

BABY STEPS

Screenplay by Gen Vardo

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EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Two security GUARDS, weathered thug types, stand outside a Star Wagons trailer at the top of a quiet street littered with empty buildings.

The only other person on the street is a late teens, fashionably dressed LA HILLS type, stood outside a grocery store in the distance behind them, tossing in the air what appears to be, from the general physics of it, a plastic orange.

SECURITY GUARD ONE
Do you recognise them?

SECURITY GUARD TWO
Maybe. But maybe I'm just saying that.

SECURITY GUARD ONE
You ready?

SECURITY GUARD TWO
Are we getting paid extra for this?

SECURITY GUARD ONE
Time to get into character.

Both Guards tense into an aggressive stance before ripping around, then hurtling down the street toward Hills with ferocious intent.

Hills turns to see the Guards making their way aggressively toward them. He dances on his toes a couple of times before tossing the orange back into the display as he runs into the Grocery Store.

INT. GROCERY STORE - CONTINUOUS

The Guards bat air-born plastic fruit and vegetables out of their way as they chase Hills through the store.

EXT. CITY STREET - CONTINUOUS

Bursting out onto the back alleyway, the Guards continue their ferocious chase into the Movie Theatre next door via the fire exit.

INT. MOVIE THEATRE - CONTINUOUS

A zig zagged chase through the seating area leads into the foyer and back out onto the street.

INT. FIVE STORY BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Diving into an office building across the street, the Guards see Hills take to the stairs after finding the elevator out of use.

EXT. FIVE STORY BUILDING - DAY

The Guards burst out onto the roof to see Hills stood at the far corner, looking down to the street below. The Guards relax their stance and walk toward him.

CUT TO BLACK

NIK (O.S)

You are confident. You will be fine. You will deal with your disorder.

INT. NIK'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY

It's early in the morning and NIK (NIKOLA, early thirties Caucasian American) is staring at himself in the bathroom mirror reciting lines, as instructed, from the Common Exercises section of an anxiety workbook sat in the sink.

It's clear from Nik's demeanour that he is not well. It doesn't look like a Flu or Cold, and though cynical people may think it from the flinching and shakes, he is not experiencing withdrawals from a drug misuse.

NIK (cont'd)

While staring confidently at yourself in the mirror, talk to the person you were before your disorder began.

After staring down at the sink for a moment he forces himself to look up and repeat the next line.

NIK (cont'd)

It is a physical condition.

Nik looks back down at the sink becoming more frustrated, lost, and irritated. Looking back in the mirror he repeats the next line.

NIK (cont'd)

I will attempt to do something today that makes me feel uncomfortable.

Nik stares at the sink again then looks sharply up, his eyes attacking the mirror.

NIK (cont'd)

I already did something today that made me feel uncomfortable, I felt my stomach tighten so much I couldn't lie flat on my bed. I felt like I could not breathe. I felt like I was burning up. I felt like my heart was pounding out of my chest. I felt like my throat had closed up. I felt like I was going to faint. I felt like I was going to die. That made me feel uncomfortable, and I was only trying to sleep.

Staring back down at the sink.

NIK (cont'd)

Talk to the person you were before your disorder began.

Looking back into the mirror.

NIK (cont'd)

How about it stranger, can you help me? Really anything you can think of. How about if you were holding the gun, would you try?

He straightens up and speaks with confidence adopting his old confident self, Nikola, pointing a GUN at his reflection.

NIKOLA

Well let me think for a second there buddy. Do you have any quality of life to look forward to? Any sunsets to walk into?

Nik drops into his natural slumped stance.

NIK

Not according to, they. They say... no, no life.

He adopts Nikola's confident stance, again aiming the GUN at his reflection.

NIKOLA

I'd pull the trigger. Why would I let you live this way?

The GUN drops from his hand as he rests on the edge of the bath hunched over shaking.

INT. NIK'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Nik avoids the mirrors and any reflective surface in the apartment while trying to hold it together getting ready for work, wearing casual comfortable clothes.

Before leaving the bedroom he stares at his suit hung on the back of the bedroom door and sighs.

INT. NIK'S APARTMENT - DAY

About to leave the apartment he catches his reflection in a framed picture of a clown's face beside the door. He raises his hand to his head and gestures firing a shot.

Taped over the door's peep-hole is a pair of mirrored sunglasses with one of the lenses covering the hole. He smooths out the peeling tape before leaving.

Nik lives alone in his one bed second story apartment just outside the centre of TOWN.

EXT. TOWN - NIK'S APARTMENT - FIRE ESCAPE - DAY

Nik exits his apartment through the rear fire escape that leads to the alleyway behind.

He places on his headphones and selects an uplifting track from his 'uplifting tracks' playlist, the only playlist.

EXT. TOWN - ALLEYWAY SYSTEM - CONTINUOUS

Nik avoids the main streets using the alleyways. It's clear by the speed in which he walks and the way in which he navigates the alleyways, that at this point he could run through most of the alleys blindfolded and not hit a thing.

Ahead of Nik the rear door to a restaurant opens and a MAN emerges carrying trash.

Nik slides to his left out of view and waits patiently for the Man to disappear back into the restaurant before continuing, all the time focused in trying to lose himself in his music.

INT. NIK'S WORKPLACE - DAY

With his head down Nik speed walks through the building, avoiding co-workers judgmental gazes.

INT. NIK'S WORKPLACE - NIK'S OFFICE - DAY

Nik sits at the desk of his small office staring at his shaky hands.

OFFICE JOKER walks in.

OFFICE JOKER
Hey man, I know we're not
supposed to bother you...

NIK
What?

OFFICE JOKER
No I mean cos you've not been
feeling well or...

NIK
(clearly lying)
What is it? I'm fine.

Office Joker comes right into the office and gets comfortable, making Nik even more uncomfortable.

OFFICE JOKER
I remember hearing about that
sale you made a couple of years
back in--

NIK
(speeding through it)
--You can do it on your own,
just trust in yourself, that's
how you get the best results.
You don't need me.

OFFICE JOKER
Ok, but maybe--

NIK
(still speeding)
--Try emailing Christopher
again. Look I've gotta make a
call. Can you close the door on
your way out? Thanks.

On his way out, Office Joker turns around and tries out another one of his jokes.

NIK (cont'd)
--Thanks. Just close the door.

OFFICE JOKER
Wait, knock, knock.

NIK
What?

OFFICE JOKER

It's a quick one. Knock, knock.

NIK

Who's there?

OFFICE JOKER

Doctor.

NIK

Doctor who?

OFFICE JOKER

Yeah.

After Office Joker closes the door behind him Nik takes a scratched up stapler from his desk draw and wedges it under the door, before continuing to sit bent over in his chair.

INT. NIK'S WORKPLACE - BOARDROOM - DAY

A series of people in suits occupy the boardroom table. It's the end of day. Standing at the head of the table wrapping up his version of a Jordan Belfort style presentation is Nik's boss LUKE (early forties).

Luke is from Dudley, England (Dhud-looy, if you're from there).

LUKE

All-roit final bell, yow don't have to go home, but yow 'can' stay ear. Yow want yow new car yow can stay ear. Yow want yor new home upgrade yow can stay ear.

With the meeting over Luke and his late twenties protégé LAKIE, confront Nik after everyone else has left with Luke's fist bumps and high fives. Lakie is the offices conspiracy theory/alternative therapy nut, and a true believer.

LUKE (cont'd)

Mate, Nik, hold on all-roit. Don't take this the wrong way, people just talking about yow round the office, stress of the job getting to yow?

Lakie waves her hands over Nik in an attempt to read his energy.

LUKE (cont'd)
 Companie set up a few therapy
 sessions for yow. Sure it'll
 help yow get back on yow feet
 and get those numbers back where
 they belong eh?

Nik is jarred and insulted but tries his best to not let
 it show. Lakie turns a hand to Luke waving it over his
 chest comparing his energy to Nik's.

LUKE (cont'd)
 I know there's nowt wrong with
 yow--how'm I doin' there Lakes?

LAKIE
 I'm comparing--

LUKE
 --Just one of those insurance
 things mate, looking after the
 company ere, so no topping yow-
 self.

LAKIE
 Luke.

Lakie hastily plucks the air from around Nik's chest in
 a reiki fashion.

LUKE
 Well if yow done laugh about it.
 It's great I can say whatever I
 want with yow to remove it from
 the old atmosphere ere Lakes.
 Yeah positive thinking, but
 that's what I'm saying.

LAKIE
 And practice it.

LUKE
 And, yeah, she drives me wild
 mate.

Lakie finishes her plucking of Nik.

LAKIE
 That should help a little. Your
 energies have been really off
 Nikola. I can bring my crystals
 in and give you a full reiki
 massage?

LUKE

Reiki massage, the one with no touching roit? The company provides a therapist, so mate, Nik, just go see this fella, get that ticked off, then back to work all-roit.

After the customary slap on the shoulder Luke begins to leave, Lakie following, waving her hands over his back.

LUKE (cont'd)

Wouldn't it be grander if yow did have some touching? Like adding another level to a ray-key massage?

LAKIE

It's all about working with the energy of another person.

LUKE

Can't help seein' a hole in the market there.

Nik's head slowly drops as Luke calls back to him.

LUKE (cont'd)

Appointment's first thing every morning, all-roit?

INT. NIK'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ready for bed Nik turns the alarm clock around and stares at the back of it.

He lies awake turning the clock around every couple of hours, relieved when the alarm finally sounds.

INT. NIK'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

He picks up the anxiety workbook and flicks past Common Exercises to the next section; Baby Steps.

This section of the book lists social exercises for a person to complete. They range from calling an old friend on the phone to attending a social function.

Nik looks up then places his finger down on the page. Looking back down Nik sees that he's chosen 'Start a conversation with a stranger'.

With determination he heads out the front of the building after putting his headphones on, selecting another uplifting song.

EXT. TOWN - THE THIEF - DAY

Nik with some force walks the main streets to work, constantly flinching and staring at every place he could hide away from people.

Continuing along the main streets he forces himself to look around for someone who looks approachable.

Choosing one person he gets close but as soon as they make eye contact Nik scurries away, continuing on.

This happens two more times, Nik looking more disappointed with himself each time.

Soon he spots JENNIFER, an attractive early twenties woman, leaning back against the window of a bar; THE THIEF.

As Nik gets slowly closer he looks down at his shaking hands. He tries his best to build himself up as his symptoms rise.

After taking his headphones off, leaving the music playing, he stops and looks at Jennifer, ready to start the conversation.

NIK

...--

JENNIFER

--What the fuck are you looking at?

NIK

...I was, I, I just...

JENNIFER

Just.

NIK

Looking... Just, passing by, and...

JENNIFER

Great line.

Jennifer walks up to Nik staring him down with complete calm. Nik struggles to keep it together.

NIK

Not a line.

JENNIFER

No, it's not, its shit. I'll tell you what, you give me a proper line, one I deserve, and I won't introduce you to Matt.

Jennifer looks back into The Thief at MATT, late thirties ex-boxer looking type, who's walked up to the window to see who she's talking to.

JENNIFER (cont'd)
I'm waiting.

Feeling the pressure Nik barely even mumbles.

JENNIFER (cont'd)
(breaking the act)
I'm joking, don't you remember me? I used to see you around, down the college bars.

Nik takes a breath and wipes the sweat from his forehead as Jennifer steps back and Matt returns to his seat.

NIK
Thanks, that was, fun.

JENNIFER
What? You ok?

NIK
Yeah. Yeah I used to go out and check out the bands.

JENNIFER
You weren't checking out bands when we met. About a year ago, you were all paranoid and shaky, not quite this bad. Are you sure you're--

Nik suddenly recognises Jennifer.

NIK
--You said I was a cop.

JENNIFER
Yeah the worst undercover cop ever, I wasn't gonna sell to you but my friend vouched for you. No one bought that much off me before in one go.

Jennifer returns to resting against the window.

JENNIFER (cont'd)
I used to deal a lot in the student bars, figured it was a good business strategy, a lot safer than out here. You never came back, figured you'd be a preferred customer.

NIK

Yeah, no I flushed it.

JENNIFER

You threw out a thousand dollars-worth of weed?

NIK

I was too paranoid to keep it. I got it to help me relax but it didn't work. Guess I don't like weed. Feel weird about that, everyone else seems to love it. Whose bar is this?

Nik is beginning to ease into having a conversation.

JENNIFER

The Thief? All mine.

NIK

You seem too young to have your own bar.

