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U.S. Patent

PRODUCTION

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PORTION
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ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY BY RUDI O'NEARA

As (f)

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PR

THE RESET

LANGLED
MODULATOR

ACOUSTIC
BRA...

ACOUSTIC TRANSDUCER

HERICAL RF / ACOUSTIC

FIG. 2

FIG. 2

THE RESET

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EXT. HOTEL, PRESIDENTIAL EXIT - DAY

Slate gray skies. Rain slicked streets.

A curved stone wall leads to the glass and steel portico above a grand hotel entrance.

SUPER: FOUR SEASONS, NEW YORK | NEAR FUTURE

Under the portico, three limousines idle. And, next to them, a small gaggle of PRESS and ONLOOKERS wait behind a cordon.

An entourage of stern-looking SECRET SERVICE AGENTS emerges from a door in the stone wall. The presidential exit.

One agent lifts his wrist, speaks:

AGENT
East exit secure.

Behind him strides AMERICAN PRESIDENT SOPHIA MORALES (60s). Dark blue pants suit. Broad grin. Undeniable star power.

She moves swiftly, confidently. Not a hair out of place.

And as she waves to the crowd, another agent watches her every movement, every step, cautiously.

This is SPECIAL AGENT RAY STILLMAN (30s). Formfitting black suit. Ruggedly handsome. Grim and guarded.

Eyes of a hunter.

Morales pauses. Ray slows, scans the crowd before --

POP! POP!

Two quick shots ring out. Chaos ensues.

Ray spins left, leaps toward a balding man with a thick attaché case. But it's too late.

The man, VICE PRESIDENT CLIFTON JAMES (50s), falls forward. A single bullet to the head.

POP!

Two agents grab Morales from behind, hustle her toward the open door to the nearest bulletproof limousine.

POP!

A fourth shot WHISTLES past Ray, strikes an NYPD OFFICER. He buckles instantly. Shot in the back.

POLICE OFFICER
I'm hit! I'm--

POP!

The agent to Morales's left turns toward the gunman, takes a bullet to the chest.

The force throws him fully around. He crumples.

POP!

A sixth shot barely misses Ray. He doesn't even flinch.

THUD.

The limo door SLAMS shut. And an unseen driver throws the car into gear, guns the gas.

As the limousine PEELS out, everything slows.

Behind Ray, another agent rips an Uzi out of a purpose-built briefcase, yanks the stock out, scans the frantic crowd.

As people take cover, scramble for safety, Ray locks eyes with THE SHOOTER (30s). White, male.

For the briefest of seconds, they appear to be mirror images of each other. Same suit. Same sharp cheekbones. Same eyes.

Another agent leaps forward, wrestles the shooter to the ground as Ray stares, dumbstruck.

Frozen in-place. A deer in the headlines.

NATASHA (PRE-LAP)
I can always tell where you are
when you're not here.

HARD CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAWN

Ray wakes with a start amid a tangle of sheets.

In the bed beside him, a young woman lies propped on one elbow staring at him curiously. Almost warily.

NATASHA
There, then. '29. Always.

Meet SPECIAL AGENT NATASHA LAZAREV (30s). A no-nonsense, strait-arrow striver with titanium nerves.

She's Ray's peer. His partner. His fiercest protector.

SUPER: CARLTON HOTEL, BRATISLAVA | TWO YEARS LATER

Across the formerly posh room, a thin flat-panel television fills the space with undulating light.

A news broadcast with a blazing red crawl on mute.

Ray searches the sheets for a remote. Natasha smiles.

NATASHA (CONT'D)
It's okay, Ray.

Ray finally finds the remote, points:

CLICK.

The television goes dark. And, as it does, we can barely make out hints of dawn through the grimy windows.

Amber light struggling to pierce gauzy gray clouds.

RAY
I froze.

NATASHA
You hesitated.

RAY
Same damn thing.

NATASHA
No, Ray. It's not.

Ray turns, eases his bare feet to the floor, runs a calloused hand over his face.

His eyes are elsewhere now. Distant. Cold.

Like they've seen a lot. Too much.

NATASHA (CONT'D)
Could've happened to anyone.

Over his shoulder, a nearly empty bottle of cheap vodka sits open on the nightstand.

One glass, half-full.

RAY
But it didn't. It happened to me.
And it nearly cost her her--

NATASHA
You read the situation.

RAY
And I didn't react.

NATASHA
She wouldn't still want you on her
detail if she didn't think--

RAY
She knows it. Oliver knows it.
Everyone fucking knows it.

NATASHA
Listen. Listen. It's been two
years. You gotta let it go.

She pulls the sheets tighter, sits up against headboard.

NATASHA (CONT'D)
We don't get second chances, Ray.

On her nightstand: a silver cigarette case and lighter.

NATASHA (CONT'D)
We make them. For ourselves.

Ray finally swivels his gaze back toward her.

NATASHA (CONT'D)
Trust isn't a weakness. It's the
only way any of this works.

RAY
I just--

He cuts himself short, walls himself back off. Hardens.

RAY (CONT'D)
Dad used to drill into me, out on
the range, all the goddamn time...

Ray lets his bloodshot eyes slide back to the windows.

RAY (CONT'D)
...that a bullet can travel at
around twenty-six hundred feet per
second in dry air.

Natasha knows the stat, has heard this before, spins, grabs
her cigarette case and lighter, stands.

RAY (CONT'D)
 But the *sound* of gunfire only moves
 at eleven hundred...

NATASHA
 ...twenty-five, uh-huh.

Natasha, used to his stubborn distance, reaches toward the bench at the foot of the bed for her blouse.

And her shoulder-holster.

RAY
 That's why all that matters is what
might happen. What *will* happen.
 (beat)
 And when.

Natasha slips into her blouse, buttons it quickly, throws on her holster, bends, grabs a black skirt from the floor.

NATASHA
 Go ahead. Keep beating yourself up
 forever. See if I care.

She steps into her skirt, ZIPS it almost violently, crosses toward a chair near the door.

NATASHA (CONT'D)
 Because I do.

Ray stares at the sun still straining to rise.

NATASHA (CONT'D)
 Can't help it.

Natasha pulls her jacket from the chair by the door, throws it on, reaches for the doorknob.

NATASHA (CONT'D)
 See ya over there?

Ray nods.

RAY
 Thank you. I'm... sorry.

She twists the knob, cracks the door, looks both ways up and down the hall. Not wanting to be spotted.

NATASHA
 I know.
 (beat)
 Don't be late.

EXT. AIRSTRIP - DAY

As the turbines of Air Force One ROAR to a stop behind them, Ray and Natasha stand shoulder-to-shoulder at the foot of a tall rolling Airstair.

Opposite them: a shambling bear of a man with a thick salt-and-pepper beard.

Unlike theirs, his suit is rumpled and worn.

GORAN
(over-loud, to Ray)
Can't believe she still trusts you.
After all that's... *happened*.

Meet GORAN BALÁZ (40s). A foul-mouthed Slovak fixer with a heavily Vodka-scorched voice.

GORAN (CONT'D)
And sleeping together?

Morales' glossy black limo, aka THE BEAST, slows to a stop before them. Out of it steps another more senior officer.

GORAN (CONT'D)
Tsk. Tsk. Tsk.

The senior officer, SPECIAL AGENT OLIVER FERRIS (late 50s), crosses the tarmac toward Ray and Natasha.

Deeply lined face. Kind eyes. Thinning hair.

And the battered body of a former warrior.

OLIVER
Final venue sweep complete. We've got protesters at spots along both routes. Snipers are in-place on the bridge, along The Square, and at key pinch points.

Ray and Natasha nod wordlessly back as more black-clad agents pour out of gleaming black transport vehicles.

One of the vehicles stands out.

This is the armored Mobile Command and Control Vehicle (or MC2V). Large satellite transmission domes dot the roof.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
Gonna have to keep a tight bubble, jam all comms, and keep clear ceiling until we're safely inside.

The door to Air Force One opens above them. And out steps Morales and her husband, DANIEL COLLINS (50s).

She waves. He squints, out of his element.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
 Dynamo straight to the signing ceremony with Tarasov. Then the deep dive with his cabinet. Two hours. Maybe three at the max. Meanwhile, First Gentleman tours The Palace with Tarasov's wife and The Slovak Prime Minister.

Morales descends the stairs clutching her husband's hand. Same star power. Same swiftness of stride.

Same game-day sense of purpose.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
 Then down to the Main Hall for the formal state dinner with E.U. leaders and members of the Russian delegation, as scheduled.

Oliver steps in next to Goran, eyes him up and down.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
 And, hell's bells man, get that piece of shit suit pressed.

Oliver and Ray share a quick look.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
 (toward Ray)
 To achieve style, begin by affecting clarity. Any guesses?

RAY
 Walt Whitman, sir.

Oliver nods with an almost fatherly pride.

OLIVER
 That's right, kid.

Oliver casts his gaze away to the massive C-17 Globemaster further down the runway.

The plane that just disgorged their entire motorcade.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
All this goes to plan, Dynamo
affects clarity, and we just might
have peace in our time after all.

Morales spies Ray at the foot of the stairs, slows, leans in
toward him as she steps out onto the runway.

MORALES
(to Ray)
Good to see you here, Agent.

Ray stiffens, at attention.

RAY
Thank you, Madam President.

MORALES
Now, let's get to work.

I/E. TRANSPORT/CITY STREETS - DAY

The sun finally having burnt through the clouds, Ray gazes
out the mirrored windows of one of the black transports as
it speeds across a long suspension bridge.

At one end of the bridge, a saucer-shaped structure sits
atop a tower like a Soviet-era UFO.

From its circular roof: momentary glints of light.

Snipers and their spotters.

GORAN
Peace? Bullshit. War is all your
side cares about. More profitable.

RAY
Why the fuck are you here again?

Seated facing Ray, Goran runs a hand through his beard.
Natasha sits next to him, tries to keep her distance.

GORAN
I'm a fixer. I fix.

NATASHA
What are your orders?

GORAN
Grease the skids. Keep tabs on a
member of Tarasov's delegation.
Former FSB. Black ops weirdo.

He falls silent, knows he's already said too much.

GORAN (CONT'D)
 (changing tact)
 This is my country. Not some shitty
 toy chessboard that you big boys
 can fuck around with to your
 heart's content. First Ukraine.
 Then Estonia. Next Finland. Always
 tit for tat. The world needs fewer
 superpowers.

Ray and Natasha just stare at him.

GORAN (CONT'D)
 (toward Ray)
 She talks a good game. But the bar
 is low, with the piss poor
 performance of your last, what,
 four Presidents?
 (toward Natasha)
 And don't get me started on
 Tarasov's old boss. No wonder
 they're trying to keep his grave
 site a fucking state secret.

He looks out the window and up at the sniper nests.

GORAN (CONT'D)
 I don't trust *either* side.

NATASHA
 And that's why CIA trusts you. Just
 another malleable opportunist.

GORAN
 Spoken like a true turncoat.
 (subtitled Russian)
Whatever happened to your accent?

RAY
 She was born in Brooklyn, asshole.

GORAN
 Bah. As far as I'm concerned,
 you're both liabilities.
 (subtitled Slovak)
*Soft-headed Americans. Bunch of
 stupid cowboys.*

Even though he knows exactly what Goran just said, Ray lets
 this roll off his back like water.

Up ahead: narrow cobblestone streets lined with PROTESTORS.

And, at nearly every corner, more SNIPERS and their SPOTTERS track the motorcade from high above.

INT. PRIMATIAL PALACE, MAIN HALL - NIGHT

A vast, ornate hall full of formally-dressed DIGNITARIES seated at gaudily decorated tables.

SUPER: PRIMATIAL PALACE, BRATISLAVA | LATER THAT EVENING

Ray meticulously weaves his way through a tangle of WAITSTAFF in starched red and white uniforms.

Behind him, we can barely make out a tall man at a lectern addressing the applauding throngs in MELLIFLUOUS RUSSIAN.

This is RUSSIAN PRESIDENT VICTOR TARASOV (late 50s). A peace-seeking reformer desperate for change.

TARASOV
(subtitled Russian)
*My recent talks with the duly
elected leaders of the other
nuclear powers around the world...*

Ray pauses, looks to see a bevy of nervous agents sweep the room, lit by the warm glow of crystal chandeliers.

Among them, Natasha (now clad in a jet-black ball gown) discretely lifts a finger to her ear, SPEAKS softly:

NATASHA (V.O.)
(over Ray's earpiece)
Comms check, over.

Ray looks to her, nods. She subtly winks back.

As she does, we hear the VOICE of an unseen ENGLISH TRANSLATOR echo through the hall:

ENGLISH TRANSLATOR (O.S.)
...have made it clear to me that
there is a deep desire to overcome
military conflict at all costs.

Beyond Natasha, Oliver surveys the entire room, every face, with an icy reserve. He's an old hand at this.

OLIVER (V.O.)
(into his wrist)
Confirmed.

While Tarasov continues his REMARKS in Russian, Goran steps up next to Ray, scowls again.

GORAN
 (sotto, to Ray)
 Same horseshit Gorbachev promised
 forty years ago.

Ray EXHALES slowly.

There's only enmity between these two.

ENGLISH TRANSLATOR (O.S.)
 ...and to put an end to this state
 of forever war once and for all.

Ray's eyes drift toward Morales seated at a resplendent
 table opposite the lectern.

She nods deeply, Tarasov's hopeful partner in peace.

TARASOV
 (subtitled Russian)
*Here's to a new-found and long-
 lasting, spirit of cooperation...*

Morales lifts her glass.

GORAN
 Cooperation?
 (beat)
 Weakness.

Ray ignores this, looks to a long table full of pallid,
 over-stuffed Russian dignitaries.

ENGLISH TRANSLATOR (O.S.)
 ...between the Russian Federation
 and the United States of America.

RAY
 (sotto, to Goran)
 Which one? Who are you tracking?

GORAN
 Need to know.

Ray stares at him, stone-faced.

Goran caves:

GORAN (CONT'D)
 Fine. Third down. Gray suit.

Ray spies a balding man in a gray suit, VICTOR MARKOV (60s)
 seated at the table with one hand cupping an oversized white
 translation earpiece.

GORAN (CONT'D)
 Markov. FSB. Psychoacoustics.
 (Subtitled Slovak)
A real piece of work.

Ray grins coldly.

