

THE DARK FIELDS

by  
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Based on the novel by Alan Glynn

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A BLACK SCREEN

EDDIE (V.O.)  
They're here.

INT. CLOSE ON - A HIGH-TECH RESIDENTIAL STEEL DOOR

being POUNDED in. WHAM! WHAM! Whoever's trying to get in is serious. The door shudders but doesn't give. It's state-of-the-art residential protection.

EDDIE (V.O.)  
I'm guessing I have ten minutes.

We hear the WHRRRRR of POWER TOOLS going to work on his door. These people are determined. Professional. And prepared.

EDDIE (V.O.)  
I will never guess how they got past security in a half-billion dollar building...

EXT. THE CELESTIAL - LOOKING INTO THE LOBBY - NIGHT

The sleek lobby is deserted. We SEE, through the GLASS, lying on the floor, the barest glimpse of the FEET of what are presumably TWO DEAD SECURITY GUARDS -- although their bodies are largely hidden behind their massive curly walnut desk. All the security monitors are BLACK -- the feeds clearly cut.

The CAMERA RISES, breathlessly, in a blur, up all 80 floors of this stunning new building, coming to rest on...

EXT. PENTHOUSE - EDDIE SPINOLA,

30's, lean and stylish, stands on the exterior ledge of his multimillion-dollar terrace. New York City looms around him, beneath him. His hands are outstretched. Balancing. He is calm, but fatalistic. He's clearly going to jump.

EDDIE (V.O.)  
I will never let them touch me.

His attention is CAUGHT by the SOUNDS of a commotion in the next apartment. He looks over, at--

EXT. THE ADJOINING TERRACE

Eddie can see, opaquely, through the gauzy curtains of the adjoining window, TWO MEN, backing A MIDDLE-AGED MAN, towards the windows... there is arguing.

EDDIE (V.0.)

My neighbor must have opened his door  
to complain of the noise.

One of the thugs pulls out a GUN, coolly shoots the neighbor through the head. It barely makes a sound -- efficiently silenced. The neighbor drops. A blur through the curtains; a few seconds pass; we hear the SOUNDS of the thugs going back to work on Eddie's door.

EDDIE (V.0.)

They've become sophisticated. Two months ago, they couldn't have done this. Now my land line's cut. My cell signal's jammed...

The door is pounded again. It doesn't give.

EDDIE (V.0.)

Still, it's slow going for them. There's a little more time than I thought. So now I confront the impossible question, the one no man should ever have to ask himself...

The pounding intensifies. Eddie jumps down, lightly, cat-like, and approaches his OUTDOOR BAR.

EDDIE (V.0.)

Which drink... should be my last?

We HOLD on his back as he surveys the various bottles, and we CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREET - DAY

EDDIE (V.0.)

Not so long ago, this was me.

Eddie is walking down the street, messily eating a street falafal. His hair is longer, his clothes schlumpier, his face rounder -- he's out of shape. A belly bulges against his belt. He wears jeans and that worn-out corduroy "writer's" sport coat -- the one that your girlfriend fights to give to the Salvation Army.

EDDIE (V.O.)

I was a writer. Two years after my copywriting job at Dexter & Kerr came to a non-mutual end, I had, in an extraordinary burst of desperate energy, bullshitted my way into my first book contract. This was it:

INT. EDDIE'S RATTY RENT-CONTROLLED APARTMENT ON AVENUE A - DAY

Eddie, slumped in his desk chair, is playing COMPUTER SOLITAIRE.

EDDIE (V.O.)

Now, at last, I was ready to write.

QUICK CUTS: --Eddie sprawled on the couch, eating takeout and watching TV, the sink in the foreground full of dishes.  
--Eddie shooting baskets into a toy hoop.

EDDIE (V.O.)

Gearing up, that's all.

--Eddie sleeping in his bed, sacked out, the clock beside him clicking to 11:59.

EDDIE (V.O.)

Getting psyched.

--Eddie sitting on the john, reading the funnies.

EDDIE (V.O.)

A few days did pass this way... maybe a few months... but, just in case you think nothing ever happened to me....

INT. A MIDTOWN COFFEE SHOP - DAY

A FEMALE HAND slides a KEY across the counter to EDDIE.

A wider shot shows Eddie staring in disbelief at his (now ex) girlfriend, LINDY, an attractive, real-looking girl, about 30.

LINDY

I didn't think I should keep this.

EDDIE

So. That's it?

She doesn't answer, can't. Eddie is really hurt and shocked.

EDDIE

Thanks for the heads up.