JENNIFER

Thanks. Students smoke a lot of weed.

NIK

Yeah. You bought your own bar just selling weed to students?

JENNIFER

I had a lot of weed. So why did you stop to talk to me if you didn't recognise me or were trying to hit on me.

NIK

No, erm, I guess I did recognise you. Just early. On my way to work.

JENNIFER

OK.

NIK

Yeah. I should get to work. I'll see you.

Nik begins to walk away.

JENNIFER

Hey, there are other ways to relax, other ideas.

Nik doesn't reply, just places his headphones back on and smiles as he continues on.

JENNIFER (cont'd)
Be unconventional.

Jennifer is aware Nik didn't hear that last part.

Nik stares down at his still shaking hands as he walks on.

He tries to stick to the streets but quickly ducks down an alley, resuming his usual route to work.

INT. NIK'S WORKPLACE - DAY

Walking through the building Nik again passes people he's seen every day for years, now with mixed looks toward him from his withdrawn character.

INT. NIK'S WORKPLACE - THERAPY ROOM - DAY

Nik finds a tiny office (large store room) that has been stripped out. An uncomfortable looking couch and a swivel chair have been thrown down either side of a wonky coffee table.

Nik rips off the 'Therapy Room' word-art printout taped to the door as he reluctantly enters the room.

Therapist DAVID, mid-fifties, enters the room shortly after.

DAVID
You must be Nikola, please take a seat. Ignore the room they've given us, ah, no, we'll be fine here.

Nik sits hunched over on the edge of the couch just as Lakie enters with a translucent resin pyramid, filled with crushed crystals.

LAKIE
Nikola when I created this I used reiki to trap in positive energy. Keep it close to you.

Lakie places the pyramid on the table right in front of Nik.

LAKIE (cont'd)
Just the pyramid itself, I mean the shape, it directs the energy straight out.

Lakie hovers, looking for an invitation.

DAVID
Thank you Lakie, that was very
thoughtful.

LAKIE
Well, you know where I am if you
need me.

Lakie reluctantly leaves.

NIK
It's Nik.

DAVID
O, sorry it says here in your HR
records you prefer Nikola.

NIK
Nik.

David stares at the pyramid a second before sitting down
in the swivel chair.

DAVID
Now I understand that you've
been feeling a little bit,
stressed out at work.

Angered and disappointed, Nik takes a deep breath.

NIK
I'm not tired, burnt out,
dealing with a lot right now, or
'a little bit stressed out'. I
have a physical anxiety disorder
that I was most likely born
with, it just took an event to
bring it out, and before you
ask, don't.

DAVID
I can only help you if you're
open with me.

NIK
Are you from human resources? Is
that how you know Lakie?

DAVID
I am a licensed therapist, but
yes I usually work in human
resources. And yes that's how I
know Lakie.

Nik laughs through his frustration.

DAVID (cont'd)

You don't have to talk about anything that makes you uncomfortable. You could talk about something that makes you feel comfortable. And anything you say here is privileged.

NIK

What point is there telling you anything? Apart from the way this disorder makes me feel the worst thing is that no one understands. I get it that people don't understand, I mean all people can observe is maybe I look flushed, uncomfortable, or unsociable, a little shaky. I get told to cheer up when inside I literally feel like I'm dying. I struggle to breathe which makes me dizzy I burn up and sweat making me feel faint, my heart pounds out of my chest as though I'm supposed to run, but all I can do is stand there and shake. Any positive thoughts I try and force in are devoured by this black hole that I can physically feel in my chest. And apparently all I can do is learn to cope with it, no cure. And I did used to prefer Nikola. Can't even handle people inquiring about it. I have to avoid everything, not just confrontation.

DAVID

When did this start?

NIK

About a year ago, I started getting panic attacks in regular situations, which was bad enough even though they only last ten minutes or so. Then about three weeks ago, it happened, and the panic attack it brought on didn't go away. And it will last forever.

DAVID

Have you been to see a doctor?

NIK

--No pills. People will never understand or sympathise unless they've experienced it themselves. There is absolutely no point in sharing. No point in talking about it. No matter what's shared or said this is for life. This disorder has ended my life. I should just get it over with.

DAVID

You need to tell me that you're joking. I have to notify someone if I believe you will harm yourself.

Nik gets up and walks over to the window.

NIK

I bought an anxiety workbook.

DAVID

Have you found it useful?

NIK

I'm trying to find it useful. I've been doing the exercises.

DAVID

Exercises?

NIK

Like, talk to the person you were before your disorder began. The section I'm on is called Baby Steps, exercises like talking to a stranger.

DAVID

You're doing this?

NIK

I did. I picked a good one. The first thing she said to me was 'What the fuck are you looking at?' I did stick with it though.

DAVID

That's a positive start.

NIK

It's just coping, not curing. Why just cope. I want it gone.

David reaches back into his bag for something.

NIK (cont'd)
Seems there's only one way.

DAVID
Sorry I didn't catch that last
thing.

NIK
I said I'm leaving.

Nik walks out leaving David sat with some papers and an
overcoming work stress pamphlet in his hand.

INT. NIK'S APARTMENT - DAY

Nik is stood outside the bathroom staring at the far
wall of the lounge, the GUN still on the floor of the
bathroom off to his right.

He's crying and shaking, daring himself, building
himself up to at least look toward the GUN.

With a cry-full grunt Nik races into the bathroom.

Reaching down for the GUN Nik suddenly dives to toilet
and throws up.

Crying Nik slumps to the ground.

LATER

Nik is lying awake on the couch.

NIK
There has to be a better way.

He gets up and heads out, another idea.

EXT. TOWN - SIDE STREETS - NIGHT

After exiting an alleyway onto a deserted side street
Nik sees a little light coming from an opening and heads
toward it.

DOORMAN ONE, A typical large middle aged bouncer type,
is just inside the opening. He steps aside as he sees
Nik.

Nik is initially reluctant, but forces himself to walk
in.

INT. CLUB - MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

Inside is a large open room stretched out with seated areas surrounding the dance floor, the bar at the near end. A series of vending and slot machines line the walls. Melancholy music is playing.

The dance floor is a quarter full, its inhabitants mostly spaced out just as those around the rest of the room.

At the very far end is a closed velvet curtain that looks like it's spent its life as an insecure homeless person's comfort blanket. Everything else looks fairly well maintained.

Nik heads across the room and through the velvet curtain.

INT. CLUB - CASINO ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nik finds a room with two blackjack tables either side of him and one large poker table at the far end.

As he closes the curtain behind him he picks up a twenty dollar betting chip from the floor.

Looking over the room he spots the impressive figure of a man at the head of the poker table, so heads over whilst examining the chip.

Nik sits in one of the central seats opposite the DEALER. To his left are GREG and PAT, mid-forties, two colourful characters making small castles out of their chips.

To his far right is the impressive figure, TEX, late sixties, rich with chips, the guy who invented the poker face, and probably poker.

The moment Nik sat down NORA began to approach the empty chair to his right having followed him through the curtain.

NORA

Does anyone mind if I join?

Greg, Pat and Tex gesture toward Nora so she takes a seat.

NIK

Sorry I didn't ask did I?

GREG

Probably shouldn't advertise being new to this.

Pat's chip castle falls as he's placing the last chip on top.

PAT
(to Greg)
That's your fault that is.

GREG
Well you can hardly blame
yourself.

Nora is an attractive and tough looking woman in her early-thirties. As she's getting comfortable she plants her vodka and orange toward the centre of the table.

Nik watches as the Dealer picks it up and places it in front of her.

DEALER
Sorry could you keep your drink
to the side, thank you.

NORA
Sure.

The Dealer looks uncomfortably suspicious by the way Nik is looking over at Nora's drink.

NIK
May I have a sip of your drink?

NORA
The bar's right back there.

Nora tries to hide her suspicious gaze toward Nik as he stares at the Dealer, smiling as he slides his twenty dollar chip across the table under his fingers.

NIK
I'm so parched I'd give a
thousand dollars for a drink. In
twenties please.

The Dealer palms the chip away.

DEALER
Change for a thousand.

The Dealer pushes over a thousand dollars in twenty dollar chips. Nik pockets half leaving the rest on the table.

NIK
Thanks. What's the deal with
that room? It's like everyone
here came alone.

GREG

There's a different atmosphere every week. I get the feeling someone's--

PAT

--Here we go. Let's play some--

NIK

--How much is a big bag of Cocaine?

NORA

How big?

NIK

Big.

NORA

You could get a kilo for about seventy thousand.

NIK

(to Dealer)

What time are you on till?

GREG, PAT

Are we playing?

GREG

Thousand dollar chip, El Chapo came to play.

PAT

He changed it right away.

GREG

He changed it right away Pat.

Pat notices Nik looking over at Tex as they all check their hands.

PAT

Don't expect anything out of Tex.

NIK

Your name's Tex?

PAT

We just call him that because of the hat.

NIK

Because he's not wearing one?

PAT

Exactly, smart arse.

GREG

Did he ruin your joke?

After the hand is dealt Nik flips over his cards leaving them on the table for everyone to see.

PAT

We normally keep our cards a secrets.

NORA

Secret.

GREG

Plural, it means more.

PAT

It's a big secret.

After the flop Nik pushes all of his chips forward.

NIK

All in.

GREG

Good.

TEX

Who are you?

PAT

Greg.

GREG

I heard it too.

NIK

I'm nobody. I just have a feeling about this hand.

GREG

One of those ESP players.

Greg, Pat, Tex, and Nora study their cards while Nik just sits back confidently, the flop showing a possible flush for Nik.

Greg, Pat, and Nora, fold. Tex calls.

Nik looks shocked as the turn and river are dealt. Tex turns over his pocket aces, winning with three.

PAT

Guess your perception is a little off balance.

Looking confused, Nik leaves the room.

PAT (cont'd)

It's ok.

GREG

Just take it easy next hand.

INT. CLUB - MEN'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Nik is standing by the sinks when Nora walks in and checks the cubicles.

NORA

Who are you?

NIK

I wasn't gonna say anything about--

NORA

--What do you want?

NIK

I should have won.

NORA

Are you crazy?

NIK

I... I saw that thing you did with the Dealer, with your drink. You put it toward the centre of the table and when he moved it back to you he dropped a chip in it.

NORA

You're on your own?

NIK

I wasn't gonna say anything to anyone about--

NORA

--Are you here on your own?

NIK

Yeah.

NORA

Ok... Look how is he supposed to rig a hand as quick as that? Despite what you think you know a rigged deck takes time, work.

NIK

If I don't make a lot of money tonight then tomorrow... I came in looking for someone to sell me--

NORA

--A kilo of Cocaine.

NIK

Then I saw that sleight of hand.
Maybe not quite a kilo, a lot.

NORA

Why do you want a lot of coke?
You know there are dealers here
who wouldn't be too happy--

NIK

--It's for personal use.

NORA

You're not gonna convince a
dealer of that. People don't
like competition around here.

NIK

So how much can I get?

NORA

It's ok, a lot. I'll help you
out, couple of hundred grams at
least.

NIK

How much is that, practically
speaking?

NORA

Christ man you can die on
several grams.

NIK

Really?

NORA

Yeah well tolerance goes up. Saw
a heavy user overdose on two
eight balls.

NIK

Eight ball?

NORA

Point eight of a pound. Like
three and a half grams. But hey
man you need a lot, not judging
I'm not a dealer. I'll get you a
big fuckin bag man. And you know
what? I'll source from different
dealers, stop em comin at you.
Now give me your chips.

NIK

What?

NORA

You need a partner. You're pretty sharp but you can't work alone. You're definitely alone?

NIK

Yeah.

NORA

Right well you need a partner. Look you're too obvious. Accept my help. I can make you some real money.

NIK

You have a partner.

NORA

I'm out of chips.

NIK

Go see your Dealer.

NORA

I can't get any more that way tonight. We can only do it now and then. Do you want the coke or not? Give me your chips and I'll play for you.

NIK

You can't help me if that's all you do here.

NORA

You think that's the only thing we have going? He's rigging the deck for me right now, I gave the signal.

NIK

I have about five hundred left.

NORA

Great, that means we won't be here all night. Wait for me out back in the alley.

Nik cannot hide his scepticism.

NIK

The alleyway?

NORA
Fine, wait at the bar. Then when
I'm done well split it up out
back.

Nik hands over the rest of his chips.

NIK
And the cut?

NORA
You get thirty percent.

NIK
It's my money. Fifty-fifty.

