Ben wakes up alone. He stretches an arm across the bed, but finds only empty space.

He sits up and looks around, and hears indeterminate SOUNDS from the front of the house.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Ben walks into the kitchen to find Lucy sitting at the table and Molly scrambling eggs.

Lucy's laughing so hard she's choking on her milk.

BEN
What did I miss?

Lucy looks up at him and rolls her eyes. She gives Molly a look that says "My dad is so lame."

Molly covers her mouth and giggles.

MOLLY
Um...eggs?

BEN

We need to get going soon.

He sits down. Molly brings him a plate of eggs.

MOLLY

Eat first.

LUCY

Wait. Where are we going?

He takes a bite of egg.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Dad?

Another bite.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Dad! Where are we going?

Swallow.

BEN

Mexico.

LUCY

What? Mexico? I don't understand.

Ben takes another bite of egg.

BEN

We don't have a choice, baby.

LUCY

But what about our life here? And the Kings? They'll take care--

BEN

They're not gonna take care of us, Luce.

LUCY

So now we're running from the Kings too?

She shoots a glare at Molly.

LUCY (CONT'D)

And you knew?

MOLLY

Sweetheart, your dad's right--

Lucy just holds up her hand, cutting Molly off.

LUCY

Whatever.

She gets up, stalks out of the room.

Molly and Ben share a look.

MOLLY

So what is the plan? Do we just get in my car and run for it?

BEN

You do, with Lucy. Nobody'll connect a young woman and a girl traveling together with me.

MOLLY

So I'm taking your daughter to Mexico without you? Wow. That's a lot of trust.

BEN

You could have sold me out yesterday, and you didn't. At this point, you're practically my best friend in the world.

MOLLY

You don't have many friends, do you?

BEN

Pretty much just you. But, no, you don't have to take Lucy all the way to Mexico by yourself. Just to New Orleans. We'll meet up there.

MOLLY

And what will you be doing while I'm driving your daughter to New Orleans?

BEN

I've got some stuff to pick up.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Ben exits a taxi at the end of the alley behind his apartment building.

He checks both directions, then heads down the alley.

But he doesn't head for his own building. Instead, he enters the building next door.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

He heads for the staircase.

EXT. ROOFTOP - DAY

Ben exits the staircase onto the rooftop.

The roof of his building is about 7-8 feet away. He stands back, then sprints toward the edge.

He jumps...flies wildly through the air...

...and crashes to the rooftop on the other side. He rolls over a couple of times and slams into an AC unit.

He gets up and heads for the staircase door.

EXT. HALLWAY - DAY

Ben creeps down the hallway to his apartment.

He checks his door, but it's shut tight.

As quietly as he can, he unlocks the door and opens it. A quick glance inside, and he heads into:

INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Ben takes a quick glance around the kitchen and living room, then heads to the hallway.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

He enters his bedroom--

--and puts his hands in the air as he comes face to face with Bliss, who's sitting in a chair and pointing a gun at him.

BLISS
Hello, Ben.

Ross steps out behind Ben, puts a gun in his back.

INT. CAR - DAY

Lucy stares sullenly out the window at the open highway while Molly drives.

MOLLY
Whatcha thinkin' about?

A quick glance from Lucy, then she turns away again.

MOLLY (CONT'D)
I'm pretty sure I have an idea.

LUCY
Oh?

MOLLY
You're pissed off at your dad.

LUCY
You're a mind reader.

MOLLY
Hey, there's nothing easy about being a parent, y'know. Especially when you have to do it by yourself in a world like this one.

LUCY
Most of my friends' parents seem to be doing okay. They work for the Kings, they make plenty of money, they get to buy whatever they want--

MOLLY
Maybe they took the easy way out.

Lucy glares at her, then rolls her eyes and looks back out the window.

INT. CELL - DAY

Ben's unconscious, tied to a chair. Blood trickles out of the side of his mouth.

Bliss and Ross walk in. Ross looks at Ben with sympathy in his eyes. Bliss doesn't.

Bliss smacks Ben across the face, waking him up.

Ben shakes his head, trying to clear the cobwebs.

BLISS
Where is it, Campbell?

BEN
Where's what?

Bliss just smacks him across the face again.

BEN (CONT'D)
Is that supposed to make my head
clearer?

Bliss raises his hand again, but Ross steps forward and catches him by the wrist.

ROSS
Give him a chance to answer.

Bliss shoots him a look of death, but reluctantly drops his hand.

BEN
(cheekily)
Where's what?

At this Bliss smacks him across the face again, this time so hard it knocks Ben and the chair over on to the floor.

SIMON (O.S.)
Now that's no way to treat a guest.

Simon strides into the room as Bliss, embarrassed, steps to the side.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Anthony, help me. Bliss, get me a chair.

Simon and Ross pick Ben up and straighten him up while Bliss disappears into the hallway.

He returns a moment later with a chair.

Simon sits, faces Ben, who's still a little woozy.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Ben, you're part of our family.

Ben doesn't respond. Simon reaches over, lifts his chin.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Family is very important to us here, Ben. We have to take care of each other.
(MORE)

SIMON (CONT'D)

If we don't, we'll end up back on the street just like the savages out there.

BEN

I don't feel like much of a family member right now.

SIMON

I'm sure. Bliss is an idiot.

He glares at Bliss, snaps. Bliss comes over, unties Ben.

SIMON (CONT'D)

But you are a part of the family, Ben.

BEN

Like Allen Porter?

SIMON

Sometimes I have to do things I don't like to do, Ben.

BEN

You don't seem too broken up about it.

Simon leans over, takes Ben by the chin, stares into his eyes.

SIMON

Ben, where's the information that Porter downloaded from our computers? We know you have it.

BEN

I don't have--

SIMON

We found Porter's body.

Ben doesn't respond.

SIMON (CONT'D)

I know you think there's something important here, but there's really not. You just lack the perspective to understand that.

BEN

Sure, I understand just fine. You and the Southern Kings are bought and paid for by the Federals.

SIMON

Ahh, Ben. Is that what you think is going on? So black and white! You really do lack perspective. Yes, there's more to that relationship than meets the untrained eye, but it's for a very simple reason.

BEN

What's that?

SIMON

To protect the people, Ben. Don't you see? This arrangement is better for everyone. Without it, the country would descend into anarchy, chaos on the streets. But instead? The government has their precious control, and our product flows to Canada and Europe, keeps all our customers happy. The lights stay on and the hospitals open. Before us, Ben, there was violence, chaos. Now people can live their lives.

BEN

People like Allen? Or me?

SIMON

Just like you, Ben. Just give us what's ours, and you'll remain a part of the family. And you can go home to your lovely daughter.

Ben looks at him, on the precipice of agreement, but instead just looks away.

Simon nods, stands, pats Ben on the shoulder. He turns to leave the room. On the way out he nods to Bliss.

Bliss pulls out a handheld radio.

BLISS

(into radio)

Yeah, send him in.

BEN

Send who in?

EXT. MOBILE CITY LIMITS - DAY

The LeSabre drives past a sign that used to say "Welcome to Mobile." Painted over it now is "Texas Cartel."

Mobile is a shambles of burned-out buildings, fires in the distance, and the hulks of abandoned cars lining the roadway.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Lucy pulls off her headphones.

LUCY
What happened to this place?

MOLLY
I heard that Mobile got hit hard in the cartel war, but...wow.