RAY
 Takes one to know one.

Goran nods, impressed.

A YOUNG WAITER (20s) emerges from a passageway across from them clutching a bottle of champagne wrapped in cloth.

GORAN
 What's it say on your flimsy little
 badges again?

Ray tracks Goran's gaze from Markov to the waiter.

As if on-cue, Goran spins to depart.

GORAN (CONT'D)
 Trust and confidence?

The waiter moves toward Morales' table.

GORAN (CONT'D)
 (over his shoulder)
 Two things you lack in the extreme.

As Goran disappears, Ray's eyes stay locked on the waiter.

Markov regards Ray coolly. Reptilian eyes.

TARASOV
 (subtitled Russian)
The whole world is watching...

The waiter pauses, bends to refill a crystal goblet.

He's only feet away from the American President.

Ray lifts his wrist, hesitates.

ENGLISH TRANSLATOR (O.S.)
 ...to see how we are going to act
 in this situation.

Natasha crosses toward Ray with the same worried look.

But before he can speak, a deafening SQUALL OF SOUND blots out every other voice in the room.

Ray lifts a hand to his head. His knees buckle.

But, by all indications, he's the only one who hears it.

EXT. HOTEL, PRESIDENTIAL EXIT - DAY [FLASHBACK]

Slate gray skies. Rain slicked streets.

POP! POP!

Two quick shots ring out.

A younger Ray spins left, leaps toward the Vice President.

PRE-LAP: SMASH!

Fine China hits cold stone.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. PRIMATIAL PALACE, MAIN HALL - NIGHT

Ray, jolted, looks to see a nearby BUSBOY (20s) standing above a dropped tray of full of broken dishes.

NATASHA

Mazel tov.

Ray, stunned, wheels around in a frightened daze.

The DEAFENING WAIL has subsided entirely. As if it was never there in the first place.

Ray looks past Natasha toward the table full of dignitaries.

Markov slips his earpiece into his jacket pocket, stands.

OLIVER (V.O.)

(over Ray's radio)

Dynamo to the podium. All eyes.

Ray, stricken, watches Markov make a beeline for the same passageway the waiter emerged from.

NATASHA

(sotto)

Ray?

The busboy hastily gathers plates from the floor.

NATASHA (CONT'D)

What is it?

Ray STAMMERS, looks right, sees Morales step onto the stage.

RAY
I... I don't--

Ray looks back to the waiter.

NATASHA
Talk to me, Ray.

OLIVER (V.O.)
Move it, kid. Over.

Oliver's voice seems to jolt Ray back into his body.

MORALES
(from the lectern)
Mister President, I want to thank
you again for the hospitality we
have encountered at every turn
since our arrival in Bratislava.

The waiter brushes past Oliver.

Ray looks to Natasha.

Her face says it all. *What's wrong? What's wrong?*

Ray thrusts a hand inside his jacket, speeds past Natasha,
weaves his way quickly through the tables.

OLIVER (V.O.)
Stillman? What are you--

Ray lifts his wrist, HISSES:

RAY
Playing a hunch, sir.

The waiter sees him, speeds back toward the passageway.

From the lectern, Morales continues unaware:

MORALES
I know I'm not alone when I say we
stand at the precipice, on the
brink of a *momentous* decision.

Her unseen RUSSIAN TRANSLATOR continues:

RUSSIAN TRANSLATOR (O.S.)
(subtitled Russian)
*Do we embrace peace through
cooperation? Or do we go it alone,
no matter the cost?*

The waiter quickly disappears.

Ray hurries after him. Oliver BARKS:

OLIVER (V.O.)
Stillman, stand down.

RAY
(on the run)
Sir, no sir.

MORALES
For I'm sure we can all agree...

PASSAGEWAY:

Ray slows before the exit, his heart racing and his body running on pure instinct. And fear of failure.

MORALES (CONT'D)
...that our children and our
children's children deserve a life
unburdened by terror, trauma,
suffering, and grief.

He pops his shoulder holster open, readies to draw.

Across the room, Natasha looks to Oliver, desperate.

OLIVER (V.O.)
Stillman, hold.

MORALES
A life, in other words, worth
living. Together. As one.

Ray pulls his sidearm, CLICKS the slide, ducks through the curtains, races into -

HALL:

A gold-gilt hallway lined with service carts covered in white tablecloths. China. Silver. Crystal.

OLIVER (V.O.)
That's an *order*, son.

A PAUNCHY CHEF drops a glistening chafing dish he's holding. Ray watches it fall.

CLANG!

And then, over Ray's earpiece, a MAN'S VOICE slithers in over heavy FEEDBACK:

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
 (thick Russian accent)
 Go ahead. Use your training.

Ray taps his earpiece, takes off running dead-out.

Other WAITSTAFF dodge him, SCREAM, duck out of the way.

KITCHEN:

Ray rounds a corner, slides to a stop inside a massive impromptu prep kitchen.

Everyone freezes. All eyes fall to him.

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
 You will only fail yet again.

Ray, frantic, weaves through the crowd, gun drawn.

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
 You know this to be true.

Ray ducks around a tall rolling rack full of dishes under silver cloches.

In the distance: the same waiter from earlier stands with his back to us, just beyond an open window.

The curtains between he and Ray flutter slightly.

RAY
 Freeze! Hands where I can--

The waiter whips around, arms up, clutching an unopened cloth-wrapped bottle of champagne.

For the briefest of seconds, he, like the shooter in New York, resembles Ray in every way.

POP! POP!

The sound of GUNFIRE rattles Ray. But it's not of the now. It's purely a figment. Of the past.

The world tilts on its axis. Ray's hands tremble.

The waiter now looks different. Thinner. Almost gaunt. With haunted, sunken eyes.

WAITER
 (subtitled Russian)
This isn't the--

The curtains briefly obscure his face again.

Ray charges at him, lifts his pistol, SMASHES it butt-end first into his temple full-force.

The blow sends him reeling, unconscious, to the ground where he lands with a heavy CRASH.

Broken glass flies every which way as Ray, stunned, stares at himself there, bleeding on the floor.

OLIVER (PRE-LAP)
He was fucking one of us!

INT. PRIMATIAL PALACE, ANTEROOM - LATER

Oliver paces inside a cramped anteroom jammed full of surveillance equipment.

An impromptu command and control center.

OLIVER
A member of Tarasov's fucking detail! Ilyin, Vladimir. Lieutenant Colonel. Former FSB. Then Wagner.
(beat)
Vetted and approved. Not some hayseed, fly by the seat of his pants, hair-trigger--

RAY
Sir, I just--

OLIVER
What the *hell* is wrong with you, kid? I give you a second shot, a chance to make good, and this is the way you repay me?

RAY
I swear I saw--

Oliver lifts a hand to shut him up.

OLIVER
Thank fucking God POTUS didn't see you or it'd be your ass *and* mine.

Ray looks to the floor, humiliated.

And entirely unable to explain.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
If she hadn't *demand*ed to have you back on her detail, if she didn't have faith in you after you fucking froze in New York, you'd be up to your eyeballs in serial numbers on fake fucking bills back in D.C. for the duration. You hear me?

Ray nods, saying nothing.

Oliver, exasperated, softens slightly.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
Listen. You hesitate once, fine. It fucking happens. But not now. Not here. Please, Ray. The stakes are too goddamn high. You hear me?

Oliver steps up, places a meaty palm on his shoulder.

Paternal, but in a scolding way.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
Not this time. Not when the world's on the fucking brink.

Ray nods, tries to regain his composure.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
Again.

Oliver gives his shoulder a firm squeeze, turns to go.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
Go back to the hotel. Rest up.
(deep breath)
I need you and the whole fucking team two hundred and ten percent on-point tomorrow, yeah?

Ray looks up just as Oliver pushes open a thick wooden door to another mirrored hallway.

In the distance, Markov stands chatting with another RUSSIAN DELEGATE in an ill-fitting blue suit.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
And be sure to swap out your earpiece before we hit The Square.

Markov turns, looks Ray in the eyes.

Pure silent menace.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
Control says they kept dropping
your signal. Too much interference
from all the fucking mirrors.

RAY
(eyes on Markov)
Yessir.

KA-THUMP.

Oliver pulls the door shut behind himself.

NATASHA (PRE-LAP)
As Lenin used to say...

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Back in the same hotel room from earlier, Natasha crosses her stockinged feet on the edge of the desk across from Ray.

SUPER: CARLTON HOTEL, BRATISLAVA | THE NEXT MORNING

She holds her silver cigarette case in one hand and has a half-smoked cigarette dangling from her lips.

NATASHA
*There are decades where nothing
happens...*

Ray meticulously cleans his sidearm looking like he hasn't slept a wink.

NATASHA (CONT'D)
...and weeks where decades happen.
(beat)
Don't let it get to you.

She takes a draw from her cigarette, doffs ash into a tray on the desk, picks up a small hand-held radio.

Beyond them both, the sun is just rising. Bright blue sky.

RAY
No, you don't understand. He was...
I thought he--

She CLICKS on the radio. "WATCHING THE WHEELS" by John Lennon and Yoko Ono kicks in, mid-stream.

RAY (CONT'D)
Never mind.

Ray reaches across the table for a bottle of vodka, takes a prodigious pull. Medicine.

Natasha narrows her eyes, lowers her feet to the floor, leans in closer.

Not for a kiss, just to look him in the eyes.

NATASHA
You were just doing your job.

He takes another gulp, sets the bottle down, CLICKS the radio off, gets back to the task at hand.

RAY
Tell that to Oliver.

NATASHA
I did.

Natasha pulls her blouse closed, buttons it.

RAY
And Lenin didn't say that.
(beat)
Marx did.

Ray quickly reassembles his cleaned weapon with a studied precision. Like he's done it a zillion times.

RAY (CONT'D)
Cribbed it from the Bible.

Natasha stabs her cigarette out.

NATASHA
It's only natural, Ray. It--

Ray lifts a hand, cuts her off.

Ray reaches out, nudges the folded cleaning cloth on the desk before him a tenth of an inch. Like he can't help it.

Like he's compelled.

Natasha just watches him. Her face shifts slowly from compassionate concern to burgeoning doubt.

Worry that he, that they, might be a liability.

NATASHA
It's just... nerves.

Ray doesn't respond.

She bites her lip, looks away.

NATASHA

Plus, it's been two years.
 (off his look)
 Don't you think it's time to just
 let it go already? Stop kicking
 your own ass and heal.

RAY

That's what the vodka's for.

This is not the response she's looking for.

INT. U.S. EMBASSY, BRIEFING ROOM - MORNING

An ornate former ballroom inside the recently renovated American Ambassador's residence.

A handful of similarly-clad agents cluster around a long conference table clutching steaming mugs of shitty coffee.

All of them regard Ray warily. Like an unwanted variable.

Oliver stands at the head of the table. His shoulder holster juts from his jacket.

OLIVER

Snipers from both sides will be
 arrayed all along The Square as
 discussed. We'll all be sharing the
 same frequency, so keep the
 chitchat to a minimum.

He side-eyes Ray briefly. Ray looks away.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

The protestors will be blocked by a
 cordon. But Dynamo wants to engage,
 hear them out. They're un-vetted,
 so all ears and eyes, yeah?

Seated opposite Ray, Natasha lets her eyes linger on Ray
 moment too long. Concerned still. Almost suspicious.

He studiously ignores her.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

Then it's back here for dinner with
 Mister and Misses Tarasov. Same
 start time as last night at The
 Palace. Any questions?

Not a one.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
Alright, dismissed.

Everyone stands, moves toward the ornate double doors.

Oliver veers toward Ray.

RAY
Sir?

Oliver wags his head. *Hang back.*

Across the room, Natasha pauses briefly. Then she speeds back up, threads into the crowd of exiting officers.

Behind Oliver, another set of doors open.

In walks Goran.

Ray GROANS.

RAY (CONT'D)
The fuck is he doing here?

Goran thrusts Ray an earpiece with a clear curlicue cord running down to a black box about the size of a matchbox.

GORAN
Special replacement from Special
Activities Center.

Ray roughly snatches away the device as Natasha disappears through the doors behind him.

GORAN (CONT'D)
No more feedback.

Ray's face says it all. *Fuck off.*

OLIVER
And no more nonsense. Especially
while we're on The Square.

Goran leans in toward Ray.

GORAN
(hushed)
Apparently, everyone deserves a
second chance.

This stings. Ray can't hide it.

Goran spins on his heels, turns to go.

GORAN (CONT'D)
Do svidaniya!

Oliver reaches across himself to the conference table, grabs a crystal bowl full of red, white and blue jellybeans.

He shakes the bowl toward Ray. In it, beans CLINK.

Wry smile.

OLIVER
 Sorry I flew off the handle.

Ray pockets the earpiece.

RAY
 You didn't, sir. You--

OLIVER
 So what? You iced-up. Same damn thing your Daddy did. Back in the day. Saved my ass, in Kandahar.

Ray cocks his head.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
 One more step and that IED would've punched both our tickets. Only wish I'd been able to pay him back before he...

Oliver trails off, scoops out a jellybean, nips it between his teeth.

RAY
 Sir?

OLIVER
 Anyway, pretty soon we'll all be able to tell our grand kids we were here when it happened.
 (beat)
 When the first female American President finally put the nuclear genie back in the bottle for good.

Oliver grabs another handful of beans, dumps them into his jacket pocket, shoots Ray a sly wink.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
 Collaborator.
 (MORE)

OLIVER (CONT'D)

(beat)

Used to be such a dirty word. Well, maybe we all ought to give it a shot every now and again, yeah?

Oliver heads for the doors Goran just exited through.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

And, for both our sakes, consider the *ramifications* of fraternizing with fellow agents.

THUMP. Oliver slams the doors behind himself.

OLIVER (O.S.)

(through the door)

Cleaner that way. For you both.

Ray reaches down, anxiously tugs at his tie.

Can't help himself. Still a bundle of raw nerves.

EXT. HODŽOVO SQUARE - DAY

Amid the CHANTING of PROTESTORS beyond a steel cordon, a cluster of twenty plus slow-moving DIGNITARIES crosses the broad square toward a circular fountain.

Unlike the day before, the sky above is cloudless and blue.

In the distance, a line of armored limousines idle flanked on both sides by troop transport trucks and various military support vehicles.