NORA
And what about my other,
partner? Three way split.

A REGULAR walks in, Nora and him greet casually as though it's nothing that she's in the men's bathroom.

INT. CLUB - MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

Nik follows Nora out and heads to the bar as she returns to the casino room.

LATER

Nik is staring over at the closed velvet curtain, no drink in his hand, as Doorman One approaches him.

DOORMAN ONE
The boss want's to meet you.

NIK
I'm waiting for someone.

DOORMAN ONE
Forget about Nora. The boss
wants to meet you.

Nik reluctantly follows Doorman One.

EXT. TOWN - CLUB - NIGHT

Nik is lead out a well-used fire exit door and up to the roof, where Doorman One leads him down a short stairwell to a large open room; the boss, JIM'S office.

INT. CLUB - JIM'S OFFICE - NIGHT

There are a couple of couches at the near end beside Nik. Sitting at the other end is a grand wooden desk, the one Lincoln chose for the oval office.

Bookcases are scattered around the walls that house bricked up windows.

The main door on the far wall is also bricked up. The bookcases are eclectically jammed with books, pamphlets, magazines, photographs and folded posters. The rest of the room is neatly scattered with other research materials, objects and outfits/disguises.

In the middle of the room against the wall Jim (averagely handsome, early forties) sits at a makeup table in front of a lit mirror in underwear, applying lipstick, enjoying the melancholy of the indie music playing.

A manikin sits to his side wearing an almost completed dress.

JIM

Thank you Doorman One.

Doorman One leaves as Jim gets up and walks over to Nik after sliding the dress off the manikin.

JIM (cont'd)

I know what you're thinking. But tatty rinky-dink shows stay hidden. If I jazzed it up more than it is downstairs it would warrant a lot of unwanted attention.

NIK

Yeah, or I was wondering about your hidden lair, and... I really need to get back downstairs.

JIM

You won't get your stolen chips back from Nora and her secret dealer.

Jim sits on one of the couches sewing the dress.

NIK

You know.

JIM

Know. I set it up. You see when you first open up an illegal casino, you send out shiny invitations to everyone who may want to steal from you--Do you want a drink?

Nik shakes his head.

JIM (cont'd)

I waited patiently for the right thief.

Jim murmurs a short laugh to himself and takes a moment before continuing.

JIM (cont'd)

And in she came, violent, manipulative, small time, degenerate gambler, a real scary mother fucker.

Nik walks over and sits on the opposite couch.

JIM (cont'd)

She even killed an ex- boyfriend because he forgot her birthday. Well that bit I made up. All of that keeps everyone else in Town from working on *her* turf. And it only costs me around five hundred dollars a week. Small price to pay for such security. I really thought she'd have been replaced by now. Impressive isn't she?

NIK

You told your Dealer to help her.

JIM

If he goes over five hundred it comes out of his bonus--So what brought you here in search for a big bag of cocaine?

NIK

I feel really uncomfortable you sharing all this with me. Why did the dealer change my--

JIM

--She would have finished you off in an alleyway after losing your stolen chips. It's her modus operandi. You do see me sat here in my underwear wearing lipstick sewing a dress?

NIK

Are you an actor?

JIM

Close, only I'm not researching a role, this is my life. I'm a student of people. I don't know anything about transvestites or their culture. Does this lipstick colour suit me?

NIK

No.

JIM

The club I'll be going to, none of them seem to have a lot of style; just trying to fit in. They seem like loners even though they're a... Well. I designed the playlist here to get me in the mood. I doubt there are many people dancing together down there. You can learn so much from the inside. It's like learning a new language, if you immerse yourself you won't just learn; they say sol, we say sun. You learn a new culture, new ideas, you become--

NIK

--Why are you being so open?

JIM

Why do you want a big bag of coke?

NIK

It's not what you think.

Jim tosses his dress to the side and perches on the edge of the couch.

JIM

Exactly, it is not what I think. I need to know. I'm inviting you to tell me. I promise it will stay between us.

NIK
It's personal.

JIM
I shared with you for--I gave
you serious information for
this, I trusted you.

NIK
You had; Doorman One?

JIM
Yes.

NIK
Escort me up here to a secret
closed off human research lair?

JIM
...Yes.

NIK
Because you want to, learn about
me?

JIM
Yes.

NIK
Do you have a big bag of coke?

JIM
I shared with you, be decent.

NIK
I'm good for the money.

JIM
I'm reading you and you are
running away, you're going
somewhere dark. I wouldn't get
my money.

NIK
I'll tell you everything about
me, everything, if you can get
me a big bag of Cocaine.

JIM
A lot of people manage to live
without a big bag of Cocaine.

Nik takes a breath.

NIK
I'm not planning on living with
it.

Jim sits back and relaxes.

LATER

Nik is sat in Jim's chair behind the desk. Jim sat opposite deep in thought.

JIM

There was a time when I would have said; if I had been through that, I wouldn't have lasted as long as you have.

NIK

The coke?

JIM

That was a long time ago. Now I know through personal experience that there are alternative ways of getting yourself out of a dark place. A place you feel that you will never leave.

NIK

You're not going to help me out.

JIM

I am. By telling you that all you need is an idea.

Nik buries his head in his hands.

JIM (cont'd)

Accept where you are and what you've been through, and find a way out.

Nik gets up and begins to leave.

JIM (cont'd)

All you need is an idea.

Jim sighs as Nik disappears out the way he came.

INT. NIK'S WORKPLACE - THERAPY ROOM - DAY

Nik is sat slumped forward on the edge of the seat. He's clearly done a lot of crying through the night, barely able to muster up the energy to shake.

David is sat holding the pamphlet from yesterday.

NIK

Put it away. It's insulting.

DAVID

Sorry.

David returns the pamphlet to his bag.

DAVID

Does working help? You could take some personal days.

NIK

And spend more time alone. I want to, that's why I can't.

Nik stands and stares out the window.

NIK (cont'd)

I force myself out. Not that forcing myself out will get rid of it. I want to completely destroy it. Learning that all I can do is cope with it, not get rid of it, destroy it... Baby steps... Fuck baby steps.

(shaking his head)

An idea?

A moment later Nik's eyes pierce the air, an idea.

NIK (cont'd)

Fuck baby steps.

DAVID

I didn't catch that.

NIK

Fuck baby steps. What if you went big instead of small, if forcing yourself into a conversation with a stranger makes it easier to cope, then doing something far bigger, could cure.

DAVID

What do you mean far bigger?

NIK

Far bigger.

DAVID

Well, we can talk about this some more tomorrow. O' you know if you're not up to working today you can take some personal time.

Nik leaves.

DAVID (cont'd)
I'm authorised to offer you an
amount of personal days. Ok.

EXT. TOWN - NIK'S WORKPLACE - DAY

Nik bursts out of the entrance, shaky with an air of motivation. He looks around the streets outside his workplace scratching his head before heading away.

EXT. TOWN - PARK AREA - DAY

It's a typical park area with a road running around it bordered by stores, businesses, and apartment buildings.

He observes in the distance what appears to be a drug DEALER making a sale at the entrance to an alleyway.

He then observes a heated altercation further along as he's heading into the park.

He notices a lone police officer walking along the path towards him.

Nik begins to approach the police sergeant; KELLY, a mid-fifties male whose uniform comprises of well used military fatigues and items, along with the basics of a police sergeant's uniform.

The .45 at his side is clearly not standard issue. Neither is the holster and belt which misses some pant loops in order to hang at his side at the right height for a fast draw. His badge reads TUWILE (Kenyan for 'Death is immortal').

Nik begins to shake as he walks toward Kelly, who is wholly the personification of a Bad Mutha Fucka. Like Jules Winfield, Hans Lander, Nicky Santora and the devil himself were gene spliced and the experiment went horribly wrong, or right, whichever way you look at it.

Nik stops and blocks Kelly who looks plainly down at him, showing no emotion. Nik's symptoms race up as he stares up into Kelly's eyes.

NIK
Fuck baby steps.

Nik SLAPS Kelly around the face with force. Kelly's head moves but his eyes never leave Nik's.

Nik turns and sprints over the park whilst a couple of Frisbee guys and other onlookers who witnessed the slap stand still in astonishment.

Kelly's blood boils behind his eyes as he reaches for his pistol. Thinking better of it he chases after Nik.

Nik notices the suspected Dealer at the edge of the park and heads toward him.

EXT. TOWN - ALLEYWAY SYSTEM - CONTINUOUS

The Dealer sees Nik and Kelly coming and dives down the alleyway behind him.

Nik keeps a purposeful distance between the Dealer and Kelly while navigating the alleyways.

Some distance into the back alleys Nik races ahead of the Dealer with Kelly now a corner behind them.

Nik dives into a long stretched-out almost flat alley, and presses himself into a shallow alcove.

After hearing Kelly's and the Dealer's footsteps get a little quieter Nik walks back out the way he came.

About to step onto the populated street Nik turns to look back down the empty alley, then down at his steadying hands.

With a surprised smile Nik catches his breath easily before heading down the populated street.

INT. NIK'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Walking into his apartment, without stopping, Nik picks up the anxiety workbook off the counter and drops it into the waste paper basket, then crashes out on the couch falling calmly to sleep, a wry smile on his face.

NEXT MORNING

Nik wakes in the same position, a slight smile still on his face. He enjoys the sun glaring through the window for a moment before getting ready for work, again in casual clothes, only a little smarter.

Before leaving the apartment he looks at his reflexion in the framed clown picture beside the front door, and pins a broad smile to his face to match the clowns.

NIK

I'm trying buddy, so why am I still afraid? Why do I still want the alleyways? I need to go bigger? What do you know, you're a clown. What's bigger than slapping a cop?

EXT. TOWN - MAIN STREETS - DAY

Sunnier, but still a little shaky Nik clenches his fists and tries shake off his return to anxious as he walks along.

Clearly afraid of its return he begins to scour the Town for another step.

In the distance he spots a squad car pull up outside a residence and heads over.

As Nik is crossing the road an OFFICER is leaving the residence, heading toward his squad car.

Behind Nik on a nearby road a CAR suddenly sounds its horn as it passes by which takes the Officer's attention.

The Car races down the road, leaving PEDESTRIAN ONE hunched over near the centre of the road, calling out.

PEDESTRIAN ONE
Hey I'm walking he... Go fuck
yourself.

Nik begins to tremble as the Officer approaches him.

Nik's eyes are fixed on the strap securing the Officer's pistol in its holster.

The Car brakes suddenly.

The Officer walks past Nik into the road toward Pedestrian One.

Nik is left with his fist clenched. He wastes no more time. He gets into the squad car and drives off past the Officer, Pedestrian One and the halted Car, heading off down the road, at a regular pace.

Nik turns the corner and heads off leaving the Officer stunned.

INT/EXT. SQUAD CAR - TOWN - MOVING - DAY

Nik wipes his face and throws the shakes from his hands. He continues at a regular pace past the Park Area.

INT/EXT. SQUAD CAR - ONE WAY SYSTEM - MOVING - DAY

Nik turns right continuing along the one way system. He misses SQUAD CAR ONE drifting past the bottom of the street.

A working factory wall runs down the left all the way to the fourth right turn at the end.

Driving past the first right he misses Squad Car One again, drifting by on the parallel road one hundred meters away.

Nik looks down at the centre console and touches the screen. It lights up showing a menu with one of the options blinking.

Continuing forward he looks down the second right and sees Squad Car One sat in the middle of the road ninety meters away.

Driving forward Nik sees SQUAD CAR TWO, stalking up the third right turn towards him. Nik takes his foot off the accelerator and rolls forward seeing SQUAD CAR THREE sat two hundred meters ahead having driven up the fourth and final right turn.

His only way out was back the way he came until SQUAD CAR FOUR turned the corner, stopping in the middle of the road.

He looks back at the blinking option on the screen. On touching it the screen brings up a map with his squad car in the centre, the other four placed where they sit.

Nik begins to slowly reverse. He looks to his right and sees Squad Car Two now sat halfway up the street.

Continuing in reverse he sees Squad Car One has done the same. He accelerates slowly forward and sees Squad Car Two stopped almost at the top of the street.

Boxed in Nik takes the only chance of escape he can think of; he drives at speed toward Squad Car Three.

Nik panics about fifty meters from impact, takes his hands off the wheel and puts his seatbelt on with his foot still planted on the accelerator.

Squad Car Three on noticing Nik's hands reaching for the seatbelt fast reverses crashing into the wall behind them, leaving enough space for Nik to turn the corner after flinching his hands back on the wheel.

