

(Name of Project)
by
(Name of First Writer)

(Based on, If Any)

Revisions by
(Names of Subsequent Writers,
in Order of Work Performed)

Current Revisions by
(Current Writer, date)

Name
Address
Phone

FADE IN:

EXT. SUNSET STRIP - NIGHT

Neon hums. Headlights glow. A stretch limo idles curbside under a buzzing streetlamp. It's the kind of car that's seen too many bad decisions.

INT. LIMO - FRONT SEAT - CONTINUOUS

RAY MORALES (40s) - ex-cop, now full-time grump, sips coffee that tastes like failure. He's slouched behind the wheel, parked in silence, watching the glittering chaos of Los Angeles nightlife.

Cracked GPS duct-taped to the dash. Empty fry containers. The scent of resignation.

RAY
(to himself)
Friday night. Drunk millionaires,
fake smiles, no tips.

Living the dream.

His phone buzzes. Text from DISPATCH:

"CLIENT: KEVIN BLAZE. DO NOT ENGAGE. DO NOT SPEAK UNLESS SPOKEN TO."

RAY
Every job's a memo now.

He checks his mirror. Tightens his tie. Sighs like it hurts.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHATEAU MARRA - FRONT ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

Camera flashes go off like land mines. Paparazzi scream. Fans press against barricades.

And then - KEVIN BLAZE (30s) explodes out of the front doors. Think: if charisma had a cocaine problem and a publicist.

Velvet tux. Custom sneakers. Big energy. Sunglasses... at night.

He signs a poster, high-fives a valet, and spins toward the limo.

KEVIN
(to paparazzi)
No questions! Unless you're asking
how good I look.

He spots Ray.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
Who's this guy?
(to Ray)
You look like a bouncer from a
failed salsa club.

RAY
I'm your driver.

KEVIN
Good. Don't slam the door when I
get in. I'm delicate tonight.

He climbs in. Door shuts. The circus continues outside.

CUT TO:

INT. LIMO - MOVING - MOMENTS LATER

Kevin sprawls out in the back like it's his throne.

KEVIN
Alexa, call my therapist and tell
him I'm winning.

RAY
No Alexa here.

KEVIN
Then pretend. Improvise, Ray. Come
on.

Ray just drives. No expression.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
You always this quiet or just when
your soul's broken?

RAY
Depends on the day.

Kevin takes a selfie. Adds a caption.

KEVIN
#LimoVibes #DriverLooksSad

CUT TO:

EXT. INTERSECTION - NIGHT

The limo stops at a red light.

Two motorcycles pull up beside it. Riders in black. Helmets.
No plates.

Ray clocks them in the side mirror.

RAY
You got enemies?

KEVIN
I got fans. And lawsuits. That's
the same thing nowadays.

RAY
Duck.

KEVIN
Why would I-?

BANG! BANG!

Glass shatters.

Kevin screams and dives to the floor.

KEVIN
ARE YOU KIDDING ME RIGHT NOW?!

Ray guns it.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS - NIGHT - MOVING

Limo screeches around a corner. Bullets ricochet off the trunk.

The motorcycles give chase. Tight. Close.

Inside the limo—

KEVIN (O.S.)
Do something! You're the grown-up!

CUT TO:

INT. LIMO - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

Ray pulls a metal flashlight from under the seat. Slides open the rear window.

He jerks the wheel — lets a biker pull up beside them — and SLAMS the flashlight into the guy's helmet.

Biker eats pavement.

Kevin peeks up from the floor, horrified.

KEVIN
Did you just Jason Bourne that
guy?!

RAY
I was LAPD.

KEVIN
Why aren't you anymore?!

RAY
Budget cuts. And trauma.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEYWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Ray swerves into a narrow back alley. Second biker follows.

Too close. Too fast.

Ray clips a dumpster – biker can't stop – CRASH.

Gone.

CUT TO:

INT. LIMO - MOMENTS LATER

Kevin slowly rises from the floor. Hair messed up. Tie crooked.

KEVIN

I need a priest. And a sedative.

Also – did I just survive an assassination attempt?

RAY

Yep.

KEVIN

Do I still have to tip?

CUT TO:

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

The limo pulls in. Smoking. Dented.

Ray pops the door. Kevin stumbles out like he was born again.

KEVIN

If anyone asks, I was calm. Cool.
Tactical.

FBI SUVs SCREECH IN.

Agents swarm. Guns up. It's chaos – again.

AGENT LANE (40s) emerges – sharp suit, no nonsense.

AGENT LANE

Mr. Blaze. Mr. Morales.
Congratulations.

You just blew a month-long federal operation.

Kevin raises his hand like he's in school.

KEVIN

Was that... the wrong thing to do?

Ray glares at him.

RAY

He posted his location. On Instagram. With a filter.

AGENT LANE

You're both coming with me. Now.

KEVIN

Wait. I just got out of a near-death chase. Can I get, like, a cookie or something?

Lane glares.

Kevin lowers his hand.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

No cookie. Got it.

FADE TO BLACK.

TITLE CARD: HITCHED

FADE IN:

INT. FBI FIELD OFFICE - BRIEFING ROOM - NIGHT

Fluorescent lights. Dull beige walls. Kevin fidgets in a chair like he's at the DMV. Ray stands in the corner, arms crossed.

AGENT LANE clicks a remote. A screen lights up with a face: VICTOR STARK - slick Hollywood mogul, big teeth, bigger ego.

AGENT LANE

This is the man trying to kill you.

KEVIN

Victor Stark? The guy who made Nuns with Guns and Bachelor Apocalypse?

AGENT LANE

Also runs shell companies. Cleans money. Orders hits on loudmouths who know too much.

KEVIN

I do not know too much. I barely know enough.

RAY

He means you.

AGENT LANE

We have Stark under surveillance. We need a confession. You'll testify.

KEVIN

Great. Let's get it over with.

AGENT LANE

Trial's in three weeks.

KEVIN

Three what?

AGENT LANE

Until then - you're in federal protection.

KEVIN

Oh. Okay. Who's my team?

AGENT LANE

(points to Ray)

Him.

KEVIN

Wait. You're saying my entire safety net... is this guy?

RAY

You're welcome.

KEVIN

No no no - I need professionals! Former Navy SEALs! Dogs with ear pieces!

AGENT LANE

You get Ray. You move when he moves. Eat when he eats. Breathe when he breathes.

KEVIN
I'm gonna die in my sleep, aren't
I?

CUT TO:

INT. SAFE HOUSE - DAY

Welcome to the saddest beige box in the world. One couch. Two chairs. Zero joy.

Kevin drops his duffel on the floor and groans.

KEVIN
This place looks like where hope
goes to die.

RAY
That's why they picked it.

Kevin walks into the kitchen. Opens a cabinet. Nothing inside but saltines and one expired can of beans.

KEVIN
Do we get takeout?

RAY
No outside contact.

KEVIN
So what - we just sit here? Until
my court date? For three weeks?

RAY
Unless you do something stupid.
Then longer.

INT. SAFE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ray watches a muted game show. Kevin paces like a trapped squirrel.

KEVIN
I can't sit still. My anxiety is
staging a musical in my chest.

Ray doesn't respond.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
You ever talk? Or just grunt and
blink?

RAY
I talk when it matters.

KEVIN
Well, guess what? It matters now. I
need noise. Human noise. Give me
something.

Beat.

RAY
I used to be a cop.

KEVIN
Oh my God, he speaks. Go on.

RAY
Partner died. My fault. So now I
drive limos and punch problems.

Kevin blinks.

KEVIN
Okay... and I thought my therapist
had a full-time job.

CUT TO:

INT. SAFE HOUSE - BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Kevin lies in bed, staring at the ceiling. Phone in hand.

He whispers to himself.

KEVIN
Just one post. No tags. No
location. Just a little selfie.

He snaps it.

"Still breathing. Still Blaze. #SafeButSexy"

POSTED.

INT. SAFE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Ray watches TV. Sees a shadow move outside the window.

SFX: GLASS SHATTERING

Ray dives for cover.

RAY
Kevin!

KEVIN (O.S.)
Oh God, I think I just liked my own
post by accident!

RAY
You POSTED?!

CUT TO:

EXT. BACKYARD - MOMENTS LATER

Ray and Kevin leap the back fence as bullets rip through the siding.

Kevin trips. Ray pulls him up.

KEVIN
I think my calf just pulled a
muscle.

RAY
Good. You'll scream louder.

They disappear into the night.

CUT TO:

INT. STOLEN PRIUS - MOVING - NIGHT

Ray drives like a madman. Kevin hyperventilates in the passenger seat.

KEVIN
I'm not built for this! I'm soft
and emotionally delicate!

RAY
You're an idiot with WiFi. That's
lethal.

KEVIN
I just needed validation!

Ray glares.

RAY
You're about to get a crash course
in validation – and maybe CPR.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOJAVE DESERT - EARLY MORNING

The Prius crawls along a dusty highway. One headlight out.
Duct tape flapping in the wind.

A tired motel sign glows in the distance:

"SLEEPY TIME INN - NO REFUNDS."

CUT TO:

INT. MOTEL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Floral wallpaper from hell. Twin beds. A microwave with a
sticker that says "NO LIQUIDS."

Kevin lies face-down on one bed. Motionless. Groaning.

Ray stands by the window, watching the lot.

KEVIN
This mattress is made of bricks and
lost dreams.

RAY
Welcome to witness protection.

Kevin rolls over.

KEVIN
I had a Tempur-Pedic endorsement.
Now I sleep where cockroaches
retire.

RAY
You'll live.

KEVIN
That's debatable.

Beat.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
You ever think about what you'd be
doing if none of this happened?

RAY
Yeah. All the time.

KEVIN
Let me guess - fishing? Hiking?
Living off the grid?

RAY
Fixing things. Stuff I broke.
Relationships. Myself.

Kevin's surprised. Sits up.

KEVIN
Wow. That's... deep. Unexpected.

RAY
And you?

KEVIN
Honestly? I wanted to teach. High
school. History maybe.

Ray looks at him, surprised.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
But then I got famous and forgot
what I wanted.

You ever do that?

RAY

Yeah.

Beat.

KEVIN

This is the part where we hug or
fist-bump or something, right?

RAY

This is the part where you stop
talking and let me sleep.

Kevin flops back down.

KEVIN

Cool. I'll process my emotional
growth in silence.

CUT TO:

INT. MOTEL ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Both in their beds. Lights off. Ceiling fan creaks.

KEVIN (O.S.)

Hey, Ray?

RAY (O.S.)

Mm?

KEVIN (O.S.)

If I die before trial, delete my
browser history.

RAY (O.S.)

It's already gone.

Kevin smiles in the dark.

EXT. GAS STATION - NEXT DAY

Ray pumps gas. Kevin snacks on trail mix like it's gourmet.

KEVIN

I think I'm growing as a person.

RAY
You put gummy bears in your trail
mix.

KEVIN
Growth is messy.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI VAN - NIGHT

Agent Lane watches a monitor.

Ray and Kevin are back in view - blurry camera feed, desert
in the background.

AGENT LANE
(to tech)
Keep eyes on them. They're idiots,
but they might actually survive
this.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI FIELD OFFICE - BRIEFING ROOM - NIGHT

Kevin and Ray sit at a table across from Agent Lane, who
clicks through a PowerPoint titled:

OPERATION: GLITZ & TRAP

Behind her: photos of Victor Stark, the gala invite, and a
floorplan of a ridiculous Beverly Hills mansion.

AGENT LANE
Tomorrow night, Stark is hosting a
charity gala. Celebs. CEOs. Half of
Washington.

KEVIN
So basically... a shark tank in
tuxedos.

AGENT LANE
Exactly. You'll be there. Wearing a wire.

Kevin chokes on his coffee.

KEVIN
Wait - me?! In a room with the guy who literally tried to murder me?

RAY
You've been in worse rooms. Like your Instagram comments.

AGENT LANE
Stark doesn't think you'd be stupid enough to show up. Which is exactly why it'll work.