LUCY
War?

MOLLY
Yeah, a few years ago the Texas Cartel and the Southern Kings fought a war for control of the trafficking routes from Mexico and the Caribbean to Canada.

LUCY
Who won?

MOLLY
Nobody, really. Thousands of people died and they eventually made a truce. The Kings control the Southeast, the Texas Cartel the Southwest.

LUCY
And the cities in the middle?

Molly doesn't respond, but her expression says it all.

INT. CELL - EVENING

SCREAMS echo off the walls.

They're coming from Ben, who's tied to the chair and held down by a couple of burly KINGS (20s).

Bliss and Ross stand to the side and watch as BILL (30s), scruffy and long-haired, uses a small hand torch to burn the crown tattoo off Ben's hand.

INT. CELL - LATER

Ben lies silently on the floor. His left hand is bandaged messily.

Ross appears at the cell door, carrying a billy club. He slides it open and sits down next to Ben.

He runs the edge of the billy club along Ben's bandage.

ROSS
How ya doin', Ben?

A grunt.

ROSS (CONT'D)
Yeah, that's what I figured.

BEN
(eyes still closed)
How could you work for these
people, Anthony?

Ross doesn't answer. Instead, he leans over and fusses with Ben's wrapping.

ROSS
That looks like shit.

BEN
Well, it feels great.

ROSS
They're gonna execute you tomorrow.

Ben says nothing.

ROSS (CONT'D)
Bliss is practically creaming his
shorts thinking about it.

Ben tries to flex his hand, but it's too painful.

ROSS (CONT'D)
Unless we get you out of here
tonight.

At this Ben sits up and looks at him.

BEN
You serious?

ROSS

I can't let Lucy grow up without
any parents. The Kings'll get their
hooks into her and she'll be doomed
too.

Ben stands, but Ross puts a hand on his shoulder.

ROSS (CONT'D)

Hold on, big guy. I've got a plan.

INT. GUARD HUT - NIGHT

TINY (30s), so called because he's built like a house,
practically engulfs the chair he's sitting on.

SOUNDS come from down the hall. Tiny leans over, listens, but
doesn't move. The sounds become more distinct...

BEN

(screaming)

Oh my God! It hurts! It hurts! Help
me! Help me!

Tiny jumps up and grabs his pistol and club. His lips curl
back in a grin as he runs out of the hut.

INT. CELL - NIGHT

Tiny arrives at the cell to find Ben curled up in the back
corner, cradling his hand and screaming.

TINY

Shut up, boy. Or I'm gonna crack
your fuckin' skull.

BEN

Oh my God! Just kill me!

Tiny bangs his stick against the bars.

Ben keeps SCREAMING.

Tiny grins. He opens the cell and comes charging in.

Ross comes from the cell across the hall and cracks him
upside the head with the billy club.

Tiny's eyes glaze, and he falls forward, toward Ben.

Ben sees him coming like a falling redwood and rolls out of
the way.

Tiny crashes to the floor, unconscious.

ROSS
Thank God. I was afraid one shot
wouldn't do it.

Ben grabs Tiny's pistol and shoves it in the back of his waistband. Ross grabs the guard's keys.

ROSS (CONT'D)
Let's go.

He leads Ben out of the cell and into the:

INT. CELL BLOCK - CONTINUOUS

Ross closes the cell and locks it. They run down the hall, past the empty cells and the guard hut to a door.

Ross unlocks the door with Tiny's keys and they go into:

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

All cinder block and dirt. Ross leads Ben to a manhole cover at the end of the hall.

He leans over, starts tugging on the cover, can't get it open.

ROSS
A little help, please?

Ben's suspicious, but he leans over and pulls on the cover until it gives.

ROSS (CONT'D)
Go down there. It's the sewers
under the building. Head east.
You'll come to...well, we'll call
it a stream. You can follow that to
the highway.

BEN
Got it. Thanks.

ROSS
And then what? Where will you go?

BEN
Canada.

ROSS
Good. Get Lucy and disappear. Simon
and Bliss will look everywhere for
you, but their influence mostly
ends at the border.

BEN
Mostly?

ROSS
Watch your ass.

He grabs Ben in an awkward hug.

ROSS (CONT'D)
Now go. And enjoy the Great White
North.

Ben drops down into the hole. Ross tosses Tiny's keys down
behind him and replaces the cover.

INT. SEWERS - NIGHT

Ben splashes through the ankle-deep piss- and shit-filled
water.

EXT. STREAM - NIGHT

Ben comes out of a pipe and falls ass over teakettle into the
dirty stream.

He wrinkles his nose, tries hard not to breathe, and gets up.
He splashes through the stream toward the highway.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ben takes off his shit-covered shoes and enters the
apartment.

He pulls Tiny's gun and makes his way silently to the back.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ben comes in and "pies" the room. It's dark and empty.

He strips off his dirty clothes and heads to the bathroom.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Ben emerges from the bathroom fresh and clean...

...and with dyed hair and a fake mustache.

He kneels by the AC vent, loosens the screws and pulls it off the wall. He reaches in, pulls out a watertight pouch.

Inside the pouch is a small wad of money, a credit card in the name "Joseph Harper," and a passport. He opens the passport and checks it.

It's in the name "Joseph Harper" and shows Ben with the same cheesy hair and mustache.

He puts the vent cover back, retightens the screws and grabs a duffel bag off the bed.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ben takes the remaining bottles of insulin, buries them in the duffel bag and leaves.

EXT. MISSISSIPPI/LOUISIANA BORDER CHECKPOINT - DAY

The LeSabre pulls up to a checkpoint with a "Thanks for Visiting Mississippi" sign on their side and a "Welcome to Louisiana" sign on the other.

Molly pulls up to a Federal BORDER GUARD (20s) and comes to a stop. She rolls down the window and gives him their papers.

The guard pages through the papers. He leans down, glances in the car.

BORDER GUARD

Ms. Page, is it?

MOLLY

That's me.

BORDER GUARD

And who is she?

MOLLY

My daughter.

BORDER GUARD

Why is her last name different?

MOLLY
Ask my asshole ex-husband.

He looks a bit suspicious, but hands the papers back to her.

BORDER GUARD
Drive safe, Ms. Page.

MOLLY
Thank you.

She rolls up the window and drives into Louisiana.

INT. CELL - MORNING

Guard BUBBA (20s), also huge and dumb, toddles past the door to Ben's cell. Tiny's unconscious body is mostly in shadow.

He stops, glances inside, bangs his stick against the bars.

BUBBA
Hey, asshole! Get up!

Tiny stirs and grunts. He rolls over, out of the shadow.

BUBBA (CONT'D)
Holy shit! Tiny?

INT. ATLANTA AIRPORT - DAY

Ben boards a Delta flight to Baton Rouge.

INT. SIMON'S OFFICE - DAY

Simon sits across his desk from Bliss and Ross.

BLISS
Somehow he got the jump on Tiny and escaped.

SIMON
How?

BLISS
I don't know, sir. Tiny said he must have had help.

ROSS
Tiny's kind of a moron.

SIMON
Do you know where he's going?

BLISS
No, sir. He's off the grid.

ROSS
He's heading to Mexico.

BLISS
How do you know?

ROSS
Because he told me he was going to
Canada when I helped him escape.

Bliss stands, towers over Ross, but Simon is calm.

BLISS
You did what?

ROSS
Get out of my face, asshole.