LINDY

Like you're surprised? Don't do this. What do you think all that ragging and nagging was, Eddie? User satisfaction?

A beat as he looks at the table. Wryly:

EDDIE

You've dropped a few clues.

A smile between them -- it *is* darkly funny. He's made her laugh; that's part of what's made her stick.

LINDY

Come on, does it really matter? I'll never be Melissa.

EDDIE

I never think about Melissa.

FLASH!

INT. A BEDROOM - NIGHT

We are in Eddie's mind, in his POV, and we are seeing a LOVELY, WILLOWY BRUNETTE bending seductively over him, wearing an undershirt, white powder faintly visible under her nose... BACK TO:

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Lindy shoots a look at him.

LINDY

I may not have the brain she did, but don't insult the one I've got.

An awkward pause. After a moment he focuses on her outfit:

EDDIE

That new?

She's wearing a very sharp suit, Italian, fashion-forward.

LINDY

Yeah. Peggy promoted me.

EDDIE

You deserve it.

A sad smile from him. He's still in her corner.

LINDY

Yeah, thanks. I do.

(beat)

I've got to get back.

EDDIE

(suddenly)

I'm going to give 90 pages to Mark on Friday, if you could just wait, see what he says--

LINDY

Stop. You think I don't know what you do all day? Eddie. I've *loved* you. I know the good stuff, and I know the shit.

EDDIE

And it's all shit to you now?

LINDY

You're the one living it. You're the one it should bother.

She gets up, throws down a couple of bills.

EDDIE

I'll get it.

LINDY

Oh, please.

Like he could afford to pay for anything. And he knows that she knows. She kisses the top of his head and goes.

Now we can see it. On his face. He's miserable.

EXT. A MIDTOWN STREET - DAY

Eddie, depressed, is trudging the long walk back downtown.

EDDIE (V.0.)

That was a day it would have been nice to roll into a cab and get my self-pitying ass carted back downtown... which, of course, was not a financial option.

We DISSOLVE block into block as continues walking...

EDDIE (V.0.)

Of all the absurd relationships better forgotten and put away in mothballs, is there any more pointless than... the ex-brother-in-law?

A FACE looms into Eddie's POV.

VERNON

*Eddie Spinola?!!!*

VERNON GANT stands on the corner, grinning, genially blocking Eddie's way. He is wearing an expensive suit and dark leather shoes. He looks like money.

VERNON

Shit! It's gotta be-- 9 years--?

EDDIE

Couple Presidents ago, yeah...

VERNON

(taking him in)

Hey, you!!!

He genially whacks the sides of Eddie's arms. Eddie half-heartedly whacks back. Vernon sizes Eddie up.

VERNON

Jesus, Eddie, pack it on, why don't you?

Eddie didn't need that. He's very self-conscious about his weight.

EDDIE

Sedentary job, you know--

VERN

So you're writing--?

EDDIE

Yeah, yeah...



VERN  
And some fool's paying you?

EDDIE  
It's been known to happen.  
(pointedly)  
Still dealing, Vernon?

VERN  
Shit, no. Look at me! Do I look  
like I'm dealing?

EDDIE  
No. You look a little pumpy,  
actually. --or that should be  
"Pimpified," shouldn't it -- or maybe  
"emPimped."

Vernon giggles, not understanding that Eddie means it.

VERN  
You still crack me up. Come on,  
let's get a drink--

EDDIE  
Nah, I should go--

VERN  
You can't tell me you're a health  
nut, now. Not with that tire--

EDDIE  
(annoyed)  
Enticing invitation. Thanks.

Vern plucks the pack of cigarettes from Eddie's upper jacket  
pocket.

VERN  
C'mon, c'mon, one beer. Or I won't  
give 'em back.

He holds the cigarettes just out of Eddie's reach.

EDDIE  
It's one o'clock in the afternoon,  
Vern.

VERN  
When's that ever stopped you?

EDDIE  
 (sighs)  
 Fuck.

INT. BAR - DAY

We face Eddie and Vern as they sit at the bar. They look at each other, Vern pleased and Eddie a little awkward. Finally Eddie speaks.

EDDIE  
 So. How's Melissa.

VERN  
 Ah-hah. That's why you agreed to the beer.

EDDIE  
 I'm making conversation, Vern.

VERN  
 Well, I don't know how Melissa is.

INT. - A BEDROOM - EDDIE'S POV - NIGHT (AN ALMOST SUBLIMINAL FLASH)

Melissa, naked, silhouetted in the bathroom door. BACK TO:

INT. BAR - DAY

EDDIE  
 How don't you know? You're her brother.