KEVIN
Well I am stupid enough, but also fragile and beautiful.

AGENT LANE
You get him talking. Get him admitting. We do the rest.

KEVIN
And if he shoots me in the face?

RAY
Then I shoot him in the back. Circle of life.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI ARMORY - LATER

Kevin stands in front of a mirror in a tuxedo that somehow screams "prom king meets panic attack."

Ray adjusts his own cuffs, calm and focused.

KEVIN
I look like James Bond had a nervous breakdown.

RAY
You look like you borrowed confidence and forgot to return it.

KEVIN
You ever wear a tux?

RAY
I wore one to my wedding. Didn't
fit. Like the marriage.

Kevin raises a brow.

KEVIN
That was dark. You okay?

RAY
Nope. Let's go save your life
anyway.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI VAN - NIGHT

Agents load gear. Surveillance feeds blink on screens.

Lane double-checks her team.

AGENT LANE
Ray's going in as catering. Kevin's
the bait. The mic is in his lapel.

TECH GUY
Audio's live. We'll be recording
everything.

KEVIN (O.S.)
Can it also auto-tune if I scream?

AGENT LANE
Just don't scream. Blend in.

KEVIN (O.S.)
I have never blended in. I was born
extra.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS ESTATE - NIGHT

Spotlights sweep across the sky. A red carpet snakes into the mansion.

A limo pulls up. Kevin steps out like he owns the planet - nerves hidden beneath a smirk.

KEVIN (V.O.)
Okay. Walk slow. Smile. Don't pee.
Smile again. Don't die.

He flashes a grin at photographers.

KEVIN (V.O.)
Time to go full Hollywood.

CUT TO:

INT. GALA - FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

Champagne. Gold everything. Guests who all look famous, rich, or both.

Kevin moves through the crowd, nodding like he belongs.

KEVIN (V.O.)
Just a normal night. Surrounded by
people who'd sell their souls for a
Vanity Fair profile.

Ray watches from the side hallway, wearing a catering vest, pushing a tray of shrimp skewers.

RAY (INTO MIC)
You got eyes on Stark yet?

KEVIN (UNDER BREATH)
Not yet. Just saw a Kardashian
though.

CUT TO:

INT. GALA - CONTINUOUS

Kevin spots VICTOR STARK across the room – laughing with a congressman, drink in hand.

Their eyes meet.

Victor smiles.

Kevin smiles back. Nervous. But ready.

KEVIN (V.O.)
Let's dance.

CUT TO:

INT. GALA - PRIVATE BAR NOOK - MOMENTS LATER

Kevin sits on a leather banquette across from Victor Stark (50s). Power suit. Perfect teeth. He radiates menace masked as charm.

Victor pours champagne into two glasses. Kevin's fingers twitch.

VICTOR
Kevin Blaze. I thought I buried you
in headlines.

KEVIN
Yeah, I popped back up. Like herpes
– but with better lighting.

Victor smirks, leans in.

VICTOR
So tell me... what are you doing
here?

KEVIN
You invited the world. I brought a
plus-one: justice.

VICTOR
Clever. Dangerous.

Not a great combination for a guy who can't go 48 hours
without posting a smoothie.

Kevin fakes a laugh. Adjusts his lapel where the wire is hidden.

KEVIN
What can I say? I like to share.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI VAN - SAME TIME

Lane and her team listen in.

AGENT LANE
Keep him talking. Don't push. Let
him tip his hand.

CUT TO:

INT. GALA - SERVICE HALLWAY - SAME

Ray slips through the crowd with a tray. Eyes locked on Kevin.

RAY (INTO COMMS)
Security's closing in near the
north wing. We need to move soon.

CUT TO:

INT. PRIVATE NOOK - CONTINUOUS

Victor sips his drink. Calm. Too calm.

VICTOR
You've always had a big mouth.

And I've always had solutions for that.

KEVIN
Was that a threat or just very
aggressive customer service?

Victor leans forward, drops the smile.

VICTOR
You wearing a wire?

KEVIN
Huh? No! Just, uh... chest hair.
Natural insulation.

Victor stares him down. Tension sharpens.

VICTOR
I don't like surprises, Kevin.

Kevin forces a grin.

KEVIN
You're gonna hate what happens
next.

CUT TO:

INT. SERVICE HALL - CONTINUOUS

Ray hears the shift in tone and drops the tray.

RAY
I'm moving in.

AGENT LANE (V.O.)
Morales, wait for the team-

RAY
No time.

INT. PRIVATE NOOK - CONTINUOUS

Victor suddenly lunges across the table - grabs Kevin's jacket.

VICTOR
What did you bring in here?!

KEVIN
(reflex)
My therapist says I have boundary
issues!

Victor pulls a pistol from under the table - just as-

RAY BURSTS IN.

RAY
Drop it!

Victor swings toward him. Ray tackles him.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI VAN - SAME TIME

AGENT LANE
Move! Go! Go!

CUT TO:

INT. GALA - CHAOS

Security panic. Guests scream. FBI rushes in.

Kevin rolls off the bench, panting. Grabs a champagne flute for no reason.

KEVIN
Is now a bad time to pitch my book?

Cu to:

EXT. GALA STEPS - MOMENTS LATER

Victor's being cuffed. Press cameras swarm.

Ray and Kevin sit on the marble steps, sweaty and shell-shocked.

KEVIN
So... are we friends now?

RAY
God, I hope not.

Kevin holds up his hand.

KEVIN
Fist bump?

Ray slowly obliges.

FADE OUT:

EXT. FBI FIELD OFFICE - MORNING

Reporters crowd outside. Cameras flash. Helicopters circle.

Ray and Kevin exit under escort. Kevin waves like a pageant winner.

KEVIN

To all my fans - I did this for
you! Also, for myself! Mostly
myself!

Ray squints into the sun like it's judging him.

CUT TO:

INT. MORNING SHOW STUDIO - LATER

Bright lights. Fake smiles. Kevin and Ray sit on a couch that's way too soft.

HOST (PERKY)

Joining us now, the unlikely heroes
of the Stark Gala sting - actor
Kevin Blaze and former officer Ray
Morales!

KEVIN

(whispers to Ray)
Don't say anything depressing. This
is daytime TV.

RAY

I literally only have depressing
things.

HOST

Kevin, how did it feel to come face-
to-face with your would-be killer?

KEVIN

Like opening a gift bag and finding
a lawsuit.

Laughter.

HOST
And Ray, what went through your
mind when you tackled Victor Stark?

RAY
I wanted a sandwich. I got a
shootout.

Louder laughter. Kevin grins.

KEVIN
That's Ray. Full of charm and
existential dread.

CUT TO:

INT. COFFEE SHOP - AFTER INTERVIEW

Kevin signs a selfie for a barista. Ray stands off to the
side, sipping black coffee, trying not to be noticed.

KEVIN
We're officially famous. Trending.
Memed. Interviewed.

RAY
I liked it better when nobody knew
who I was.

KEVIN
You say that, but wait until
someone names a sandwich after you.

RAY
Better be a bitter one.

CUT TO:

INT. PODCAST STUDIO - DAY

Neon sign: "Blaze & Ray: Surviving Stuff."

Kevin records into a mic. Ray sits across from him -
slouched, annoyed, somehow magnetic.

KEVIN

Episode one: How to survive being shot at, chased through an alley, and still make it to brunch.

RAY

Step one: Don't hang out with Kevin Blaze.

KEVIN

Step two: Make peace with chaos.
Step three: Duck faster.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The two sit on the hood of a black SUV. City skyline glows behind them.

Kevin tosses popcorn in his mouth. Ray lights a cigar.

KEVIN

So what happens now?

RAY

You go back to being famous. I go back to being... less so.

KEVIN

Nah. I think you're stuck with me, man.

Like gum on a shoe. But charming gum.

Ray sighs.

RAY

I've made worse friends.

Beat.

KEVIN

That was almost nice. Are you dying?

RAY

Thinking about it.

They stare out over the city.

FADE OUT:

INT. HOLLYWOOD AFTERPARTY - NIGHT

Music pounds. Lights flicker. Everyone is attractive, networking, or confused.

Kevin holds court in a circle of influencers. Ray stands near a potted plant, deeply uncomfortable.

KEVIN

And then I was like, "You think I'm scared of bullets? I've seen my own movie reviews."

Laughter.

INFLUENCER GIRL

You're so brave. Can I tag you in my breakup post?

RAY

(to himself)

This is hell. With better lighting.

CUT TO:

INT. YOGA STUDIO - NEXT MORNING

A tranquil, candlelit studio. Kevin in stretchy gear. Ray in jeans and a grimace.

YOGA TEACHER

Now let's open the hips and release the ego.

KEVIN

My ego's very limber. Been stretching it for years.

Ray wobbles. Tries to follow. Fails.

YOGA TEACHER

Let go of tension. Let go of fear.

RAY
I let go of my dignity twenty
minutes ago.

THUD.

Ray topples over into a Himalayan salt lamp.

CUT TO:

INT. TRENDING OFFICE SPACE - LATER

Kevin meets with a brand rep.

Whiteboards read: BlazeFit. BlazeSnax. BlazeRide.

BRAND REP
You're viral. You're raw. You're
America's new underdog with abs.

KEVIN
I don't have abs.

BRAND REP
You will.

Ray watches, unimpressed.

RAY
This ends with your face on
kombucha, doesn't it?

KEVIN
Only if it glows in the dark.

CUT TO:

INT. RAY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ray flips through the channels.

Every one features Kevin.

Talk shows. Commercials. A workout tape preview.

TV KEVIN (O.S.)
Feel the burn! Then file the
lawsuit!

Ray shuts it off. Stares at the ceiling.
Smiles. Just barely.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOG PARK - DAY

Kevin takes a selfie with a golden retriever. A fan approaches.

FAN
You're Kevin Blaze, right? The guy
who stopped an assassin and
launched a wellness brand?

KEVIN
I contain multitudes.

FAN
Can I hug you?

Kevin's about to answer - when Ray suddenly steps in,
blocking the view.

RAY
Only if you sign a waiver.

Fan scurries off.

KEVIN
You're my security detail now?

RAY
Someone has to save you from your
own approval rating.

CUT TO:

EXT. FILM FESTIVAL - NIGHT

Kevin arrives in a rented tux and fresh teeth-whitening.
Camera flashes. Banner reads:

"CINEFLARE: The Indie Spirit Festival Nobody Asked For."

Ray follows behind in a sport coat that clearly isn't his.

KEVIN
Red carpet rule #1: Don't trip.
Rule #2: Always look like you know
what you're doing.

Ray stops walking.

RAY
That's exactly what got you shot
at.

KEVIN
True. But tonight's different. I'm
an actor now.

CUT TO:

INT. THEATER - MOMENTS LATER

The film begins. Kevin plays a blind poet in a post-apocalyptic desert.

It's moody. Stark. Silent.

Until Kevin dramatically walks into a cactus.

The audience bursts out laughing.

KEVIN (O.S.)
(whispers)
That was supposed to be sad.

Ray sips his soda, smiling.

CUT TO:

EXT. THEATER LOBBY - AFTER THE SCREENING

A crowd of college kids swarm Kevin for selfies.

FAN #1
You were hilarious!

FAN #2
Was it improv when you tripped into
the fire pit?

KEVIN

That was... not scripted, no.

Ray is approached by a festival organizer with a mic.

ORGANIZER

Mr. Morales, how does it feel watching your partner transition from viral celebrity to cinematic genius?

RAY

It feels like watching a cat fall down the stairs and land on an award.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Kevin reads reviews on his phone.

KEVIN

Look at this one:

"Kevin Blaze delivers the year's most relatable performance as a man completely out of his depth."

That's not... great, right?

RAY

It's accurate.

Kevin exhales. Then, surprisingly:

KEVIN

I actually tried this time. Like... really tried.

Ray looks over.

RAY

I saw it.

Beat.

KEVIN

What, the cactus or the effort?

RAY

Both.

Kevin laughs.

MOVE TO:

EXT. HOTEL BALCONY - MOMENTS LATER

They both step outside. Quiet desert night.