And in front of them all sits the hulking mobile command and control vehicle (or MC2V) from earlier.

Satellite dishes and domes dot the roof.

Slowly, the dignitaries make their way toward the vehicles as a twin-turbine helicopter WHOOSHES overhead.

En route to landing pad behind the Presidential Palace.

At the center the pack, Tarasov walks shoulder-to-shoulder with Morales. He looks ecstatic. Thrilled.

A man of purpose, knowing full-well the stakes are high.

Between them, their TRANSLATORS (both bald, one with a thick mustache and one with a scraggly beard) do everything they can to keep up.

And, on opposite sides of entourage: Ray and Natasha scan every person, every detail. On high alert.

Oliver follows them keeping a wary watch.

Behind him: stately Palaces upon which unseen Russian and American snipers track every step.

Snipers track them from rooftops.

Glints flash in Ray's periphery.

Eventually, the pack slows at a cluster of PROTESTERS gathered around a YOUNG GIRL (10) in a red dress.

Ever the charmer, Morales makes a beeline for the girl, pauses, reaches out a hand.

A ROAR goes up from the crowd.

Ray lifts his watch. In the date window: the number 31.

Over Ray's earpiece, OLIVER'S VOICE crackles:

OLIVER (V.O.)
Dynamo hold.

MORALES
(to the girl)
Well, hello there.

The young girl reaches up, shakes Morales's hand, eyes averted to the cobbles.

Ray lowers his wrist, looks past the young girl and is shocked to see a familiar face amongst the protestors.

It's the waiter again.

AKA: VLADIMIR ILYIN (30s) an undercover member of Tarasov's personal security detail.

OLIVER (V.O.)
Steady.

Everyone stops.

For the briefest of seconds, the skies above go gray. The cobbles, once dry, are suddenly rain-slicked.

Just like in New York.

Tarasov BELLOWS something we can't quite make out to the girl in Slovak.

The sound rouses Ray.

The sky turns instantly back to bright blue.

Ilyin, wearing a light beige suit, has a reflex camera slung around his neck.

He nods discretely toward Ray. *Fuck you, Yankee hothead.*

His eyes, like Ray's, are cold. The eyes of a hunter.

More BANTER in Slovak is drowned out by another brief moment of BUZZING FEEDBACK over Ray's earpiece. Then:

OLIVER (V.O.)
Clear lines of sight, over.

One of the translators MUTTERS something to Morales.

She smiles, nods.

MORALES
Of course you do. We want the same.

Ray shakes his head, moves right, tries to clear his mind.

A nearby PRESIDENTIAL PHOTOGRAPHER (mid-50s) stumbles into his path, blocks his way.

PRESIDENTIAL PHOTOGRAPHER
Can't--

Ray steadies him, pulls him aside, ducks past him.

As he moves, Ray's eyes are on a small portable radio dangling next to the camera at Ilyin's chest.

It's old-school. Something from the 60s. Outdated. Strange.

TARASOV
(subtitled Slovak)
*What do you think of Madame
President's visit?*

The young girl STUTTERS nervously.

Tarasov surges toward her, runs a hand over the top of her head as if to calm her, draw her out.

Everyone tenses. Even the protestors.

The young girl looks up.

YOUNG GIRL
 (subtitled Slovak)
*It is good that Madame President
 has come.*

Ray locks eyes with Ilyin again.

On Ilyin's face, a hint of a black eye seems to have been clumsily covered up. Where Ray cold-cocked him.

Tarasov's VOICE briefly breaks through the tension:

TARASOV
 (subtitled Slovak)
I could not agree more.

Ilyin, almost as if commanded remotely, grips the camera, lifts it slowly.

RAY
 (anxious)
 Control?

Oliver CHIMES IN calmly:

OLIVER (V.O.)
 Easy now.

Natasha looks to Ray, then to Ilyin, then back. Her face says it all: *What the fuck are you--*

Morales' translator WHISPERS into her ear. She smiles.

MORALES
 Exactly. We're here to talk to each other instead of *about* each other for a change.

Nearby, Morales' photographer fires his DSLR. Ray turns.

More STATIC over his earpiece. Everything slows down.

Ray looks back to Ilyin as he removes the lens cap.

Instead of glass: matte black metal.

Twin barrels.

Ray rakes in a breath.

Everything speeds back up.

All instinct, Ray thrusts a hand into his jacket, dashes through the crowd toward Morales.

OLIVER (V.O.)
(over the earpiece)
I said hold. Stand your--

RAY
Shooter! Shooter! Shooter!

BANG. BANG.

Ilyin hits the shutter, fires twice.

Ray LEAPS into the breach, arms thrust forward. But it's too late. Milliseconds too late.

Two shots. Morales staggers. Blood mists the air.

Ilyin drops the camera, grabs the radio, presses a button.

High above, SNIPER FIRE rips through Tarasov and his aides.

Bullets TUMBLE and WHISTLE through the air.

The crowd scatters, SCREAMING.

From across the square, a single troop transport truck speeds over the cobbles toward the dignitaries.

Ray, on one knee, pulls his sidearm, fires once:

BANG!

The bullet barely misses the petrified young girl, clips Ilyin in the shoulder.

The armored vehicle SCREECHES to a stop behind Ilyin.

A door RUMBLES open. Inside: a single RUSSIAN SOLDIER.

And, in the shadows: Markov.

He points a hand-held dish-like device directly at Ray.

The same DEAFENING WAVE. Again.

Ray buckles.

EXT. HOTEL, PRESIDENTIAL EXIT - DAY [FLASHBACK]

Slate gray skies. Rain slicked streets.

BANG!

The Vice President falls.

BANG!

Another shot rings out. But Ray doesn't budge, can't react.

Frozen. Paralyzed by a TEMPEST OF NOISE.

END FLASHBACK.

EXT. HODŽOVO SQUARE - DAY

The Russian Soldier LEAPS out of the vehicle, YANKS Ilyin with him up and into the transport, SLAMS the door shut.

The THUNDEROUS ROAR suddenly ceases.

OLIVER (V.O.)
(barely audible)
Dynamo down! Repeat, Dynamo down!

More sniper rounds THUD and PING into the vehicle's shell.

But they barely make an impression. The steel is too thick.

Ray fires for the tires: BANG. BANG. BANG.

To no avail. The bulletproof vehicle PEELS out, bathing the stunned survivors in a cloud of blue smoke.

Ray, eyes narrow slits, spins.

OLIVER (V.O.)
Hold your fire! Hold your--

Stunned but uninjured, Natasha turns, holsters her weapon, rushes toward Dynamo.

She and Tarasov lie on the cobbles (Morales on her back, Tarasov on his chest) surrounded by armed agents.

Both are slowly bleeding out.

NATASHA
(into her wrist)
We need transport ASAP!

INT. LIMOUSINE - MOMENTS LATER

In the back of The Beast, Ray cradles the President in his arms while central Bratislava whips by.

Over the HOWL of the engine, sirens BLARE.

MORALES

(weak)

And everything was going...

She looks to Ray. Her blouse and his shirt are both bathed in blood. Her blood.

Natasha quickly RIPS open Morales's jacket, finds a small wound oozing blood.

MORALES (CONT'D)

...so well.

Ray nods, doing his best to stem the tidal wave of self-recrimination building inside himself.

RAY

I'm so sorry I--

NATASHA

(to Ray)

Hurry.

Ray jolts to attention, RIPS at Morales' sleeve, quickly applies pressure, GRABS a packet of sulfa powder, TEARS it open with his teeth, dumps it into her chest wound.

Anyone else would scream bloody murder. But, instead, Morales just keeps staring up at Ray while Natasha tries to help staunch the bleeding.

It just won't stop.

MORALES

You did all that you--

RAY

No, ma'am. I--

Natasha looks to him. *We're losing her...*

The unseen driver SQUEALS through a long bend as car horns BELLOW and WHINE.

MORALES

It's--

A faint COUGH overtakes her. Blood runs from the corner of her mouth. Her face, normally tan, is ghostly white.

MORALES (CONT'D)

My--

NATASHA
 He's safe, ma'am. The First
 Gentleman is safe.

INT. CENTRAL BRATISLAVA HOSPITAL - AFTERNOON

Who knows how much later, Ray and Natasha pace amongst a handful of their fellow agents. She smokes nervously.

NATASHA
 (sotto)
 What do you mean you *fucking* saw
 him? Where?

RAY
 At The Place. He's the one I...

Ray trails off, eyes averted to the pale green floor.

RAY (CONT'D)
 Ilyin, Vladimir. From Tarasov's
 detail. Vetted. Approved.
 (beat)
 I could've stopped him. Last night.
 I Could have...

Ray looks away. Outside the windows, the blue sky has faded to a lifeless pale gray.

RAY (CONT'D)
 Fuck.

NATASHA
 Stop.

Ray's dead eyes dart to nearby wall clock.

RAY
 And that sonofabitch. Markov. What
 the fuck was that thing?

NATASHA
 What thing?

RAY
 In the van. The transport.

Natasha's face blanches. She has no idea what he means.

NATASHA
 I don't understand.

Ray gestures. *Keep it down.*

RAY

The fuck is taking so long?! We gotta get wheels-up and out.

Natasha, regarding Ray cautiously, crushes her cigarette out in a standing ashtray.

RAY (CONT'D)

For all we know, this could be a *fucking* coup.

She leans closer, urgently WHISPERS.

NATASHA

What are you even-- Who is Markov?

RAY

He was in the fucking--

In the distance, a pair of doors open. Every head swivels.

It's Oliver in the doorway. His arms are crossed. And his face says it all.

We lost her. She's gone.

Oliver looks to Ray, nods gravely. There are no words.

OLIVER

The oath has already been administered.

A collective GASP goes up from all assembled.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

Sparrow is ordering all diplomatic staff, the entire embassy, on lock down ASAP. Essential staff out now.

Heavily-armed MPs stream in from behind him.

Oliver strides forward. Even he has blood on his hands.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

Armed convoys will escort you in waves to The Carlton for individual interrogation. Until then, not a word to a *fucking* soul.

Oliver pauses.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

Tarasov's dead. Half of his cabinet too. No one's taken responsibility.

(MORE)

OLIVER (CONT'D)
 Commandos have stormed Varda. NATO
 P-9s have spotted Russian nuclear
 subs leaving Murmansk.

(beat)
 So much for world peace. Could very
 well be all-out war. Again.

Natasha takes an instinctive half step back from Ray. He
 doesn't notice. His mind is elsewhere. Reeling.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
 Thankfully, Tarasov's Chief of
 Staff in the clear. And we've got
 open lines of communication with
 him and what's left of his team at
 The Kremlin. Joint Chiefs have
 upped readiness to Defcon 3.

(deep breath)
 Either this is a stunt pulled by a
 bunch of mercenaries aiming to stop
 the peace talks, the nuclear draw
 down. Or it's a full-on attempt at
 overthrow. A military coup.

Oliver steps between Ray and Natasha. Ray looks away.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
 First plane's wheels-up at 0800.

Oliver places a hand on Ray's shoulder again. Ray finally
 looks to him, brimming with guilt.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
 (toward Ray)
 We need to get to the bottom of who
 the *fuck* was behind this.

Oliver grips Ray's shoulder.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
 Dismissed.

Everyone nods, trudges toward the pack of MPs by the doors.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
 (gravely)
 Donovan wants a word.

Ray nods.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
 Don't make me regret covering your
 ass for your Daddy's sake.

INT. HOSPITAL, CONFERENCE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Oliver rushes Ray into a drab, dimly-lit conference room.

RAY
Here?! You've gotta be--

Oliver SLAMS the door shut behind them.

OLIVER
Agent Stillman, I presume you know
Station Chief Donovan.

Ray looks to see a tall, trim man with a coiffed mane of bright white hair seated at the far end of the table.

This is CIA Station Chief JACK DONNOVAN (late 40s).

DONNOVAN
Who the *fuck* was he?

Goran from earlier stands right behind him, arms crossed.

RAY
(to Oliver, re: Goran)
Get him OUT of here! He's a dirty
fucking mole playing both sides
against the middle!

Donnovan abruptly stands.

DONNOVAN
Sit!

Ray looks to Oliver. He nods, pulls out a chair.

RAY
Yessir.
(beat)
As if every inch of this shithole
isn't already bugged to the nth.

Donnovan stays standing.

DONNOVAN
Who was he? The shooter.

RAY
You tell me.

DONNOVAN
Unless you wanna be dragged outta
here in manacles, I suggest you--

RAY
 (toward Oliver)
 A part of Tarasov's fucking detail.
 Approved and confirmed.

Donnovan reaches a hand into his jacket, produces a small hand-held recorder, SLAMS it onto the table, presses play.

Over the recorder, a MAN'S VOICE in speaks in heavily-accented English:

MAN'S VOICE (RECORDED)
 (thick Russian accent)
 Go ahead. Use your training.

Rays face falls.

RAY
 I swear, I--

MAN'S VOICE (RECORDED)
 You will only fail yet again.

Ray tries to stand. Oliver presses him back down firmly.

Donnovan violently hits pause.

DONNOVAN
 Don't make me ask you again.

Ray points to Goran.

RAY
 Fucking ask him!

Oliver spins Ray's chair around.

OLIVER
 So help me God...

GORAN
 (calmly)
 Arrest him.

RAY
 Don't tell me you're gonna listen
 to this fucking two-timer!

GORAN
Liaison.

Donnovan snatches up the recorder, pockets it.

DONNOVAN
 (to Ray)
 Pack your things.

RAY
 Sir, CIA has no jurisdiction over--
 Donovan turns to depart, all-business.

DONNOVAN (CONT'D)
 (to Oliver)
 Expect a full inquiry. And I want
 his discharge papers in-hand by the
 time we touch down at Andrews.
 Together, he and Goran head for the door.

DONNOVAN (CONT'D)
 (to Ray)
 You could've stopped this goddamn
 zealot, whoever the *fuck* he was.
 (beat)
Again!

BANG!

Donnovan slams the door behind himself.
 Oliver lets go of Ray's chair, steps back, SIGHS.

OLIVER
 One last rodeo and they put you out
 to pasture for good.
 Ray swivels slowly around toward him.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
 Used to think I'd sooner die than
 give up this deal. But the rules
 keep changing. Players keep
 switching sides. Just can't keep it
 straight any more.

RAY
 Sir?