VERN  
 I don't see her. She lives upstate now, has a couple of kids.

It's hard for Eddie to process this.

EDDIE  
 A couple of kids...

FLASH!

INT. SAME APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM -

Melissa, her beautiful face over a mirror, doing lines. BACK TO:

INT. BAR - DAY

Eddie, trying to keep his voice casual.

EDDIE  
What's her husband like?

VERN  
Her husband? What are you, jealous?

EDDIE  
It's just a question.

VERN  
What do you care? You guys weren't even married six months! Were you? It was just a coke thing, right?

EDDIE  
*Is that what she said?*

"A coke thing." It unexpectedly hurt Eddie. Maybe it's just the bumner day. Or there's a deeper wound then he knew.

VERN  
--Hey, hey, no, I just thought, you know, the two of you went through about a metric ton, that's all--

FLASH!

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

--Melissa naked on top of Eddie, her hair whipping his face as she comes--!

INT. BAR - DAY

EDDIE  
Look, maybe it's better I don't know what she's up to--

Eddie gets up, throws down a couple of bills.

VERN  
--No, look, I'm sorry, you want to know about the husband?

Eddie freezes. He does.

EXT. A DOWNTOWN STREET - DAY

Eddie and Vern walk.

VERN

He's just some jerk. Walked out on her about two years ago. She has some part time job, now, I don't know what it is, some internet "home job" kind of...

Eddie stares straight ahead as Vern's voice fades down.

EDDIE (V.O.)

Melissa. Dumped, with two kids. I couldn't imagine it. She'd been so smart. Smarter than anyone around her. And oh, how she loved to provoke people...

FLASH!

INT. A DOWNTOWN PARTY - PARTY - NIGHT

Melissa, cigarette in one hand, drink in the other, is surrounded by people, in intense conversation with a bunch of prosperous-looking downtown types.

MELISSA

--Oh, please, you think professional women *mentor* one another? You think there's some mutually supportive empathetic touch-feely *network* of kindly pie-bakers? --Those bitches hate each other! Quick, who was the worst boss you ever had? A woman, right?! We can't delegate, we can't *command* -- I mean, there's a reason we're not generals--!

The men gasp, shocked and titillated. The women are furious. Melissa smiles to herself -- she's trying not to crack up.

EDDIE (V.O.)

I thought, by now, she'd be editing a newspaper, directing movies, running for the Senate...

We HOLD ON MELISSA'S LOVELY FACE as her voice fades down and Vern's fades in.

VERN (V.O.)  
So how are you, Eddie?

INT - WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK - DAY

Eddie snaps out of it. He and Vern are now sitting on a bench. He didn't even know where he was.

EDDIE  
Me?

VERN  
You.

Eddie looks at him, with mournful irony, a look he frequently employs.

EDDIE  
Well, I'm... behind. I'm behind on my book, and it's pretty well polluting my days and nights, if you really want to know.

VERN  
How much've you written of it?

A beat.

EDDIE  
Not one fucking word, Vern.

Vern appraises him.

VERN  
Creative problem, huh? I think I have something that can help you.

Vern reaches in his jacket. Eddie thinks he knows what Vern means.

EDDIE  
Oh no. No.

VERN  
It's not *that*--

EDDIE  
You're still dealing.

VERN  
No-- yeah -- will you listen? This is like nothing you've ever done. Ever.

(MORE)

VERN (cont'd)  
I've been consulting for a pharmaceutical company--

EDDIE  
You mean a lab in some little Yalie's basement.

VERN  
No, this is an exclusive product coming on-stream next year, they've had clinical trials, and it's FDA-approved.

A long beat. Eddie bites.

EDDIE  
Okay, what is it?

Vern reaches into his jacket, produces a tiny plastic sachet with his right hand, tapping something out into the palm of his left hand. He holds this up for Eddie to see. In the center of it is a tiny white unmarked tablet.

EDDIE  
What's in it?

Vern puts the little white tablet on the bench.

VERN  
Just take it.

EDDIE  
I'm too old for this, Vernon.

VERN  
They've identified these receptors in the brain that can activate specific circuits, and-- you know how they say you can only access like 20 percent of your brain, or something--? Well what this does--

EDDIE  
Vernon. Look at me. Do I look good? I smoke too much; my chest is sore. A fucking corpse has more energy than I do, I've got weird aches, possible lumps, rashes, maybe they're a condition, or a network of conditions. One of these days they're all going to hold hands, light up, and I'll keel over dead.