KEVIN

You ever think maybe we're better
as a team?

RAY

Better than what?

KEVIN

Than whatever we were before.

Ray doesn't answer. Just looks out at the stars.

RAY

I don't know what we are. But for
once... it doesn't suck.

FADE OUT:

INT. KEVIN'S MANSION - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Kevin scrolls through articles on his phone. Every headline
praises him, most are spelled wrong.

KEVIN

Look at this: "Kevin Blaze
Reinvents Himself as Relatable
Genius."

And this one: "Morales the Muscle: Hollywood's New Stone-
Faced Savior."

RAY

(reluctant)

That second one isn't terrible.

Kevin's face lights up.

KEVIN

Dude. You're catching on! We could be the next Lethal Weapon. Or like Bad Boys, but less fit.

CUT TO:

INT. TABLOID OFFICE - SAME TIME

A sleazy tabloid editor slams a front page onto a desk:

"BLAZE & BULLETS - WHAT ARE THEY HIDING?"

Blown-up surveillance still of Kevin meeting an unknown figure in a parking garage.

EDITOR

Get me everything on Blaze. His driver. That sting.

Dig till you hit dirt or get shot. Either way - it sells.

CUT TO:

INT. KEVIN'S MANSION - NIGHT

Ray watches the news. His phone rings.

AGENT LANE (V.O.)

We've got a leak. Someone sold your safehouse footage. Stark's associates are back in motion.

RAY

You think Blaze is compromised?

AGENT LANE (V.O.)

I think Blaze is the compromise.

Ray looks around - the mansion is too quiet.

RAY
Where is he?

CUT TO:

INT. SLICK LOUNGE - NIGHT

Kevin sits at a private booth with a slimy producer named MICKY JETT - all teeth and plastic tan.

MICKY
I want to fund your story. Action.
Heart. Maybe dragons.

But we need you solo. No driver.

KEVIN
Ray's kind of my partner-

MICKY
Think bigger. You're the star.
He's... backup.

Kevin hesitates.

MICKY (CONT'D)
Come on. What's Morales ever done
that didn't involve car keys and
sarcasm?

CUT TO:

INT. MANSION - LATER THAT NIGHT

Kevin returns home. Ray's waiting.

RAY
Where were you?

KEVIN
Meeting a guy. Nothing shady.
Just... Hollywood stuff.

RAY
Your face is on every screen in the
country. You move, someone follows.

KEVIN
 Okay, Dad. Relax. I can handle
 myself.

Ray stands.

RAY
 That's the problem. You can't.

Beat.

KEVIN
 Wow. So we're doing this now?

RAY
 You think this is a game. You think
 you're untouchable because people
 laugh at your jokes.

But the guys we dealt with? They don't laugh.

Kevin's silent.

Ray heads for the door.

KEVIN
 Where are you going?

RAY
 To clean up your mess. Again.

CUT TO:

EXT. DARK ALLEY - NIGHT

Ray meets with Agent Lane near an unmarked SUV.

RAY
 What's the plan?

AGENT LANE
 Stark's men are circling Blaze's
 next public appearance.

Some charity event. Cameras. Soft target.

RAY
 He doesn't even know he's walking
 into it, does he?

AGENT LANE
 No. And he won't listen unless you
 drag him.

Ray sighs. Checks his weapon. Nods.

RAY
Then I'll drag him.

CUT TO:

EXT. ART GALLERY - NIGHT

Valets park luxury cars. A banner reads:

"THE HUMANITY BALL - Hope. Glamour. Cameras."

Kevin steps out of a town car, dripping confidence and insecurity.

Paparazzi flash bulbs. Fans cheer.

KEVIN (TO HIMSELF)
Okay. No shooters. No drama. Just
charity, charm, and a little light
redemption.

He waves. Air kisses. Owns the carpet.

MOVE TO:

INT. GALLERY - MOMENTS LATER

Sculptures. Free wine. Celebs and billionaires pretending to care.

Kevin moves through the crowd like a pro. Until he sees a familiar face:

MICKY JETT - smiling way too hard.

MICKY
Blaze! There's my money-maker.

Kevin grins awkwardly. Suddenly unsure.

KEVIN
Hey, Micky. No dragons tonight?

MICKY
Nah, just tension. The real kind.

Kevin laughs—until he notices two well-dressed men blocking the exit.

Security? No.

Muscle.

CUT TO:

INT. SECURITY VAN - NEARBY - SAME TIME

Ray and Agent Lane watch a feed from a hidden camera inside the event.

AGENT LANE
We just ID'd two of Stark's guys
inside. Blaze is boxed in.

RAY
I told him.

Ray grabs a headset, exits the van.

RAY (CONT'D)
I'm going in.

CUT TO:

INT. GALLERY - MAIN FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Kevin's trapped in conversation with Micky, who's suddenly sweating.

MICKY
So funny thing, you remember how I
said we had funding?

KEVIN
Yeah?

MICKY
Turns out the money's a little...
mafia-adjacent.

Kevin blinks.

KEVIN
Like, legit mafia?

MICKY
I didn't ask for paperwork.

Kevin backs away.

KEVIN
Hey, man. That's cool. I like
boundaries. Let's not cross any
more tonight.

He turns to leave—

Only to see the two enforcers closing in.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
And now I miss Ray.

INT. GALLERY - SERVICE ENTRANCE - SAME

Ray enters fast. Weapon hidden under a waiter tray. Eyes
locked.

INT. GALLERY - BACK HALL - CONTINUOUS

Kevin ducks behind a sculpture, trying to breathe.

KEVIN (TO HIMSELF)
Okay, think. You survived bullets.
Yoga. Your mother's second wedding.
You got this.

The enforcers round the corner. Fast.

RAY (O.S.)
Down!

Ray rushes in — launches the tray at one of them. CLANG!

Kevin dives. Ray tackles the second guy.

KEVIN
I knew you'd come!

RAY
You had fifteen minutes left on my
loyalty.

They scramble behind a display.

KEVIN
What's the plan?

RAY
Improvise and survive.

KEVIN
Oh good. My two strongest skills.

INT. GALLERY - CONTINUOUS

Ray and Kevin rush the exit. Security guards appear - not FBI. Bought and dirty.

RAY
This way!

KEVIN
I hate this way!

They duck under a massive sculpture. Bullets tear through a statue of a dolphin.

Kevin grabs a champagne bottle.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
I was saving this for my Emmy party!

He throws it. SMASH.

CUT TO:

EXT. GALLERY - BACK ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

Ray hotwires a catering van. Kevin jumps in.

KEVIN
You're a terrible influence.

RAY
And you're allergic to silence.

They peel out.

CUT TO:

EXT. CATERING VAN - MOVING - NIGHT

Kevin peers out the passenger window, still breathing heavy.

KEVIN
 So that's two near-deaths in one week. Is this like dog years? Do I get bonus maturity?

Ray drives in silence. Focused. Frustrated.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
 You mad?

RAY
 I'm tired.

KEVIN
 Tired like, "we need a nap," or tired like, "I'm reconsidering this friendship"?

RAY
 Both.

Beat.

KEVIN
 For what it's worth... thanks for saving me. Again. You know, you're really good at that.

Ray stays silent.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
 I just wish you'd let someone save you once in a while.

Ray's eyes flicker. That hit something.

FADE OUT:

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

They're back in a dumpy safehouse. Second one this month.

Ray paces. Kevin sits on the bed scrolling his phone.

KEVIN
 So... we're trending again.

Ray doesn't respond.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
People are calling us "The Survival
Bros."

Someone made a fan edit of you choking that guy. They added a techno beat.

RAY
Delete it.

KEVIN
Can't. It's art now.

Ray finally stops pacing.

RAY
You ever stop performing?

KEVIN
You ever stop hiding?

Silence.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
You push everyone away, man. You
think it makes you strong, but
really - it just makes you alone.

Ray sits down, jaw clenched.

RAY
You think being liked makes you
bulletproof?

You think followers will protect you when real trouble shows up?

KEVIN
No.
(beat)
But maybe someone will show up...
if you let them.

It hangs there. Honest. Ugly.

CUT TO:

INT. COFFEE SHOP - THE NEXT MORNING

Ray meets LENA - his daughter - again. She sits across from him, guarded but curious.

LENA
You made the news again.

RAY
Yeah. This time no one bled. So that's growth.

She smiles.

LENA
You're different now.

RAY
Trying.

Beat.

LENA
That guy with you... Blaze?

RAY
Yeah?

LENA
He's weird. But good for you.

Ray shrugs.

RAY
I hate that you're right.

CUT TO:

INT. KEVIN'S MANSION - SAME TIME

Kevin films a promo for a charity. His phone won't stop buzzing.

KEVIN
(to camera)
Hi, I'm Kevin Blaze. Survivor.
Fighter. Inspiration. Slightly
lactose intolerant...

His assistant runs in.

ASSISTANT

Uh, Kev? You might wanna see this.

She holds up a tablet showing a new headline:

"KEVIN BLAZE STALKED BY REMNANTS OF STARK NETWORK – FBI SAYS
'MORE TO COME'"

Kevin's smile drops.

KEVIN

Tell Ray... we've got a problem.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI FIELD OFFICE – WAR ROOM – DAY

Screens everywhere. Surveillance photos. Phone taps. New faces.

AGENT LANE addresses a small group. Ray and Kevin sit across from her.

AGENT LANE

Victor Stark was just the face.
We've been tracking shell accounts
connected to an international
laundering ring – military
contractors, politicians, pharma
money.

KEVIN

I thought I was just annoying a
movie producer.

Now I'm pissing off the Illuminati?

RAY

So we're not done?

AGENT LANE

Far from it.

She clicks a remote.

On screen: a blurry photo of a man in a sharp suit and sunglasses.

AGENT LANE (CONT'D)
This is Aleksei Novik. Russian-
American financier. Quiet. Private.
Deadly.

KEVIN
That's the guy Micky met with!

RAY
This is why you don't take meetings
without backup.

KEVIN
This is why I should have been an
accountant.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI PARKING GARAGE - LATER

Ray leans on the hood of a car. Kevin joins him, quieter than usual.

KEVIN
So we're in a spy movie now?

RAY
Feels more like a documentary about
bad decisions.

KEVIN
You think we're being used?

RAY
We've been used since day one.

Kevin exhales.

KEVIN
I thought once Stark was gone, it
was over.

RAY
It's never over. You just get a new
level of the game.

FADE OUT:

INT. RAY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ray sits at his small kitchen table. Blueprints and photos scattered. He studies Novik's face.

Kevin enters holding a pizza box and a six-pack.

KEVIN

Figured we should carb-load before whatever comes next.

Ray grunts.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

I also brought beer. And-if we survive this week-a potential book deal titled "I Didn't Die, But I Wanted To."

Ray finally cracks a smile.

RAY

You're insane.

KEVIN

And you're fun at funerals. We balance.

They clink bottles.

CUT TO:

INT. DARK OFFICE - UNKNOWN LOCATION - SAME TIME

A sleek, blacked-out office. Phones ring. A shadowy figure - NOVIK (50s) - watches drone footage of Kevin and Ray leaving the FBI building.

He smiles - barely.

NOVIK (TO INTERCOM)

Activate the L.A. team.

Let's welcome them to the next level.

CUT TO:

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Kevin stares at the ceiling.

KEVIN
You think we'll make it out of
this?

RAY (O.S.)
I think we've made it further than
we should have.

KEVIN
...I'll take that as a yes.

CUT TO:

EXT. L.A. SKYLINE - NIGHT

The city pulses below. Unaware. Unprepared.

Kevin and Ray look out from the rooftop of a parking garage.

KEVIN
You ready?

RAY
You?

KEVIN
No. But I look great in black.

They step into the shadows.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. FBI SATELLITE OFFICE - NIGHT

Low-lit. A smaller team now surrounds a table with
topographic maps and surveillance stills.

AGENT LANE
Novik's network is fractured, but
dangerous. You're not just
witnesses anymore. You're leverage.