OLIVER
 (way too calm)
 How's your golf game, kid?

Ray pushes his chair out, stands.

RAY
 Sir, I--

Ray cuts himself off, struggles to make sense of everything he's seen. Everything he's experienced. His secret truth.

Oliver, oddly resigned, turns to go.

OLIVER

Because I think we're *both* about to
have a *lot* of time on our hands.

INT. HOTEL, LOBBY - EVENING

Two burly MPs rush Ray through the once palatial lobby of the Carlton Hotel.

In the distance, Natasha stands amid a cluster of other agents. At their feet: hastily packed rolling bags.

Oddly, Goran is amongst them. Right next to Natasha.

NATASHA

(to Goran)

I don't know what to believe. I'm
worried he's spinning out. Fixated
on what happened in New York.

Goran just nods.

GORAN

(subtitled Russian)

*This is why field agents shouldn't
fraternize, yes? Don't let him take
you down with him.*

Ray looks to them both. He wants to call out. Tell her everything. But Goran's there. His sworn enemy.

She nods slowly. *It's gonna be--*

One of the MPs grabs Ray by the arm, hustles him toward a bank of elevators.

Natasha and Goran just watch him go.

GORAN (CONT'D)

(back to English)

Donnovan wants him out by the time
you're back in D.C..

He steps slowly away, sans suitcase.

GORAN (CONT'D)

(subtitled Slovak)

But you didn't hear it from me.

INT. HOTEL, ELEVATOR CORRIDOR - SAME TIME

One of the MPs guarding Ray reaches out, stabs the call button just as another pair of gold doors RUMBLE open.

Out steps Markov.

Neither MP clocks him. Why would they?

But, as Markov calmly strides back toward the lobby, Ray locks him in his furious gaze.

DING.

The doors before him glide open.

One of the MPs gestures for Ray to enter.

But, instead, Ray STABS a hand toward the man's holster, his YANKS away his sidearm, SPINS.

Everything slows down.

As both MPs struggle to react, Ray lifts the MPs pistol, CHARGES across the marble toward Markov.

INT. HOTEL, LOBBY - SAME TIME

Markov stops dead, turns.

His face exudes an eerie, imperious calm.

Ray skids to a stop, takes aim, grips the trigger.

Everything speeds back up.

RAY

Who the fuck are you?

Behind Ray, the second MPs levels his sidearm.

MP

Drop the weapon!

MARKOV

(thick Russian accent)

Your comrade... in arms.

His voice is instantly familiar. The same voice from his earpiece in The Palace, from Donovan's recording.

Ray's face blanches.

In the distance, Natasha slowly spins toward the scene.

BANG. BANG.

Two shots ring out. But they're not from Ray's gun.

NATASHA

No!

One bullet hits Ray between the shoulder blades. The second grazes his thigh, kicks out a thick mist of blood.

Markov just stares as Ray, still gripping his sidearm but, again, not having fired a shot, falls.

PRE-LAP: SMASH!

Fine China hits cold stone.

INT. PRIMATIAL PALACE, MAIN HALL - NIGHT

Ray, rocked, finds himself standing again inside the vast Palace from the night before.

The same busboy stands above the same dropped tray.

NATASHA

Mazel--

Natasha pauses. Same black ball gown.

RAY

The ffffff...

In a daze, Ray pads his chest, looks to his right leg. No blood. No powder burns. No bullet wounds.

The light shifts, dims. Brightens. The glinting mirrored walls fade briefly to a sea of static.

Like a demagnetized video recording. A corrupted timeline.

Ray looks frantically past Natasha toward the table full of Russian dignitaries. Their silhouettes jump and judder.

Then there he is again: Markov.

OLIVER (V.O.)

(over Ray's earpiece)

Dynamo to the podium. All eyes.

Ray swiftly whips around to see his President, very much alive again, step toward the stage.

RAY

Oh my god.

No pixels. No static. Still, Ray can't trust his eyes.

NATASHA
(sotto)
What is it?

Ray turns again, looks past her toward Markov as he stands, slips his translation earpiece into his pocket.

RAY
YOU.

Ray THRUSTS a hand into his jacket, grabs his sidearm, charges past Natasha.

NATASHA
Ray?

Beyond Natasha, Ilyin - the shooter - brushes past Oliver, tracks Ray with his dead eyes.

OLIVER (V.O.)
Stillman?

Natasha watches Ray pass.

OLIVER (V.O.)
What are you doing?

This time, Ray doesn't answer.

RAY
The fuck is happening?

Natasha steps closer, tries to cut him off.

NATASHA
Talk to me, Ray.

Ray hesitates, doesn't reach for his weapon.

OLIVER (V.O.)
Move it, kid. Over.

Ray looks to Ilyin, sees him brush past Oliver.

Ray's eyes dart back to Natasha.

RAY
Whatever happens, I--

In the distance, Ilyin picks up the pace, slips into the passageway. Ray rushes after him.

OLIVER
Stillman, stand down.

Ray lifts his wrist, on the move.

RAY
Sir, no sir.

MORALES
...I'm sure we can all agree...

PASSAGEWAY:

Ray skids to a stop, his heart racing and his mind spinning.

MORALES (CONT'D)
...that our children and our...

Ray stabs a hand inside his jacket, pulls his sidearm, ducks through the curtains and into -

HALL:

The same gaudy hall lined with rolling service carts draped in white tablecloths.

OLIVER (V.O.)
That's an order, son.

The chef. The same dish.

This time, Ray catches it. Hands it back.

The waiter just stares.

And then, as before: FEEDBACK.

MARKOV (V.O.)
Go ahead. Use your training.

Ray sprints dead-ahead.

The same clusters of stunned waitstaff duck out of the way, SCREAM as he passes.

KITCHEN:

Ray, clutching his pistol, rounds a corner, slides to a stop inside the same prep kitchen.

MARKOV (V.O.)
You will only fail yet again.

Ray bobs and weaves through the crowd.

RAY
Oh, yeah? Watch me.

Ray lunges around the same rolling rack, sees Ilyin again there - standing beyond the billowing curtain.

But, as Ray takes aim: a CYCLONE OF PIERCING NOISE.

Ray, in searing pain, looks left, sees Markov angling the same parabolic transmission device directly at him.

EXT. HOTEL, PRESIDENTIAL EXIT - DAY [FLASHBACK]

Slate gray skies. Rain slicked streets.

Glitches. Pixels. Noise.

POP!

A single shot tumbles past Ray. Like a digital mirage.

THUD!

A limo door slams shut. And an unseen driver throws the car into gear, guns the gas.

The limousine PEELS out.

Ray turns, looks to the shooter.

His face is instantly familiar once again.

This time, it's Ilyin. Not Ray.

The same cold eyes. The same blank expression.

PRE-LAP: SMASH!

Fine China hits cold stone.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. PRIMATIAL PALACE, MAIN HALL - NIGHT

Ray, hyperventilating, finds himself standing yet again inside the very same Palace.

Dignitaries double and flicker. Shape-shifting phantoms comprised of shimmering pixels.

This time, without hesitation, Ray CHARGES at Natasha, DRAGS her with him across the room full of glitching dignitaries.

Ahead of them: Markov resolves, clarifies, hurries away.

NATASHA (CONT'D)
The hell are you--

RAY
(sotto)
Find Goran. Grill him.

NATASHA
What?!

Ray, clearly in pain, pushes Natasha toward the main entrance, slips a hand inside his jacket for his pistol.

RAY
The command center. Quick as you can. Whatever happens. Hurry.

She slows, confused.

OLIVER (V.O.)
Stillman?

Ray doesn't respond.

Ilyin disappears into the passageway.

MORALES
...I'm sure we can all agree...

Ray finally pulls his sidearm, runs.

PASSAGEWAY:

Seeming to count the seconds, Ray slows.

Natasha looks back at him as she makes her way across the room and toward the entrance.

MORALES (CONT'D)
...deserve a life unburdened by
terror, trauma, suffering, and...

Ray arms his weapon, bolts.

HALL:

Ray rushes into the same long hallway full of service carts.

OLIVER (V.O.)
That's an order!

The chef drops dish. BANG. Ray kicks it away, hurries on.

Then: the same FEEDBACK.

MARKOV (V.O.)
Go ahead. Do your--

Ray lifts his wrist, BARKS:

RAY
I know who you *fucking* are,
asshole!

KITCHEN:

Ray BLASTS into the kitchen.

MARKOV (V.O.)
You will only fail yet again.

Ray CHARGES toward the rolling carts, skids to a stop.

RAY
Not this time.

Ray LUNGES out from behind the cart, takes aim.

But Ilyin is gone. Just the same open window and the gauzy curtains blowing in the wind.

RAY (CONT'D)
This can't be...

Finally, it clicks. *The window!*

Ray LEAPS toward it, ducks his head out, takes aim.

EXT. PRIMATIAL PALACE, FAÇADE - NIGHT

Ray sweeps his weapon down, then up.

Above, a silhouetted figure climbs quickly.

Ray fires twice: BANG. BANG.

One hit, one miss.

The second bullet ricochets across the stone just as Ilyin heaves himself, bleeding, up and onto the roof.

Over HEAVY STATIC:

NATASHA (V.O.)
Shots fired! Shots--

Ray SLAMS his pistol back into his holster, RIPS off his jacket, THROWS open the window, CLIMBS out.

As he LEAPS from column to column, window to window, the steady FEEDBACK persists.

Over it all:

MARKOV (V.O.)
Just as his comrades abandoned him
in Lviv, so shall yours here.

Ray squints upward, lunges toward a narrow ledge, dangles precariously, pulls his body higher.

MARKOV (V.O.)
Again and again and again.

From above: the sound of FOOTFALL. But no gunfire.

MARKOV (V.O.)
Until you finally prove your worth.

Ray scrambles up a copper drain pipe, pauses, reaches his hand back, pulls his weapon again, bites down on the top of the barrel, draws a quick breath.

MARKOV (V.O.)
Once and for all.

Using all his strength, Ray HURLS himself over the ledge and onto the roof.

EXT. PRIMATIAL PALACE, ROOF - NIGHT

CRUNCH.

Ray lands on the gravel, spins, drops his gun, catches it with one hand, takes aim at a nearby stationary silhouette.

He seems to be clutching something at waist level. A gun?

MARKOV
(aloud)
A world without conflict is chaos.

Ray advances toward him, pistol armed and aimed.

RAY
What do you want from me?

MARKOV
To do what you were destined to.

We see a tiny glint of light from the clear parabolic device in Markov's right hand.

MARKOV (CONT'D)
 Your shared failure in New York
 paved the way. An even swap. You
 for him. Reset the clock. A chance
 for both our nations to reignite
 our collective struggle.

RAY
 I don't... understand.

Markov edges closer.

MARKOV
 After months of training, the
 moment has finally arrived.

Markov lifts the parabolic device, aim it at Ray.

RAY
 (through clenched teeth)
 You turned my darkest moment, my
 worst day, into a cage.

MARKOV
 What you're experiencing now, it's
 just your body fighting the truth.

RAY
 But it's mine. It ends with me.

Beat. SILENCE from Markov. Then:

MARKOV
 Embrace it. Let it guide your hand.

RAY
 To do WHAT?

MARKOV
 Let your President die.

EXT. HOTEL, PRESIDENTIAL EXIT - DAY [FLASHBACK]

POP. POP.

Gray skies. Rain slicked streets. Static. Judder. Artifacts.
 The Press Secretary falls. Ray turns.

PUFF.

Another shot rings out. But this time, suppressed, from off.
 But it sounds different. Clearer. From the now.

END FLASHBACK.

EXT. PRIMATIAL PALACE, ROOF - NIGHT

CRUNCH.

Ray falls to his knees, drops his gun.

In the distance behind him stands Ilyin holding his same silenced pistol.

MARKOV

We have a saying in Russia.

RAY

(pained)

Wait...

MARKOV

*One should not criticize a mirror
if you have a crooked face.*

PRE-LAP: SMASH!

Fine China hits cold stone.

INT. PRIMATIAL PALACE, MAIN HALL - NIGHT

Ray, his mind melting, looks to see Natasha standing before him again in the same black ballgown.

NATASHA

...tov.

Everything's back, just as it was. Yet again.

Ray looks around wildly, his brain breaking.

RAY

(to Natasha, rote)

Command center. Now.

This time, he turns and charges back across the room toward the main entrance and away into the night.

EXT. PRIMATIAL - NIGHT

Like a man possessed, Ray tumbles down the stairs of The Palace and sprints across the cobbles toward a broad boulevard of BUZZING traffic.

He sees a cab, desperately hails it. But it speeds on.

RAY
C'mon! C'mon!

He turns right, keeps running, sees another cab pass and veer toward the curb.

He gallops toward it, throws open the rear door, BARKS toward the driver:

RAY (CONT'D)
(subtitled Slovak)
American Embassy. Now!

I/E. CAB/BRATISLAVA - NIGHT

The unseen driver GRINDS the car into gear, guns the gas.

Ray, winded and thrumming with adrenalin, pulls a phone from his pocket, swipes and stabs:

MARKOV PSYCHOACOUSTICS

A whole host of search results load, including what appears to be an article from "The Guardian".

Ray smashes the link, scrolls.

RAY
Bullshit. Bullshit. Bull--

He slows at a photo of a younger Markov (40s) in dark gray suit shaking the hand of a gaunt FSB Colonel in an all-black uniform and a black beret.

He and a long line of cadets stand shoulder-to-shoulder amid bombed-out urban ruins sporting scoped sniper rifles.

All of their eyes are obscured out by dark black bands.

The caption reads:

PUTIN'S ELUSIVE PSYOPS MASTERMIND

Ray reads on, stone-faced.

INT. U.S. EMBASSY, PORTICO - NIGHT

Ray flashes his credentials to a pair of armed MPs outside the colonnaded entrance to the ambassador's residence.

One of the MPs them nods. The other reaches for the door.

RAY
Orders. From Control.

Ray pockets his credentials, speeds through the open door and into the warmly-lit entrance hall.

ENTRANCE HALL:

Moving fast, Ray veers past the winding stairs to the second floor and instead hurries down a narrow stairwell.

LOWER FLOORS:

Ray hits the base of the stairs, turns right down a dim passage lined with oil landscapes in gold frames.

DOORWAY:

Ray slows, looks both ways, swipes his badge.

BUZZ.