Bliss turns to Simon.

BLISS
General! Can I call Security?
Perhaps our interrogators can--

SIMON
Sit down, Colonel.

Bliss looks at him, shocked. Simon motions with his hand, and
Bliss reluctantly sits.

SIMON (CONT'D)
(to Ross)
Do you think he's got the USB?

ROSS
The girl's got it.

Bliss stares back and forth at them, mouth wide open.

SIMON
Close your mouth, Bliss. You look
like Tiny.

Bliss closes his mouth.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Anthony, can you catch them?

ROSS
Yes, sir. Between the checkpoints
and the ocean, there's only so many
ways they can go.

BLISS
We'll find them, sir. And finish
them.

ROSS
Not Lucy.

BLISS
Who?

ROSS
The daughter, genius. Nobody
touches her.

SIMON
What's your solution, Anthony?

ROSS
I'll take her, sir. With some time
I'll make her loyal to the Kings.

BLISS
Sir, I can't disagree with this
strenuously enough. She's a danger
to us. She needs to be put down
with the rest.

ROSS
No.

Bliss starts to protest, but Simon raises his hand.

SIMON
Okay, Anthony. We don't touch the
girl.

ROSS
Thank you, sir. Now there's only
one wild card.

SIMON
Which is?

ROSS
Who's helping them?

EXT. STRIP MALL - DAY

The LeSabre pulls up in front of a cheesy New Orleans strip mall and parks in front of a store marked "Computer World."

INT. SOUTHERN KINGS CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Bliss sits in front of a bank of computers. His look is edgy, obsessed.

He runs video backward and forward, but he can't see anything. Frustration fills his features.

ROSS (O.S.)
There they are.

Bliss stops the video.

BLISS
What?

Ross steps forward, points at a checkpoint video. Lucy's face is fuzzy but visible inside the LeSabre.

ROSS
That's Lucy.

BLISS
You sure?

ROSS
I'd know her anywhere. She looks
just like her mother.

He taps the screen.

ROSS (CONT'D)
Find that car and you'll find Ben
Campbell.

INT. COMPUTER WORLD - DAY

Molly and Lucy enter the store, which is dark and stuffed to the gills with computer equipment.

Behind the counter sits LAZLO PETERSEN (30s), with glasses and long, stringy hair. He looks up, sees Molly and beams.

LAZLO
Molly! Oh my God.

MOLLY
It's been awhile, Lazlo.

LAZLO
Too long.

He comes around the counter, engulfs Molly in a hug.

He takes Lucy by the shoulders, gives her the up and down.

LAZLO (CONT'D)
And who is this? Is this your
daughter, Molly?
(to Lucy)
Last time I saw you, you were--

MOLLY
No, she's not my daughter. This is
Lucy, the daughter of a friend.

Her tone is short. Lazlo notes it, gives Lucy a smile.

LAZLO
Lucy, it's a pleasure to meet you.
I'm Lazlo.

They shake hands.

LUCY
Nice to meet you.

LAZLO
(to Molly)
So what can I do for you, my dear?

She smiles.

EXT. COMPUTER WORLD - DAY

Two suited THUGS (20s) in a black sedan watch Molly and Lucy exit the store and get into the LeSabre. The passenger bears a crown tattoo, the driver does not.

EXT. PLACE D'ARMES HOTEL - NIGHT

A French Quarter boutique hotel. A taxi pulls up in front.
Ben gets out, goes inside.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Lucy lounges on the bed, headphones on, paging through a magazine. Molly clicks absentmindedly on her laptop.

There's a KNOCK at the door. Lucy doesn't notice.

Molly gets up to answer, finds Ben in his ridiculous getup.

Molly checks to see if Lucy's watching. She's not, so Molly surreptitiously but enthusiastically throws her arms around Ben's neck and kisses him.

She pulls back, looks at his mustache.

MOLLY

You can pull that thing off, right?

BEN

What, no mustache ride for you?

He comes inside, drops his bags and sneaks over to Lucy.

He tickles her. She jumps from the surprise, then starts giggling. When she sees it's Ben, she jumps up and engulfs him in a hug.

Then sees his mustache and bandage.

LUCY

Daddy, what happened?

She grabs his hand, making him wince, and unwraps the bandage.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Oh my God!

Molly comes over, sees the jagged burn wound where his tattoo used to be.

MOLLY

Holy crap, Ben.

BEN

I spent some time with the Kings before I left. I'm pretty sure I'm out of the club.

MOLLY

Do I even want to know?

BEN
Forget about it. It's fine. How are
we on the USB?

MOLLY
Lazlo called and said he fixed it.
We can pick it up tomorrow.

BEN
Great. Did you get adjoining rooms?
She nods, points to the connecting door.

BEN (CONT'D)
Perfect.

He leans over, kisses Lucy on the head.

BEN (CONT'D)
Baby, you sleep over here, okay?

LUCY
Sure. Are you guys sleeping over
there?

This catches them short. They look at each other, back at
her.

BEN
Uh...

LUCY
Oh, come on, Dad. I'm 10. I'm not
stupid.

He and Molly share a look: *Kids!*

LUCY (CONT'D)
Just try and keep it down. Your
daughter's sleeping next door.

BEN
This is such an inappropriate
conversation.

MOLLY
Um, I'm going to get changed.

She goes to the other room as fast as possible.

Ben sits next to Lucy on the bed.

BEN
Okay, let's say you're right.

LUCY
I am.

BEN
Okay, let's say you are.

LUCY
I am.

BEN
Okay, you are. Are you okay with that?

LUCY
I'm always okay with being right.

BEN
Luce.

She climbs up in his lap, puts her arms around his neck.

LUCY
Daddy.

She squeezes his neck, kisses him on the cheek.

BEN
How'd you end up being so much smarter than me?

LUCY
Mom.

They share a smile.

EXT. COMPUTER WORLD - DAY

The LeSabre pulls up in front of the strip mall. Ben, Molly and Lucy get out and head for the front door.

It's hanging open.

Ben pulls Tiny's pistol from his waistband and pushes Molly and Lucy behind him.

He opens the door, goes into:

INT. COMPUTER WORLD - CONTINUOUS

The store is totally trashed. Destroyed computers and hard drives litter the room.

Ben makes his way through the room, followed by Molly and Lucy. They pick their way past the computers to the counter.

Ben looks over the counter.

BEN
Oh, shit.

BEHIND THE COUNTER

A huge bloodstain covers the side of the counter and the floor.

Ben leads them around the counter, not letting Lucy see the blood.

MOLLY
(calling out)
Lazlo?

No answer.

BEN
I'm gonna check the back.

MOLLY
I'm coming too.

BEN
But--

MOLLY
Lucy, hold my hand. Stay with me.

Lucy clings to her side as they go to the storeroom door.

Ben opens it, and they go inside:

INT. STOREROOM - CONTINUOUS

The detritus of dozens more computers.

A bloody chair in the middle of the room, and Lazlo's naked, dead, broken body on the floor in front of it.

He's missing fingernails and has multiple burn marks on his arms and legs.

Ben tries to stop them from coming in, but:

Molly sees it, gasps.

MOLLY
Oh, my God. Lazlo!

Lucy sees it, bursts into tears. She buries her head in Molly's side.

She breaks away from Lucy and rushes to Lazlo. She tries to rouse him, but there's nothing. Ben hugs Lucy to him.

Molly looks to Ben.