Ray scans the maps. Kevin plays with a stress ball.

KEVIN

We've got to stop meeting like this. Secret rooms. Nervous people. Feels like every holiday I spent with my stepdad.

LANE

We have one shot to trace Novik's funds. Tomorrow night, there's an off-grid transfer meeting in an abandoned office complex in Glassell Park.

RAY

What's our cover?

LANE

Ray's backup. Kevin... you're the buyer.

KEVIN

I'm sorry-what?

CUT TO:

INT. FBI ARMORY - LATER

Kevin stands in front of a mirror, trying on different disguises.

KEVIN

Too rich? Too edgy? Too Euro-criminal? Do I look like I sell crypto and regrets?

Ray loads gear in the background.

RAY

You look like you own a chain of failed smoothie bars.

KEVIN

That's called "emotional layering."

Ray walks over and adjusts Kevin's tie.

RAY

Don't improvise. Don't joke. Don't die.

KEVIN
I'll aim for two outta three.

CUT TO:

EXT. GLASSELL PARK - ABANDONED OFFICE COMPLEX - NIGHT

Kevin walks toward the structure, flanked by two undercover agents dressed as muscle.

Ray watches from a distance through binoculars.

RAY (TO COMMS)
He's in. Keep it tight.

Inside, Kevin enters a bare, dusty boardroom. NOVIK'S MAN sits at a folding table with a laptop and a metal briefcase.

NOVIK'S MAN
You're late.

KEVIN
Traffic. And inner turmoil.

He sits. The man eyes him coldly.

NOVIK'S MAN
You don't look like a buyer.

KEVIN
I moisturize.

Kevin opens the briefcase. Inside:
fake cash and a tracker.

KEVIN
Let's make this quick. I've got an
existential crisis penciled in for
10:30.

The man narrows his eyes.

NOVIK'S MAN
You're Blaze, aren't you?

Kevin freezes.

KEVIN
Depends. Is he getting a discount?

Outside, Ray hears the tension spike in the comms.

RAY
Move in. He's made.

LANE (V.O.)
Hold—too many cameras. We need him
to walk out clean.

Inside, Novik's man leans in.

NOVIK'S MAN
Mr. Novik doesn't like loose ends.

He reaches for a gun beneath the table—
Kevin kicks the table hard, slams the laptop shut, and bolts.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE COMPLEX - HALLWAYS - CONTINUOUS

Kevin runs through the crumbling halls. Shouts echo behind him.

Ray enters from the stairwell, gun raised.

RAY
Down!

Kevin slides. Ray opens fire behind them as Novik's men chase.

They crash through a locked exit door into—

EXT. PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

A black SUV screeches up. Agent Lane at the wheel.

They dive inside. Tires SCREAM.

KEVIN
I'm too pretty for this!

RAY
You're too loud for this.

CUT TO:

INT. SAFEHOUSE - HOURS LATER

Kevin's slumped on the couch. Ray paces. Agent Lane updates from a laptop.

LANE

We've tracked the signal from the laptop to a shipping yard. Novik's real base of ops. Long Beach.

KEVIN

Oh, come on. Can't we just send drones?

LANE

We're out of drones. Budget cuts.

KEVIN

Then I say we put on disguises, talk in bad accents, and steal a yacht.

RAY

I swear to God—

KEVIN

Joking. Mostly.

Ray sits. Kevin watches him.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

You okay?

RAY

No. But I'm focused.

KEVIN

That's your version of therapy, huh?

RAY

You're my therapy. And that's the real tragedy.

CUT TO:

EXT. LONG BEACH SHIPPING YARD - NIGHT

A sea of containers. Shadows. Movement.

Ray, Kevin, Lane, and a small team weave through the maze, comms crackling.

LANE

Thermal drones spotted movement near container 87. Likely Novik's data vault.

KEVIN

Can I just say: if this were a video game, we'd be dead already.

RAY

Shut up and move.

As they approach, gunfire erupts from the far row.

The team ducks.

LANE

Ambush! Flank left!

Ray grabs Kevin.

RAY

Stay behind me. And if I go down, you better make it count.

KEVIN

That's the most romantic thing you've ever said.

CUT TO:

INT. SHIPPING CONTAINER - MOMENTS LATER

Ray and Kevin breach the container.

Inside: hard drives. Cash. Weapons. And—

NOVIK, waiting calmly, sipping coffee.

NOVIK

Mr. Morales. Mr. Blaze.

KEVIN

Okay that's terrifying. And also, hi.

Ray aims his weapon.

RAY
Put your hands where I can see
them.

NOVIK
I'm not here to shoot. I'm here to
talk.

Ray doesn't lower his gun.

NOVIK (CONT'D)
You're not just a threat. You're a
symbol. And symbols... can be
repurposed.

KEVIN
What does that mean?

NOVIK
It means if I can't kill you - I'll
make you work for me.

Ray fires. Hits Novik in the arm. He collapses.

KEVIN
Well, so much for diplomacy.

RAY
I hate talking.

CUT TO:

EXT. LONG BEACH - MOMENTS LATER

Novik's crew surrenders. FBI moves in.

Kevin stands, shaking.

KEVIN
I just realized something.

RAY
What?

KEVIN
We're kind of good at this.

RAY
Don't get used to it.

FADE OUT:

INT. FBI HQ - THE NEXT DAY

Kevin and Ray sit across from a federal review board.

SUIT #1
You were reckless, insubordinate,
and made half the country think you
died - twice.

KEVIN
But we're alive.

And you're welcome.

SUIT #2
Any final words?

Ray thinks. Then-

RAY
He annoys me.

But I'd take a bullet for him.

Kevin grins.

KEVIN
That was weirdly poetic.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Kevin and Ray walk along the shoreline.

KEVIN
So what now?

RAY
We disappear. Normal life. Pizza.
No bullets.

KEVIN
You sure?

RAY
No. But I'm tired.

KEVIN
Then let's vanish together. But
like... somewhere with WiFi.

They walk off, leaving footprints in the sand.

CUT TO:

INT. MORNING SHOW - LIVE BROADCAST

Kevin and Ray sit side by side, again.

The host grins like she just swallowed glitter.

HOST
After uncovering an international
criminal ring, being hunted by
assassins, and becoming the most
unexpected buddy duo since Turner &
Hooch - what's next?

KEVIN
Honestly? Pants that fit. And less
screaming.

RAY
No promises.

HOST
Ray, how does it feel knowing your
story's inspiring people?

Ray stares blankly.

RAY
Deeply uncomfortable.

KEVIN
That's his way of saying "thank
you."

CUT TO:

INT. PODCAST STUDIO - DAY

The sign behind them now reads: "Blaze & Ray: Mostly Survived."

KEVIN

Today's episode: "How to Make Peace
With the Fact That You're
Accidentally a National Hero."

RAY

Step one: fake your death. Step
two: survive a dozen murder
attempts. Step three: lose faith in
humanity.

KEVIN

That last one feels optional.

RAY

It's not.

EXT. COMMUNITY CENTER - DAY

Ray teaches a boxing class to local teens. Punches fly. Ray corrects footwork. Focused. Calm.

Kevin arrives late, holding smoothies.

KEVIN

You forgot your protein sludge.

Ray tosses a pad at Kevin.

RAY

Put it down. Hold this. You're
helping.

KEVIN

I didn't wear deodorant for this.

RAY

Then everyone loses.

INT. LENA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ray sits on the couch. Lena brings over two cups of tea.

LENA
You didn't used to sit still.

RAY
Didn't used to have a reason to.

She sits beside him.

LENA
I like this version of you.

RAY
Me too. Took too long to get here.

She hugs him. It lasts longer than either expected.

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INT. KEVIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Kevin FaceTimes with his agent.

AGENT (V.O.)
Netflix wants a deal. Your life
story. A limited series.

KEVIN
Ooh. Who plays me?

AGENT (V.O.)
They're thinking... Zac Efron.

Kevin gasps.

KEVIN
Too flattering. Approved.

He hangs up. Pauses.

KEVIN (TO HIMSELF) (CONT'D)
Better get Ray's permission...

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EXT. DIVE BAR - NIGHT

Kevin and Ray sit in a booth. Quiet for once.

KEVIN
They want to turn us into a TV
show.

Ray stares at him.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
I know. Terrible idea. But maybe...
it helps people?

RAY
As long as they don't make me a
white guy.

Kevin raises a toast.

KEVIN
To bad decisions that lead to
decent outcomes.

RAY
To whatever comes next.

INT. FBI ARCHIVES - NIGHT

A sealed box marked:

"STARK CASE / NOVIK INTEL - CLASSIFIED"

A hand stamps it:

"CLOSED"
Another hand opens a file behind it
marked:

"PROJECT MERIDIAN / SUBJECT: BLAZE + MORALES"

We PAN UP to see a new figure watching them on surveillance
cam footage.

UNKNOWN VOICE (O.S.)
Let's keep them close. Just in
case.

EXT. BEACH - SUNSET

Kevin and Ray sit side by side, watching the ocean.

KEVIN
You think we're done?

RAY
Not even close.

KEVIN
Cool. Because I already ordered
matching bulletproof vests with our
initials on them.

Ray side-eyes him.

RAY
Why?

KEVIN
Because we're a brand now, baby.

Ray stands. Walks away.

KEVIN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Ray! Come on! They were on sale!

FADE OUT.

INT. FILM FESTIVAL GREEN ROOM - DAY

Kevin paces in a small room stacked with bottled water and rejection. Ray sits in a chair flipping through a newspaper with Kevin's face on the cover.

KEVIN
This screening could change
everything. I finally get to be
taken seriously.

RAY
I took you seriously once. For 11
minutes. I regret it.

KEVIN
You're just jealous because I found
emotional truth in moonlight.

Ray folds the paper, sets it down.

RAY
You tripped into a river.

INT. FILM FESTIVAL THEATER - NIGHT

The screening plays. Kevin's indie film unfolds on-screen. An artful, silent, borderline confusing 70 minutes.

The audience is... unsure. One woman sobs. One man laughs in the wrong place. Another texts.

Ray watches stoically. Kevin peeks from behind the curtain.

EXT. PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - SUNSET - CONTINUOUS

The convertible hums along the cliffs. Ocean to their left. Sky turning fire-orange.

Kevin fiddles with the radio. Finds static. Then cheesy pop.

KEVIN
This song got me through three
breakups and one very awkward Comic-
Con panel.

RAY
Turn it off.

KEVIN
You have no soul.

Ray turns the volume up. Kevin nods, smug.

INT. FBI TRAINING FACILITY - NEXT DAY

Ray and Kevin sit in folding chairs. AGENT HALL stands before a whiteboard that says:

"PREDICTABLE DUMB MOVES & HOW TO NOT DIE DOING THEM."

AGENT HALL

This workshop was not optional. You two are walking chaos.

KEVIN

That's harsh. Accurate. But harsh.

RAY

Just tell me who to hit.

HALL

You? You're fine. Blaze? You're getting a PowerPoint.

A screen flashes with the title:

"WHEN TO SHUT UP: A GUIDE FOR KEVIN."

Kevin fake claps.

INT. TEMP FBI OFFICE - BREAK ROOM - LATER

Kevin pours coffee. Ray leans against the counter.

KEVIN

I think Hall hates me.

Which makes me feel oddly safe.

RAY

She doesn't hate you.

She just understands you.

Beat.

KEVIN

That's worse.

EXT. KEVIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A delivery van pulls up. Kevin answers the door wearing silk pajamas.

Delivery guy hands him a massive package.

DELIVERY GUY

Says "urgent." From... "Protocol Department"?

Kevin stares.

KEVIN
That sounds like either the CIA or
a marketing firm. I'm opening it
anyway.

INT. KEVIN'S LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

He opens the box. Inside:

- A military-grade vest
- A phone with no brand
- A folder labeled "CLASSIFIED: OPERATION RECAST"

KEVIN
Ooooooh no. I am not Mission
Impossible-ing again.

He calls Ray.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
Dude. Weird box just showed up.

RAY (O.S.)
Describe it.