(MORE)

My life's ~~in the gutter~~ <sup>EDDIE (cont'd)</sup>, and I DON'T think it's going to take a sudden upswing into the stratosphere if I do some brand new, shiny designer DRUG!

Vern's phone rings. He holds up his index finger -- sh! -- and takes the call.

VERN  
 (into phone)  
 Gant.  
 (beat, getting agitated)  
 When. --I know, but when?  
 (looking at his watch)  
 Tell him we can't do that. He knows that's out of the question. We absolutely can't do that.

Vern is edgy. Very tense. He continues:

VERN  
 No, I'm not going to tell him! You tell him -- no, now!

He turns off his phone, gets up.

VERN  
 Fucking *people*. I'm afraid I'm going to have to leave you here, Eddie.

He takes out his business card, and places it carefully next to the little white tablet on the bench.

VERN  
 By the way, that's on the house.

EDDIE  
 I don't want it, Vern.

Vern smiles at him.

VERN  
 Don't be ungrateful, now. You know how much these things cost?

Eddie shakes his head.

VERN  
 Five hundred bucks a pop.

He pats Eddie on the shoulder and goes. Eddie is still looking at the pill. Which seems to be looking back at him.

EXT. A DOWNTOWN STREET - DAY

Eddie makes his way home, a little tipsy, pensive and filled with self-loathing.

EDDIE (V.0.)  
 Melissa. What had happened? Her life made no sense. I mean, it made sense that I wasn't an Internet guru or a venture capitalist, but it didn't make sense that Melissa wasn't. I could see a direct, plausible link between this Eddie, broke and buzzed at three o'clock in the afternoon, and an earlier Eddie...

INT. A DISTINGUISHED GENTLEMAN BEHIND A DESK - DAY

--getting SPLATTERED by some ochre liquid from an offscreen source.

EDDIE (V.0.)  
 ...vomiting on his boss' desk during a presentation...

INT. A BEDROOM - NIGHT

A YOUNGER, THINNER EDDIE rifles through a bureau.

EDDIE (V.0.)  
 ... or going through a girlfriend's underwear drawer in search of stash.

EXT. THE STREET - DUSK

Eddie walks, pensive.

EDDIE (V.0.)  
 But there was no link between *my* Melissa and this upstate Melissa with two kids and a shit home job.

EXT. EDDIE'S DOWNTOWN APARTMENT BUILDING - DUSK

Eddie puts his key in the front door lock.



EDDIE (V.0.)  
24 blocks later, I was home.

INT. EDDIE'S BUILDING - STAIRWELL - DUSK

It's a former tenement, fourth-floor walkup. Eddie trudges up the old stairs, the tiny tiles worn away in spots, the Victorian moldings disfigured from a hundred and twenty years of paint. Eddie suddenly stops, weary, paralyzed.

EDDIE (V.0.)  
I was tired. And depressed. And how much worse could it get...?

He digs into his pocket, comes up with--

THE LITTLE WHITE PILL

which he clearly did take from the bench. The pill sits teasingly in the palm of his hand, looking up at him.

EDDIE (V.0.)  
In the end...? There was just no reason not to.

Quickly, impulsively, he swallows it.

INT. THE LANDING - DUSK

As Eddie passes, a neighbor's door swings open. Eddie tries walking faster.

EDDIE (V.0.)  
I didn't want to see anybody.

VALERIE, 26 and attractive, emerges, dressed to go out.

EDDIE (V.0.)  
Especially not my landlord's nasty young wife.

She is immediately soured at the sight of Eddie. Eddie knows what she's thinking.

EDDIE  
Tuesday.

VALERIE  
Look, enough, okay--?

EDDIE  
Just tell him--

VALERIE  
Steve handles the rents. So feed  
your fucking bullshit to him--

EDDIE (V.0.)  
I was suddenly aware that I had extra  
reason to get away from her. I had  
thoughtlessly ingested a *substance*.

Valerie's tirade FADES up or down, depending on when we're  
hearing Eddie.

VALERIE  
--Like rent control hasn't protected  
your ass enough? You can't get \$585  
a month together?

EDDIE (V.0.)  
I had gotten remarkably little  
information from Vernon about what  
this drug would do.

VALERIE  
You could be a *bicycle messenger* and  
come up with that!

Eddie continues up the stairs. But she follows, getting in  
front of him.

VALERIE  
--Look, I'm just telling you, he's  
been talking about calling these  
people he knows from the club to  
muscle you out -- I've told him not  
to do that, but he's really *pissed*.