MOLLY (CONT'D)
Ben, what do we do?

BEN
We have to get out of here. They
tortured him to get the USB.

He looks around and spots a wall safe hanging open.

BEN (CONT'D)
Come on, Molly. We have to go.

Reluctantly she leaves Lazlo and they exit the storeroom.

SHOWROOM

They step over computer trash-- and find three black-suited GOONS (20s) waiting inside the door for them.

The goons open fire, pelting the back wall with bullets.

Ben pushes Molly and Lucy down behind the counter, kneels next to them.

BEN
Does Lazlo keep a gun here? For
security, maybe?

He leans out, takes a shot. The goons react by scattering and hiding behind piles of computer junk.

Molly searches under the counter and finds a sawed-off shotgun.

Ben points to the other side of the counter.

Lucy sits, back to the counter, hands over her ears and eyes squeezed shut.

Molly spots one of the goons moving from one stack to another and fires a shot.

The BOOM! of the shotgun reverberates through the room and the goon splatters against the back wall.

Ben exchanges fire with the second goon while the third repositions behind a different pile of broken computers.

Ben disappears behind the counter, then comes rolling out to a nearby pile.

Smoothly he comes up and fires a shot at Goon #2, hitting him in the chest and knocking him down.

Molly tries to fire at Goon #3, but there's no shell in the chamber.

MOLLY

Shit!

Goon #3 comes up and shoots at Ben.

The round catches Ben in the upper arm, spinning him around and knocking the gun out of his hand.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

No! Ben!

Lucy looks up, sees Ben spin around and fall to the floor.

The gun skitters across the floor toward them.

Goon #3 comes to finish off Ben.

Lucy sees the goon, dives across the floor and grabs the gun. She turns and squeezes off a shot.

Amazingly, it catches Goon #3 right between the eyes.

He stops, surprised and then dead. He drops the gun and topples to the floor.

Ben looks over, sees Lucy holding the gun.

Her eyes are wide. She drops the gun, runs to Ben.

LUCY

Daddy, are you okay?

BEN

Nice shot, baby.

His head drops back to the floor. Lucy grabs him, hugs him like she never plans to let go.

INT. PRIVATE AIRPLANE - DAY

A Gulfstream VI with video screen on the front wall, leather chairs, the works.

Bliss slams down the phone as Ross looks on dispassionately.

ROSS

Good news?

BLISS

Your friend and his weird little family killed three more of our men. They're in the wind.

ROSS

What are you going to do?

BLISS

I'm not sure. They're in Texas Cartel territory now. Our control is limited from here on out. You have any more bright ideas?

ROSS

Make it a group effort, genius.

As Bliss weighs this thought, the video screen BEEPS and Simon's face appears. He's furious and it shows.

SIMON

Ross, your friend Benjamin is making a mockery of us!

ROSS

Sir, he's a resourceful guy. But we'll get him.

SIMON

We? What exactly have you contributed to this process besides a foolhardy plan to let him go when we already had him?

ROSS

Sir, I--

SIMON

You nothing! Your part in this operation is over. When you land, I want you to drop off Bliss and tell the pilots to get your ass back to Atlanta. You and I have a long conversation ahead of us.

The blood drains from Ross' face.

ROSS
Sir--

SIMON
Shut up, Ross. Bliss, find
Campbell, his daughter and that
woman and kill them all. You
understand?

BLISS
Loud and clear, sir.

They don't notice the anger on Ross' face.

INT. CAR - DAY

Molly drives at top speed down an open interstate. There are
no other cars. Music plays quietly on the radio in the
background.

Ahead is a sign that reads "Beaumont - 10 miles."

Ben slouches in the front seat, eyes closed, arm bandaged.
Lucy watches him like a hawk from the backseat.

LUCY
Where are we going?

MOLLY
I know a coyote named Felix.

LUCY
A what?

MOLLY
A coyote.

LUCY
Like a dog?

Molly laughs.

MOLLY
Yeah, but with fewer scruples.

LUCY
What?

MOLLY
Nothing. A coyote is a guy who
helps people like us cross the
border into Mexico.

Suddenly the radio music stops.

ANNOUNCER
(from the radio)
Breaking News. The Federal Police
have issued a threat warning for
the following people. Benjamin
Campbell, Molly Page and Lucy
Campbell are wanted for murder and
narco-trafficking, as well as
treason against the state. They are
known to be in a black Buick
LeSabre heading for south Texas.

Lucy starts to cry. Molly turns the radio down.

MOLLY
How'd they know?

BEN
Ross.

MOLLY
What?

BEN
I'm an idiot.

MOLLY
What are you talking about?

BEN
Never mind. It doesn't matter now.

MOLLY
OK, so what do we do?

EXT. TARMAC - NIGHT

The Gulfstream pulls back from a slot and heads toward the
runway.

Ross watches from the shadows inside the hangar.

EXT. BEAUMONT, TEXAS - NIGHT

Another burned-out city. The LeSabre cruises down the street, conspicuous by its presence. The homeless and streetwalkers stare and point.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Lucy's eyes are saucers, and Ben and Molly don't look so comfortable either.

BEN

Where's this coyote friend of yours live?

MOLLY

First of all, he's not my friend. Just a guy I've worked with. But he lives outside town on the other side.

LUCY

Shit, can we get there faster?

BEN

Lucy!

LUCY

Really, Dad? You're worried about my language?

BEN

I worry about everything, Luce.

Ben's phone RINGS. He picks it up, glances at it, looks surprised.

BEN (CONT'D)

It's Ross.

He answers it.

BEN (CONT'D)

What, Anthony?

ROSS

(through the phone)

I know you're pissed at me, Ben. But you need to listen.

BEN

Fuck you, Anthony.

Lucy swats him on the shoulder. He covers the phone, looks at her, mouths "Sorry."

ROSS
(through the phone)
Seriously. We need to talk.

Ben doesn't respond.

INT. SMOKEY'S BAR - NIGHT

A corner bar, dingy but crowded.

Ross waits alone at a corner table, nursing a whiskey neat. Each time the door opens, he looks up expectantly.

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

The LeSabre pulls up and parks in a spot near the side of the bar. Ben gets out, but doesn't go to the front door.

Instead, he heads around the side.

EXT. BACK OF BAR - CONTINUOUS

Ben comes to the back of the bar and finds the employee door. He glances around, enters.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Ben makes his way through the kitchen. He finds the door to the restaurant floor and peeks through it.

He spots Ross in the back corner, staring at the front door.

INT. RESTAURANT FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Ben strides through the back of the restaurant, grabs Ross by the shoulders and lifts him half out of the seat.

He pulls Ross' face close to his.

ROSS
Ben, thank--

BEN
I should bury you out back, right now.

ROSS
Look, I understand--

BEN
You don't understand shit, Anthony.
You know those fucking goons you
sent after us at the computer
place? My daughter had to shoot one
of them to get him off me. Do you
know what it does to a 10-year-old
girl to have to shoot some fucking
meathead right between the eyes?

Ross' eyes are wide. He holds up his hands in surrender.

Meanwhile, the other customers are starting to turn and watch.

ROSS
(whispering)
I'm sorry, Ben. I didn't know she'd
be there.

BEN
Sorry's not good enough, Anthony.

ROSS
Can we sit down and talk about this
like old friends?

BEN
Old friends my ass.

But after a long, tense moment he lets Ross go and they sit down.