The door sensor flashes green and Ray steps inside.

INT. U.S. EMBASSY, COMMAND CENTER - NIGHT

Guiding the door closed with a muted CLICK, Ray rushes toward one of a bevy of glowing workstations, grabs a worn task chair, logs in.

The space is shockingly austere. Just a cramped, utilitarian workspace full of aging computer equipment.

Something cobbled together quickly and on a narrow budget.

Ray pulls up an old-school, shockingly rudimentary database application, pounds the keys.

Soon, all manner of sophisticated, scanned schematics for what appear to be electronic devices flash by.

Then: a series of blurry scans of Russian dossiers. But every single word is redacted.

Just a sea of black bands.

RAY

Fuck me.

CLICKS through dossier after dossier. Clipped to each document: a small cadet photo.

But all the eyes, all distinctive features, are blacked out.

RAY

Lviv, Lviv, Lviv.

No one's familiar. Not even recognizable.

RAY (CONT'D)
Goddammit.

Suddenly: BUZZ. CLICK.

The door whips opens and Natasha, winded, presses in.

NATASHA
Jesus, Ray. What the *fuck* are you
thinking? You can't just--

Ray pushes himself back from the keyboard, points toward an
entirely black page.

She stares, edges closer.

NATASHA (CONT'D)
You're gonna get me fucking fired!

RAY
This time tomorrow, Dynamo will be
dead. Shot in broad daylight in the
middle of Hodžovo Square. And it
will be entirely my fault.

Natasha does a slow, deeply dubious double-take.

RAY (CONT'D)
He's there right now. The shooter.
At the fucking Palace.

NATASHA
Are you insane?

Ray turns back to the screen.

RAY
I froze. And they've kept me on ice
ever since.

EXT. HOTEL, PRESIDENTIAL EXIT - DAY [FLASHBACK]

POP. POP.

Gray skies. Rain slicked streets. Digital distortions. Snow.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. U.S. EMBASSY, COMMAND CENTER - NIGHT

Natasha reaches for the back of a chair, pulls it closer.

NATASHA
Jesus, Ray. We've been over this.
It wasn't your fucking fault.

RAY
He's not their asset. I am.

Natasha just stares at him blankly, questioning her own exposure. Her own vulnerability.

Ray's eyes wash over the blacked-out dossier. In the lower left corner, there's a small circular stamped insignia.

It hasn't been entirely redacted. The type is in Cyrillic.

Ray leans closer. The screen paints his face harshly.

NATASHA
Don't make me party to... What the fuck is this? Insubordination? A fucking cover-up?

Ray stares at the screen. Parsing.

RAY
There's nothing I can do to change the outcome. It happens. I hear it.

NATASHA
Hear WHAT?

RAY
I fuck it up. It starts over.

NATASHA
Ray!

Natasha, spinning out, lets her eyes drift to the dossier.

Ray finally looks to her again.

She steps closer, reaches out to the screen, pinch-zooms in on the seal.

NATASHA (CONT'D)
Our country, my home, gave me a chance to prove my worth.
(beat)
My loyalty.

Ray's eyes drift to the screen.

NATASHA (CONT'D)
Don't fuck this up for me.

Natasha grabs seat, YANKS away the keyboard, types, pulls up her own (un-redacted) dossier.

In the lower left corner, the same stamp. The same seal:

PROJECT PENDULUM

And a hand-written note reading:

*The joint task force recommends
further experimentation with all
three .*

Ray STABS a trembling hand out, cuts the power, leaps up.

Natasha just sits there, reeling.

NATASHA

If you're right, we both hang. If
you're wrong, you're already gone.

INT. HOTEL, LOBBY - NIGHT

Ray and Natasha speed through the formerly opulent lobby of the Carlton Hotel again.

Ray's eyes nervously scan every passing stranger for any sign of Markov.

But, by all indications, the coast is clear.

Natasha takes a bend, ushers Ray with her toward the amber light glowing from the hotel's once grand bar.

RAY

How do you know he'll...

NATASHA

Vodka's the best lie detector.

Ray nods as he spies Goran hunched over frosty glass at the far end of the mostly empty bar.

Goran swivels his head slightly, tracks the two of them as they veer toward a more discrete table with three threadbare velvet lounge chairs.

INT. HOTEL, BAR - LATER

Bleary-eyed, Goran pours more vodka from a clear decanter tucked into a silver bucket full of chipped ice.

GORAN

CIA blasted your own embassy with
microwaves back in '65. Ears bled.
Eyes bled. The Moscow Signal.

Goran lifts his glass, takes a greedy gulp.

GORAN (CONT'D)

Doctors showed up, took blood. All
CIA. Each one. Said they were
testing for some virus. Big lie. A
cover story. For testing microwave
radiation on human subjects.
American subjects.

RAY

But why? To do what?

Goran smiles, SLURS:

GORAN

Influence their behavior. Change
their sense of time. Shape their
thoughts. Direct their actions.

NATASHA

That's... not possible.

Goran shrugs.

GORAN

A psychic feedback chamber. Like
déjà vu on repeat. A loop you can't
escape. But where the outcome could
be shaped. Optimized.
(deep breath)
Where guilt could become a weapon.
A tool of ultimate control.

Goran downs the last of his vodka, shrugs.

GORAN (CONT'D)

Whole thing got swept under the rug
like nothing ever happened. Fake
news. Until 2016.
(pregnant pause)
Havana Syndrome.

Goran smiles slyly, looks to Natasha.

GORAN (CONT'D)
(subtitled Russian)
Why do you ask?

Ray sits forward, turns deadly serious.

RAY
(to Goran)
I've heard it. Felt it. It's
happened to me. Markov and Ilyin...

Mention of Markov and Ilyin sobers Goran up instantly.

GORAN
Where exactly?

RAY
Tonight. At The Palace. Tomorrow.
On The Square. Where Ilyin will
successfully assassinate Tarasov
and Morales.

Natasha spins.

NATASHA
Wait. What?! Both?

Ray nods gravely.

Goran narrows his glazed eyes.

GORAN
(to Natasha)
You knew about this?

NATASHA
No. No, I--

RAY
I've seen it. It *will* happen.
Unless we find some way to--

GORAN
This is why I trust no one. Not
U.S.. Not Russia.

Goran leans forward toward Ray as Natasha's mind races.

GORAN (CONT'D)
They're turning your failure into a
tool. Your guilt. Your trauma.

Goran looks to Natasha.

GORAN (CONT'D)
 (subtitled Russian)
*And you think you're part of this
 program as well?*

NATASHA
 I don't... I think--

GORAN
 (subtitled Slovak)
*Well, luck would not happen without
 misfortune's help.*

Goran stands, turns to depart.

RAY
 Wait. Hold on. All I have to do is
 convince them not to go out, stay
 off The Square. Convince POTUS,
 convince Dynamo there's a shooter
 on The Square. The Palace roof.
 Show her the evidence that--

GORAN (CONT'D)
 Come. I have a better idea.

INT. U.S. EMBASSY, BRIEFING ROOM - MORNING

Back again inside the second floor ballroom inside the
 Ambassador's residence, Oliver briefs the same collection of
 Secret Service agents.

OLIVER
 Snipers from both sides will be
 arrayed all along The Square as
 discussed.

Ray and Natasha, tired, share a brief conspiratorial look.

But she seems like maybe she still can't believe Ray
 completely. Like she's questioning her own complicity.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
 We'll all be sharing the same
 frequency, so keep the chitchat to
 a minimum.

He eyes Ray briefly. Ray nods.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
 Then it's back here for dinner with
 Mister and Misses Tarasov. Same
 start time as last night at The
 Palace. Any questions?

No hands go up.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
Alright, dismissed.

Everyone stands, moves toward doors.

Oliver veers toward Ray as before, wags his head. *Hang back.*

Behind Oliver, another pair of doors open.

Goran enters, veers toward Ray with the same replacement earpiece, thrusts it his way.

GORAN
(practiced)
Special replacement from Special
Activities Center.

His eyes are bloodshot but thrumming with anticipation.

Ray takes the device, palms it as Natasha disappears.

GORAN (CONT'D)
No more feedback.

OLIVER
And no more nonsense. Especially
while we're on The Square.

Goran leans in toward Ray.

GORAN
Everyone deserves a second chance.

This alters Ray's countenance, softens him slightly.

Goran spins on his heels, turns to go.

GORAN (CONT'D)
Do svidaniya.

Oliver reaches for the same a crystal bowl of jellybeans, jostles it toward Ray.

OLIVER
The hell happened last night?

Ray pockets the new earpiece.

RAY
Comms failure, sir. My earpiece--

OLIVER
Yeah, well. Just stay focused, kid.
Don't let 'em fuck with your head.

Ray cants his head at this. *Why would you say that?*

OLIVER (CONT'D)
And pretty soon we'll all be able
to tell our grand kids we where
here when it...

EXT. HODŽOVO SQUARE - DAY

The entire entourage steps into the sunlight and out onto the cobbles, moving en masse across The Square.

After a few strides, Ray veers left.

OLIVER (V.O.)
Stillman?

Ray yanks out his old earpiece, tosses it, pulls in the new one that Goran just handed him, stabs it into one ear.

Behind him, Natasha slows, lifts her wrist.

NATASHA (V.O.)
(deeply nervous)
Four minutes. Mark.

Ray, on the run with his pistol drawn, BARKS back:

RAY
Confirmed.

Ray thunders up the stone stairs, past a pair of bewildered GUARDS, throws open a pair of gilded doors, rushes into -

INT. PRESIDENTIAL PALACE, GROUND FLOOR - DAY

Ray SKIDS to a stop on the mirror-polished mosaic floor of a vast, bright white palace entrance.

GORAN (V.O.)
(over Ray's earpiece)
Stairs. Dead ahead.

Ray SPRINTS past another pair of SLOVAK SOLDIERS toward a pair of mirrored doors, throws them open.

RAY
Secret Service.

Ray SURGES through the doors, starts climbing.

EXT. PRESIDENTIAL PALACE, ROOF - DAY

Gulping down air, Ray BURSTS through another pair of doors and TUMBLES back out into the daylight, gun drawn.

In the distance: a lone sniper team (one SPOTTER with a matte green scope and one SHOOTER laying prone).

Both are clad in black tactical gear. Bullet-proof vests with POLICE patches across the back.

Americans.

NATASHA (V.O.)

Three minutes.

Ray rushes toward the men in black, barely able to speak:

RAY

Presidential detail!

The spotter wheels around toward Ray.

The sniper stays prone.

RAY (CONT'D)

Move!

SPOTTER

The fuck?

Ray falls to the gravel, wrestles the rifle away.

RAY

Distance?

GORAN (V.O.)

Three hundred seventy five yards.

SNIPER

That wasn't in the--

Ray steadies the gun, swivels left, lowers one eye to the scope, tries to calm his chest.

RAY

Wind speed?

EXT. PRESIDENTIAL PALACE, ROOF - RAY'S POV

Though the rifle scope, we see the entourage slow before the cluster of protesters once again.

GORAN (V.O.)
Eight point five. North northeast.

The cross-hairs whip side-to-side, then up and down.
Jittery. Unstable.

NATASHA (V.O.)
Two minutes.

Through the scope, we catch sight of Ilyin as he slowly
lifts his hands toward the camera.

RAY (V.O.)
The camera. It's a gun.

DEEP BREATH. DEEP BREATH.

RAY (CONT'D)
Two rounds.

NATASHA (V.O.)
Are you nuts?!

Tarasov surges toward the young girl, runs her hand over the
Girl's head as if to calm her.

We can't see her face. Or Morales's.

DEEP BREATH. DEEP BREATH.

RAY (V.O.)
The radio...

SPOTTER (V.O.)
Control says stand down.

RAY (V.O.)
It's some sort of transponder. To
signal the transport.

SPOTTER (V.O.)
He says now.

We hear Ray DRAW another long, slow, deep breath.

He EXHALES quietly.

SNIPER (V.O.)
Negative, sir. He won't...

The cross-hairs steady on Ilyin's chest, just right of the
old-school portable radio.

RAY (V.O.)
What is that fucking thing?

SNIPER (V.O.)
Command orders you to--

RAY (V.O.)
Sorry, Oliver.

NATASHA (V.O.)
Ray?

RAY
I have him.

Ilyin slowly lifts the camera to his eye.

Ray squeezes off a single round: BANG.

The bullet hits Ilyin just right of the radio.

He drops the camera. The crowd scurries, hits the deck.

The troop transport speeds toward the crowd as the rest of the armored support vehicles depart.

Through the scope, Ilyin looks up, directly at us.

His face seems again to silently beg Ray to finish the task at hand, to succeed.

RAY (V.O.)
That's right you sonofabitch.

Ilyin's right hand jolts upward, grips the radio as blood blooms through his shirt.

It's as though he can't control his body, his moments are stiff, awkward. Like a puppet on strings.

The armored transport SCREECHES to a stop behind him. The door RUMBLES open.

GORAN (V.O.)
Stillman?

There's Markov once again.

NATASHA (V.O.)
Ray? What's your call?

Markov levels the transmission dish directly our way.

An ear-splitting SQUALL overcomes every other sound.

EXT. HOTEL, PRESIDENTIAL EXIT - DAY [FLASHBACK]

Slate gray skies. Rain slicked streets.

Tessellated polygons.

POP. POP.

Ray turns, looks to the van. It dissolves, shakes, reforms.

NATASHA (PRE-LAP)

Ray!

END FLASHBACK.

EXT. PRESIDENTIAL PALACE, ROOF - DAY

Ray, his ears bleeding, tumbles away from the sniper rifle in a stricken daze.

GORAN (V.O.)

He's going for the radio.

The spotter next to Ray angles his binoculars down toward the transport:

SPOTTER

The fuck is--

A BRIGHT WHITE FLASH fills the screen.

PRE-LAP: SMASH!

Fine China hits cold stone.

INT. PRIMATIAL PALACE, MAIN HALL - NIGHT

Ray stumbles forward toward Natasha back inside the same golden Palace yet again.

At his feet: the same busboy doubles then triples.

NATASHA

Mazel...

Ray, melting down and broken, HISSES:

RAY

Embassy. Now.

EXT. U.S. EMBASSY, COMMAND CENTER - NIGHT

We're back to the command center.

Ray paces furiously behind Natasha. His partially blacked-out dossier glows on the screen before her.