We PUSH IN on Eddie's face, into his eyes... where we see his  
pupils contract just slightly. A flicker.

EDDIE (V.0.)  
And then... I felt it.

EDDIE'S POV - THE APARTMENT UPPER HALL...

The room is changing... springing into sharper focus.

EDDIE (V.0.)  
Everything had more definition...  
more dimensions...

There seems to be a little more light, too -- he can see more clearly. The SOUND drops out for a moment; he can see VALERIE'S FACE, mouth contorted, continuing to heap the abuse, but there's something in her eyes that's not mean... something anxious.

EDDIE (V.0.)

"I was blind, but now I see."

He looks at her with a sudden keen intelligence. And sympathy.

EDDIE

What's wrong?

She's taken aback.

VALERIE

W-What?

EDDIE (V.0.)

Now I noticed... her tense fingers  
and defeated look...

His eyes go to THE BOOK BAG in her arms. On a gut instinct, Eddie takes a shot, pushing his words forward with a new, sharp, penetrating intimacy, articulateness.

EDDIE

You don't like me, and I don't blame you -- you see a retrograde, collegiate, schlumpy energy-sucking defeated sack of shit sponging off your husband. You're hoping I'll blow my brains out. But my existence shouldn't make you this upset. What is it?

He's hit a nerve.

VALERIE

Look, that's none of your--

EDDIE

Something wrong with school?

VALERIE

How do you know I'm in school!

His eyes flick down at her bag.

EDDIE

People who aren't don't usually carry  
dry, academic constipated out of  
print books about Dorothea Lange--

VALERIE

Are you some kind of sickie? Have  
you been following me?!

EDDIE

No! I just saw the book--!

VALERIE

You can only see a corner of it. How  
did you know?

He looks down. She's right -- only a corner of the book is  
visible. Eddie realizes:

EDDIE

I've seen it before.

EDDIE (V.0.)

It was true. 15 years ago. In  
college...

INT. A COLLEGIATE DORM - NIGHT

Young skinny Eddie is flipping through the Lange book.

EDDIE (V.0.)

...Sitting on the couch of a T.A. I  
was trying to make, waiting for her  
to come back out of the bathroom...  
Hoping she'd put in her diaphragm.

BACK TO:

INT. EDDIE'S APARTMENT - LANDING - DAY

EDDIE (V.0.)

Somehow, my unconscious had served  
that up... a memory long forgotten,  
never even recorded. Or was it  
recorded, there all the time, and all  
I'd needed... was the access?

ON EDDIE'S FACE - CLOSE

As it sinks in:

EDDIE (V.0.)

Vern was right. This was like no drug I'd ever known.

Eddie's eyes flicks to the laptop in her bag, his manner suddenly intimate, confident.

EDDIE

If you're writing a paper, that's not the book I'd use.

VALERIE

Well, who asked y--

EDDIE

Cal Berkeley has her oral history. I'd start there. Her sons are still alive. You could Google them. Sons of famous people always want to dish dirt about their parents. You'd get something no one else has, and you'd've gone the extra mile, a nice little apple for the professor.

During this speech, MUSIC COMES UP and the sound goes down... SEVERAL QUICK CUTS... Eddie and Valerie's mouths are moving... she's asking questions... he's supplying answers, lots of them...

EDDIE (V.0.)

Information culled from the odd museum show, a half-read article, a once-aired documentary, was all bubbling, obligingly, up to my frontal lobes, mixing itself together into a sparkling cocktail of useful information.

Valerie's whole posture is relaxing, the look in her eyes becoming... friendly.

EDDIE (V.0.)

She didn't have a chance.

INT. THE DOWNSTAIRS APARTMENT FROM EDDIE'S - NIGHT

A mirror image of Eddie's, but considerably nicer. We HEAR the SOUNDS of two people -- Valerie and Eddie -- HAVING WILD, mutually satisfying SEX from the other room.

EDDIE (V.0.)

We'd worked on her paper for about two hours.

We see the laptop set up, books scattered -- then, obviously abandoned for a more pleasurable pursuit.

EDDIE (V.0.)

One nice little side effect...? I stayed hard for hours.

We HEAR female groans of pleasure. Laughter.

INT. EDDIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

EDDIE (V.0.)

Half the night later... I returned home.

A dishevelled Eddie opens the door to his apartment. He enters, looks around.

EDDIE'S POV - HIS LIVING ROOM

It's the first wide shot we've seen of it, and it hammers home: what a mess. Books scattered across the floor, dirty dishes, broken Venetian blind sashes. The nest of a slob.