Nik heads down the street at speed keeping one eye on the display showing the four squad cars rallying.

He races out to the main road then reduces to a normal pace. The four squad cars adopt the same pace, continuing to stalk him.

INT/EXT. SQUAD CAR - MALL PARKING LOT - MOVING - DAY

Nik heads into the large open parking lot to SHOPPING MALL ONE. He weaves through the gaps in the parked cars and around the roads to the opposite end, spreading out the four squad cars.

He then turns around and begins to weave his way back.

Checking the monitor regularly Nik sneaks out of the still moving squad car as he's threading through gaps in the parked cars.

He races crouched over through the cars to set off two or three of their alarms by throwing his weight onto them.

He continues racing to and from the moving squad car weaving his way toward the exit.

EXT. TOWN - MALL PARKING LOT - DAY

Nik spots the main entrance to Shopping Mall One up on his left. He leans in the squad car and lines it up, letting it roll toward the entrance.

Set around the parking lot are the four squad cars with three of the officers out of their cars searching around between the many car alarms filling the air.

Cop Car Four sees Nik's squad car rolling slowly toward the main entrance in front of them, followed by COP CAR TWO OFFICER racing past them toward it.

Nik sneaks away between the cars as his squad car comes to a pathetic stop on the barriers outside the main entrance.

INT. THE THIEF - DAY

Nik sits at the bar and checks out the room, seeing a few male thug types scattered around relaxing. Before he can order a drink THUG ONE approaches him.

THUG ONE

Hey, what do you need?

NIK

I'm ok.

THUG ONE

Just came in for a drink.
Anytime you need anything you
come here. You want drugs,
women, men, guns, you want
someone killed you come here.
Supply and demand.

NIK

I'm in sales myself.

THUG ONE

You looking for work?

NIK

No, thanks.

As Thug One walks back over to his table, Nik looks up to the second floor office at the far end of the room, seeing Jennifer stood with Matt.

After noticing Nik Jennifer walks down to join him, gesturing to THUG THREE behind the bar to bring over a couple of drinks.

JENNIFER

Supply and demand speech?

NIK

Hell of a sales pitch.

JENNIFER

You good?

NIK

I actually think I'm doing ok.
Found a way to relax. You?

JENNIFER

Good. I'm ok. What time do you
start work? It's past nine. What
is it, you hate your boss? I get
it, they never took to me.

NIK

No, actually he's a ray of
sunshine. He's English. He came
over here to work in sales
because he heard we love the
English accent.

JENNIFER

Smart move for sales.

NIK

He's from a place called Dudley,
or as he pronounces it, Dhud-
looy.

JENNIFER
 (laughing)
 Not quite English aristocracy.

NIK
 I haven't told him. He's too entertaining. You must get a lot of entertainment here.

JENNIFER
 Not so much in here, despite being decorated with thugs. They use this place as their own personal office. Town is getting interesting. There making a movie on the outskirts, supposed to be a secret.

NIK
 You know people in the industry?

JENNIFER
 No, I supply security around Town. Two of my guys are guarding the area.

NIK
 Security company, and a bar.

JENNIFER
 Gotta make bank bro.

Nik laughs.

JENNIFER (cont'd)
 What?

NIK
 Sorry, just sounds funny.

JENNIFER
 O, yeah, you say things ironically long enough they wind up in your general vocabulary.

Thug Three brings over a bowl of nuts.

JENNIFER (cont'd)
 When did we start doing nuts?

THUG THREE
 Thought it'd make it look like a proper bar.

JENNIFER
 (sarcastically)
 Thanks.

THUG THREE

We need music too. Hey you know
what song you never hear
anymore? Hazard - Richard Marx.

JENNIFER

Love that song. I like stories
about outsiders.

NIK

You know he killed the girl
right?

JENNIFER

What? Fuck you.

NIK

Seriously.

THUG THREE

He doesn't kill the girl.

NIK

Mary.

THUG THREE

She was the only one who gave
him a chance.

JENNIFER

Yeah, she didn't judge him for
being an outsider.

NIK

OK, listen to the lyrics. He
says all that, about not judging
him and everything. Then he says
'she went out walking *alone* and
never came home'.

THUG THREE

Yeah but what does that have to
do with--

NIK

--Then the cops arrive and he
says 'I swear I left her by the
river'.

JENNIFER

'I swear I left her safe and
sound'.

NIK

Changed his story for the cops.
Only one reason you change your
story for the cops.

THUG THREE

Yeah, but that doesn't mean...

NIK

You trying to tell me Richard Marx and those musicians, all the sound guys, record label guys, didn't notice that he changed his story when confronted by the cops?

JENNIFER

He killed the girl.

NIK

Killed the girl.

THUG THREE

I don't wanna talk to you anymore.

Nik and Jennifer laugh as Thug Three walks to the other end of the bar.

Matt walks in and addresses Jennifer as he passes by.

MATT

Interesting cop chase. Got a group of cops chasing a cop.

Nik just smiles to himself as Jennifer answers Matt.

JENNIFER

I'll wait till Penguinz does his video.

(to Nik)

So you work in sales? Thug One just lost his salesman. I have no idea why people insist on getting arrested. Apparently Kelly and some undercover cop were seen chasing him down an alley.

Nik tries to hide the connection he's just made.

JENNIFER (cont'd)

Do you--

NIK

--Kelly?

JENNIFER

Kelly Tuwile.

Nik shakes his head.

JENNIFER (cont'd)

You must be the only guy in Town who hasn't heard of him. Guy invented dirty cops, and torture. I learnt about him from some of the students. We've spent a lot of time, money, and effort staying out of that sadistic fucker's way. You know Tuwile means *death is immortal*, Kenyan.

Nik begins to sweat.

JENNIFER (cont'd)

He came in here just after I opened, sat here, had a drink, payed for it and left without saying a word. I know it sounds like a joke but it's the scariest thing he could have done. He was warning us to not overstep, knowing his reputation precedes him like a wrecking ball.

The rest of Nik's symptoms are rapidly rising.

NIK

Can we talk privately, please?

JENNIFER

We can talk here, you're safe.

Jennifer sees the change in Nik's demeanour so walks him up to her office.

JENNIFER (cont'd)

Follow me. My office is up here.

INT. THE THIEF - OFFICE - DAY

The office is pretty standard apart from a die cast cop car sitting on the desk. Once inside Jennifer sees Nik's symptoms rise further as he stands slightly hunched over.

JENNIFER

It's ok, what--

NIK

--I was being chased by a cop over the park yesterday. I needed to get away so I ran toward this guy who looked like he was selling drugs. He was standing right next to an alleyway, I knew he'd run down it, I know the alleyways well and I knew if I chose my moment and ducked around a corner that the cop would run by chasing that guy.

JENNIFER

The cop, did he dress like a cop?

NIK

A bit.

JENNIFER

Sort of a cross between a 2000AD Commando and a cop?

NIK

Yeah.

JENNIFER

That's Kelly.

NIK

Yeah, but what you said about torture and...

Jennifer is sympathetic but forces herself to tell the truth, the whole truth.

JENNIFER

True, listen, all those crazy fucking characters you've seen in the movies, those crazy fucking bad guys, those crazy fucking monsters, that's him, all of them. He's the Terminator, he's the meteor in Armageddon, the T-Rex in Jurassic Park, he's Jaws...

Nik rips off his sweater overheating. Unable to deal with the onset of the heightened symptoms he goes into an auto pilot mode and just stares at the floor, clearly dizzy from failing to control his breathing.

JENNIFER (cont'd)

Wait, why was he chasing you over the park?

NIK

Can you get him? Is there someone here...? Is there anyone who could...? Wait, no, just stop him, someone to stop him. Is he looking for me? What will he do if he catches me? No, I've just started getting better. It was working--

JENNIFER

--Getting better?

NIK

Can you help me?

JENNIFER

I really don't understand...

NIK

If I just wanted to apologise to him. If I wrote a letter explaining everything, could you get it to him?

JENNIFER

Explain? Apologise for what?

NIK

I slapped him.

Jennifer stands back in amazement.

JENNIFER

Why the fuck would you do that?

NIK

I have a condition.

JENNIFER

That makes you suicidal?

NIK

No, well, ok, I have an anxiety disorder and there's these Baby Steps and you just cope with it, but I don't want to just cope with it, I want to get rid of it, I want to completely... He won't stop will he?

(softly)

I have to just end it.

Jennifer's head slowly drops on hearing Nik's softly spoken words as he begins to leave.

JENNIFER

Come and sit down with me. I
can't help you with Kelly but...
I've seen men go through...

NIK

Thanks for the drink.

Matt walks in as Nik leaves. He stands next to Jennifer
as she watches Nik disappear.

JENNIFER

I don't suppose you have
withdrawals from cop killing.

MATT

What is it with you and strays?
If you wanna help someone, Thug
Three needs help changing the
barrels.

EXT. TOWN - NIK'S WORKPLACE - DAY

Nik stops in an alley beside his work for a moment
trying to scream, trying to kick or punch a wall.

INT. NIK'S WORKPLACE - DAY

Unable to release the anxiety, frustration, and horror
of the position he's in, Nik slumps into and through the
building on auto pilot.

INT. NIK'S WORKPLACE - THERAPY ROOM - DAY

David is holding Lakie's pyramid looking perplexed as
Nik walks in, stopping close to the doorway.

DAVID

Hey Nikol--Nik, ha, yeah come
in. I was just checking out... O,
I printed out some relaxation
exercises, yeah, some
techniques, breathing ones; it
says four seconds in, hold two
seconds, four out, hold two,
supposed to help. I just have to
say I've given them to you. You
don't have to read them.

David sits down with the pyramid on his lap.

DAVID (cont'd)

How have you been since I saw
you last, well yesterday, how
have you been since then.

Nik spends a moment staring over at David.

NIK

Fuck it give me the pills, give me every fucking pill you've got.

DAVID

If you want to talk about medication we... You didn't go ahead with this plan of yours to do, bigger things, did you?

NIK

Judge me, it's over. And the acts are crazy, the idea behind them isn't.

DAVID

What did you do?

NIK

It was working. It does work.

Nik paces close to the doorway.

DAVID

Ok I don't have a form to fill out about your idea so maybe... Sorry I didn't mean that to sound like a joke. It's not just for some company insurance reasons that I want to know where you're going with this. I can see--

NIK

--No, you can't.

DAVID

Let's try an exercise. You might find it therapeutic. Vent your frustrations about the world, people, anything. You must have kept so much in for such a long time in avoiding confrontations. Maybe if you were more open you wouldn't need to do these, bigger things.

NIK

Fuck you.

DAVID

(smiling)
That's a start.

NIK

It's alien to share. I never had it growing up. My mother never once genuinely asked me how I was feeling. I can't... Far before this I kept everything to myself. I never argued growing up I just took shit all the time and said nothing, I'd have to walk away, all shaky and clammed up. But that was nothing, absolutely nothing compared to... I can't even tell Lakie I don't believe in crystals having magical powers. Come on, no one in their right mind would believe in crystal therapy.

David returns the pyramid to the table.

NIK (cont'd)

For a start it's never been proven. And it's a simple test. Blindfold a group of believers and ask them to identify each crystal. There's a reason that hasn't ever been done. Christ we're surrounded by these people too, they're everywhere and the worst part of it is they look down on everyone else.

Nik stands still and really opens up.

NIK (cont'd)

And this new flat earth movement, a fucking movement? Yeah, online. They say the rest of us are wrong and uneducated. It's inhumane to make us walk amongst people who believe in this shit no matter how many facts you throw at them, no matter the fact that they have no facts. You've heard of Kickstarter right, all that flat earther's need to do is chip in a few dollars each to charter a plane to the so called edge, broadcasting live as they go, but they won't, just like all the alternate nuts they refuse to do the one thing that could prove them right. Some of us have real issues to solve. Some of us will go to great lengths to solve a problem.

DAVID
Feel better?

David feels a little uncomfortable with the atmosphere coming from Nik so places the relaxation printouts back in his bag.

NIK
We may as well do whatever we want. Live as though we expect no consequences. I can accept that my life is over, end it quick, avoid the torture... or fight.

DAVID
Why don't we look at maybe a short visit to a clinic?

Nik walks out leaving David sat in the room, calling after him.

DAVID (cont'd)
Just for some balance.

INT. NIK'S WORKPLACE - NIK'S OFFICE - DAY

Nik hurriedly grabs his baseball cap.