KEVIN
Looks expensive. Feels dangerous.
Definitely not a wine club.

RAY (O.S.)
Don't open anything else.

Kevin's already pulled out a tactical smartwatch.

KEVIN
Too late.

INT. RAY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ray holds a similar watch. Looks out the window to see a
black SUV parked across the street.

RAY (INTO PHONE)
They're watching both of us again.

KEVIN (V.O.)
How are we still alive?

RAY
I ask myself that daily.

INT. PRIVATE BOARDROOM - UNKNOWN LOCATION - SAME TIME

A panel of suited officials reviews footage of Kevin and Ray in action.

CHAIRMAN
They weren't trained. They weren't
stable.

But they got results.

WOMAN IN GLASSES

So we're funding them?

CHAIRMAN
We're studying them. If chaos
works... we might need more of it.

INT. COMIC BOOK STORE - NEXT DAY

Kevin browses shelves while Ray waits near the exit like a bored dad.

KEVIN
You ever wonder if we were
characters in a story?

RAY
What kind of story?

KEVIN
Probably one that started funny,
got weirdly emotional, and now
might be heading toward a sequel.

Ray grabs a graphic novel off the shelf titled "HITCHED:
VOLUME ONE."

RAY
Let's hope it doesn't suck.

Kevin smirks.

KEVIN
Too late.

INT. FBI SAFE BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

Agent Lane, Agent Hall, Ray, and Kevin sit at a round table. The mood is tense.

On the table: a stack of new surveillance photos. They show Kevin at the comic shop. Ray at the gas station. Lena at her apartment.

LANE
Someone's watching. Not just you
two - Lena, too.

RAY
That wasn't part of the deal.

HALL
Welcome to the deal. The minute you
got useful, you stopped being just
witnesses.

Kevin stares at one of the photos - him buying string cheese.

KEVIN
Why do I look so... soft?

HALL
Focus.

LANE
They want to see how you act under
pressure. And if you crack...
they'll move in.

KEVIN
And by "move in," you mean-

RAY
Take us out.

Beat.

KEVIN
Man, I miss being irrelevant.

INT. LENA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ray knocks on the door. Lena opens, surprised.

LENA
You okay?

RAY
No. But you're in danger. And I
don't let that happen again.

She steps aside. He enters.

LENA
Are you staying?

RAY
Only if you want me to.

She nods.

LENA
I do.

INT. KEVIN'S MANSION - NIGHT

Kevin unboxes another mystery delivery. This one's labeled
"GOVERNMENT ISSUED - STAY READY."

Inside: A burner phone, cash, a miniature voice recorder, and
a card that reads:

"STAY LOUD."

Kevin frowns.

KEVIN
Stay loud?

What am I, a motivational speaker with a gun?

He pockets everything.

INT. GYM - DAY

Ray and Kevin train with Agent Hall. Again. But this time,
something's different.

Kevin's faster. Ray's quieter. They work as a team.

HALL (WATCHING)
 God help us... they're syncing.

LANE
 Let's just hope they don't start
 finishing each other's-

KEVIN (O.S.)
 -sandwiches?

RAY (O.S.)
 Sentences.

LANE
 ...Yup.

INT. CONFERENCE CENTER - EVENING

A tech-security expo. Booths. Drones. Government people
 pretending to be fun.

Kevin and Ray walk through in borrowed suits.

KEVIN
 Why are we here again?

RAY
 Lane said this Novik guy had ties
 to one of the encryption firms.
 We're supposed to observe.

KEVIN
 You know I can't "observe." I
 narrate. Loudly.

RAY
 And yet they keep trusting us.

Kevin stops at a booth showing facial recognition software. A
 camera snaps his image and a screen flashes:

KEVIN BLAZE - INFAMOUS / LOUD / POSSIBLY ARMED

Kevin's face lights up.

KEVIN
 Finally, software that gets me.

Ray walks away.

INT. CONFERENCE FLOOR - LATER

They spot TECH GUY IN SUIT - mid-40s, shifty, tapping on a tablet while glancing around nervously.

RAY
That's him.

Kevin straightens his tie.

KEVIN
Time for charm.

RAY
Time for silence.

They approach. Tech Guy bolts.

INT. CONFERENCE CENTER - BACK HALLS - CONTINUOUS

Ray and Kevin give chase. The halls twist. The guy ducks into a service corridor.

Ray follows fast. Kevin... slower.

KEVIN
This isn't cardio-optimized!

INT. PARKING GARAGE - MINUTES LATER

They corner the Tech Guy near a stairwell.

RAY
Stop running.

TECH GUY
I don't work for Novik. I worked
for whoever paid.

KEVIN
So everyone?

TECH GUY
They don't want you dead. They want
to control the story.

You're assets now - loud, messy... viral assets.

Beat.

RAY
What does that mean?

TECH GUY

It means... whatever happens next?

You're the main event.

He presses a button on his watch – BOOM – a car explodes down the ramp. The man vanishes in the smoke.

INT. FBI SAFE ROOM – LATER

Lane slams a folder on the table.

LANE

They're not trying to kill you anymore.

RAY

They're using us?

LANE

Or testing you.

KEVIN

That is so messed up...

(beat)

Am I being live-streamed right now?

LANE

Possibly.

Kevin straightens his hair.

KEVIN (TO CAMERA)

Hey, future sponsors.

INT. PODCAST STUDIO – NIGHT

Kevin and Ray sit in their home studio. A camera streams. Kevin leans in, energized.

KEVIN

People keep asking if we're done.

If we're going to disappear back into whatever hole we crawled out of.

And the answer is... maybe. But not before we set a few things straight.

Ray eyes him cautiously.

RAY
Where are you going with this?

KEVIN
We're not just lucky survivors.
We're also witnesses.

To a system that let us almost die. Repeatedly.

RAY
This is how we get burned again.

KEVIN
Or how we burn them first.

Ray leans back, reluctant... but not stopping him.

INT. FBI HQ - MONITORING ROOM - SAME TIME

Agent Lane watches the stream on a wall of monitors.

HALL
He's provoking them.

LANE
Good.

INT. STUDIO - LATER

Kevin shuts off the feed. Ray exhales slowly.

RAY
You're playing with fire.

KEVIN
I'm trying to light the way.

Ray stands to leave.

RAY
Just make sure you don't set the
house on fire while you're at it.

EXT. L.A. STREET - NIGHT

Ray walks alone. The city's hum is louder than usual.

A black van rolls past. No headlights.

Ray watches it. Slows.

The van turns a corner. Gone.

INT. DARK ROOM - UNKNOWN LOCATION - SAME TIME

A wall of screens shows Ray. Kevin. Lena. FBI offices.
Private homes.

The screens flicker.

Then a voice cuts through the static - deep, calm,
calculated:

UNKNOWN VOICE (V.O.)
They want to be seen.

Let's give them an audience.

One screen zooms in on Ray. Another on Lena.

INT. LENA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Lena checks the window. Nothing there... but she feels
something.

Her phone buzzes.

Text from: UNKNOWN

"NICE SPEECH. HEARD YOU LOUD & CLEAR."

Her eyes widen.

INT. RAY'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

Ray enters. The lights are on.

He never left them on.

He pulls his gun.

Moves room to room.

Nothing... until he finds a Polaroid on his kitchen table.

Of him and Lena, taken earlier that day.

APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ray stares at the Polaroid. The handwriting on the back reads:

"YOU'RE NOT JUST WATCHED. YOU'RE WANTED."

He sets it down carefully, then locks every bolt on the door.

He doesn't sleep that night.

INT. KEVIN'S HOUSE - NEXT MORNING

Kevin wakes to a phone call. Groggy.

KEVIN

Hello, this is Kevin Blaze, star of trauma and gluten sensitivity.

AGENT LANE (V.O.)

You've got 10 minutes to pack a bag.

KEVIN

Why, are we going to brunch?

AGENT LANE (V.O.)

We're going dark. Something's coming.

Click.

KEVIN

Well... there goes my weekend.

INT. BLACK SUV - MOMENTS LATER

Kevin, now dressed, sits next to Ray and Hall in the back.

KEVIN

Why does everyone look like someone died?

HALL

Because someone might.

KEVIN

Awesome.

RAY
Someone was inside both our homes.
Took pictures. Left messages.

KEVIN
Did they steal anything?

RAY
No. That's what scares me.

EXT. MILITARY BASE - HANGER 12 - NIGHT

A giant steel hangar. No signage. Just silence.

Kevin and Ray are escorted inside by Agent Hall and Lane.

KEVIN
I'm getting "Area 51 but make it
depressing" vibes.

INT. HANGER 12 - CONTINUOUS

Inside: maps, screens, laptops, a mobile ops unit. At the center: a huge corkboard with surveillance photos, code names, and the phrase:

Kevin stares at a familiar photo.

KEVIN

That's me. From... 3 months ago?

RAY

They've been tracking us since Vegas.

LANE

Longer. You were part of a larger surveillance algorithm tagged under "Unpredictable Assets."

KEVIN

Unpredictable Assets. Is that the name of our band?

INT. SIDE OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Lane sits with Ray privately.

LANE

They want to use you both in a decoy op. Public. Flashy. Bait.

RAY

You know what you're doing?

LANE

I don't even know what day it is anymore.

INT. BRIEFING ROOM - LATER

Kevin flips through a folder marked "PHASE II - DECOY LAUNCH."

KEVIN

So let me get this straight: we pretend to be available targets so they expose their next layer?

RAY

You're the bait. I'm the bat.

KEVIN

That sounded cooler than it should've.

RAY
I practiced.

INT. BASE BUNK ROOM - NIGHT

Ray lies awake. Kevin's on the top bunk typing something on a laptop.

RAY
What are you doing?

KEVIN
Writing my will... and a new pilot pitch.

They're strangely similar.

RAY
You good?

KEVIN
Honestly? I've never been more scared.

But I've also never had this much purpose.

So... no. But yes?

Ray stares at the ceiling.

RAY
Yeah. Same.

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS HOTEL - DAY

A luxury hotel swarming with paparazzi, influencers, and phony executives. Kevin steps out of a Rolls wearing sunglasses the size of dinner plates.

A voice in his ear: Ray.

RAY (V.O.)
Remember: you're "Dante Cline."
Crypto millionaire. Douche level:
medium-high.

KEVIN
So basically... me, but with fake confidence and a crypto watch.

RAY (V.O.)
Exactly. Don't improvise.

Kevin smiles at the cameras. Loudly.

KEVIN
What's up, America? Just here to
invest in emotions and confuse the
economy!

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Kevin checks into a suite under the alias. Meanwhile, Ray
watches from a surveillance van nearby, sipping stale coffee.

Agent Hall sits beside him, typing fast.

HALL
Facial rec pinged two flags in the
lobby. Could be scouts.

RAY
He's gonna blow this.

HALL
He might not. He's unpredictable.
It's his only gift.

Ray watches. Quietly concerned.

INT. HOTEL BAR - LATER

Kevin sits at the bar. A tall woman in a white suit, GRETA,
joins him. Cold smile. Eyes like lasers.

GRETA
Mr. Cline. You're hard to ignore.

KEVIN (FAKE LAUGH)
And even harder to take seriously.

She leans closer.

GRETA
We hear you're looking to expand
your portfolio into... deeper
waters.

Kevin stalls. Swallows hard.

KEVIN

Only if those waters are warm,
shallow, and filled with plausible
deniability.

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EXT. HOTEL - PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Ray and Hall move into position as night falls.

HALL

Her name's not Greta. Her real name
is Dalia Krevsky. Ex-intel, linked
to six black market firms.

RAY

Kevin's toast if she figures him
out.

HALL

He's not toast yet. But he's
definitely mid-toast.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Kevin enters his suite. Greta follows.

GRETA

You're either very smart... or very
reckless.

KEVIN

What if I'm both?

She locks the door.

Ray watches the feed, tension rising.

INT. SUITE - MOMENTS LATER

Greta sets down her purse. Pulls out a slim metal case.

GRETA

You have five minutes to prove
you're not wasting my time.