EDDIE (V.0.)

... but it couldn't be my home, could it? Who would live like this?

MONTAGE: Speeded-up shots of Eddie sifting through his books and tapes. Cleaning up the kitchen. The bathroom. Picks up books. He starts moving the sofa. QUICK CUTS: the living room, rapidly whipped into shape. If not stylish, habitable. Final shot: he's sitting on the (repositioned) couch. Thinking.

EDDIE (V.0.)

What was this drug? I couldn't stay messy on it, I hadn't had a cigarette in six hours...

He stares at the pack in his hands. It looks alien.

EDDIE (V.0.)

I also hadn't eaten. So I'd been abstemious and tidy. So what was this -- a drug for people who wanted to be more anal-retentive?

He gets up. Paces.

EDDIE (V.0.)  
I wasn't high. I wasn't wired.  
Everything was just very clear. What  
I needed to do. And the surge of  
electric energy, pulsing in my  
brain... to make me do it.

His eye falls on his COMPUTER.

The MONTAGE CONTINUES: Eddie flipping through research books, typing onto his keyboard, the printer printing, doing Internet searches... pages and pages spit out of the printer.

EDDIE (V.0.)  
Soon... ninety-two pages just wrote  
themselves.

INT. EDDIE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Eddie, in his underwear, is sleeping soundly. He stirs, rolls over, cracks open an eye.

He gets up, schlumps to the mirror, looks at his unshaven face. The penetrating gleam is no longer in his eyes.

EDDIE (V.0.)  
The next morning, I sent a little  
probe down into my brain. No surge  
of brilliance came up to greet me. I  
felt dull, thick, needing coffee and  
a cigarette. In short...

INT. EDDIE'S CLOSET

His UNDERWEAR get tossed at the hamper -- missing the hamper by about a foot. The underwear remain on the floor.

EDDIE (V.0.)  
I was back.

INT. EDDIE'S LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Eddie sits at his table, eating doughnuts. (Already the room shows signs of being messed up again.)

EDDIE (V.0.)  
But something remained.

His eye falls on the NEAT STACK of the 93 PAGES he'd written the night before. He picks them up. Looks at them.

INT. AN EDITOR'S OFFICE - DAY

A windowless cubicle. Eddie drops A MANILA ENVELOPE containing the pages on the desk of MARK SUTTON, 40, an editorial lifer. He looks dubiously at Eddie, then the pages.

MARK  
You're kidding.

EDDIE  
No.

MARK  
(sarcastic)  
Words have appeared on paper.

EDDIE  
Yes.

MARK  
Written by you.

Eddie knows he's on thin ice.

EDDIE  
Hey, no pressure. Just call me when you've read them.

INT. A MOVIE THEATER - DAY

We see the flicker of a movie screen on Eddie's face.

EDDIE (V.O.)  
Had a couple hours to kill, so I caught a flick.

We HEAR the voices from the screen:

HEAVY'S VOICE  
(European accent)  
There is no vaccine. Once I break the vial, your "Eastern Seaboard" will be permanently contaminated.

DANIEL CRAIG'S VOICE (V.O.)  
Well. Cape Cod is overrated.



We HEAR the Oofs!, Thuds!, and loud music that signifies Mr. Bond has attacked the enemy. Eddie chuckles. He loves this shit.

INT. EDDIE'S APARTMENT - DAY - ON EDDIE'S ANSWERING MACHINE

The red light is blinking. Eddie pushes "Play." Mark Sutton's voice is heard, upbeat.

MARK SUTTON'S VOICE

Eddie... give me a call when you get in... (BEEP)

The second message is from Mark too.

MARK SUTTON'S VOICE

Eddie, I'm 40 pages further in... call me... how did you do this? I'd, uh, I'd really like to talk to you about your plans for after you finish. I'm wondering if this maybe should be one of a series of books... look, the minute you get in, call. Okay? Okay. (BEEP!)

Eddie smiles to himself -- he knew it! But then, his smile fades. Reality hits. Because it was an enhanced Eddie who displayed all that brilliance, now, wasn't it?

EXT. VERN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Eddie, holding Vern's card, buzzes the buzzer. There's no answer. Eddie buzzes again and again. Finally:

VERN'S VOICE

(groggy)  
Yeah?

EDDIE

Vern! It's Eddie.

VERN'S VOICE

Yeah, yeah, okay...

The buzzer buzzes.

INT. VERN'S APARTMENT DOOR - DAY

The door opens. And Eddie is taken aback.