INT. NIK'S WORKPLACE - DAY

On the way out of the building Nik passes a concerned looking Lakie, more crystals and odd looking items in tow.

LAKIE
My Nikola, where are you going?

NIK
I'm going to find something absolutely fucking insane to do.

He puts on his baseball cap and walks out.

EXT. TOWN - BANK ONE - DAY

On his way to the park area Nik stops in front of BANK ONE considering his next step. After making eye contact with a large and surly looking BANK GUARD ONE through the glass, he quickly continues on.

EXT. TOWN - PARK AREA - DAY

He scans the park area while trying to keep a low profile. Spotting a MEDIA STORE he pulls his cap low and heads inside, his anxiety and motivation building in unison.

NIK

Fuck baby steps.

INT. MEDIA STORE - FIRST FLOOR - DAY

He picks up a DVD and begins walking toward the entrance. Before reaching the scanners he stops and looks back at GUARD ONE (male, mid-twenties) who's playing around on his phone.

Nik clicks his fingers but gets no response. After waiting a moment for his attention he walks right up to Guard One holding up the DVD.

NIK

I'm going to steal this.

GUARD ONE

What?

Nik's symptoms rise as he sees GUARD TWO (male, mid-thirties) who's just walked down from the floor above. He grabs another DVD and approaches him.

NIK

I am going to steal this.

Guard Two looks down the store at Guard One who just shrugs.

Guard Two is a more militant person who, if he was trusted with the store keys, he'd wear them on the outside of his pants along with every other key he could find. He squares up to Nik in a cocky and aggressive manner.

GUARD TWO

Unless you like getting fucked numbnuts, hand those over and get the fuck outta my store.

Nik forces himself to push the situation further.

NIK

Unless I like getting fucked?
How many times have you said
that to someone? What if I was
gay and had the kind of
disability that made me
attracted to you? Seriously you
must expect a positive reaction
to that question at some point.
Is that why you're using it?

Guard Two looks around laughing sarcastically then focuses right on Nik with clear intent to harm him. Nik is overcome by his symptoms.

GUARD TWO

Piece of shit, hand over the
fucking titles and let me walk
you out back.

Nik looks past Guard Two and sees the fire exit leading to the back alley. Shaking he stares right at Guard Two.

NIK

Is there another guard upstairs?

Guard Two is left stunned as Nik heads upstairs to the second floor.

INT. MEDIA STORE - SECOND FLOOR - DAY

On the second floor Nik finds GUARD THREE (female, early-thirties) and immediately approaches her after picking up a CD.

NIK

I'm going to steal this.

GUARD THREE

Hey?

Guard Three grabs Nik's shoulder as he tries to head back down to the first floor.

GUARD THREE (cont'd)

Hey, you should plan on paying
for those.

NIK

No.

Nik shakes off Guard Three's hand and heads back down to the first floor, followed by a confused Guard Three.

INT. MEDIA STORE - FIRST FLOOR - DAY

Nik heads toward the entrance, the three guards getting quickly in sync closing up behind him.

On reaching the scanners Nik stops and subtly stretches his legs, then draws a breath readying for the chase.

NIK
Fuck baby steps.

GUARD THREE
As soon as those alarms go off
the cops show up.

Nik exhales and closes his eyes.

NIK
(whispered to self)
Kelly.

GUARD TWO
I get mine first.

Nik turns to face the guards and without hesitating dives around them and races out the rear fire exit.

EXT. TOWN - MEDIA STORE - REAR ALLEYWAY - DAY

On bursting through the fire exit door Nik quickly looks around to find something to wedge the door with.

He rips off a loose piece of drainpipe and wedges it under the handle of the door, jamming his foot on the bottom.

He places the DVD's and CD in his pockets and takes a couple of deep breaths as the guards thump into the other side of the door.

Checking out the alley Nik accidentally looks up into the security camera above him.

NIK
Shit.

Nik focuses his mind back to this step before kicking away the drainpipe and sprinting away, heading out to the street, quickly followed by the three guards.

EXT. TOWN - PARK AREA - CONTINUOUS

Searching for an option Nik jumps very carefully onto the back of a slowly passing truck, the guards chasing right behind.

The driver breaks hard about a hundred meters down the road causing Nik to slam into the back door and fall backward onto the road.

Seeing the guards still chasing at full speed Nik gets up and sprints into the park.

Guard Three catches up with Nik in the middle of the park and kicks his leg out from under him, sending him to the floor.

Crouched on the ground pretty scuffed up Nik catches his breath as the other two guards catch up and stand over him.

GUARD THREE

Who the fuck, are you?

Nik takes his time rising to his feet. Looking down he sees his hands settling.

NIK

(to self)

Almost there.

Nik raises his fists, taunting Guard Two into a fist fight.

NIK (cont'd)

How about that promise you made me?

Guard Two punches Nik in the face knocking him pathetically to the ground. Guard Three holds Guard Two's shoulder and addresses Nik who's again taking his time getting up of the ground.

GUARD THREE

We've dealt with some pretty creative shoplifters but what the fuck freak?

NIK

I'm not a freak. I have a condition. And I feel better already. You won't scare me.

GUARD TWO

I promise you I will. I'm your worst fucking nightmare.

NIK

So corny. And I already have a worst nightmare, his name is Tuwile. I slapped his face.

GUARD ONE

Kelly?

GUARD THREE
You slapped Kelly.

The three guards look at each other then begin to leave.

GUARD ONE
Enjoy the films.

GUARD TWO
Your about to get what's coming
to you freak.

Nik takes the items out his pockets to see what he's taken: DVD's - Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid / Death Wish. CD - Hard-Fi: Stars of CCTV.

Looking over at the guards leaving Nik sees two teenagers race out of the Media Store, each throwing a full backpack on, the stores alarm sounding out, the three guards barely halfway between Nik and the store.

Guard One and Guard Three fast begin the futile chase. Guard Two stops and looks back at Nik, his eyes screaming with hate. Collecting himself Guard Two continues walking back toward the store.

Nik smiles with respect at the teenagers easily disappearing. His smile abruptly vanishes as a new horrifying revelation crosses his mind. He takes a few quick steps toward the store then stops, turns and heads home fast.

INT. NIK'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Nik paces up and down, he tries to sit, control his breathing and relax but can't. He stares at the anxiety workbook sticking out of the waste paper bin. Defiantly he storms in the bathroom.

INT. NIK'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Using the exercise he remembers from the workbook he tries talking it out with his old self in the mirror.

NIK
It was a positive step, I did it, again. I created an insanely stressful social situation, one that could have put me behind bars, again, and I lived through it, again. I even made it so much harder, I told them, and I stayed out of the alleys. I felt it again, my idea working. It works.

He stares down at the sink.

NIK (cont'd)
(laughing)
I'm not crazy, it works.

Looking back up confidently Nik blends his posture and voice between Nik and Nikola.

NIKOLA
You did nothing wrong.

NIK
Those kids did something wrong.

NIKOLA
Yep, if it wasn't for those pesky kids you'd be high and dry, sir.

NIK
They wouldn't have bothered with the camera that saw my face. They walked off, they let it go, leaving me for Kelly.

NIKOLA
You're on the same video timeline as those kids.

NIK
Kelly won't have trouble finding me now.

NIKOLA
True story. So stop talking to yourself and go get that footage.

INT. NIK'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS

After starting up a motivating TRACK on his stereo he grabs all the dark items of clothing he can find, and begins to get ready.

He puts on a black hoodie with some lettering on the front and some black work pants.

He uses a black marker to darken his old running shoes.

He constructs something to cover his face by cutting the top off a black woollen hat. He pulls it down over his face so that it sits just under his eyes, then stretches a navy blue woollen hat down over his head so that his eyes are all that's visible.

He practices rolling the navy blue hat up and pulling the black one down, tucked in as to look like a scarf.

He then grabs some dark gloves, black fabric tape and a miniature crowbar and places them in a backpack.

Dressed and ready to leave Nik flinches as he sees the streetlight turning on through his curtains.

EXT. TOWN - ALLEYWAY SYSTEM - EVENING

Nik puts on his gloves and places on his headphones as he heads out the fire exit and into the alleyways.

BLEND TO:

EXT. TOWN - ALLEYWAY SYSTEM - NIGHT

Nik stops at a point in the back alleys next to a filthy looking full dumpster. He stares ahead at a security camera.

He takes the tape out of his bag and covers the lettering on his hoody, then adjusts the woollen hats to cover his face before continuing on past the camera.

EXT. TOWN - MEDIA STORE - REAR ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

It's fully dark as Nik reaches the back of the Media Store. Seeing no way in without setting off the alarm he stares up at the building.

The Media Stores fire escape is far out of reach so he looks around but sees nothing that could help him get up that high.

He looks over at the adjacent building seeing a ladder attached to the wall leading up to the roof.

Unable to pry the bottom section off the wall he stands back and notices that the rooftops are the same height.

He grabs a stone and marks two lines on the floor from the corner of each building into the alley.

He notes his position using a PIPE leading up to the roof before taking a short run up. He jumps the gap and lands with his toes just over the line.

He walks past the PIPE taking a much longer run up, making it over the line by a few inches.

NIK
Fuck baby steps.

He shakes as he begins climbing the ladders, his motivation and anxiety rising again in unison.

EXT. TOWN - MEDIA STORE - OPPOSITE ROOF - NIGHT

Just managing to avoid falling he makes it to the top and in a scared childish way, crawls on his belly off the ladder onto the rooftop.

After taking a couple of breaths, not managing to get up just yet, he looks over the rooftop.

His head drops seeing that there are air conditioning units and structural parts in line with the PIPE, that were not visible from the ground, taking up the space that he will need for his run up.

Crawling further onto the roof he shakes as he half stands, his hands poised to drop to the floor as he scans both rooftops as best as he can.

Seeing no way over Nik drops back down then pathetically crawls on his belly to the corner. He looks down at the lines he marked on the ground, then over to the fire escape platform.

Without hesitating he jumps to his feet, runs back to the PIPE and kicks off from it racing to the corner of the building leaping through the air.

EXT. TOWN - MEDIA STORE - FIRE ESCAPE - CONTINUOUS

Flying through the air the bottom of his foot skims over the near rail of the fire escape. Landing he slows over the platform walking to a gentle stop at the far rail.

Looking back over at where he just jumped from Nik smiles and looks at his steadying hands before heading up to the roof.

EXT. TOWN - MEDIA STORE - ROOF - NIGHT

Seeing nothing obvious as a way in Nik searches the rooftop and notices a section close by that appears to have been repaired.

He uses the mini crowbar to pry up the metal sheet covering a hole in the roof then slides it to the side.

He takes his time prying up the wooden boards underneath to not set off an alarm, and finds an air conditioning duct running through the ceiling space.

INT. MEDIA STORE - CEILING SPACE - CONTINUOUS

He climbs in and lies down on the air conditioning duct. He stretches down and lifts up a ceiling tile, seeing he's above the rear of the second floor. Noticing a closed room off to the side he replaces the tile and crawls over on the duct.

Loosing moonlight from the hole he came through the further along he crawls he uses the light on his phone.

NIK
(quietly)
Come to LA, we'll get together,
have... Come to the coast, we'll
get together, have some laughs.

Nik lifts up another ceiling tile revealing a small room with a couple of PC's and a server stack. He drops down onto a desk.

INT. MEDIA STORE - SECURITY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Immediately turning to the server stack he pulls out the hard drives.

Checking around the room to make sure he has everything he places the hard drives into his bag and prepares to climb back up.

He stops as he notices something by the main security panel near the door. Walking toward it in disbelief he finds a series of numbers written on a sticky note next to the keypad.

Pausing for only a second he stares at the door leading into the store before inputting the code, revealing complete access to the system on the LED display.

Looking closer at the display he runs through the commands and turns off all systems, noticing 'Camera Error: REPLACE HARD DRIVES' blinking as he's doing so.

He searches the room and finds the sticky note pad and pen used, and then copying the handwriting writes down the numbers, only changing the last one. He sticks his to the security panel and pockets the real one.

NIK
You're welcome, assholes.

He climbs up and back along the duct, not taking his time now the security system is down.

INT/EXT. MEDIA STORE - CEILING SPACE - NIGHT

After replacing everything he heads back along the duct.

INT. MEDIA STORE - SECURITY ROOM - NIGHT

Nik throws his hats in his bag, slings it on his back and opens the door to the second floor.