KEVIN

Five minutes is my usual pitch length. Also, weirdly, my dating average.

He opens his laptop. Plugs in a flash drive Agent Hall preloaded with fake crypto accounts and transactions.

She watches. Suspicious. Impressed.

Then—

ALARM (V.O.)

Security breach detected. South hallway. Armed hostiles.

INT. VAN - SAME TIME

Hall stands.

HALL

That's not us.

RAY

Then we've got company.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - CONTINUOUS

A crash outside the door.

Kevin looks at Greta, wide-eyed.

KEVIN

Okay, so... is this still part of the interview?

GRETA

Get down.

She pulls a pistol from her coat just as the door is KICKED IN.

A masked man storms in—Ray's tackle sends him flying before he gets a shot off.

Kevin SCREAMS. Greta fires at the second intruder.

RAY

Down!

They hit the floor. Firefight erupts.

Kevin army-crawls under a coffee table.

KEVIN
If I live through this, I'm
launching a skincare line.

EXT. HOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

Agents swarm the building. Greta's gone. Ray escorts Kevin to the van, both breathing hard.

RAY
She played you.

KEVIN
Yeah. But... she also saved me.

RAY
Right before trying to sell you
out.

KEVIN
Weird kind of loyalty. I relate.

INT. FBI HQ - NIGHT

Footage of Greta fleeing on a motorbike. Lane watches with a clenched jaw.

LANE
She got what she needed. The decoy
plan's blown.

HALL
They're ahead of us again.

LANE
No. They're reacting faster. But
they're not ahead yet.

INT. FBI HQ - BRIEFING ROOM - NEXT DAY

Kevin nervously scrolls his phone. Across the screen:

"KEVIN BLAZE RANTS AGAINST 'SECRET PEOPLE IN SHINY BUILDINGS'
- TRENDING #1"

A paused video shows Kevin mid-rant, hair wild, face serious.

LANE
You were off-mic. In a controlled
room.

How the hell did this leak?

KEVIN
I was venting! To myself! That was
between me and the wall!

HALL
The wall had ears. And at least one
livestreaming janitor.

Ray watches the clip. Distracted.

RAY
They're always a step ahead.

LANE
You think we've got a mole?

RAY
Or a camera where there shouldn't
be one.

INT. LENA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Lena opens her laptop. The clip auto-plays. She sees Kevin,
red-faced, saying:

"I don't care if they want to use us - I'm done being someone
else's test subject!"

She clicks pause. Her phone rings. No caller ID.

She answers.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
He's not done. And neither are you.

Click.

She grabs her jacket.

INT. SAFEHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ray stares at a photo board. Strings. Faces. He's built a web.

Kevin enters with two coffees.

KEVIN

I thought caffeine might un-break your mood.

RAY

We've been tracked too many times for it to be coincidence.

He pulls a pin off the board: it's Agent Hall.

KEVIN

Whoa. Wait. You think Hall's the leak?

RAY

I think someone close is. And I think we're about to be left out in the cold.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Lena steps out of her car. Alone. Heading toward a stairwell.

SFX: Footsteps. Slow. Deliberate.

She turns—

GRETA steps from the shadows. Hair slicked back. No gun visible. But deadly calm.

GRETA

You're not part of this, Lena.

But they made you part of it.

Lena backs away, slow.

LENA

What do you want?

GRETA

A message.

Tell Morales... they were never watching him.

Beat.

GRETA (CONT'D)
They were studying him.

Greta vanishes into the dark.

INT. SAFEHOUSE - NIGHT

Lena bursts in.

LENA
She found me. Said they were
studying you.

Ray goes still. Kevin freezes mid-chew on a granola bar.

RAY
We need to disappear. Again.

KEVIN
Define "disappear." Because I just
got my kitchen remodeled.

RAY
I mean off-grid. Now.

LANE (O.S.)
Too late.

They turn. Lane stands in the doorway, holding a tablet.

LANE (CONT'D)
They've taken over the network.
Every file. Every feed.

We're not watching them anymore.

KEVIN
Then who's watching us?

INT. SAFEHOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Ray grabs the tablet from Lane. On the screen: every FBI feed
goes dark, one by one.

OFFLINE. OFFLINE. OFFLINE.

RAY
They're severing visibility.
Creating silence.

KEVIN
Is this the part where we panic?
Because I've been warming up.

LANE
This isn't a leak. This is
extraction.

They're removing us from the game.

LENA
Then what do we do?

Ray looks up. Calm. Certain.

RAY
We unplug.

INT. UNDERGROUND PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Ray, Kevin, Lena, and Lane move fast to an old 1990s
Suburban. Scratched. Reliable. Untraceable.

Kevin gapes.

KEVIN
This thing looks like it's allergic
to GPS.

RAY
Exactly.

They pile in. Ray drives.

EXT. FREEWAY - NIGHT

The Suburban flies down the highway. They pass surveillance
cameras - already powered down. The road feels... abandoned.

KEVIN
Okay. What's the plan?

RAY
No phones. No digital. We
disappear. Then we reappear - on
our terms.

KEVIN
So like a trust fall, but with
guns?

RAY
And betrayal.

INT. HIGHWAY DINER - LATE NIGHT

A quiet, rundown diner somewhere outside the grid. Neon flickers. Locals stare as the group enters.

Kevin walks in with sunglasses and a hoodie.

KEVIN
I feel like a celebrity hiding from
TMZ.

Am I pulling it off?

A KID (10) points at him.

KID
Hey! That's the guy from the
internet meltdown!

Kevin pulls his hood tighter.

INT. DINER BOOTH - MOMENTS LATER

Everyone eats silently. Exhausted.

LANE
We regroup. We cut them off at
their next move.

RAY
No. We don't wait.

Everyone looks at him.

RAY (CONT'D)
We go on the offensive.

We bait them - but on our turf.

KEVIN
Please tell me that turf has wifi.

RAY
It has dirt. Trees. And a line of
sight in every direction.

EXT. ABANDONED MOUNTAIN COMPOUND - DAY

A remote military training site Ray used years ago. Now overgrown and desolate.

He stands at the front gate, cutting through an old lock.

KEVIN (O.S.)
You used to train here?

RAY
Used to hide here. Same thing.

KEVIN
I am... not emotionally prepared
for this.

INT. COMPOUND HQ ROOM - LATER

Old radios. Tactical maps. Dust everywhere. Ray and Lena begin cleaning and converting the space.

Kevin tries to make coffee with what turns out to be diesel fuel.

KEVIN
It said "Bold Roast" - not
"Explosive."

INT. COMPOUND HQ - NIGHT

Ray puts a red pin on a wall map. Several blue pins mark supply caches, old field cameras, and one place labeled "Glass Nest."

RAY
This is where we make the play.

LANE
You're outnumbered.

RAY
But we're not outsmarted. Not yet.

KEVIN
Okay but... am I still pretending
to be Dante Crypto-Millionaire
again, or what?

RAY
No more fake names.

KEVIN
Finally.

RAY
You're bait. With your real face.

KEVIN
That's... horrifyingly personal.

INT. COMPOUND ARMORY - LATER

Ray opens a metal trunk. Inside: a few remaining weapons, flares, comms gear, and... a wedding photo.

He closes it quickly. Takes only what he needs.

EXT. MOUNTAIN TRAIL - DAWN

Kevin and Lena carry gear. She's impressed with his attitude. He's sweating profusely.

LENA
You're not terrible at this.

KEVIN
Thank you. That's the most romantic thing anyone's said to me under duress.

She hands him a canteen.

LENA
Hydrate or die.

INT. COMPOUND - HQ - THAT NIGHT

The group stares at a monitor powered by a jerry-rigged generator. It displays a blinking signal: a pulse being broadcast to lure in the watchers.

Ray hits a button. The pulse intensifies.

RAY
Now we wait.

KEVIN
Or we monologue.

Everyone glares.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
Okay. We wait.

INT. COMPOUND - HQ ROOM - NIGHT

A red light blinks on the console. The signal's been pinged.

LANE
They've received the bait.

Multiple hits. Three directions.

Ray stays calm, methodical.

RAY
How far?

LANE
Closest is two clicks out. No
vehicles spotted yet - they're
walking.

Kevin peers out the narrow window, holding a thermal scope.

KEVIN
That's commitment. If someone made
me hike just to kill me, I'd be
insulted and impressed.

INT. COMPOUND - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Ray corners Agent Hall near the makeshift radio room.

RAY
Who do you report to? Really?

HALL
Excuse me?

RAY
You've been ahead of every tech
failure. Every pivot. You knew we
were burned before Lane did.

Hall's jaw tightens.

HALL
You don't trust me?

RAY
I trust patterns. Yours don't line
up.

They lock eyes.

HALL
You want to put me in a cell? Do it
after this is over.

But right now, we're on the same side.

Ray backs off – but barely.

INT. COMPOUND – STORAGE ROOM – NIGHT

Kevin sits alone. Staring at his reflection in an old dusty
mirror.

Lena enters quietly.

LENA
You good?

KEVIN
No. Not really.

I thought being famous meant something.

Turns out, it's just a louder kind of invisible.

She sits next to him.

LENA
But here you are. Still showing up.

Beat.

KEVIN
Yeah. Weird, right?

EXT. COMPOUND PERIMETER – SAME TIME

Tripwire snaps.

A flare launches into the sky.

BOOM!

Bright red.

RAY (O.S.)
They're here.

INT. COMPOUND - HQ ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The team gears up. Ray tosses Kevin a radio.

RAY
No hero moves.

KEVIN
Define "hero."

RAY
Anything where you die first.

Kevin salutes. Nervous grin.

EXT. WOODED RIDGE - NIGHT

Five armed intruders creep through the trees.

One steps on a false rock - BOOM - smoke explodes, blinding them.

RAY (V.O.)
This isn't an ambush.

It's a lesson.

EXT. COMPOUND - PERIMETER - MOMENTS LATER

Ray and Lena circle left. Lane covers the front. Kevin is stationed above with a spotlight.

He turns it on - blinding a target.

KEVIN
Surprise! Welcome to Camp Bad Idea!

He ducks as gunfire rattles the tower frame.

INT. COMPOUND - ARMORY - SAME TIME

Hall loads a weapon. Pauses. Looks at her phone - encrypted app blinking.

HALL
(under breath)
Not yet. Not yet.

She shoves the phone into her pocket and rejoins the fight.

EXT. COMPOUND - BACK RIDGE - NIGHT

Ray moves like a ghost. Silent. Efficient. He flanks an attacker, disarms him, and knocks him out cold.

He grabs the radio.

RAY
Two down. Who's left?

KEVIN (V.O.)
Me. And I'm scared.

RAY
Use it. Let fear keep you alive.

INT. COMPOUND - MAIN HALL - NIGHT

Lena moves through the dim hallway with a sidearm. Focused. Controlled.

Suddenly - she hears movement behind her.

She spins - too late.

AN ATTACKER GRABS HER.

A struggle. She slams back against the wall - HARD.

LENA
(gritted)
You picked the wrong woman.

She stomps his foot, knees him, and grabs his weapon. He drops. Gasping.

INT. COMPOUND - TOWER ROOM - SAME TIME

Kevin watches the chaos from above. He spots a second wave approaching the south perimeter on infrared.

KEVIN

Uh, we've got a party crashing the party.

He grabs a paintball gun Ray modified – now rigged to launch flares and smoke.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Okay, Blaze... channel your inner Bourne. Or Bond. Or Bugs Bunny.

He fires.

A red flare hits the lead attacker in the chest – BOOM – the others scatter in panic.

INT. COMPOUND – HQ – MOMENTS LATER

Ray bursts through the side door, sees Lena recovering from her fight.

RAY

You alright?

LENA

Better than him.

She nods to the guy on the floor, groaning.

Ray helps her up. They lock eyes – something unspoken passes.

LENA (CONT'D)

I'm not staying behind next time.

RAY

You weren't behind.

EXT. COMPOUND – MAIN YARD – SAME TIME

Two intruders make it past the flare traps. One spots the generator powering their comms grid.