NATASHA

A tactical nuclear weapon buried in the middle of Hodžovo Square? Are you *fucking* insane?!

RAY

I just... Yes. That's what is looked like. The radio is a transponder. And a detonator. If he fails, he blows The Square. Everyone loses but fucking Markov.

NATASHA

But that doesn't make any sense. Why would Markov...

She trails off, stands, looks to Ray like he's the ticking time bomb. Like he's the vector. A traitor.

The one to be dealt with, taken down.

INT. HOTEL, BAR - LATER

Goran narrows his bleary eyes.

GORAN

Mutually assured destruction? Same shit, different day.

RAY

Exactly.

NATASHA

That's madness. Insanity. With the world on the brink of total--

RAY

(still to Goran)
You said it. Last time...

GORAN

Last time?

Ray ignores this.

RAY

They've weaponized my failure. My trauma. My grief. But why? There's gotta be a fucking reason. A purpose for...

Ray trails off, a realization slowly dawning.

RAY (CONT'D)
 What if they're trying to make sure
 that I fail again. Freeze again.
 (deep breath)
 Or, fuck. Succeed? What if they
 want me to be the one to...

GORAN
 ...pull the trigger?

Natasha stares at both of them, perhaps forming a plan to somehow guard against the contagion of this seeming lunacy.

EXT. HODŽOVO SQUARE - DAY

Ray charges toward Morales. Tarasov, startled, stumbles away. Everyone else freezes.

RAY
 (to Morales)
 Get down! Get down!

Agents from both sides draw guns, wheel around wildly.

RAY (CONT'D)
 I have to get you out of--

OLIVER (V.O.)
 Stillman?!

In the distance, The armored vehicle SCREECHES to a halt. The door RIPS open again, just like it always does.

Amid the scrum, Markov angles the device toward Ray.

Sonic chaos.

Ray falls backward, away from a stunned Morales.

BANG. BANG.

Two shots from Ilyin. Down goes Dynamo.

Natasha just watches.

OLIVER (V.O.)
 Dynamo down! Repeat, Dynamo--

EXT. HODŽOVO SQUARE - DAY

Ray, desperate, RUSHES toward Morales just at the entire entourage hits The Square.

RAY
 Madam President! I need you to come
 with me *right* now! There's a
 confirmed shooter in The Square.
 Please, you're in grave--

Yet another wave of FEEDBACK.

Ray winces. Natasha stares.

RAY (CONT'D)
 (on his knees)
 It's... a... trap.

Morales looks past Ray, toward Oliver.

Oliver lifts his wrist.

OLIVER (V.O.)
 Easy.

Oliver gestures toward another pair of agents.

OLIVER (V.O.)
 Get him out of here.

Behind him, Natasha's face hardens.

EXT. HODŽOVO SQUARE - DAY

Ray pulls his pistol, fires rapidly:

BANG. BANG. BANG.

The bullets WHISTLE past young girl, THUD into Ilyin's chest. Three direct hits, but he doesn't fall.

Instead, he looks directly to Ray again.

Deep condescension.

The armored vehicle SCREECHES to a halt behind him. The door RIPS open. And there's Markov once again.

Ray aims for him. But it's too late.

An ear-splitting TUMULT OF GRINDING overcomes him.

The soldier pulls Ilyin in, SLAMS the door.

Ray crumples to the cobbles in excruciating pain.

Natasha's hand drifts toward her sidearm.

OLIVER (V.O.)
Dynamo down! Repeat, Dynamo--

I/E. LIMOUSINE/BRATISLAVA - DAY

Back in the armored limousine, Ray cradles the President in his arms while central Bratislava bleeds by.

By the look in his eyes we can tell: this is the thousandth time he's been here/done this.

MORALES
And everything was going so well.

She looks to Ray. Her blouse and his shirt are both bathed in her blood as they always are.

Failure.

No matter what he does, nothing ever affects the outcome.

It's inevitable.

While he frantically works at staunching Morales' wounds, Natasha's eyes are affixed still to Ray.

Her face says it all. *This is your fault.*

INT. HOTEL, LOBBY - EVENING

As the same burly MPs rush Ray through the hotel lobby, Ray (his eyes ringed in black and his face entirely devoid of emotion) spies Markov exiting the same elevator.

Looking like he's playing out the same scenario on eternal repeat, Ray slips a hand inside his jacket, pulls his weapon, spins.

INT. HOTEL, ELEVATOR CORRIDOR - EVENING

Markov smiles, ominously calm.

Without even looking, Ray grips the trigger.

BANG. BANG. Two shots from across the lobby.

As he falls, Ray looks to the MPs. Neither of them have drawn their weapons.

Instead, Natasha stands at the center of the lobby just ahead of Goran, clutching her smoking sidearm.

NATASHA
I'm sorry, Ray. This stops now.

Goran, stunned, just watches as Ray, on his knees, dabs at his white shirt with bloody fingers before crumpling sideways to the cold marble.

PRE-LAP: SMASH!

Fine China hits cold stone.

INT. PRIMATIAL PALACE, MAIN HALL - NIGHT

Ray, a ghost of his former self, stands staring blankly at the same poor busboy gathering up broken dishes.

NATASHA

...tov.

Ray's shoulders slump. *Here we go again.*

INT. U.S. EMBASSY, COMMAND CENTER - NIGHT

Back to the command center.

This time though, Ray just sits there staring into the distance as Natasha furiously scrolls.

A man trapped in his own unending trauma.

Natasha spins around to face him. The blue light of the monitor paints her fine features.

NATASHA (CONT'D)

Ray.

For a second, it's almost as if we can hear "WATCHING THE WHEELS" kick in again. From another place. Another time.

NATASHA (CONT'D)

They made you fail. Not you. And maybe you *can't* fix this. Maybe you're not *supposed* to fix it. And they know it. They're banking on it, exploiting it.

Ray eyes her blankly. *It's over. There's no way out.*

NATASHA (CONT'D)

But maybe we can. Us, not you. All three of us. Together.

(off his look)

You said it yourself. You need my help. Our help. That takes trust, Ray. Stop shutting me out. If you're right, none of this was your fault.

(MORE)

NATASHA (CONT'D)
 Maybe they stopped you. Maybe
 they're *still* stopping you.

She turns away from him, stands.

NATASHA (CONT'D)
 This isn't just about you anymore.
 It's about us.

CLICK. Off goes the screen. The room fills with darkness.

NATASHA (CONT'D)
 Trust and confidence, Ray. Trust
 and confidence.

INT. HOTEL, BAR - LATER

Goran narrows his bleary eyes, grins ear-to-ear.

GORAN
 Interesting.

NATASHA
 (to Goran, hushed)
 We swap headsets. You take the
 roof, the snipers.
 (to Ray, quietly)
 You and I switch places. I take the
 shooter. You cover Dynamo.

Ray GROANS. *It's not gonna...*

NATASHA (CONT'D)
 (back to Goran)
 As soon as the transport stops,
 once the door opens, you take
 Markov from above.

GORAN
 And the detonator?

NATASHA
 I'll make sure buddy boy doesn't do
 anything stupid, yeah?

Natasha looks back to Ray.

His eyes are still elsewhere. Just gone.

NATASHA (CONT'D)
 Ray, listen to me. I want to
 believe you.
 (MORE)

NATASHA (CONT'D)
 But doing the same fucking thing,
 over and over again and expecting a
 different result? A different
 outcome? That's the fucking
definition of crazy.

(beat)
 The literal definition.

Natasha lifts her wrist, looks to her watch.

NATASHA (CONT'D)
 Try and get some sleep. We got
 this. We can do this. As a team.

Goran lifts his nearly empty decanter, gulps it down.

EXT. HODŽOVO SQUARE - DAY

Natasha and Ray track the same cluster of men in suits as
 they cross the square.

As it always is, the sky above is cloudless and blue.

Ray is wearing his new earpiece, tuned to a shared channel
 with only Natasha and Goran.

NATASHA
 (into her wrist)
 How do they work? Microwaves.

GORAN (V.O.)
 Metal reflects. Water absorbs.

NATASHA
 No, I mean...

The same helicopter ROARS by overhead.

Ray slows, lifts his watch. In the date window: 31.

His eyes drift past Tarasov and Morales, toward the long
 line of idling limousines and troop transports.

RAY
 (into his wrist)
 What was your remit? Why were you
 really tailing Markov?

Down The Square, there's the same hulking MC2V.

EXT. PRESIDENTIAL PALACE, ROOF - DAY

Goran lies prone with one eye to the scope of a sniper rifle. Two men in black uniforms are sprawled unconscious on the rooftop next to him.

GORAN
Simply mirror his movements.

He takes a long, deep breath. Exhales slowly.

GORAN (CONT'D)
There are concerns on both sides
about his... *allegiances*.

RAY (V.O.)
(over his earpiece)
What's that supposed to--

GORAN
(calmly)
I'm not working both sides against
the middle, my friend. I'm working
both sides against the extremes.

EXT. HODŽOVO SQUARE - DAY

Natasha and Ray cross paths, moving swiftly toward opposite sides of the pack.

GORAN (V.O.)
Only hardliners on both sides stand
to gain if the peace process breaks
down. If it doesn't even begin.
(beat)
Oliver. Markov. They're the old
order. Using you to prevent peace.
To stop progress. Kill the only two
leaders who have a real shot at
ending the violence.

Ray's eyes are still glued to the MC2V in the distance. One of the dishes on its roof seems to be angled down toward The Square instead of the sky.

Directly at Ilyin.

GORAN (V.O.)
Think about it. The *joint*
commission? *Three* candidates?

Ray slows momentarily, putting two and two together.

GORAN (V.O.)
CIA and FSB. Working together. You,
him, her.

NATASHA (V.O.)
But that doesn't make any--

RAY
Shit.

Natasha looks his way.

In the distance behind them all, Oliver lifts his wrists,
BARKS something we can't hear into it.

INT. PRIMATIAL PALACE, ANTEROOM - NIGHT [FLASHBACK]

Oliver silently rips Ray a new one inside the cramped
anteroom jammed full of surveillance equipment back inside
the Primatial Palace.

A seeming eternity ago.

RAY (PRE-LAP)
One of us.

END FLASHBACK.

EXT. HODŽOVO SQUARE - DAY

Ray picks up the pace, eyes dead ahead again.

RAY
He said Ilyin was one of ours.

Oliver speaks silently into his wrist.

Everybody slows.

Natasha looks to him, then back to Ray. They're on opposite
sides of the tightly packed cluster of dignitaries.

She lifts her wrist, SPEAKS.

NATASHA (V.O.)
(over Ray's earpiece)
Clear line of sight?

Ilyin removes the lens cap. BARRELS.

GORAN (V.O.)
Confirmed.

Ray thrusts a hand into his jacket.

RAY

Now.

Ray and Natasha draw, sprint toward Ilyin.

NATASHA

Shooter. Shooter. Shooter.

RAY

Outta my way! Outta my--

BANG! BANG!

Ilyin fires twice.

Ray LEAPS toward Morales.

But it's too late.

The first bullet hits Natasha just above her collarbone.

The impact jolts her backward.

The second round catches her in the chest. A direct hit.

Bedlam ensues.

Natasha's gun discharges twice as she falls. The first bullet ricochets off the cobbles, hits a protestor.

The second bullet grazes Morales' photographer.

Ray pivots, LUNGES past the falling photographer, wraps his arms around Natasha, pulls her to the ground.

Ilyin drops the camera, reaches for the radio/detonator.

From far off, SNIPER ROUNDS take down Morales, Tarasov, the Translators, and four others.

Bullets WHISPER and WHINE through the air.

Where are they coming from?

Covering Natasha with his body, Ray rolls onto his side, fires once from an odd angle:

BANG.

The bullet barely misses the young girl, clips Ilyin in the shoulder yet again, knocks his hands from the detonator.

But, again, he doesn't fall. Instead, he looks to Ray with hauntingly empty eyes. *Surely you can do better than--*

The armored transport SCREECHES to a stop behind him.

Markov angles the dish toward Ray. A SWIRLING TEMPEST OF NOISE blots out every other sound.

EXT. HOTEL, PRESIDENTIAL EXIT - DAY [FLASHBACK]

Slate gray skies. Rain slicked streets.

Shimmering digital haze.

PRE-LAP: TTTTTHHH-UMPPP.

The GALE OF SOUND abruptly ceases.

END FLASHBACK.

EXT. HODŽOVO SQUARE - DAY

Ray, stunned, looks to see Markov's contorted body blasted backward against the interior wall of the armored transport.

The hand-held dish sits on the floor beside him. And a single high-caliber bullet hole oozes blood from the center of his pale forehead.

The Russian soldier YANKS Ilyin into the transport.

For a fraction of a second, Ray just stares.

Then, as the door RUMBLES closed, he empties his clip into the van in a desperate bid to finally take Ilyin out.

BANG. BANG. BANG. BANG. BANG. CLICK. CLICK. CLICK.

The vehicle PEELS out, bathing Ray and Natasha in smoke.

In the distance, the ministers and journalists run toward The Palace. Rooftop snipers take them out one-by-one.

GORAN (V.O.)

That is not me. I swear!

Ray drops his pistol, gently turns Natasha over in his arms. Blood runs from her lips.

RAY

No, no, no.

Natasha strains to force a smile.

NATASHA

Well, that's not what I expected.

Ray holds her tight. Won't let go.

NATASHA (CONT'D)

At all.

She COUGHS. Her sidearm falls from her fingers.

RAY

(into his wrist)

We need transport ASAP!

Behind him, Morales and Tarasov lie on the cobbles surrounded by frantic agents.

A mirror-like slick of blood envelops them both as one of the bulletproof limousines speeds their direction.

NATASHA

(weak)

Metal.

Behind them, the limo SQUEALS to a stop.

NATASHA (CONT'D)

Reflects.

(gasp)

Water absorbs.

Out-of-focus figures rush Morales into the limo.

GORAN (V.O.)

(over Ray's earpiece)

Stillman? Get out of there.

Natasha reaches a bloody hand up, touches Ray's cheek.

NATASHA

I'm sorry. I should've... I should've *trusted* you.

GORAN (V.O.)

NOW!

INT. HOSPITAL, CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

Oliver SHOVES Ray into the same drab, dimly-lit conference room inside the Bratislava Hospital.