INT. MEDIA STORE - SECOND FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

He walks into the moonlit store with a clear, wonderful sense of satisfaction and calm.

Noticing the stores stereo system on the wall behind the cash desks he closes the door behind him, glides over and presses play. A slightly uplifting TRACK starts.

Nik glides around the second floor browsing the shelves. He moves a little to the first TRACK playing, placing the odd CD in his bag, becoming more and more relaxed.

He stops and grows a cheeky grin in front of the clothing and memorabilia section, mostly inspired by Marvel and Tim Burton movies.

CUT TO BLACK

A MOMENT LATER

Nik is posed in the centre of the floor now wearing a top hat, both hands resting on a cane, waiting for the next TRACK to begin.

The TRACK starts up, this one very uplifting; like INXS' Need You Tonight, just saying.

Not starting off subtly at all Nik bursts into a full improvised dance routine leading to the glass front.

Standing there he punches his arms out to the side, embracing the Town. He then dances down to the first floor.

INT. MEDIA STORE - FIRST FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Dancing around the sales racks he selects a few DVD's and stuffs them in his bag.

Now ready to head home he can't help leaving an anonymous message in resting the top hat and cane against the main entrance.

As he's leaving via the fire exit at the rear of the store he puts on a plastic Spider-man mask from the second floor.

EXT. TOWN - MEDIA STORE - REAR ALLEYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Nik looks up to the roof he jumped from and pretends firing webs.

SPIDER-MAN

Fuck baby steps.

He heads away through the alleyways hearing the stores compilation CD, grow quieter as he dances away.

EXT. TOWN - ALLEYWAY SYSTEM - NIGHT

Nik reaches the dumpster he prepared at earlier. He takes off the Spider-man mask and places it in the backpack with the hard drives, hats, gloves, and the tape off the hoody.

Pulling out a few garbage bags from the dumpster he opens one, puts his bag in then ties it back up. He buries it toward the bottom throwing the others on top.

Nik dusts himself off, and forgetting his usual tradition of putting on his headphones almost skips back to his apartment.

FADE OUT

INT. NIK'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Nik wakes clothed, on top of his bed. After checking the time, a little past nine, he looks over at his suit hung on the back of the door and smiles.

INT. NIK'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Noticing the anxiety workbook sticking out of the waste paper basket he puts his shoe on top and pushes it down while adjusting his tie.

Exiting his apartment he takes the mirrored sunglasses from the front door and places them on.

EXT. TOWN - STREET - DAY

Exiting the front entrance and taking the street route to work Nik suddenly stops just after an alleyway, the backpack.

EXT. TOWN - ALLEYWAY SYSTEM - DAY

Reaching the dumpster from the night before Nik is elated to see that it's empty. Watching the garbage truck driving off in the distance he smiles then continues through the alleys.

EXT. TOWN - BEN'S APARTMENT - REAR ALLEY - DAY

Walking through a section of the alleys behind a row of apartment blocks Nik notices a fire exit door to his far left begin to open. BEN (late thirties, African American) walks out carrying a garbage bag.

Taking one more step Nik freezes seeing a silenced GUN come into view from around the corner held outstretched by Kelly striding toward Ben.

Kelly about to open fire on Ben notices Nik to his left.

Recognising Nik, Kelly is distracted just long enough to allow Ben to dive back into the building.

Nik turns and races away as Kelly slams into the fire exit. Finding no way in he races after Nik.

EXT. TOWN - ALLEYWAY SYSTEM - DAY

Nik's glasses fall off as his shoes drift around a corner and race down an alley that exits onto a busy street, a building river of morning rush hour people passing by.

On reaching the street Nik turns around to see Kelly come to a stop at the far end of the alley. Kelly picks up Nik's glasses and casually places them on.

Nik stands frozen, staring at Kelly as the river of people thickens behind.

Kelly gestures firing the GUN.

Nik steps backward disappearing into the crowd, blending away.

INT. THE THIEF - DAY

The Thief is awash with a sea of thugs. Nik is fast approached by THUG TWO, age unknown, and a very intimidating size and build.

THUG TWO

Out.

NIK

I need to talk to--

THUG TWO

--Fuck you, were closed.

Nik looks past Thug Two to the office. Jennifer appears at the top of the staircase and signals down to let Nik up.

INT. THE THIEF - OFFICE - DAY

Jennifer invites Nik to take a seat as she sits behind her desk. He just stands, unable to move.

JENNIFER

Sorry about the thugs, they're all a little on edge. We're all pretty on edge right now. Your friend Kelly is on a warpath. How far did you get with that apology letter? You look... Why are you here?

NIK

Who's Kelly after?

JENNIFER

Everyone, so we're holding up here. Did you check the news last night?

NIK

I don't watch news. --Look I just came to--

JENNIFER

--It's bad news, well good news for you. You don't have to worry about Kelly anymore. You'll be the furthest thing from his mind right now.

NIK

You're wrong.

JENNIFER

What? No trust me. What Kelly is involved in right now, what he's doing, goes beyond... You are not on his mind, you're safe. Just don't write that stupid fucking letter.

NIK

This is the end, I'm dead. I should have just ended it. I have to just end it.

JENNIFER

What is wrong with me? Ok, you don't ever share anything I tell you.

Struggling Nik can only gesture yes as he sits on the edge of the seat partially bent over.

JENNIFER (cont'd)

You're fine. Kelly is mixed up in something big. He's after this guy called Ben. Some guy who just escaped jail. Ben was in there with the Denya brothers. Some guys with cartel connections. I don't know them. The Denya's want him dead pretty fucking bad because Kelly's tearing up the Town in search of him. No idea why he's doing it for them. Two guys we know were murdered last night after being tortured. This Town does something to people.

Matt comes into the office gesturing to have Nik leave before he speaks.

JENNIFER (cont'd)

It's ok. What is it?

MATT

Just came on the news, two more, they were found near the old pond, one of them a cop. They were both beaten to death.

JENNIFER

Kelly.

MATT

Apparently someone was spotted walking from the scene, but no positive I.D.

JENNIFER

Walking, who walks from that scene?

Matt nods in agreement then leaves the office.

JENNIFER (cont'd)
 We all know the stories about Kelly but this is just... And there's no way to... Right now he's walking around torturing and killing people for information.

NIK
 But you have people here. You can go after him. Because all of you can stop him.

JENNIFER
 You can't kill Kelly. Even if you could, the men who set him loose have cartel connections. They'd wipe every single one of us out, including our goldfish.

Nik paces around the office in desperate thought.

JENNIFER (cont'd)
 There's nothing we can do. I can't end this.

Nik slowly comes to a stop in the middle of the office, another idea.

NIK
 I can. Sell me a gun.

JENNIFER
 Listen--

NIK
 --I have no other choice.

JENNIFER
 If you--

NIK
 --Please.

(to self)
 I have to end it.

Jennifer takes her time looking over at Nik.

JENNIFER
 Wait here.

She disappears into a side room for a moment then returns with a GUN.

JENNIFER (cont'd)
 Here.

Jennifer hands him a semi-automatic Colt .45.

JENNIFER (cont'd)

No charge.

Nik places it in his pocket and wipes the sweat of his hands. Matt re-enters jolting Nik awake and out of the office.

MATT

What did he want?

JENNIFER

A way out.

INT. RANSACKED APARTMENT - DAY

Nik is standing outside the bedroom of a ransacked apartment. No item of furniture is intact and small shards of glass and ceramics cover the floor in front of the entrance. Some of the smashed in pictures still remain on the walls accompanying the movie set style graffiti.

Nik shakes as he takes the GUN out of his pocket, staring at it in his hands.

Standing outside the open door looking into the bedroom he gives up trying to control his breathing.

Standing with the GUN at his side Nik scrapes the building sweat and tears from his face then, with his hands shaking even more, raises the GUN while staring at the ground.

When the GUN reaches head height he looks up. His eyes pierce forward as he throws his arm out taking aim at the bedroom closet, firing two shots into each door.

Four blasts sound out but no holes appear in the closet doors, which are immediately thrown open by Ben.

Although Ben is a handsome athletic man, right now he is looking pretty rough after remaining in hiding since he broke out of jail.

Nik is frozen still as Ben dives at him tackling him to the floor, the GUN flung into the centre of the room.

Ben gets a couple of blows in then pins Nik to the floor.

BEN

Who the hell... Who the fuck, are you?

Unable to move Nik remains on the floor as Ben jumps off him and grabs the GUN.

Nik closes his eyes to accept death as Ben takes aim and pulls the trigger. Another loud blast sounds out, Nik doesn't flinch.

Nik opens his eyes to Ben taking out the magazine, blank rounds.

BEN (cont'd)
Blanks, who the... fuck, are you?

Through the curtains Ben sees the silhouette of someone outside the window on the fire escape.

Nik turns to look at what Ben is concerned with. Turning back he sees Ben running to the door. Nik quickly jumps up and follows him down the stairwell.

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT - STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Almost halfway down the stairwell of this four story building, Nik races past Ben as they hear heavy footsteps pacing through Ben's apartment.

EXT. TOWN - BEN'S APARTMENT - REAR ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Bursting through the fire escape, Nik rips a metal sign off the wall and folds it in half.

As Ben races out Nik grabs his arm then kicks the door closed.

He wedges the sign into the side of the door then kicks it deep in to wedge it shut.

Ben tries to get free but Nik manages to force him down behind the dumpster beside the door.

NIK
(whispering)
Trust me, he'll run by.

After thumping down the stairwell it takes Kelly a few seconds to kick open the door.

Kelly pounds down the shortest and most obvious route. As Kelly's footsteps quieten Ben pushes Nik off him.

NIK (cont'd)
Kelly. We need to keep moving,
he'll be back any second. We
need to go.

BEN

We? Why are... Who are you?

NIK

We need to be quick. I'll try to explain, we just need to go now.

BEN

Ok... back upstairs.

Inside the fire exit Nik notices a garbage bag with prison clothing hanging out.

Ben closely follows a nervous Nik quickly back up the stairwell to his apartment after lifting a prison SHANK from the bag.

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT - STAIRWELL - DAY

NIK

I can explain. It's just... It isn't exactly what you think it is.

BEN

You mean you didn't just try to kill me a minute ago?

NIK

I'm in... I have... It's not like that. Look this is difficult to explain when there's a complete madman who may appear again any second.

BEN

All I know right now is you just tried to kill me. And he's not coming back, you can relax.

NIK

You tried to kill me. He's crazy he will be coming back.

BEN

After you tried to kill me. Agreed he's crazy, he's still not coming back.

INT. BEN'S (RANSACKED) APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Ben keeps the SHANK hidden behind his back.

NIK

Look I can--

BEN

--Ok, who are you? Why did you just try and kill me? How do you know Kelly? How the hell did you even know I was here?

NIK

Just give me... Ok, here, well I knew because look at this place, it's already been searched and abused pretty well. I can tell that you did it yourself. You even put up some fake movie set style graffiti, big building. Why would Kelly think you're still here?

BEN

Why do you?--

NIK

--And you spread broken glass around the door to alert you. And the door lock is punched out 'No Country for Old Men' Style. Kelly would've just kicked it in. I knew you were here, and he wasn't. I watch a lot of movies.

BEN

Who are you?

NIK

I recently made Kelly an enemy. Not a fatal one until you. Kelly want's me dead because of you.

BEN

I don't even know you.

NIK

(phasing out)

I didn't know they were blanks.

BEN

How's Kelly after you because of me? Actually fuck--

NIK

--You didn't see me but I saw you, earlier. I saw Kelly right there about to shoot you. He looked over at me and that's when you managed to dive back inside. He chased me down the alleys. I managed to get away, again.

The SHANK relaxes in Ben's hand.

NIK (cont'd)

He kills you, then me for being a witness earlier. He's a professional killer. I can't stop him, no one can. He wouldn't have stopped until he'd killed us both. I knew my only way out was... I knew if I killed you he would leave me alone.

BEN

...Wow... that's some fucked up logic.

Ben slides the SHANK in his back pocket.

NIK

Now we're both dead no matter what.

They hear police sirens in the distance.

BEN

Someone reported the shots. If you're over trying to kill me to save your ass, help me on the roof.

Nik follows Ben out of the open window onto the fire escape.

EXT. TOWN - BEN'S APARTMENT - ROOFTOP - DAY

BEN

I hid some ladders up here. If you don't wanna go back down follow me across. There's a fire escape two buildings over.

Nik helps Ben carry the ladders over to the edge of the building.