ROSS
Ben, I was just doing what I had to
do.

BEN
Sending those assholes after Lucy
and me?

ROSS
No, just after you. I didn't know
she'd be there.

BEN
Well, damn, you are my friend!

ROSS
I'm not gonna keep apologizing,
Ben. I'm putting my ass on the line
just being here with you.

BEN
Then why are you here?

A pause.

ROSS
Lucy.

BEN
What?

Ross just looks at him, doesn't say anything.

BEN (CONT'D)
What?

ROSS
I don't know how to tell you this,
Ben. But you need to know.

Now Ben starts to look suspicious.

BEN
What?

ROSS
When you were in Afghanistan--

He doesn't get the chance to finish, as Ben interrupts him by coming across the table, snarling, his face a mask of rage.

Ben launches himself into Ross, knocks him into the wall.

ROSS (CONT'D)
Ben--

But Ben keeps coming, his fists pounding into Ross.

Ross finally gets his hands up, gets his hands around Ben's neck, pushes him back.

ROSS (CONT'D)
Ben, calm down. Let's talk.

Ben says nothing. He takes Ross' hands, yanks them away and holds them over Ross' head with one hand.

With his free hand, he pounds Ross again in the face.

Suddenly two sets of burly arms grab Ben and yank him off Ross. Two BOUNCERS (20s) pull Ben away.

Ben's still roiling, trying to get away.

Ross stumbles to his feet, his face bloody.

ROSS (CONT'D)
Ben, you've got to calm down.

BEN
Fuck you, Ross!

ROSS
We need to talk. I have things I
need to tell you. I want to save
Lucy as much as you do.

This just pisses Ben off even more, but the bouncers don't let him go.

SMOKEY (50s) comes over, points to the door.

SMOKEY
Get him outta here.

ROSS
No, wait.

SMOKEY
Son, he beat you half to shit. Let
us take care of him.

ROSS
No, he had a reason. But I know
he'll calm down and have a beer
with me.
(to Ben)
Right, Ben?

Ben's breathing has started to slow. He looks back and forth, considers his choices, finally nods.

He holds up his hands in surrender. The bouncers let him go.

Smokey considers them for a moment, then shrugs.

SMOKEY
Okay, but any more shit and I call
the Federals on botha'ya.

ROSS
There won't be. Thank you.

They pick up the table and chairs and sit. Ben stares at Ross with seething hatred.

ROSS (CONT'D)
Listen to me, Ben. What happened
between me and Elizabeth was a
mistake--

BEN
What do you want?

ROSS
What?

BEN
I don't want to hear your pathetic
excuses. What do you want?

ROSS
You're gonna get Lucy killed.

BEN
What?

ROSS
They're gonna kill Lucy and that
woman you're with. I had the
General convinced to leave them out
of it, but after New Orleans...

This hits Ben hard. He looks away from Ross.

ROSS (CONT'D)
Bliss can't wait to kill you. Or
Lucy. I'm pretty sure he jerks off
to the thought.

BEN
And you?

ROSS
If it was just you? I don't know.
But Lucy too? No.

BEN
So now you want us to get away?

ROSS
You've got my--

Ben cuts him off with a look. Ross raises his hands.

ROSS (CONT'D)
Okay, forget that for a second.
It's not the only reason, anyway.

BEN
What's the other reason?
(a beat)
It's Bliss, isn't it?

Ross just smiles and slides Porter's USB across the table.

ROSS
You get away with this and put it
online, then yeah, I'd say Bliss'
time with the Kings will be short.
If there's even a Kings after that.

Ben just looks at it, nonplussed.

BEN
We've already had that. Look how
much fucking good it did us.

ROSS
Not this. Remember that file that
you thought was corrupted? It was
just encrypted. Now it's not.

Reluctantly, Ben takes the USB.

BEN
So the Kings and the Federals make
common cause. So what?

ROSS
It's worse than you think, Ben.
Simon's the CEO of the biggest
narcotics trafficking organization
in the world.

BEN
Yeah, the Kings.

ROSS
Please. The Kings can't hold a
candle to the US government.

BEN
What?

ROSS
You know how they always call Simon
an ex-general in the US Army?
That's not exactly true.

BEN
He still works for the government?

ROSS
We all do. Who do you think S is?

Now Ben's jaw drops.

BEN
Simon is S?

INT. BLISS' CAR - CONTINUOUS

Bliss and SHANNON (30), a Kings bodyguard, sit in the front seat of Bliss' car. Bliss holds a speaker.

BEN
(from the speaker)
Simon is S?

Bliss and Shannon share a look.

INT. BAR - CONTINUOUS

Ross sits back and looks at Ben.

ROSS
He reports directly to the President.

BEN
(whispers)
Holy shit.

ROSS
Exactly. The President of the United States is the biggest drug dealer in the world. And Simon's his number one bagman.

BEN
Does everybody know?

ROSS
No, just the management. The street and mid-level guys don't have a clue. The folder's got a series of video calls between Simon and the President. It's all the proof you need.

(MORE)

ROSS (CONT'D)
I'll try to misdirect Bliss, but
you have to get to the border and
disappear, then get that online.

Ben, still distracted, just looks up and nods halfheartedly.

Ross stands, comes around the table, puts his hand on Ben's
shoulder.

ROSS (CONT'D)
And, Ben. I am sorry.

Ben doesn't respond. After a moment, Ross heads for the door.

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

Ross steps outside, looks around.

From the parking lot, the brights from Bliss' car come on,
spotlighting him and forcing him to cover his eyes.

BLISS
(from the darkness)
You've been a bad boy, Anthony.
You're supposed to be on a plane
back to Atlanta.

ROSS
Why don't you come out here and
let's do this like men, huh, Bliss?

Bliss steps out of the lights. He's holding a pistol at his
side.

BLISS
I have a feeling the General will
not be pleased with you, Anthony.

ROSS
I have a feeling you can kiss my
ass, Bliss.

At the same time he pulls his pistol from his waistband and
raises it toward Bliss.

There's a SHOT from the darkness that hits Ross in the side,
spins him around.

Bliss raises his pistol to finish him off, but he's
interrupted by the sound of an ENGINE revving and the lights
from the LeSabre light up the scene.

Bliss turns to see the LeSabre speeding toward him. He dives out of the way and hits the ground hard as Ben speeds past.

The LeSabre rams into the front bumper of the sedan, spinning it around and slamming it into Shannon, who goes flying into the darkness.

Ben opens the back passenger door.

BEN
Anthony! Come on!

Ross staggers to his feet and dives into the backseat.

The car screeches off into the darkness as Ross pulls the door closed.

Bliss fires off a couple of useless shots, but they're wild and nowhere close to the car.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Ben looks back over the seat to see Ross wheezing and holding his side.

BEN
Hold on, Anthony. I'll get you help.

Ross coughs. Blood comes out.

ROSS
Nah, fuck it. I'm done, Ben.

BEN
Anthony, you hold on. I still have to kick your ass for Elizabeth.

ROSS
Forget it, Ben. The light's going out.

BEN
Look--

ROSS
I'm sorry I wasn't a better friend.

He coughs again, bringing up more blood.

ROSS (CONT'D)
Just get that beautiful daughter of ours across the border.

At this, he lies back against the seat, lets out one last, calm breath and dies.

Ben looks back, sees he's gone, smacks the steering wheel.

BEN
Goddammit!