RAY

You damn well know who the fuck he is. Both of you!

Ray's white shirt is saturated with dried blood. Not Morales' blood, not his President's blood.

Natasha's blood.

RAY
Tell me you're not running him,
running Ilyin, just like Markov's
fucking running me.

OLIVER
Running?

Oliver SLAMS the door. Donovan stands. Goran just watches.

DONNOVAN
Sit!

RAY
(still to Oliver)
You said it yourself. He's one of
us. I wanna fucking know why!

Oliver looks to Ray's blood-stained shirt.

OLIVER
Listen, I'm sorry, son. I'm sorry
about Agent Lazarev. But--

Ray LUNGES at him, SHOVES his mentor backward.

RAY
She's *dead* because of you! All of
them are! Their blood is on YOUR
hands. I *deserve* to know why!

Oliver, stricken, looks to Donovan. Donovan nods.

OLIVER
It's over, kid. There's no way to
win. No way to--

Ray, in a fury, reaches inside his bloody jacket, WHIPS out
his pistol, turns, levels it at Donovan's head.

RAY
Why would CIA and FSB want Tarasov
and Morales dead?

DONNOVAN
Agent Stillman...

Ray's hand trembles.

RAY
The truth. Now!

Goran slowly steps forward, puts himself between them, directly in the line of fire.

GORAN

(calmly)

Elements within both agencies, both governments, are using you. Both of you. You and Ilyin. And she's next.

(beat)

Using you to run every possible scenario. Every variable. In order to ensure that *both* leaders are taken off the chessboard. For good.

Ray's gun wavers between Goran and Donovan.

Oliver just stands, feet frozen to the ground, his face a studied mask of plausible deniability.

GORAN (CONT'D)

They think peace isn't profitable.

Goran lifts his hands, edges closer.

GORAN (CONT'D)

That stasis is stagnation. Like Markov said: a world without superpowers is tyranny. Disorder.

Sweat beads on Ray's forehead as he tightens his grip, takes a slow step sideways.

OLIVER

You didn't fail in New York, kid. You took Ilyin down. Like a pro.

(beat)

Unfortunately.

Ray's hand shakes. His eyelids flutter. Dazed disbelief.

RAY

You're lying.

OLIVER

You and you alone.

RAY

I froze. I failed.

DONNOVAN

You took a bullet.

RAY

Stop.

DONNOVAN
You're lucky you're even here right now. We saved your life.

RAY
I don't... That can't--

OLIVER
Induced coma. Sixteen weeks. Walter Reed. Then we turned you over to the other side. I'm sorry, kid.

DONNOVAN
Our AI, their neurotech, your savior complex and tragically low self-esteem. We couldn't have found a better candidate if we'd tried.

RAY
That's not...

OLIVER
The world needs this, Ray. It's your duty. To shore up the world order. The strength we've built through conflict and struggle. Don't let her undo it.

Ray looks to Goran, then back to Donovan.

DONNOVAN
Now, put the gun down. Agent.

Goran advances toward Ray, slowly.

GORAN
The MC2V. The dish. It's how CIA controls Ilyin. The same way FSB controls you.

Ray's face shifts. *Of course.*

He instantly lifts the barrel of his gun to his own temple.

RAY
(to himself)
Please be there. Please be--

OLIVER
Wait!

Ray pulls the trigger.

PRE-LAP: SMASH!

Fine China hits cold stone.

INT. PRIMATIAL PALACE, MAIN HALL - NIGHT

Ray trips sideways, sees the busboy down on his knees again, spins, catches sight of Natasha.

Alive and well but slipping in and out of focus. In and out of reality just like the rest of the room.

NATASHA

Mazel--

She cuts herself off. Looks for a moment like she knows what's happening. Is ready to do anything to stop it.

Ray SMASHES a hand against his head, charges toward her.

RAY

You're alive! It *fucking* worked!

Natasha's faintly GLITCHING figure finally falls into focus.

As does the rest of the room. Like a mirage made real.

NATASHA

Of course I am. The fff--

RAY

Doesn't matter. Doesn't matter.

Ray looks ahead, sees Markov stand, head for the passageway.

OLIVER (V.O.)

Dynamo to the podium. All eyes.

RAY

(sotto, to Natasha)

The bar. Carlton. Fast as you can. Tell Oliver your transponder's on the blink again.

NATASHA

Again?

RAY

Find Goran.

NATASHA

You hate that two-timing--

RAY

Shhh.

Ray looks right, sees Morales (also very much alive again) quickly make her way toward the stage.

OLIVER (V.O.)
Move it, kid. Over.

Ray looks left, sees Oliver only feet away from Ilyin.

His face hardens. He lifts his wrist.

RAY
(bitterly)
Sir, yes sir.

Ray flips his wrist over. There again in the date window: the number 30. The day before Hodžovo Square.

RAY (CONT'D)
(back to Natasha)
You were right. I can't do this alone. No one can.

MORALES
(from the lectern)
...I want to thank you again...

RAY
Act don't react.

Natasha screws up her face. *What?!*

Ray presses past Natasha, trying to recall every detail from his first go-around.

RAY (CONT'D)
Together.

OLIVER (V.O.)
Stillman? What are you doing?

Ray lifts his wrist, smiles.

RAY
Playing a hunch, sir.

MORALES
...on the brink of a momentous...

Ray slows, doesn't reach for his sidearm. Seems to be counting every step, every inch.

RUSSIAN TRANSLATOR (O.S.)
 (subtitled Russian)
*...or do we go it alone, no matter
 the cost?*

Ilyin disappears into the passageway like clockwork.

Ray pauses, waits. Natasha hesitates.

MORALES
...I'm sure we can all agree...

Ray CHARGES after Ilyin.

The same passageway. The same curtains.

This time he knows exactly where to go.

HALL:

Ray SKIDS to a stop.

OLIVER (V.O.)
 That's an order, son.

Ray looks to the chef, reaches out just in time to catch the silver chafing dish.

Shhh...

But, this time, instead of handing it back, Ray clutches it by its handle like a shield.

A metal shield.

Over his earpiece, the ever-present WAVE OF FEEDBACK.

Then, as always, Markov's VOICE:

MARKOV (V.O.)
 Go ahead. Use your training.

Instead of running, Ray walks, speaks calmly into his wrist:

RAY
 (subtitled Russian)
I'm trying.

Passing waitstaff regard him curiously as he steps toward the kitchen. This time: no screaming, no dodging.

KITCHEN:

No one freezes. Everyone goes about their business.

MARKOV (V.O.)
You will only fail yet again.

RAY
(subtitled Russian)
Yeah, that is the idea, isn't it?

Ray spies the same rolling rack full of dishes.

Beyond it: the same open window.

And Ilyin, swapping bottles, entirely unaware of Ray's steady, almost lulling advance.

The curtains between them flutter as ever.

RAY (CONT'D)
(back to English)
But, somehow, this time, I'm not so sure. Not sure in the slightest.

Ray pushes his way past the rolling rack, still hasn't reached for his gun.

All he has in his hand is the silver cloche.

RAY (CONT'D)
(toward Ilyin)
Sucks, doesn't it?

Ilyin wheels around. Ray smiles.

To his left, there's Markov - angling the transmission device directly at Ilyin.

RAY (CONT'D)
Never getting to choose.

Markov turns, points the device at Ray.

Ray lifts the cloche, angles it at Markov.

No sound. No grinding.

No rain slicked streets or gray skies.

Metal reflects.

Beyond Ray, Ilyin buckles slightly. Like a puppet whose strings have been unceremoniously cut.

He drops the champagne bottle.

SMASH!

Glass goes flying. But we stay here for a change.

In the moment, in the now.

RAY (CONT'D)
Used to think all that mattered was
what *might* happen. Not what is
happening. Right now.

He advances toward Markov.

Markov, in a panic, toggles the device back toward Ilyin.

Ilyin, like Ray always used to, buckles in pain.

Ray continues his steady advance.

RAY (CONT'D)
But guess what?

MARKOV
(flawless English)
Stop. Reset.

RAY
Nobody knows what *will* happen.

MARKOV
Reboot.

RAY
Or when.

BANG!

He smashes the cloche into Markov's face.

The man flies backward, hits the ground with a meaty THUD.

Everyone else in the room just stares as the device
previously in Markov's hand skitters across the floor.

Instead of stomping on the device, Ray turns, drops the
cloche, stares into the startled and bloodshot eyes of his
seeming lifelong adversary.

RAY (CONT'D)
See you tomorrow.

Without another word, Ray spins on his heels and ambles back
through the kitchen and into the night.

RAY (CONT'D)
Don't be late.

NATASHA (PRE-LAP)
Maybe you *can't* fix this. Maybe
you're not *supposed* to.

INT. U.S. EMBASSY, COMMAND CENTER - NIGHT

Back in the command center once again.

This time, Ray furiously scrolls until his dossier appears.

RAY
They're banking on it. Using me to
make sure it all goes to--

He cuts himself off as the highly-redacted document on-
screen swipes to Natasha's dossier.

She represses a gasp.

Ray lifts a hand from the mouse, looks to Natasha.

RAY (CONT'D)
I can't let that happen. To you.

She stares at him, then the photo in stunned disbelief.

NATASHA
This ends now.

INT. HOTEL, BAR - LATER

All three of them sit again clustered tightly around the
same table inside the dimly-lit bar.

NATASHA
A coma. At Langley. They turned him
over to them. Implanted some sort
of device. To make him more
receptive. Just like Ilyin.

Goran blinks his bleary eyes, runs a hand over his stubble.

GORAN
And I said what again?

RAY
Will say, tomorrow. Unless we pull
this off. Unless this works.

Goran and Natasha stare at him blankly.

RAY (CONT'D)
(paraphrasing Goran)
Peace doesn't pay. Without
superpowers, the world freezes.

Goran narrows his eyes. Natasha grabs his decanter of vodka,
downs it.

RAY (CONT'D)
You said, say, will say in front of
Donnovan himself that there are
factions inside each agency, inside
CIA and FSB, that are actively
running every possible scenario
using me and that fucker Ilyin to
make sure Morales and Tarasov both
get taken off the board. For good.

Ray looks to a passing HOSTESS, orders another round.

GORAN
(stunned)
How did you--

Natasha reaches inside her blazer, pulls her silver
cigarette case, cracks it, nervously draws a cigarette out.

RAY
I don't know how they're doing it,
fucking microwaves or--

NATASHA
Ray, baby...

RAY
All I know is it's on us, all *three*
of us, to show them it *can* be done.

NATASHA
What can be done?

RAY
We can save Dynamo. And Tarasov.
And both of their...

Ray cuts himself off, spies Markov crossing the lobby.
With a black eye.

RAY (CONT'D)
Here's how we do it...

EXT. HODŽOVO SQUARE - DAY

The same cluster of Dignitaries emerges from The Palace and crosses Hodžovo Square.

The sky above, as it's always been, is brilliantly blue.

Ray lifts his wrist, looks to his watch.

In the date window yet again: 31.

Ray lowers his wrist, draws a breath.

The same helicopter with the glass canopy WHOOSHES overhead.

The same limos idle in the distance. The same mobile command vehicle sits with the dish angled down, not to the sky.

At the center of the pack, Morales and Tarasov walk like leaders completely oblivious of their potential fates.

On opposite sides of the slow-moving cluster, Ray and Oliver walk. Protégé and fallen mentor.

Ray lifts his wrist again, speaks into it:

RAY
Status check. Over.

Oliver doesn't react in the slightest. He can't hear a syllable from Ray's headset.

Just as before.

EXT. PRESIDENTIAL PALACE, ROOF - DAY

Natasha bursts through a door to the roof of The Palace flanked by a ARMY STRIKE TEAM armed to the teeth.

Up ahead: a RUSSIAN SPOTTER kneels, eyes trained to a scope. Next to him, a RUSSIAN SNIPER lies prone.

Natasha rushes toward them, pistol drawn:

NATASHA
Secret Service! Stand down!

The spotter spins toward her. The sniper stays prone.

NATASHA (CONT'D)
Presidential detail. You're under
arrest!

RUSSIAN SPOTTER
 (subtitled Russian)
What the hell is this?!

Natasha grips the trigger on her pistol as the strike team surges past her, weapons trained on the sniper.

AMERICAN SOLDIER
 Hands where I can see them.

The sniper rolls over onto his back, arms to the sky.

RUSSIAN SNIPER
 (in English)
 We have orders...

NATASHA
 (in subtitled Russian)
I said stand down, now.

The sniper pushes himself slowly to his feet.

The AMERICAN SOLDIER grabs him by his wrists, spins him back around, shoves him face-down onto the rooftop.

Natasha lifts her wrist.

NATASHA (CONT'D)
 Second sniper team neutralized.
 Repeat: second sniper team--

EXT. HODŽOVO SQUARE - SAME TIME

The entourage veers toward the same gaggle of vacationers.

Ray looks to Oliver. Oliver mutters something into his wrist. Ray can't hear it.

EXT. HODŽOVO SQUARE, MOTORCADE - SAME TIME

Having split from the pack, Goran rushes toward the long line of limos flanked by troop transports.

A young RUSSIAN PRIVATE (20s) lifts a hand.

Goran flashes him his credentials, swerves toward the MC2V, raps his meaty palm on the steel door. KNOCK. KNOCK.

The door RUMBLES open.

GORAN
 (subtitled Russian)
Change of plans.

He leaps in, slides the door shut: BANG.

Draws a silenced pistol.

THUMP. THUMP. THUMP. THUMP. THUMP.

Goran drops the techs, slides into the glowing control seat.

GORAN (CONT'D)
Sorry not sorry.

EXT. HODŽOVO SQUARE - SAME TIME

Ray slows, looks forward.

There's Ilyin again. Waiting. Frozen. Unable to move.

Tarasov slows, points toward a distant tower, leans in toward Morales, says something we can't hear.

The entire entourage pauses.

In the distance, we can see Natasha speeding back across The Square. She has one hand inside her coat.

Ray looks to Oliver. Oliver's face stiffens.

Ray reaches down, flicks a button on his receiver, looks to the motorcade, sees the dish atop the MC2V rotate.

Over his shoulder, Ilyin bites his lip, seemingly in pain.

Ahead of Ray, Tarasov lifts his arms, turns, as if he's explaining the whole history of The Square to Morales.