Vern has been beaten up. Really worked over. His lip is split, his face puffy and bruised. His right hand is bandaged.

VERN  
Shit, Eddie, that was fast.

EDDIE  
What hap--

VERN  
Don't ask.

Leaving the door open, Vern turns around and motions at Eddie with his left hand to come in.

The place is all mismatched antique furniture -- the possessions of someone who collected once, with enthusiasm, but who's letting it all go to hell. Vern sits, keeping his injured arm elevated.

VERN  
So, Eddie. I guess you're interested after all.

EDDIE  
Yeah. That stuff's amazing.

VERN  
What did I tell you?

Eddie can't get over how bad Vernon looks.

EDDIE  
Vern--

VERN  
You don't want to know.

End of subject. And Eddie wants the drug more than he wants to know what happened.

EDDIE  
What's... um... what's it called?

VERN  
It doesn't have a street name yet, because it doesn't have a street profile. And that's the way we want it to stay. The boys in the kitchen are calling it MDT-48.

EDDIE

"The boys in the kitchen..." Vern,  
that doesn't sound like something  
that's FDA-approved.

VERN

"FDA-approved," that's a laugh. Did  
you really believe that shit?

Eddie stares at Vern as he pours himself a coffee.

EDDIE (V.O.)

Okay, so what did we have here? Some  
unknown, untested, possibly dangerous  
pharmaceutical scammed out of an  
unidentified lab somewhere, given to  
me by an unreliable person I hadn't  
seen in a decade.

VERN

So. You want some more of this?

EDDIE

Yes. Definitely.

Vern chuckles. He knew it.

VERN

Okay, uh, we'll get into it.

(beat)

But you want to do me a little favor  
first?

EDDIE

Uh... sure.

Eddie wants to get on with it and get out of there, but Vern  
clearly has him by the balls.

VERN

As you can see, I'm in no shape to go  
out right now... but I need to later.  
Will you hop down to the dry cleaners  
and get my suit? And maybe pick me  
up some breakfast too...?

Eddie sighs. Vern tosses him a set of KEYS.

INT. A DRY CLEANER'S AUTOMATED CLOTHING RACK - DAY

As the plastic-wrapped clothes spin towards us...

EDDIE (V.0.)  
I was amazed at how quickly it all  
slotted back into place...

INT. A DINER GRIDDLE - DAY

As two eggs are flipped, over easy.

EDDIE (V.0.)  
..the dealer-client dynamic.....

INT. VERNON'S BUILDING - HALLWAY - DAY

And here comes Eddie, carrying Vernon's suit, and greasy bag  
of breakfast...

EDDIE (V.0.)  
...this easy sacrificing of dignity  
for a guaranteed return of a dime  
bag, or a gram, or in this case a  
little pill that was going to cost me  
a month's rent.

He arrives at Vernon's door. He takes out the keys Vern gave  
him, but he doesn't need them. The Door is AJAR.

INT. VERN'S APARTMENT - DAY - EDDIE'S POV

As Eddie pushes the door open, he can see Vernon sitting,  
quite normally, on the couch. As we enter the room, though,  
we look around and see that the place has been RANSACKED.  
Destroyed.

Eddie wheels back to ask Vern what the fuck. And then sees  
it.

VERN'S FACE - CLOSE

In the center of his forehead is a neat little BULLET HOLE.

EDDIE

is no tough guy, and sweat springs to his brow. He starts  
shaking... then, seized with horror that they might still be  
in here, he edges to the bedroom. We hear THE POUNDING OF  
HIS HEART as he peeks in...

INT. EDDIE'S POV - VERN'S BEDROOM

It's been ransacked, too. Torn to shreds, bureau drawers opened and dumped, pillows ripped open with knives.

But no one is there.

INT. VERNON'S DESK - DAY

Eddie's shaking hand can barely hold the phone.

EDDIE

Yes... I... I need to report a  
murder. Eddie. Spinola. --Edward  
J. I won't.

He puts down the phone, puts his head in his hands. VARIOUS CUTS OF: Eddie sitting. Shifting his butt in various positions. Holding a BASEBALL BAT he's found -- just in case "they" come back.

EDDIE (V.O.)

It took them forever. And the longer  
I sat there, the clearer I saw...  
whoever had done this had known Vern.  
He had opened the door. And I  
suddenly knew what they had been  
looking for.

CLOSE ON - EDDIE'S FACE

EDDIE (V.O.)

And I couldn't help but wonder... if  
they'd found it.