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

The LeSabre, dented and dirty, cruises through downtown Beaumont.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Lucy slumps in the back, trying to stay away from the bloodstains. Molly drives, Ben ducks down in the front.

BEN
I think we need to ditch the car.

MOLLY
What? No! I--

Suddenly the inside of the car is bathed in flashing light.

MOLLY (CONT'D)
Oh, shit.

Ben looks up to see three Federal vehicles speeding down the street toward them.

BEN
Shit is right. Get us out of here.

Molly guns it.

A black Federal SUV comes screaming into the intersection from the right.

Molly sees it and twists the wheel savagely, sending the car into a skid to the left.

She regains control of it and angles around the SUV, which jams on its brakes and loses control.

It skids to a hard stop, flips over and rolls- once, twice, three times- into the building on the far corner. It EXPLODES and sends a fireball high into the air.

The remaining Federal cars speed past the fireball.

Molly takes a hard left at the next intersection. The LeSabre skids into the turn and barely misses sideswiping a light pole.

EXT. BOULEVARD - CONTINUOUS

The LeSabre rights itself and heads up the street, a wide boulevard lined with trees and busy with traffic.

The LeSabre barrels up the boulevard, darting left and right in between the other cars.

They approach the next red light, which is backed up with cars.

Molly veers off the street onto the sidewalk and avoids hitting three PEDESTRIANS, who scatter as the LeSabre speeds around the stopped cars and lurches back onto the street.

Back up the street, the Federal cars take the corner and keep coming.

Ahead, two black Federal trucks pull into the boulevard from a side street and come together, blocking the road.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Molly sees the trucks in the road ahead and slams on the brakes.

MOLLY

Shit!

Ben and Lucy brace themselves as the car turns hard and starts to skid.

BOULEVARD

The car skids hard, the brakes screech, and the car slides inexorably toward the parked trucks.

Amazingly, though, it comes to a stop a foot or two short of the truck's bumper.

CAR

Molly turns and looks around the car.

MOLLY

Everybody--

But she's interrupted by FEDERALs yanking open the doors, reaching roughly inside the car, and dragging everybody out.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

Ben, Molly and Lucy stand blindfolded in front of a pit. The LeSabre's parked next to it.

Inside the pit are dozens, possibly hundreds, of bodies.

Six FEDERALs (20s-40s) guard Ben, Molly and Lucy. They're led by the CHIEF (50), who nods at the guards.

They take the blindfolds off the prisoners.

Molly's the first one to glance around. She sees the pit and lets out a GASP.

This draws Lucy's attention to the pit. When she sees it, she starts to cry.

Ben looks over, sees it. His expression doesn't change.

He looks back toward the Chief.

CHIEF
Time to die, Campbell.

BEN
That's fine. Go ahead and kill me.

The Chief just looks at him. *Really?*

BEN (CONT'D)
But let my daughter go.

LUCY
Dad!

CHIEF
No can do, Campbell. She knows as much as you do.

BEN
She's just a child.

The Chief just glances at the guards.

Three grab Ben, Molly and Lucy while the other three pull their sidearms and place them to the sides of the prisoners' heads.

Lucy starts to SCREAM and hyperventilate.

CHIEF
Shut her up!

BEN
No! Wait!

Then comes the sound of a RIFLE REPORT in the distance.

The Chief's head explodes and he dies in place, falling to his knees and slumping to the ground.

The other guards start looking around wildly.

Ben pulls free and grabs the pistol from the holster of the guard who was holding him.

He shoots that guard in the neck, then puts the pistol to the head of his other guard and shoots him.

Two white pickups come over the hill, each with a .50-caliber gun mounted on the back and each carrying three TEXAS CARTEL MEMBERS (20s-30s).

They're all pointing their rifles and .50-cals at the Federals.

Ben grabs Lucy and Molly and pulls them to the ground.

Rounds whiz by overhead and thud into the Federals. In seconds, all six of them lie dead on the ground.

The trucks pull up next to the pit and the Texans jump out and surround Ben, Molly and Lucy.

CLETE (30), the leader of the group, holds out a hand and pulls Ben to his feet. Two other Texans help Molly and Lucy up.

CLETE
Mr. Campbell?

Ben nods. Clete reaches out, shakes his hand.

On his neck is a tattoo in the shape of Texas. The other Texans all have the same tattoo.

CLETE (CONT'D)
I'm Clete Perkins, area leader for the Texas Cartel. Mr. Ross sends his regards.

Ben's shocked and shows it.

BEN
Mr. Ross?

CLETE
Yes, sir. Anthony Ross?

BEN
I know who he is. But...he sent
you?

CLETE
He called my boss.

BEN
You know he's dead?

CLETE
Ross?

Ben nods.

CLETE (CONT'D)
Well, that doesn't change my
orders. I'm to help get you out of
town so you can get to Mexico.

Ben reaches up to scratch his head. As he does, his bandage
slips and Clete notices his scar.

CLETE (CONT'D)
Were you a King?

Ben nods. The Texans grumble and raise their guns a fraction.

CLETE (CONT'D)
Excommunicated?

BEN
Very.

Clete thinks on this for a moment.

CLETE
Normally we say the only good King
is a dead King.

BEN
So do the Federals. Hell, so do I.

EXT. COYOTE'S HOUSE - DAY

A surprisingly pretty ranch house, with an attached garage.

A large panel truck backs out of the garage, with FELIX CARTER (30) at the wheel. He's grubby, shifty-looking.

INT. PANEL TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

The truck carries boxes of fruit.

INT. COMPARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Ben, Molly and Lucy lay back-to-front in a tiny compartment under the floor of the truck.

They barely breathe, much less speak.

Suddenly the truck jerks to a stop.

EXT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

A Federal SUV, lights flashing. Three FEDERALs (20s-30s) prowl around the truck.

INT. COMPARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Ben glances at Molly.

BEN
(whispering)
Federals.

MOLLY
(whispering)
Shit. And we were so close.

They cower and listen. From outside the truck come the sounds of YELLING, Felix PLEADING, then a burst of GUNFIRE.

Moments later they can hear the back of the truck open and the boxes move.

Ben awkwardly pulls the gun from his waistband and points it upward.

FOOTSTEPS thump on the wood flooring. They grow closer until they're right overhead.

Ben pulls Lucy closer to him. She's crying, and she presses her hand over her mouth to muffle the sound.

The footsteps pause. There's muffled CONVERSATION, then KNOCKING on the wood above.

Then nothing.

Molly buries her head in Ben's back. Lucy keeps her mouth covered. The tears flow freely down her cheeks. *This is it...*

...but then the footsteps recede and they hear the sound of the door closing.

Suddenly the truck's engine roars to life and it starts to move.

EXT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Felix' body lies in the dust as the truck pulls away.

INT. CAB - CONTINUOUS

One of the Federals drives the truck and follows the SUV.

He turns on the radio. MARIACHI MUSIC comes blaring out. He grins and turns it up.

COMPARTMENT

Lucy looks up at Ben, eyes full of tears and hope.

LUCY
(whispering)
You think they let us go?

Ben looks at Molly, suspicious.

BEN
(whispering)
What was the gunfire?

MOLLY
(whispering)
Warning shot?

BEN
Can you call Felix?

Molly pulls out her cell phone, dials.

GROUND

From Felix' body comes the chirp of a RINGTONE.

COMPARTMENT

She hangs up the phone.