NIK

Where are you going to go? -- Wait, don't tell me. If Kelly finds me he'll torture it out of me.

BEN

I was happy hiding out in my staged apartment. If you didn't bring him here I wouldn't have to be thinking of were next.

NIK
You think he was following me?

BEN
I don't know. I don't care. And
I don't know where I'm going.

NIK
(phasing out)
I had one way out of this and
that's gone.

(snaps back)
--Not that I'm sad about...

BEN
About not murdering me?

NIK
There's a safe place I know
about. We can hide out there. A
friend told me about it.

BEN
I think I'll be safer if we both
go our separate ways.

The sirens grow louder.

NIK
Kelly won't be on his own
anymore. He'll say whatever he
needs to, to get all the roads
out of Town blocked. He's gonna
block us in until he catches up
with us.

BEN
Where's this place of yours?

NIK
It'll be where The Scene Theatre
is, just outa Town. We need to
get away first.

With Nik's help Ben threads the ladders over to the adjacent building only several meters away, the sirens closing in.

EXT. TOWN - ADJACENT ROOFTOP ONE - DAY

The two crawl over the ladder one at a time quickly pulling it across and racing to the other side of the roof. They set it up again and crawl over to the next building.

EXT. TOWN - ADJACENT ROOFTOP TWO - DAY

Nik suddenly stops and looks back confused for a moment.

NIK
So you're not afraid of heights?

BEN
No, never.

They hide the ladder then head to the fire escape.

NIK
I guess mine went away.

Ben leads Nik down the fire escape on the outside of the building, the sirens now settled below Ben's apartment building.

EXT. TOWN - ALLEYWAY SYSTEM - DAY

The sounds from the main part of Town grow quiet as they continue away.

BEN
So what's the deal with the blanks, killer?

NIK
The friend I told you about, she gave me the gun. She told me you're mixed up with these, Denya brothers and a cartel. I mean Kelly's after us both now, we may as well talk.

BEN
So this place we're heading is cool?

NIK
Come on.

BEN
I don't know who your friend is or how; she?--

NIK
Yeah.

BEN
--knows about any of this. And I didn't bring you into this either.

NIK
We're both in this now.

BEN

What were you doing walking through the alleys anyway?

NIK

I've been avoiding people. Well not then I wasn't. I was...

BEN

Ok so your friend, who doesn't know blanks from the real thing, is just plugged into the criminal network. And you wound up in the wrong place at the wrong time.

NIK

There's loads more to it, but yeah, pretty much.

BEN

Do you really wanna know everything? Guess it doesn't make any difference now. I found something out in jail. I found out that the Denya brothers were responsible for ripping of this Mexican cartel. They hijacked a shipment of heroin this side of the border. And to keep the cartel from suspecting them, they arranged to have Kelly arrest them and their guys a hundred miles away at the time of the hijacking. Kelly just had to pick them up coming back down state after calling in the arrests. The Denya's, and their guys, get a few months on a minor charge; when they're out, get a shitload of free heroin.

NIK

Shit. It's a good idea, if you get away with it.

BEN

If you don't brag about it to each other in the prison library. So what's your story? You said 'there's loads more to it'.

NIK

Ok, so a couple of days ago...

FADE OUT

EXT. TOWN - OUTSKIRTS - ALLEYWAY SYSTEM - DAY

BEN

You slapped Kelly across the face. Kelly? Sounds like a hell of a disorder.

NIK

It started from a positive place. I've just been trying to get back to who I was before.

BEN

Yeah, I respect that man. I just don't know about this 'fuck baby steps'. Do you say it? Like a mantra or something? Right before you do one of these things?

NIK

Shut up.

BEN

(laughing)
You do.

NIK

You've had some experience with anxiety?

BEN

I grew up in the roughest area of Town. I know all about anxieties.

NIK

It's actually a physical disorder. I can't just relax and change my environment to get over...

Nik sees Ben raising his eyebrows.

NIK (cont'd)

But the environment you must've experienced through your life, I couldn't even imagine dealing with that.

BEN

Yeah. So slapping a cop, robbing movies like that, that helps?

NIK

Yeah, I mean, yeah like a few days ago I couldn't ask a stranger for directions because I'd start to immediately fall apart just thinking about it. Feeling like I'm about to pass out. It really feels like you're gonna die.

BEN

So now you're going around doing all kinds of crazy stressful shit, so the ordinary shit is easy.

NIK

Well put.

BEN

Well if you survive this, you'll be completely cured.

NIK

Stop. We should be ok. We just need to hide out for a couple of days, and then leave Town for good. There's no way I could stay. No way I could take on Kelly. It would take something so massive, to get me to a place where I could handle a confrontation with a heavily trained, crazed and motivated killer.

The sounds from the main part of Town have long disappeared. Continuing along a back street Nik notices some heavy fencing that looks new and out of place.

BEN

So your friend told you this street is closed off for a movie?

NIK

That fencing looks out of place. Yeah, well she said out of Town and mentioned a theatre. Figured it was this one. The two security guards work for her. So I guess we just drop her name.

BEN

Let's find a way in.

Finding a large gate after following the fencing along to the top of the street, they look through to a Star Wagons trailer. Seeing no one around, they scale the gate.

EXT. SET - STREET - CONTINUOUS

This is the street from scene one.

The street looks like it was built in the 1940's and adapted over the years to look more modern. A lot of it has already been converted to how it looked originally.

It's lined with buildings only a couple of stories high. The exception being the five story building in the centre of the street.

Nik and Ben approach the Star Wagons trailer and see a printed sign on the door reading 'Security'.

Peering inside they find no one there, just the usual items found in a security trailer. Plugged into a wall socket is a radio charging station with three radios missing, Nik takes one and they head down the street.

NIK

The security guys should be around here somewhere. Just have to listen in.

BEN

Just press the button, call em.

NIK

No, just in case, we should just listen in. Shit we didn't bring any food or water.

BEN

We can get water from one of these buildings.

NIK

It'll all be shut off right?

They look over the buildings along the street, one of which is the small grocery store, still set with fake fruit and veg outside.

INT. SET - GROCERY STORE - CONTINUOUS

They head toward the back and find some edible snacks and drinks which they bag for later, noticing plastic fruit and veg strewn over the floor.

NIK
At least that's food n drink
sorted.

BEN
I've found some wine.

NIK
I don't think we'll get that
desperate.

BEN
Who said anything about
desperate.

EXT. SET - STREET - DAY

Scanning the rest of the street the next building that interests them is The Scene Theatre. They both look up at the marquee. The films advertised are: The Undying Monster, and Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man.

BEN
Not a good sign.

NIK
Bet it's gonna be a gangster
movie. They're from the
thirties.

INT. SET - THE SCENE THEATRE - FOYER - DAY

The foyer has already been converted back to how it looked in the 1940's. Nik revels at how it looks while Ben, making a start on the wine, gets behind the concession stand checking out the snacks.

Nik wanders over giving a poor Travis Bickle impersonation.

NIK
Hey, do you have any ju-jukes,
you know ju-jukes, they last.

BEN
What?

NIK
Travis Bickle, Taxi Driver. In
the porn theatre.

BEN
Good.

NIK
Let's see what's playing.

They begin walking to Screen One.

BEN
You've cheered up.

NIK
Movies are my escape, my safe
place.

INT. SET - THE SCENE THEATRE - SCREEN ONE - DAY

Only the screening room doors have been dated back, the inside remains modern.

Nik jogs off to the projection room as Ben wanders toward the stage. The room is lit only by the natural light coming in through the open doors to the foyer.

BEN
No prison movies!

As Ben reaches the stage, the projector lights up the screen. Remnants of a burnt frame border the screen.

Nik reappears a moment later.

NIK
No films.

BEN
Sorry, man.

Nik walks up to the stage and jumps up followed by Ben, still swigging back the wine, beginning to get a little tipsy.

NIK
Hey what's your favourite movie?

BEN
More Taxi Driver?

NIK
No, pick one of yours.

BEN
Tropic Thunder.

NIK
Seriously, I have no idea how he
got away with doing black face.

BEN
Did he? The part with the map
cracks me up.

NIK

Ok I remember. Wait which one of us gets to play Lincoln?

Ben looks to the projector and raises his eyebrows comically as Nik takes the bottle and walks to the other side of the stage.

NIK (cont'd)

So Downey can play a black guy but I can't? That's so racist. Ok, so I'm over here beginning to cross the river.

Ben begins to approach Nik.

BEN

(as Lincoln)

Hey, let me take a look at that wine.

NIK

(as Fourleaf)

Hey, I look after the wine.

BEN

(as Lincoln)

Hey man, let me hit you up real quick. You see man, I'm trying to come up but it's hard. And look at you man. All shredded like a julienne salad. Like Rambo, you know the second one where he's all cut up.

NIK

(as Fourleaf)

Yeah, I mean that's what I'm going for you know.

BEN

(as Lincoln)

You got any tips? Any tips? Give me the god damn wine.

After snatching the bottle from Nik, Ben walks away and continues drinking.

NIK

You're pretty good. Give me the god damn wine.

BEN

Now you're talking.

Ben hands Nik the bottle.

NIK
Because you improvised with the
bottle for the map.

BEN
Don't explain it.

NIK
You really shouldn't drink
anymore. We need to stay alert.

The light from the projector CUTS and they both freeze.

NIK (cont'd)
The bulb blew.

BEN
Or.

NIK
Don't.

Nik checks the radio, hearing nothing. Ben takes the
bottle of wine back, and they both head out to the
street.

EXT. SET - STREET - DAY

NIK
Doesn't look like there's power
anywhere. Maybe it just cut out.
Was anything on when we came in?

BEN
Don't. We'll get up as high as
we can, out of sight.

NIK
You need to stop drinking.

BEN
You need to start.

Ben points to the top floor of the five story office
building in the middle of the street.

BEN (cont'd)
We'll hold up there.

NIK
Let's just have another look for
the guards. We'll be safer with
them. Then I'll have a drink.

They walk back over to the Star Wagons trailer and see
that it's still empty.

Searching around that area they see a boarded up side street. Breaking through the wooden door they see that it was hiding two large shipping containers, surrounded by barrels of Kerosene.

Ben flings open the first to reveal a massive cash of explosive equipment.

BEN

Shit.

As Ben browses the cash Nik heads over to the second, quickly returning with a wide eyed look.

BEN (cont'd)

More.

NIK

There's, lots more.

BEN

Are you sure those movies are from the thirties? I think you're about ten years off, cos they're making a war movie. This ain't for show pyrotechnics. This is real shit. They're gonna level the street. It's not just explosives too, there's all kinds of different fuses, triggers, launchers, every kind of military grade style movie ordinance you'd need to make a real show of blowing up this, entire fucking street.

NIK

These are real explosives?

BEN

Powder explosives. Yeah, tons, I'm not kidding they're gonna level every building. I can do this.

NIK

Do this?

BEN

Look, help me get all this around to that building. I'll rig traps on every single floor. I'll use everything they've got. Leave the Kerosene. We're gonna be safe as hell, man.

NIK

Kera... No, safe as what?

BEN
We'll hide out on the top floor.

NIK
You want us to hide out on top
of all this?

BEN
(smiling)
Yeah.

NIK
Ok, wait, let's stop smiling.
We're just hiding out--

BEN
--And what if he finds us? You
know he's probably torturing
people for information right
now. What if he gets to your
friend?

NIK
She doesn't know... What if it
goes off accidentally? You'll
blow the entire building up.

BEN
Listen, I'm not drilling into
the concrete, placing it
anywhere to bring the building
down. It'll just severely fuck
up anyone who tries to get in,
tries to get to us. I'll wire it
all together so even if Kelly
spots the first floor charges,
climbs in through the second... He
triggers a domino effect running
floor to floor that no one could
escape. I know how to set this
up, man. It will all be ok.

NIK
We haven't heard anything on the
radio. What if security check
the building?

BEN
We listen in. We hear anything,
we warn em.

NIK
You're not hearing my main
argument.

Ben hasn't stopped browsing, or smiling through this
entire exchange.

BEN
I have a plan to keep us safe
from the devil himself and... The
smiling?

NIK
Well--

BEN
--An unstoppable torturous
madman after us and you're
worried about my smile.

NIK
How do you know how all this
stuff works? This all seems real
specialised.

BEN
Just breathe. I was an army brat
before we moved here.

NIK
You've served?

BEN
No.

BLEND TO:

EXT. SET - STREET - DAY

Transporting the last load they both freeze as they hear
a short FIZZLE then CLICK from the radio. The sound
repeats as they're stood in silence.