Beyond them, Oliver's wary eyes are on Ray, not Dynamo.

Natasha rejoins the pack, veers close to Ray, discretely palms him her cigarette case.

He grips it in one hand, angled down to the cobbles.

Tarasov guides Morales toward the Vacationers.

MORALES
Well, hello there.

The young girl reaches up, shakes Morales's hand.

OLIVER (V.O.)
Steady.

Everyone freezes.

Ray BOLTS toward Morales. Natasha draws her sidearm, swings it momentarily between Ray and Ilyin, Ray and Ilyin.

RAY
Shooter. Shooter. Shooter.

Total anarchy ensues.

Jolted as if from a dream, Ilyin reaches for the camera.

RAY (CONT'D)
Don't you *fucking* do it!

Ray grabs a stunned Morales, charges with her directly toward Ilyin as Natasha readies to fire.

But not at Ilyin. At Ray again.

Then, out of nowhere: MACHINE GUN FIRE.

Bullets strafe the cobbles, send both Ray and Natasha lurching. There's no cover. None.

SCREECH!

The armored transport SQUEALS to a halt. The door SMASHES open. There's a stunned Markov, clutching the device.

Same black eye as before.

He angles the device at Ray as a single bullet grazes the Russian President's upper arm.

Natasha, frozen, whips her gun between targets.

But, instead of firing at Markov, Ray lifts the cigarette case, angles it toward the transport.

He and Ilyin are face-to-face. But the shooter's expression has shifted. No longer blank. No longer in pain.

Ray YANKS the radio/detonator from his neck.

RAY
Gotcha.

As bullets TUMBLE and WHINE all around Ray, Natasha, and Morales, Ilyin locks eyes with Ray.

ILYIN
(subtitled Russian)
This can't be--

THUMP.

A single sniper round from high up and further down The Palace roof hits Ilyin just right of the sternum.

The force sends his body backward toward the stunned Russian Soldier frozen next to Markov inside the transport.

Markov and the soldier are convulsing. In paroxysms of pain from the dish angled directly toward them from the MC2V.

It's working.

RAY
(to Morales)
In. Into the transport!

As the rest of the entourage scatters amid more incoming SNIPER FIRE, Natasha rushes Tarasov, bleeding, around the front of the vehicle.

The windscreen is down, latched to the hood.

Natasha fires twice toward the DRIVER:

BANG! BANG!

The driver slumps sideways.

Ray pulls Markov from the hold, casts him roughly to the cobbles still clutching the device.

But, just Ray's about to reach for it: WHOOSH!

A single shoulder-fired rocket STREAKS down from The Palace rooftop, toward the transport.

Ray sees it, veers left.

RAY (CONT'D)
INCOMING!

The rocket hits the transport broadside.

KA-BOOM!

The blast blows the vehicle into the air, up and over Ray as he shields Morales with his body.

BAM.

The vehicle hits the cobbles. And the impact nearly knocks Ray, Natasha, and Morales off their feet.

In the distance, now outside the MC2V and returning fire at the gathering bevy of RUSSIAN REBELS, Goran SHOUTS:

GORAN
This way! This way!

His ears ringing and his face burnt, Ray lets go of Morales, looks to the device.

NATASHA
No time!

Ray looks right, sees more ARMED TROOPS advancing on Goran, lifts his pistol, fires quickly:

BANG. BANG. BANG. BANG.

Three fall. The rest scatter.

Goran grabs a rifle, ducks for cover behind the MC2V.

GORAN
(toward Ray)
The limousines. Hurry!

Ray looks to Natasha. She nods. *Let it go.*

And, together, they sprint dead-out toward the long line of idling cars, firing at anything that moves. Then:

BOOM. BOOM. BOOM. BOOM. BOOM.

RPGs fired from the rooftops explode beneath each limousine in rapid succession, sending each car hurtling end-over-end into the air like dominoes.

Ray skids to a stop. A bullet catches him in the leg.

More GUNFIRE. More SNIPER ROUNDS.

RAY
Shit. I'm--

Natahsa GRABS Ray, TUGS him and Dynamo with her and Tarasov toward momentary safety next to Goran.

Taking control.

NATASHA
This ends NOW.

Bullets THUD and PING into and off of the armored van.

Goran leans around the edge, empties the clip of his scavenged AK-47:

RATA-TAT-TAT-TAT-TAT!

NATASHA (CONT'D)
The Mi-8. The helicopter.

He ditches the clip, swaps in a second, looks to Ray.

GORAN
Tell me you can fly.

I/E. MOBILE COMMAND VEHICLE/HODŽOVO SQUARE - CONTINUOUS

Now at the wheel, Goran pilots the armored MC2V through a swarm of gunfire coming from literally everywhere.

In the back, Natasha tends to Tarasov's shoulder while Ray wraps his own thigh with an improvised tourniquet.

RAY
(to Morales)
The First Gentleman should be safe.
He always is. But we need to get
you to U.S. EMBASSY. Now.
(to Tarasov)
Both of you. This is not a stunt.
Not a drill. This may be a full-on
coup orchestrated by officials at
the highest levels.
(back to Morales)
Of both governments.

Goran BASHES the vehicle through a pair of steel bollards, sending it SCREECHING across the cobbles.

Through the blacked-out windows: smoke and tracers. Evidence of an on-going, heavy firefight.

Ahead: vividly-colored ornate palaces and churches bleed by.

GORAN
Hold on. This is going to be--

SMASH. SMASH. SMASH.

He careens the van through a low pedestrian tunnel beneath an imposing red brick tower amid a shower of sparks.

All of the equipment on the roof goes flying.

SCREECH.

Goran sends the vehicle into a long controlled left hand skid. Then he guns it directly toward a cluster of heavily-armed SLOVAK GUARDS.

BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!

The windscreen spiders with each high-caliber round. But it doesn't shatter.

THUMP. THUMP. THUMP. THUMP.

He takes each guard down one-by-one. Mows them over.

As their bodies SMACK against the grill, we catch a quick glimpse of a helipad in the distance.

On it sits the twin-turbine helicopter from before.

Miraculously, it's unguarded. For the moment.

EXT. HODŽOVO SQUARE - SAME TIME

As wounded dignitaries claw their way back across the cobbles amid a scene of total carnage, Markov rolls over onto his back, covered in blood.

The hand-held microwave gun sits on the ground beside him.

MARKOV
Obedience without agency.

He pushes himself slowly to his feet, bends to grip the gun.

MARKOV (CONT'D)
Equals control over chaos.

I/E. HELICOPTER/BRATISLAVA SKYLINE - CONTINUOUS

Ray, bathed in his own blood, scans the massive bank of controls in before him like an archeologist studying the Rosetta Stone.

Buckling in next to him, Natasha does a quick double-take.

Through the nearly all-glass canopy, six or seven ARMED SOLDIERS rapidly ready a rocket launcher.

WHOMP. WHOMP. WHOMP. WHOMP.

The rotors spin-up.

The soldiers take aim.

NATASHA
No time like the present, Ray.

Ray reaches to a panel overhead, gives the twin throttles a heavy heave forward.

And the helicopter lurches, nose-down, just barely off the ground and toward the Russian soldiers.

WHOOSH.

The rocket fires, streaks dead-on toward them.

Ray banks hard right, barely misses a turret on the nearest section of stone wall.

KA-BOOM!

The rocket hits a nearby Palace, blows a massive hole into it as Ray ducks the hulking craft back down the other side of the wall and toward the ring road adjacent the river.

BANG. BANG. BANG. BANG.

Automatic weapons fire from a pair of Zodiacs on the river ricochets off the glass canopy, barely missing Dynamo.

Ray banks again, heads north. Away from the river. Back toward Hodžovo Square.

GORAN

What are you doing?!

Ray YANKS wildly at the stick. Like it's unresponsive. Dead.

RAY

I don't... It's not... I can't--

THUD.

A single round rips through the steel behind Goran, shreds his jump seat, and sends tattered bits of his jacket flying.

Blood blossoms across his chest.

Ray looks back, sees it.

RAY

I'm gonna get you outta here. I'm gonna get all of you--

Ray jolts backward, wincing.

Below: the carnage of Hodžovo Square.

And Markov standing amidst it all, brandishing the device.

NATASHA

Ray? RAY!

Ray, unable to control his body, slumps forward.

The helicopter falls into a steep nosedive.

GORAN
Pull up! Pull up!

Natasha grips her controls, strains with all her might.

Through the glass floor, she can see Markov there on the ground, angling the gun toward her partner.

NATASHA
(back to Goran)
Markov?

Goran, in pain, strains to get a view.

GORAN
Yes!

TARASOV
(fading, in Russian)
What is happening?!

MORALES
Don't worry, Victor. They're my
detail. I trust them with my--

Morales braces as Natasha throws the helicopter into a steep banking turn and guns the throttle.

She's headed directly toward Markov.

PING. PING. PING.

More sniper rounds from The Palace rooftop ricochet off the fuselage and pierce the glass canopy.

Natasha flicks the trigger guard on the flight stick with her thumb, takes aim at Markov.

GORAN
I don't think--

WHIR. WHIR. WHIR.

Both chain guns blast a fiery corridor around Markov, spraying high-caliber rounds to his left and right but missing him completely.

GORAN
Too low. Too low!

NATASHA
Fuck's sake.

Natasha arcs skyward.

Ray, his ears and eyes bleeding, lurches backward.

GORAN
Water!

Natasha bends south, still taking too much fire.

GORAN (CONT'D)
Metal reflects. Water absorbs!

That's when she sees it again. The Danube.

The river.

Avoiding the two gunboats, Natasha STREAKS over a small park, toward a wider section of slow-moving water.

NATASHA
(toward Ray)
This better *fucking* work!

She SLAMS the buckle on his harness restraint with the butt of her fist. And it falls away, undone.

NATASHA (CONT'D)
(back, to Goran)
Little help.

His chest now covered in blood, Goran snakes his hand forward, throws Ray's glass cockpit door open.

GORAN
(toward Ray)
Never say I didn't do anything nice for you.

Natasha wavers briefly, uncertain. She looks to Ray.

NATASHA
See you over there?

Her voice breaks:

NATASHA (CONT'D)
Don't be late.

And, with that, Natasha BANKS hard left.

Ray's body falls from the speeding craft like a rag doll, hits the water below with a heavy SLAP!

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Ray JOLTS awake inside the same dimly-lit hotel room from before. Natasha lies with one arm draped over his chest.

NATASHA
I can always tell where you are
when you're not here.

Ray blinks, disoriented.

NATASHA (CONT'D)
There, then. '29.

Ray's eyes dart to the chair at the desk by the door. Draped over it: his waterlogged suit.

NATASHA (CONT'D)
Always.

Ray looks quickly to the nightstand, sees his watch.

He snatches it up, turns it over in his hand, afraid to look. But then he slips his thumb from the crystal face.

In the date window: a number. The number one.

A new day dawning. The next day. At last.

An almost imperceptible spasm of laughter ripples Ray.

They did it. Finally. Together.

He slips the watch back onto the nightstand and threads his arm around Natasha's.

A huge, contented grin dawns across his face - precisely like the sun slowly rising just outside.

RAY
Not this time, babe.

He lifts her arm to his lips, kisses it gently.

RAY (CONT'D)
Not this time.

As we slowly PULL BACK, Natasha slides closer, burrows her body into his, smiles.

United.

NATASHA

Think maybe a Presidential Medal of
Valor might nab you a better desk
back in D.C.?

Ray simply CHUCKLES. Still barely believing they all
survived. That he's actually back.

NATASHA (CONT'D)

Yeah, nah. Probably not.

Ray closes his eyes. Threads his finger between hers.

Home at last.

But then the entire space BRIEFLY GLITCHES.

Slips in and out of focus. Shakes.

A turbulent sea of glimmering pixels.

HARD CUT TO:

EXT. HODŽOVO SQUARE - NIGHT

The crowd disperses. SIRENS in the distance.

But it's night now, no longer day.

Ray staggers into the open, bloodied, breathing hard.

Natasha rushes toward him, stops just short.

NATASHA

(hushed, frantic)

Did we--

Ray draws a breath, looks down to his blood-soaked shirt.

He freezes. A FLICKER.

His body shudders, glitching at the edges.

Static bleeds into the night air.

Natasha reaches for him, then pulls her hand back.

In her POV, the world begins to double:

-- Morales smiling, alive, extends her hand --

-- The young girl in the red dress LAUGHS --

-- The Square fills again with dignitaries --

Back to Ray.

He stands trembling, trying to hold on.

SMASH! Fine China hits cold stone.

NATASHA

Mazel...

But, this time, nothing changes.

NATASHA (CONT'D)

(an edge of dread)

...Tov?

RAY

It's mine.

BEAT. Silence.

RAY (CONT'D)

It ends with me.

Then: the faint ECHO of a DSLR shutter firing.

CLACK. CLACK. CLACK.

Natasha turns slowly toward the sound.

FLASH. A blinding white burst of light.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Ray JOLTS awake yet again.

But, this time, the room is different. More modern.

Natasha lies again with one arm draped over him.

NATASHA

...there, then.

Ray sits up, heart POUNDING. Tries to take in the environs.

NATASHA (CONT'D)

'29. Always.

Ray looks for his drenched suit. It's not there.

Looks to the nightstand. No watch.

Natasha rolls over, sits up.

But something's wrong. Her face. It's subtly unfamiliar.

Green eyes instead of brown.

Harshly chiseled cheekbones. Hints of vivid red lipstick.

Jet black hair. Tousled but straight. No cascading river of auburn curls. Stark.

NATASHA

What is it?

Ray, in a panic, looks to the windows.

Outside: an entirely different city.

Rain. Double-decker buses on the wrong side of the street.

RAY

She's alright? She made it?

On a bench at the foot of the bed: a single shoulder holster. In it: a very familiar pistol.

Ray's service 9mm.

NATASHA

She who?

The sight of his gun brings more confusion than relief.

RAY

POTUS.

Natasha smiles.

It's a wholly foreign, seemingly soulless grin.

NATASHA

She?

For an almost imperceptible instant, the entire room morphs into a glimmering sea of oscillating pixels.

Natasha rolls back over. The room resolves.

NATASHA (CONT'D)

Yeah, right.

SMASH TO BLACK.

ROLL END CREDITS --

To "ONE THING LEADS TO ANOTHER" by The Fixx.

THE END