MOLLY
He's not answering.

BEN
I'm going topside and see what's
happening.

MOLLY
You sure that's a good idea?

BEN
Not really.

He unlatches the hatch.

INT. BACK OF TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

A Federal sits on one of the fruit boxes, his gun on his lap.
He's young and bored.

Right behind him, the hatch opens and Ben's face pokes out.
He doesn't notice.

Ben glances up and sees him, disappears back into the hatch.

COMPARTMENT

BEN
(whispering)
It wasn't a warning shot.

MOLLY
(whispering)
What are we going to do?

BEN
Go out the back. Wait here for a
second.

He goes back up.

BACK OF TRUCK

Ben's head pokes up again. The Federal doesn't see.
Ben comes up, eases the hatch shut.

The Federal, unaware, is surprised by the arm that comes around his neck and starts squeezing.

He turns and ducks out of Ben's grip, but Ben pops him in the jaw, sending him sprawling. The gun skids away.

Ben chases him, but the truck hits a bump and he stumbles. The Federal climbs to his feet and charges at Ben.

He lowers his shoulder and drives it into Ben's stomach, sending him toppling over a fruit box.

CAB

The driver listens to the blaring mariachi music, oblivious to the fight a few feet behind him.

BACK OF TRUCK

Ben and the Federal topple over the box and onto the floor of the truck.

COMPARTMENT

Molly and Lucy cower at the sounds of the fight above them.

BACK OF TRUCK

The Federal's on top of Ben, and he punches him-- once, twice, three times.

Ben thrusts his knees upward and sends the Federal flying into the side wall of the truck.

Ben takes a swing at him, but the truck hits a pothole and he loses his balance.

He falls into the Federal, who shoves him backward.

The Federal comes after him again, but this time Ben is ready. He steps to the side and drives his fists downward into the man's back, sending him sprawling across the floor.

CAB

The Federal bops his head to the music, blissfully unaware.

COMPARTMENT

Molly looks at Lucy.

MOLLY
I'm going to help. Stay here.

LUCY
No! Don't leave me!

Molly hands her the pistol.

MOLLY
If anybody besides me or your dad
opens that hatch, you blast 'em.
Okay?

Lucy nods, her eyes wide, her face frozen in fear.

Molly opens the hatch.

BACK OF TRUCK

Molly comes up just in time to get in Ben's way. He stumbles over her and falls backward.

The Federal sees her and kicks her viciously. Her head snaps backward and she's knocked unconscious.

She falls back into the compartment.

COMPARTMENT

Lucy tries to catch her.

LUCY
Oh my God! Molly!

But she's out cold.

Lucy looks up and sees the Federal grab her father by the shoulders and punch him again, and again, and again.

Ben's head lolls to the side and he looks like he might be about done for.

The Federal raises a knife.

Lucy aims the gun at him and squeezes the trigger.

The shot BOOMS inside the tiny compartment.

CAB

A trumpet wails, but even through that the muffled GUNSHOT can be heard, just a little.

The Federal narrows his eyes. He turns the radio down and listens.

BACK OF TRUCK

The shot hits the Federal in the arm.

As Ben readies for the killing blow, he sees the Federal react, then grab for his arm.

Ben grabs the Federal's head and drives his knee into the man's face.

Before the Federal can react, Ben wraps his arms around the man's head and viciously snaps his neck.

He slides the body soundlessly to the floor.

CAB

The driver listens for a moment, but hears nothing.

He shrugs, turns the music back up.

COMPARTMENT

Molly sits up, rubbing her head.

MOLLY

Ow.

Lucy drops the gun, her eyes wide.

Ben rushes to her. He pulls her, then Molly, out of the compartment.

He hugs Lucy.

BEN

Are you okay?

LUCY

That's twice I've saved your, a--
your butt, Dad.

Ben looks at her for a long moment, like he's searching for something.

LUCY (CONT'D)

What?

And then the moment passes. He pulls her to him. She snuggles against him, safe in his arms for just a moment.

MOLLY

Now what?

BEN

Now we leave.

He raises the back door and looks outside. The road behind them is dusty and unpaved.

BEN (CONT'D)

Now or never, guys.

MOLLY

I'll go first.

She readies herself, then jumps out of the back of the truck.

EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Molly hits the ground hard and rolls over a few times before coming to a stop.

BACK OF TRUCK

Ben motions to Lucy.

BEN

Come here, baby. We'll go together.

LUCY

No, Dad, I can't. You go. I'll just stay here. They can't hurt a 10-year-old, can they?

BEN

I know you're scared, baby. But I'll protect you.

He takes her by the shoulders, looks her in the eye.

BEN (CONT'D)

You trust me, right?

She just rolls her eyes like the 10-year-old she is.

BEN (CONT'D)
Okay, then.

She sighs and accedes. They stand at the back of the truck, and Ben wraps his arms around her.

LUCY
On three?

BEN
Sure. Three!

He jumps, carrying her with him, and twists his body so that he lands on his back in the dust.

They bounce and roll and finally stop a few feet apart.

Ahead the truck continues on.

Lucy gets up first and crawls over to him.

LUCY
Dad, are you okay?

He groans.

BEN
That was a terrible idea. And I'm a terrible father. Next time I suggest something like that, remind me I'm an idiot.

They make eye contact, then both break into grins.

Then the laughing starts.

They lie there and giggle, snort and guffaw as the truck disappears into the dust.

EXT. FELIX' HOUSE - DAY

Ben, Molly and Lucy-- dusty, bloody and bedraggled-- approach the house.

Ben leads them to the garage. He tries a side door, but it's locked.

He takes off his shirt, wraps it around his arm, and smashes the nearest window. He crawls inside.

A moment later, the garage door opens and the LeSabre backs out.

BEN
New plan.

MOLLY
Which is?

BEN
We drive like hell.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

The LeSabre speeds across an open desert road, sending up a cloud of dust behind it.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Lucy points off to the East.

LUCY
Oh, my God. Look.

Ben and Molly look in the same direction and see a line of stopped cars trailing off into the distance.

LUCY (CONT'D)
What *is* that?

BEN
That's the border crossing.

LUCY
Why aren't we going that way?

BEN
They'll be waiting for us there, baby.

MOLLY
So I ask again, what's the plan?

BEN
There's open desert between here and the border. We get across however we can, then we disappear.

MOLLY
And if they catch us? Or should I say, when they catch us?

BEN
Then we petition the Mexican
government for asylum.

MOLLY
On what grounds?

He holds up his mangled hand.

BEN
We go back, we're subject to human
rights abuses.

MOLLY
Well, that's true.

BEN
But they're not gonna catch us.
We'll go to Mexico City and
disappear. It's a metropolis of 30
million people. They can't find
every one of us.

Lucy points ahead.

LUCY
Look! There it is!

Ahead in the middle distance is a sign that says "Bienvenidos
a Mexico! Illegal Immigration is Prohibited."

Ben speeds up.

EXT. CAMERA LENS - CONTINUOUS

A camera, obviously somewhere above the desert, notes the
LeSabre coming toward it and zooms in on it.

CONTROLLER (V.O.)
(in Spanish)
Target approaching border at high
rate of speed. Readyng deterrence.

Far behind the LeSabre is a group of black Federal vehicles.

EXT. SKY - CONTINUOUS

In the distance, on the Mexican side of the border, flies a
Predator UAV, the Mexican flag painted on the side.