Hearing nothing else they proceed while scanning the
street, Ben trying to hide his concern, Nik's clear to
see.

INT. SET - OFFICE BUILDING - FIRST FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

The building has been completely stripped bare. The
first floor now filled with everything from both
containers.

BEN
Ok man you head up to five.

NIK
Are you sure you don't need any
help with all this?

BEN

Do I want you sweatin' and shakin' all over the explosives? Not so much. C'mon man, you kidding, I'm in heaven here. I'll see you up there. Save me a seat.

NIK

Ok, be careful.

Ben laughs and gets to work.

NIK (cont'd)

I'll go wait and listen to the radio.

Nik heads up the stairwell leaving Ben stood holding a spool of cable and what appears to be a futuristic claymore, looking enthusiastic but a little confused.

FADE OUT

INT. SET - OFFICE BUILDING - FIFTH FLOOR - DAY

Nik sees Ben tentatively enter from the stairwell at the far end of the floor.

He observes him attaching a wire around the handle of the door and very, VERY carefully closing it.

Ben takes his time backing away from the door with his hands held out. A few feet back he exhales and heads over to Nik.

Nik has laid out two fire blankets near to each other and stacked the food neatly beside him.

Ben slumps down on his blanket exhausted, and admires the setup. Nik is still staring over at the door to the stairwell.

BEN

Very homely.

NIK

But you know how we get back down safely right?

BEN

Heard anything on the radio?

NIK

No. And there's no other way up?

BEN

You can't climb the outside this high up.

Nik walks over to the elevator and tries the buttons. They don't light up or make a sound. He manages to pry open the doors and sees the elevator stuck on the third floor.

BEN (cont'd)

Yeah I checked, still no power.

Nik wanders over to the windows and scans the empty street before sitting back down with Ben.

NIK

How safe are all those explosives? Did you use everything?

BEN

Eighty percent on the first two floors, it'll be one fucked up domino effect. And I can get us back down. It'll just take a real long time the way I've set it all up. That's the way you want it. It's a scary mess of a setup. Safest way to have it. Trust me, no one is getting up here. Not even Kelly.

Ben lies back on his blanket while Nik begins to organise the food and drink into five small piles next to each other, writing DAY 1, DAY 2 etc. in front of each pile in the dust beside him.

NIK

Hey, can I ask you a personal kinda question?

BEN

Sure, why not.

NIK

How did you escape jail?

BEN

No.

NIK

What? C'mon.

BEN

I just did. Some things you don't ask a man.

NIK

C'mon man, a prison break story, they're the best.

BEN

There you go, that's why I don't want to share it. You think it's gonna be some awesome Shawshank story.

NIK

Seriously, I don't expect you to top Andy Dufresne, or Steven Russell.

BEN

Steven Russell?

NIK

Best jail breaker of all time, fuck Tim Robbins.

BEN

Alright.

NIK

Or Frank Abagnale Jr. Asked to talk to the warden and told him he has nothing to worry about regarding his report. They figured he was an undercover agent checking out the conditions in the jail. They did that back then. Let him straight out. Genius. C'mon are you serious? It's that boring a jail break story that you're embarrassed to tell someone. Now you have to tell me.

BEN

It wasn't boring it was calculated and well executed, and fuck man I escaped prison, what the fuck have you ever done that's cool except slapping a cop.

NIK

So tell me.

Ben takes a while.

BEN

I told a guard I'd been raped then I walked out the medical wing in a lab coat.

NIK
(confused)
Why didn't you lie to me?

BEN
Fuck you man. I did what I had
to do to stay alive. It's not
like I'm expecting a movie to be
made out of it.

They both laugh.

NIK
So your name is Ben?

BEN
Yeah. Yours?

NIK
Nikola.

BEN
That's a girl name.

NIK
I actually really like it. I was
named after Nikola Tesla. Just
avoided using it recently.
Everyone wants to ask questions.
I've avoided a lot of the small
talk. You like Taylor Swift?

BEN
What kind of a question is that?

NIK
Right. I fell in love after
shake it off.

BEN
I'm happy for you. Look we're
gonna be here for a few days but
we should get started on our
exit plan. I mean once we leave
here we split up and head off
into our respective sunsets
right?

NIK
I've been telling myself not to
think about it yet. I really
don't have a plan after this. I
can't go back to my apartment,
collect my things.

BEN

Listen man, I'm an escaped convict, this is my life now. After this I have to figure out a way of getting over the border, and so do you.

NIK

Shouldn't it be easier now they built a wall? They'll be more relaxed about patrolling. I'm never living how I was again I know that much. I'm sticking with my idea.

BEN

Fuck baby steps?

NIK

Fuck baby steps.

BEN

Better learn Spanish.

NIK

Mierda bebe pasos?

BEN

Hey when do they start filming?

They both look at each other and laugh having not considered this until now.

INT. SET - OFFICE BUILDING - FIFTH FLOOR - DUSK

Ben is lying down with his eyes closed. Nik is sat with his hands on his head between his knees, opening his eyes every few seconds to check the radio. The sunlight is just beginning to fade.

They're both surrounded by empty wrappers and cartons, the DAY 1 pile empty.

A sound comes from the roof. It takes them both a second to flinch awake through fear.

Ben tiptoes over to the door that leads to the roof. They both hear another sound.

Nik begins to tremble uncontrollably. Ben reaches for the door handle like it's the last thing in the world he wants to do.

Nik shakes on his toes into the centre of the floor and picks up a piece of wood. Measuring it with his eyes he gestures to Ben for it to be wedged under the door handle.

Ben grips the handle tight with both hands. He feels the handle tested from the other side, his eyes conveying it to Nik.

Ben grips the handle harder as Nik begins to walk over to wedge the door. The handle is not tested a second time so Ben puts his ear to the door.

Nik freezes hearing a metallic object clinking down the steps behind the door.

The instant Ben catches the look in Nik's eyes his heart plummets and he closes his eyes.

A large blast blows the door open sending Ben flying across the floor. Nik unable to move stares at the doorway seeing a figure begin to slowly emerge through the dust filled staircase.

Nik races away across the floor and dives behind a concrete pillar as Kelly emerges through the cloud of dust. Peering around the right of the pillar Nik sees Ben lying motionless on the floor.

Kelly takes a few steps toward Ben. Ben appearing dead he begins to slowly approach Nik teasing him by casually firing shots at the pillar.

Nik's teeth squeeze together as he tenses up as much as possible to try and quell the shakes and sporadic jolts his body is making.

As Kelly continues taking his time forward firing shots at the pillar, Nik's eyes begin to register the rigged door leading down the stairwell five steps in front of him.

Nik gently closes his eyes. The following shots fired at the pillar come in slow motion and have less and less effect.

NIK

Fuck baby steps.

Nik opens his eyes and leaps forward through the door. A small charge is set off blowing the door shut on his leg as he falls through.

INT. SET - OFFICE BUILDING - STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Scrambling to his feet racing down the steps leading to the fourth floor, Nik looks down through the gap in the stairwell and sees LARGE EXPLOSIVE PACK ONE, rigged on the third floor steps.

Hearing Kelly closing in above him Nik dives onto the fourth floor.

INT. SET - OFFICE BUILDING - FOURTH FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Racing over the fourth floor with Kelly closing in, Nik can see the only way off the floor is the open elevator shaft.

The explosives on the fourth floor are few and spaced out. The one near the door was tripped when Nik came through and the 'fucked up domino effect' has begun, setting off the explosives running across the windows and the ones set by the pillars in the centre of the floor.

Kelly reaches the fourth floor as Nik is at the open elevator shaft. The explosives going off near Kelly are not distracting him at all as he walks through them. Kelly appears worth every word that precedes him.

INT. SET - OFFICE BUILDING - ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Jumping into the open elevator shaft Nik hits the wall on the far side. Not able to grab on he falls backward landing on top of the elevator, Kelly getting ever closer.

Nik looks for the hatch to climb into the elevator. Not finding one he panics and jumps up, and kicking down with both feet breaks through the florescent lighting box, landing on the elevator floor.

As he lands he hears, on the other side of the elevator doors, the domino effect reaching into the third floor. Hearing Kelly closing in Nik tears into the doors prying them open.

INT. SET - OFFICE BUILDING - THIRD FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Nik dives out onto the third floor noticing more explosives than on the fourth, and some other ordinance used in creating explosive and firearms effects for movies.

As he hears Kelly approaching the open elevator shaft above explosive ball bearings blast into his side painfully flicking him to the ground, as though he weighed only a few pounds.

Nik forces himself up and races unsteadily across the third floor, unable to avoid any explosives and effects ordinance.

Reaching the stairwell, already covered in dust, cuts and bruises, Nik grabs the handle, puts his foot on the door and rips it off. Then using his palm he hits the door knocking the handle off the other side.

He places the handle back and quickly opens the door, stepping inside and closing it behind him, just as Kelly appears from the elevator.

INT. SET - OFFICE BUILDING - STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Nik takes the wire leading from LARGE EXPLOSIVE PACK ONE and unravels it from the fallen door handle, then walks it down to the door leading to the second floor.

LARGE EXPLOSIVE PACK TWO is sat on the rail outside the second floor door with a cable leading up to LARGE EXPLOSIVE PACK ONE, as well as a wire leading to the door handle and another under the door.

He quickly unravels the wire from the door handle and pulls the one leading under the door out of LARGE EXPLOSIVE PACK TWO.

INT. SET - OFFICE BUILDING - SECOND FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Nik just gets in the door as he hears Kelly walking into the stairwell and slams the door shut as he yanks on the wire. The two large explosions fill the stairwell blowing the door open, knocking Nik backward onto the floor.

Nik gets to his feet and begins walking backward with his eyes fixed on the doorway. He doesn't notice the massive collection of explosives stacked up in piles all over the entire second floor.

He hears a sound from the stairwell followed by a click beside his feet. He looks down seeing that he's tripped a wire.

Looking back up he sees Kelly standing still in the doorway, not bothering to brush off any of the dust and debris he's now covered in. Nik notices Kelly no longer has a GUN in his hand.

The wire Nik tripped runs to the back of the floor. He's restarted the 'fucked up domino effect' he stopped by removing the wire leading under the door.

A series of explosive ball bearings fire from the back wall, so Nik takes cover behind a pillar.

Kelly remains in the doorway. Their eyes are fixed on each other as an array of explosive fireworks rocket over the entire floor shattering the glass at the front.

Nik looks over the second floor and sees that all the piles of explosives will go off in sequence from the back, all the way to the glass front.

Kelly begins walking toward Nik as the first pile erupts at the back wall. On seeing what Nik sees, they both race toward the glass front as each pile of explosives erupt and chase after them.

Each time one of the piles erupts behind them it causes them to skip and stumble forward. Finding it difficult to stay on their feet as they close in on the glass front, they are both blown out of the building.

EXT. SET - STREET - CONTINUOUS

They come crashing down on the street below showered by continual debris as the explosions continue. Kelly lands in front of the main entrance, Nik at the other end.

The domino effect continues through the building from the second floor spreading to the first.

NIKOLA calmly rises to his feet without shaking. He looks over at Kelly getting to his feet.

The domino effect reaches the front of the first floor beside Nikola. With the absence of fear, he walks toward Kelly without blinking.

Nikola is unaffected, doesn't even blink, as the explosive and surface effect ball bearings and fireworks, backed by the large explosives, begin showering his torso and theft side of his face. The domino effect now following him every step he takes.

The explosives get just ahead of Nikola as he's several steps away from Kelly. Suddenly a massive blast blows out the main entrance throwing Kelly violently across the street.

Nikola sheltered somewhat by the large concrete wall beside the main entrance is slid back only a couple of feet, not knocked down.

The explosions have ended and the street is silent.

A final small explosive goes off right above the entrance, Nikola does not flinch. He walks over the street to where Kelly's body landed.

After a beat, as Nikola is looking down at Kelly's body, a pretty beat up Ben stumbles out of the building and begins to walk over.

Ben stops in the middle of the street seeing enough from where he stands. Nikola turns and they look at each other for a moment before walking off into the distance, toward a large green screen placed at the bottom of the street.

BEN

You think that's there for a
sunset walk off?

NIKOLA

Definitely.

As Nikola and Ben walk off toward the green screen the first two floors of the building begin to crumble. Larger pieces crumble and fall until the first two floors give way and the building pathetically slams down to a three story building.