He raises a grenade.

BANG!

The attacker drops. Shot clean in the leg.

KEVIN (O.S.)

Sorry, buddy! I protect what powers my espresso machine!

Ray rushes in, sees Kevin holding a rifle. Smiling. Shaking.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
Did I just do a... thing?

RAY
You did a thing.

KEVIN
Was it badass?

RAY
Almost.

INT. COMPOUND - ARMORY - MOMENTS LATER

Hall is alone. The fight is dying down.

She opens her phone again. A message flashes:

"IS THE PACKAGE EXPOSED?"

She types back:

"NOT YET. MORALES SUSPECTS."

Suddenly - Ray enters behind her.

RAY
Who you texting?

Hall spins. Guilty.

HALL
Field team. Backup protocol.

RAY
Try again.

INT. ARMORY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Ray closes the door behind him. Hall stands tense, phone still in hand.

RAY
Let me see it.

HALL
It's classified.

RAY
I don't care.

He holds out his hand. Calm. Final.

Hall hesitates, then... hands over the phone.

Ray scrolls. Eyes narrow.

RAY (CONT'D)
You've been feeding them updates.

Breadcrumbs to keep us alive – but never safe.

HALL
They were supposed to monitor, not
eliminate.

It changed after Novik.

RAY
And you didn't tell us?

HALL
They threatened my sister. My
family.

You have Lena. You get it.

Ray stares her down.

RAY
You should've come to me.

Now I don't know if I'm watching your back... or mine.

He leaves her with the phone. Alone.

INT. HQ - MOMENTS LATER

Ray reenters. Kevin, Lena, and Lane look up.

LANE
Well?

Ray drops the phone on the table.

RAY
She's been relaying movement.
Thought she was protecting us.

She was really just tagging us for target practice.

Kevin picks up the phone, flips through.

KEVIN

She's got good grammar. No emojis.

Evil... but literate.

Lane sighs, running a hand down her face.

LANE

Then it's worse than we thought.

LENA

Why?

Lane turns the tablet toward them – shows a new satellite image:

A convoy of black SUVs moving fast. Toward them.

LANE

That last assault?

It was a distraction.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS – NIGHT

A fleet of tactical vehicles speeds along the dirt roads.

At the front: GRETA, in a black Jeep. Calm. Focused.

Beside her: a NEW PLAYER – bald, cold eyes, government ID clipped to his collar.

BALD MAN

They're becoming a liability.

GRETA

Or a legend. Depending who wins.

INT. COMPOUND – HQ ROOM – LATER

Everyone is gearing up. Fast. Quiet.

Kevin tries to fit into body armor. Fails.

KEVIN

Can I just tape two Kevlar
placemats to my chest and call it a
day?

Ray tosses him a real vest.

RAY
Try this.

KEVIN
This smells like violence.

RAY
It is.

EXT. COMPOUND - LOOKOUT POST - NIGHT

Lena takes position on a rocky outcropping. Ray joins her, scanning the dark horizon.

LENA
How many do you think?

RAY
Enough that this might be goodbye.

She smirks.

LENA
You're getting sentimental.

RAY
No. I'm getting strategic.

Beat.

LENA
For the record... I'm proud of you.

RAY
Don't jinx it.

EXT. COMPOUND - NIGHT

The forest line glows with headlights.

Engines HUM like a slow-moving storm.

Kevin peers through binoculars from the tower.

KEVIN

Okay... lotta black SUVs. A few too many laser scopes. And one guy out there definitely just winked at me.

RAY (O.S.)

Get down.

Kevin ducks. A bullet hits the wood beside him – THWACK.

KEVIN

Oh good! They're flirting with bullets now!

INT. COMPOUND - HQ ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Lane draws up the layout of the compound.

LANE

They'll hit from three sides. Greta's leading. The bald guy? We have no intel.

KEVIN

I hate that guy already. His face looks like he bans books and yells at birds.

RAY

We split. Defend the relay point and generator first. If that goes, we're done.

HALL (O.S.)

Let me cover the east ridge.

Everyone turns. Hall stands with her gear on. Calm. Serious.

LANE

You're not part of this op.

HALL

I was never part of any op. Just someone cleaning up after people like you.

RAY

If you cross us again—

HALL

Then shoot me.

But if I can fix what I broke... I'm not running from that.

Ray and Lane exchange a look.

Ray nods. Slowly.

RAY
One shot. You blow it – you're
done.

Hall heads out.

KEVIN (QUIETLY)
That was intense.

Like, HBO-limited-series level intense.

EXT. COMPOUND – EAST RIDGE – LATER

Hall sets up her sniper position. Her finger hovers over the trigger.

She breathes.

Waits.

INT. COMPOUND – UTILITY SHED – SAME TIME

Kevin digs through storage. Finds:

- * Fireworks
- * An old walkie
- * A propane tank
- * A kiddie pool

KEVIN
If I live through this, I'm
pitching this as a cooking show.

He dumps everything into a wheelbarrow and hauls it outside.

EXT. COMPOUND – NORTH PERIMETER – NIGHT

Ray and Lena crouch near the treeline. Lasers flicker through fog. Shadows shift.

RAY (INTO MIC)
Wait for my mark.

Across the ridge – explosions. Fireworks erupt into the sky.

Red. Blue. Gold.

KEVIN (V.O., TRIUMPHANT)
I CALL THIS "DISTRACTIONPALOOZA!"

The gunmen freeze. Look up.

Hall opens fire. POP. POP. Two go down.

EXT. COMPOUND - YARD - MOMENTS LATER

Kevin lights a second fuse. The kiddie pool, now filled with flammable liquid, ignites in a spectacular fireball.

KEVIN
Hollywood, baby!

He runs. Barely dodges an incoming round.

INT. COMPOUND - HQ - NIGHT

Ray and Lena return. Sweaty. Bloodied. But intact.

LANE
They're falling back. Whoever led this - they're not ready for improvisation.

KEVIN (O.S.)
No one is ready for what I just did!

He stumbles in, covered in soot, holding a smoking walkie.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
I'm either a hero or an arsonist.
Time will tell.

EXT. FOREST RIDGE - NIGHT

Greta stands at the edge of the woods, surveying the distant fireworks smoke rising from the compound.

GRETA (INTO RADIO)
Pull back. Reset.

He's not just reacting - he's orchestrating.

She clicks off the radio and smiles faintly.

GRETA (CONT'D)
He learned.

EXT. RIDGE - MOMENTS LATER

Hall breaks cover - steps out from her sniper perch.

HALL
You knew I'd come.

Greta doesn't flinch.

GRETA
You always come late... but you
come.

HALL
I told them everything.

GRETA
No. You told them what you wanted
to believe.

That you weren't one of us anymore.

Beat. Guns lowered, but the danger is real.

HALL
I'm not.

GRETA
Then shoot me.

Hall hesitates - and walks away instead.

Greta doesn't follow.

INT. COMPOUND - COMMON ROOM - LATER

Kevin talks to a few of the younger agents on-site, all wiped out but listening.

KEVIN
Look, I know I'm not military. Or
an agent. Or someone who should be
holding anything explosive ever
again.

Laughter.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
But I am someone who knows fear.

And the only way I've ever beaten it is by being louder than it is.

He holds up a flare.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
You don't win by being invisible.
You win by making them wonder what
the hell you're going to do next.

The room erupts into light applause. Someone mutters, "Damn right."

Ray stands nearby, watching.

INT. COMPOUND - HQ - MOMENTS LATER

Ray studies a map. Alone. Focused.

He draws a red line across the terrain.

LENA (O.S.)
You're not sleeping again.

RAY
Sleep's not gonna save us.

She steps beside him.

LENA
You're planning something. Bigger
than just holding the line.

Ray nods.

RAY
We draw them in.

All the way in.

Then we bury the whole playbook.

EXT. COMPOUND - SUPPLY STAGING AREA - NIGHT

Kevin and Ray go over equipment - wires, charges, signal boosters.

KEVIN
Okay, so just for my fragile actor
brain – what's the goal here?

RAY
We make them think they've won.

KEVIN
And then?

RAY
We break their system in front of
the world.

EXT. COMPOUND – THE NEXT MORNING

Fog blankets the ridge. Early light creeps across the
terrain.

Ray walks the perimeter. Every tripwire is now active.
Explosives planted. Exits planned.

He's in full mission mode.

Kevin trails behind, chewing gum, wearing a vest two sizes
too big.

KEVIN
Just want to confirm – I'm still
the bait, right?

RAY
You're more than bait.

Kevin brightens.

RAY (CONT'D)
You're the distraction and the
insurance policy.

KEVIN
...Less encouraging.

INT. UNDERGROUND TECH ROOM – COMPOUND – LATER

Lane and Hall set up a rogue signal tower. Wires snake across
tables. A satellite link flashes green.

LANE

Once we trigger this feed, we're broadcasting wide – secure, but visible.

HALL

Anyone with a screen will see it.

LANE

Including the ones who want us dead.

INT. COMPOUND – OLD STORAGE CLOSET – MOMENTS LATER

Lena's gathering field gear. She opens a forgotten locker...

Inside – a dusty file. Labeled:

"MORALES: ECHO TIER POTENTIAL – ARCHIVE 7"

She flips it open. Ray's face. Younger. Labeled as:

"Asset Contingency Alpha – Unaware."

She blinks, stunned.

LENA (WHISPERS)

He was marked from the beginning...

EXT. MOUNTAIN RIDGE – SAME TIME

Greta stands at a mobile command post. The bald man from earlier – now clearly a high-level official – speaks into a headset.

BALD MAN

Execute Operation Collapse. We erase them – and the evidence.

GRETA

They're not going quietly.

BALD MAN

Good. That'll make the footage harder to deny.

INT. COMPOUND – HQ ROOM – SHORTLY AFTER

Kevin is mic'd up. Light ring. Small camera. Goofy headset.

KEVIN
So... just talk into the void and
hope the world's listening?

LANE
Exactly.

KEVIN
Great. That's basically my career
strategy.

Ray enters. Nods.

RAY
You ready?

KEVIN
No. But I'm louder than my fear.

So let's make some noise.

Ray almost smiles.

RAY
Let's.

EXT. WOODED TRAIL - CONCURRENT

A figure moves through the trees. Military garb. Measured
steps.

They stop near the outer tripwire - disabling it quietly.

Lena watches from a distance, rifle ready - but doesn't fire
yet.

Then, the figure turns.

It's someone from Ray's old unit.

Name tag: VARGAS.

EXT. COMPOUND - SIGNAL TOWER RIDGE - MOMENTS LATER

Lena slowly approaches Vargas, rifle up.

LENA
Drop it. Now.

Vargas turns, calm.

VARGAS
Lena Walker. Didn't expect Morales
to still keep friends.

LENA
He earned one.

VARGAS
Or created a liability.

She doesn't lower the rifle.

LENA
Why are you here?

VARGAS
I'm not here for Ray.

I'm here for what they buried in him.

Beat. She tightens her grip.

LENA
That doesn't make sense.

VARGAS
It will.

INT. COMPOUND - HQ ROOM - SAME TIME

Kevin sits in front of the camera setup. His hand shakes.

Ray enters, watching from the corner.

KEVIN (QUIET)
You know... I thought the scariest
part was getting shot at.

RAY
It's not?

KEVIN
No. It's being heard.

Ray steps up. Lowers the mic slightly.

RAY
Then make it count.

Kevin exhales.

Then—click.

He's live.

INT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS - MONTAGE

— A sports bar. TVs glow. The bartender lowers the volume.

— A military base overseas. Soldiers stop mid-card game.

— A classroom. A teacher pauses, then slowly turns up the screen.

KEVIN (V.O.)

This isn't about secrets anymore.

It's about systems. Ones that break people... and then recycle them like they never mattered.

EXT. RIDGE - SAME TIME

Lena brings Vargas into the compound at gunpoint. Ray sees him — and freezes.

RAY

No.

VARGAS

Hey, Morales.

Still playing soldier in someone else's war?

Ray steps closer.

RAY

I watched you die.