It's far enough away from the LeSabre as to be invisible.

A puff of smoke signals the release of a missile.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Ahead the border sign seems to close to be true.

LUCY
Hurry, Dad!

And then, without warning...

An EXPLOSION comes from seemingly nowhere and the whole world spins out of control.

EXT. DESERT - CONTINUOUS

The car flies crazily into the air.

It flips over and over and comes crashing down onto the roof.

It bounces, flips two more times and finally settles, upside down, in the middle of the desert.

It rests there, a useless, smoking hulk.

After a few moments, a badly-bandaged hand reaches out of the driver's side window, grasps desperately for anything.

It gains purchase in the sand, grabs, digs.

Finally an arm follows it, then Ben's bloodied, dirty body.

He pulls himself out of the car and up to a seated position.

In the distance in both directions, rising dustballs signal the impending arrival of Federal and Mexican Police vehicles.

Ben leans over, looks into the car.

BEN
Lucy! Molly! Lucy! Baby?

He sits up, his eyes wide, and lapses into motionless silence, tears welling in his eyes and rolling down his cheeks.

He sits a few feet apart from the vehicle, his tears turning into cries and then into a low MOAN.

For the first time, finally, we can see him give up.

His body sinks in on itself, gets smaller and weaker, as he realizes that it's over...

...but then, from the car:

LUCY (O.S.)
(weakly)
Daddy?

Ben looks up, leans over.

BEN
Luce? Lucy?

He crawls to the car, looks inside.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

The inside of the car is a bloody mess. On first glance Molly looks dead, her eyes open but unfocused.

In the backseat, Ben sees Lucy's bloodied body twitch.

LUCY
(weakly)
Dad?

BEN
I'm here, baby.

He reaches out for her. She stretches, takes his hand. He pulls and struggles to get her loose.

BEN (CONT'D)
Push, baby. Push!

She pushes with her feet against the backseat.

They keep struggling.

Finally she gets free and tumbles into the front seat. Ben pulls her out through the window.

EXT. DESERT - CONTINUOUS

He pulls her into his arms and she presses against him.

She cries into his chest as he caresses her hair.

BEN
Shhhh...it's okay.

LUCY

Molly?

He just pulls her closer.

BEN

Come on. We have to keep moving.

He stands, lifts her to her feet.

BEN (CONT'D)

Are you okay? Can you walk?

LUCY

Yeah.

Ben pulls out the USB and slides it into Lucy's pocket.

LUCY (CONT'D)

What is that?

BEN

If something happens, you take that to Mexico and you put this on the internet. All of it, you hear me?

LUCY

What is it?

BEN

Just do it.

LUCY

Oh-okay.

They start limping away, toward the border.

Then there's a GROAN from the car.

MOLLY

(weakly)

Don't leave me.

Ben turns back. He crouches and looks inside.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Molly's bloody and broken, but she's alive.

He reaches in, takes her by the arm, and pulls her out.

DESERT

Ben pulls Molly to a sitting position. Blood trickles from the side of her mouth.

He wipes it away, pulls her close.

BEN
Are you okay?

She shrugs.

BEN (CONT'D)
Can you walk?

MOLLY
I think so.

He helps her up and picks up Lucy, who wraps her arms around his neck.

They make their way, Lucy in Ben's arms and Molly nestled against him, toward the border.

EXT. CAMERA LENS - DAY

The lens focuses on the ragged trio as they near the border.

Behind them footprints lead back to the LeSabre. The Federal cars zoom past the wreck.

EXT. THE BORDER - CONTINUOUS

They reach the sign.

Behind them the Federal cars scream to a stop, maybe 10 yards from the border.

Bliss jumps out of the lead car and is quickly flanked by a dozen helmeted, jackbooted FEDERALS.

The Federals point their MP-5s at Ben. Bliss pulls out his pistol and does the same.

BLISS
Campbell! Stop!

The Mexican Police cars pull up on their side of the border.

Fifteen MEXICAN POLICE OFFICERS (20s-40s), in their own SWAT suits, fan out facing the Federals, holding M-4s.

The leader, COLONEL PEREZ (50), wears a uniform instead of a SWAT suit. He comes to the front.

Ben pushes Molly and Lucy forward toward the border. He turns to face Bliss, keeping them behind him.

BEN

Nice to see you again, Colonel.

BLISS

It's over, Campbell. Now you and your little family come with us.

BEN

I don't think so.

PEREZ

(accented English)

Do you have Mexican visas?

Ben glances over his shoulder.

BEN

Not so much.

PEREZ

Then you cannot come into Mexico.
Illegal immigration is prohibited.

BEN

Yeah, I read the sign.

He turns toward Perez.

BEN (CONT'D)

We'd like to ask the Mexican
government for asylum.

BLISS

Campbell! Try to cross the border
and you're a dead man.

He raises his weapon.

The Federals follow suit. Then the Mexicans do the same.

PEREZ

Asylum? On what basis?

Ben pushes Molly and Lucy across the border.

Then, very deliberately, he steps across himself.

A PISTOL SHOT rings out and Lucy hears a GRUNT behind her.

She turns to see Ben looking at her, a half-smile creasing his dirty face and a bloodstain spreading across his chest.

BEN
(to Perez)
Human rights abuses.

He stumbles backwards and drops to his knees, just at the border. He looks plaintively at Lucy, then winks.

With the last bit of his energy, and smoothly considering his injury, Ben half-turns and flings his throwing knife, which buries itself in Bliss' throat.

Bliss gurgles, drops his gun and topples over to the ground.

Perez snaps, and the Mexicans step forward and position themselves between Lucy and Molly and the Federals.

On the other side, the Federals move forward and spread out to face them.

LUCY
Dad!

She tries to get to him, but the Mexicans and Molly hold her back.

PEREZ
No, dear, no! If you go back across
the border, we cannot protect you.

LUCY
Daddy!

She struggles, but they won't let her go.

She manages to reach her hand out.

Ben takes her hand, squeezes it weakly.

BEN
Go with Molly, baby. Your mom would
be proud.

LUCY
I love you, Daddy.

He smiles, happy at last, then gives up the ghost and pitches forward into the sand.

The Mexicans hustle Lucy and Molly to their cars.

Across the border, the Federals look at each other, confused and unsure what to do.

Finally, one motions toward the cars, and they retreat.

Two of them pick up Bliss' body and toss it in the back of one of the trucks.

The Mexicans drive away with Molly and Lucy, while the Federals leave with Bliss.

Ben's body, now still, lies alone as the vehicles retreat in both directions.

He's half on the US side of the border, half on the Mexican.

EXT. MEXICO CITY STREET - DAY

It's a sunny day on a busy street in Mexico City.

Molly and Lucy pick their way through the crowd. Molly's wearing a sling over one arm and she still walks with a limp.

They come to Better Day Internet Cafe and go inside.

INT. INTERNET CAFE - CONTINUOUS

Lucy approaches the counter, smiles at the CLERK (20). She shows him a green card marked REFUGEE.

LUCY
Internet, por favor.

He smiles back and hands her an internet card.

She sits at one of the computers, puts the card in the reader and opens the internet browser.

She pages to Facebook and logs on, then plugs in the USB.

She moves the files from the USB to Facebook and adds a note that reads, "Federals and Kings and General Simon, oh my!!"

She and Molly share a sad smile as the images and videos rocket around the Internet and the hits pile up and as we:

FADE OUT.