VARGAS

No. You watched me get upgraded.

INT. COMPOUND - COMM ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kevin's still speaking. Less jokes now. All soul.

KEVIN (V.O.)

They told us we were protected.

But really, we were just useful. Until we weren't.

INT. FBI HEADQUARTERS - DC - SAME TIME

A wall of screens. All showing Kevin.

Directors, agents, suits - silent.

KEVIN (V.O.)
This is us saying we're done being
footnotes.

EXT. COMPOUND - COURTYARD - NIGHT

Ray and Vargas circle each other slowly.

RAY
They took you. Broke you.

VARGAS
They focused me.

He pulls a small controller from his belt.

VARGAS (CONT'D)
You're the last glitch in their
machine.

Ray draws his sidearm. No hesitation.

RAY
Then I'm the virus.

TO BE CONTINUED ON PAG

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EXT. COMPOUND - COURTYARD - NIGHT

Ray and Vargas circle like ghosts. Guns drawn. No backup.

Kevin's voice echoes faintly from the speakers inside - his
live feed still running:

KEVIN (V.O.)
You can't erase people just because
they scare you.

You can't delete them because they won't shut up.

VARGAS
He talks a lot.

RAY

He listens more than you ever did.

Vargas lunges. The two crash into a brutal, bare-knuckle fight.

INT. COMPOUND - COMM ROOM - SAME TIME

Lane scrambles to boost the signal. Feedback flickers.

Lena watches the screen: live comments pouring in from all over the world.

"Is this real?"

"Where's the FBI?"

"#SystemDown"

LENA

He did it. They're watching.

EXT. COURTYARD - MOMENTS LATER

Ray and Vargas grapple near the power junction. Vargas is bigger, faster - but Ray's smarter.

He slams Vargas into the panel, sparks flying.

Vargas drops, dazed.

RAY

That's for Fallujah.

VARGAS (GASPING)

You think you're clean?

You're just the test subject that worked.

Ray stares. Stunned.

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INT. COMPOUND - UNDERGROUND FILE ROOM - NIGHT

Lena tears open old filing cabinets. Dust flies. She finds it:

PROJECT ECHO: Conditioning Trial Subjects / Category:
Morales, Raymond

Dozens of pages. Psychological metrics. Field influence.
Manipulation through controlled trauma.

Her hands shake.

INT. COMM ROOM - SAME TIME

Kevin sits, visibly worn. A tech agent runs in, whispering to Lane.

AGENT

They're spoofing the signal. We've
got maybe ten minutes before the
feed crashes.

KEVIN

Ten minutes? Cool. That's like
three award speeches and one public
apology.

He leans back into the mic.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

If you're still watching - yeah,
this is real.

And if they cut this off? Then you already know who's afraid
of the truth.

EXT. COMPOUND - TREE LINE - SAME TIME

Greta arrives on foot. Efficient. Armed. She radios in.

GRETA

Phase Three: Confirm Morales.
Eliminate Blaze.

Leave the feed running.

She moves fast. Tactical.

INT. HQ ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Ray storms in. Face bleeding. Lena hands him the file.

LENA

They built you.

Ray flips through it. Something breaks in his eyes.

RAY
I thought I was fighting the
system.

Turns out... I am the system.

LANE
Then break it from the inside.

Ray nods. Looks at Kevin.

RAY
Time to burn it down.

INT. COMPOUND - MAIN HALL - NIGHT

Ray lays out explosives and tripwires. Methodical. Efficient.

Lena and Lane move through the corridors, placing flares and thermal charges.

Kevin wheels in a rolling whiteboard with "BAD GUYS DIE HERE?" scrawled in giant red marker.

KEVIN
I figured some battlefield signage
might boost morale.

RAY
Only if they're literate.

KEVIN
Weirdly, I hope they are.

INT. HQ ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Lane decrypts files from the Echo archives Lena found.

LANE
There's enough here to trigger
hearings, indictments, maybe even a
collapse.

LENA
Then we leak it.

LANE
If we leak this, we paint a bigger
target.

Not just on us – on everyone we've ever known.

Lena pauses. Then leans in.

LENA

Then blur the names. But leak the truth.

INT. ARMORY - SAME TIME

Ray loads his last mag. Checks his knife. Pulls a folded piece of paper from his pocket.

Unfolds it.

It's a picture of him and his unit – back when they still smiled.

He breathes deep, then stuffs it into his vest.

EXT. COMPOUND - NORTH RIDGE - NIGHT

Greta watches the compound from a slope above. Masked soldiers fan out behind her – no insignia, no identifiers.

GRETA

They built him to obey.

Now let's see what he does when we test that faith.

She moves forward.

INT. COMPOUND - COMM ROOM - SAME TIME

Kevin sits in front of the mic one last time.

KEVIN

We've only got a few minutes left before they cut this signal.

So let me leave you with this:

He leans forward.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

It's okay to be afraid. It means you still think life's worth something.

He hits a final button – the "SEND ALL" on Lane's leak drive.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
Here's what they never wanted you
to see.

EXT. VARIOUS SCREENS - AROUND THE WORLD

Smartphones. Security monitors. Cable news tickers.

Hundreds of leaked files flood the public view. Redacted
names. Charts. Maps.

The truth - ugly and undeniable.

EXT. COMPOUND - MAIN GATE - MOMENTS LATER

Greta's team breaches the gate.

SFX: ALARMS BLARE.

Flares burst. Smoke fills the night.

Ray moves into position.

RAY (V.O.)
They made me to follow orders.

So here's one from me:

He presses the detonator.

RAY (V.O. CONT'D)
Welcome to the reckoning.

BOOM.

INT. COMPOUND - EAST WING - NIGHT

Explosions ripple. Walls shake. Hallways fill with smoke.

Kevin stumbles backward, coughing.

KEVIN
Okay! We officially passed the
point where this feels like a prank
gone too far!

He grabs a fire extinguisher, blindly sprays behind him – hits no one.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
I am so underqualified to exist
right now.

INT. SERVER ROOM - SAME TIME

Lena finishes uploading the last of the files onto a secure drive.

LANE (O.S.)
They're inside. We've got one shot
to get that data out.

LENA
I've got it. I'll take the service
tunnel.

Lane looks at her, steady.

LANE
Don't stop for anything.

EXT. COMPOUND - CENTRAL COURTYARD - NIGHT

Ray crouches behind a busted vehicle, rifle aimed.

Masked soldiers flood the yard. Methodical. Precision-trained.

Ray takes them one by one – focused, brutal. No hesitation.

RAY (V.O.)
They wanted obedience.

They got survival.

INT. HQ ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Kevin's cornered by two masked men.

He raises his hands. Grins nervously.

KEVIN
Before you shoot me – may I
interest you in a podcast
opportunity?

They raise their rifles.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
Okay! No pitch! Just vibes!

BOOM – smoke bomb from the ceiling.

Hall drops in from above, firing – takes out both gunmen.

Kevin gasps, collapses.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
You are the most terrifying
guardian angel I've ever seen.

HALL
Get to Ray. He's buying us time.

INT. TUNNEL SYSTEM – NIGHT

Lena runs through the dark passage, clutching the data drive.

Behind her – FOOTSTEPS. FAST.

She turns a corner – and runs directly into Greta.

EXT. COURTYARD – CONTINUOUS

Ray moves to the center, out of cover.

He reloads one final mag. He's been hit. Bleeding. But standing.

RAY
Come on, then. You wanted the
ghost.

Let's finish it.

Out of the smoke: Vargas. Alive. Armored. Smirking.

VARGAS
Let's see what they built you for.

EXT. COMPOUND – COURTYARD – NIGHT

Ray and Vargas circle. Smoke curls. Debris falls around them.

VARGAS

You think they're watching you now?
You think your speech mattered?

RAY

I'm not talking to them anymore.

I'm talking to you.

Vargas lunges. Ray ducks, counters, grabs a broken rifle stock – SMACKS him across the jaw.

Vargas recovers. Bleeding. Laughs.

INT. TUNNEL - SAME TIME

Greta pins Lena against the wall. Knife at her throat.

GRETA

You're carrying something too
dangerous to let go.

LENA

Then you picked the wrong person to
stop.

She knees Greta, grabs her wrist, flips the knife – a quick, clean move. They struggle, brutal, silent.

Lena SLAMS Greta into the tunnel wall.

LENA (CONT'D)

You wanted to control the story?

You just became part of mine.

INT. HQ ROOM - NIGHT

Kevin is zip-tied to a chair by two remaining operatives.

He shifts in his seat, somehow smug.

KEVIN

Fun fact: the livestream's still
going.

And you're on camera, champ.

OPERATIVE

Liar.

KEVIN
Check the red light, genius.

The guard turns – sees the blinking “LIVE” button.

Kevin HEADBUTTS him. Chair flips. Both go down.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
Blaze... out.

EXT. COURTYARD – CONTINUOUS

Ray and Vargas are a blur of fists and fury. Both bleeding.
Both exhausted.

Ray finally gets the upper hand – slams Vargas into a support
beam.

RAY
You had a choice.

VARGAS (GRINNING)
So do you.

He pulls a detonation trigger.

CLICK.

Nothing.

Ray lifts his own remote.

RAY
We swapped those 10 minutes ago.

BOOM – Vargas is thrown back as the perimeter charges ignite.

INT. TUNNEL – MOMENTS LATER

Lena runs with the drive. Greta – bloodied – rises slowly,
watching her disappear.

She doesn't chase.

She radios in:

GRETA
Target escaped.

Pulling back.

BALD MAN (V.O.)
Understood. Package no longer
viable. We're done here.

Greta lowers the radio. Looks out into the smoke.

GRETA (SOFTLY)
Not yet.

EXT. COMPOUND - NIGHT

Ray limps through the wreckage. Kevin catches up, bleeding from the forehead but grinning.

KEVIN
I kicked a guy in the face with a
folding chair.

I'm... not okay with how good that felt.

RAY
Let's find Lena.

KEVIN
She's probably the only one who
knows how to escape your
apocalypse.

EXT. SERVICE ROAD - DAWN

Lena climbs out of a drainage tunnel, dirt-covered and shaking, but alive.

She pulls out the flash drive - now battered, blinking red.

A battered SUV screeches to a halt.

Inside: a friendly tech agent - last survivor from Lane's team.

AGENT
Get in.

We're taking this global.

INT. TEMPORARY BROADCAST VAN - MOMENTS LATER

Lena plugs in the drive.

AGENT

You're sure about this?

LENA

I was never supposed to know any of it.

Now the world has to.

She presses "TRANSMIT ALL."

INT. RAY'S POV - OUTSIDE THE COMPOUND

Ray and Kevin watch smoke rise from what was their last stand.

KEVIN

So that's it?

RAY

That was the beginning.

INT. TV STUDIO - MORNING SHOW - LATER

A stunned anchor holds papers in her hand.

Behind her: leaked footage playing on screens - names, programs, photos, hard truths.

ANCHOR

...if this is verified, it changes everything we know about military oversight and global surveillance programs.

The whistleblowers are still unidentified.

Kevin watches from a hotel room. Silent. Holding a cup of coffee with shaking hands.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - SAME TIME

Ray stands at the edge of the lot, phone in hand.

A message from Lane:

"They're hunting ghosts now. Stay gone."

He deletes it. Looks out at the sunrise.

RAY (V.O.)
You can spend your life running
from what they made you...

INT. MOTEL ROOM - SAME TIME

Kevin opens his laptop. Types into a blank doc:

"Chapter 1: The First Time I Should Have Died."

RAY (V.O.)
...or you can use it to burn the
whole damn script and write your
own.

EXT. SMALL DINER - LATER

Ray, Lena, and Kevin sit at a booth. Quiet. Worn. Alive.

The waitress brings eggs and toast. No one speaks.

Finally-

KEVIN
What now?

Ray sips his coffee.

RAY
We stay off the grid.

Until they try it again.

LENA
And then?

Ray looks at them both.

RAY
Then we hit first.

TO BE CONTINUED... MAYBE.

FADE OUT.

THE END.