INT. VERN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Eddie, cleverly wearing kitchen gloves, is now furiously tearing through the rubble the thieves have left behind, the scattered clothes, under the bed...

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Eddie pokes quickly through the medicine cabinet -- nothing but Tylenol.

INT. VERN'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Eddie lies on the floor, exhausted, the room even further trashed than it was before.

EDDIE'S POV - THE CEILING

It's made of many interlocking panels. And one of them is... a little crooked. We HEAR SIRENS now -- the cops are finally coming, and Eddie must rush. CUT TO:

EDDIE,

standing on a chair, poking at the panel. It gives, pops upward. His arm disappears into the hole... he feels around... his expression changes... and his arm reappears containing...

A LARGE BROWN PADDED ENVELOPE

Slowly, Eddie pulls out the package, reaches into it.

EDDIE'S HANDS - CLOSE

He is holding about TWENTY THOUSAND DOLLARS in cash.

But that's not all. He reaches in again... there's something else inside...

Eddie's hand pulls out a LITTLE BLACK ADDRESS BOOK. But there's still something else.. he reaches in again.

And now Eddie's hand pulls out A PLASTIC CONTAINER WITH AN AIR-LOCK SEAL... he pries the seal off...

Inside are FIVE HUNDRED OF THE LITTLE WHITE PILLS.

Eddie HEARS THE THUD OF APPROACHING FEET, voices. Making a decision, he quickly tucks the envelope into his jacket, jumps down from the chair, and repositions it as THE FOOTFALLS get closer...

INT. POLICE PRECINCT - DAY

Eddie sits, finishing up his statement to an overweight DETECTIVE.

EDDIE

... I'd just run into him on the street, and he invited me up to... to chew over old times.

The Detective looks at him suspiciously.

DETECTIVE  
"Chew over old times?"

EDDIE  
Is there something wrong with that?

EDDIE (V.O.)  
The brown envelope was burning a hole  
in my side. But because I'd been a  
good samaritan and called right away,  
nobody had thought to search me.

DETECTIVE  
And what, exactly did he do for a  
living?

EDDIE  
When I knew him he was an antique  
dealer.

DETECTIVE  
A dealer--?

EDDIE  
Oh, look, I don't know... we didn't  
exactly get a chance to catch up.

The phone is ringing. The detective picks it up.

DETECTIVE  
(into phone)  
Yeah. That is correct. An Edward  
Spinola. He's here.

Mysteriously, the Detective hands the phone to Eddie.

DETECTIVE  
We contacted the victim's sister.

FLASH!

EXT. A BEACH - DAY

Eddie sees young, beautiful Melissa, laughing, in the surf.

INT. POLICE PRECINCT - DAY

Eddie can't believe it. He stares at the phone.

EDDIE  
That's *Melissa*?

EDDIE (V.O.)  
I hadn't heard her voice in 10 years.

He looks into the receiver, then finally speaks into it.

EDDIE  
Melissa?

MELISSA'S VOICE  
Eddie. You were there?

EDDIE  
Right before. I'd just run into him  
on the street.

MELISSA'S VOICE  
Christ.  
(broken)  
This is all so weird.

EDDIE  
Melissa -- you don't think I had  
anything to--

MELISSA'S VOICE  
Oh, no, no, Eddie, I know that... I  
wish I was more surprised. He was...  
involved in some stuff... I better  
not say any more.

EDDIE  
Not on this line, no.

A beat. Eddie still can't believe he's talking to her.

EDDIE  
Melissa... maybe we should just...  
(a deep breath)  
Do you want to... meet somewhere,  
or...?

He lets it hang in the air for a moment.

MELISSA'S VOICE  
Eddie, I've got to do the funeral.  
And God knows what else.

EDDIE  
Right. Do you, uh... do you want any  
help? I feel like I should--



MELISSA'S VOICE

No, better not. I'll call you again... when I've processed. Okay?

EDDIE

Okay.

A beat. Melissa's voice is wan, vulnerable.

MELISSA'S VOICE

Okay.

She's hung up. Gone.

EDDIE (V.0.)

93 pages, a murder, and a talk with Melissa. What a 24 hours. --And now, the looming possibility of my arrest.

The detective, still staring intently at Eddie.

DETECTIVE

Something doesn't jell here.

But he suddenly breaks his gaze, eyes drifting towards the snack table, where there are pastries and doughnuts.

EDDIE (V.0.)

But I knew, when his attention wandered to something more pressing, that he was going to let me go.

EXT. PRECINCT - DAY

Eddie walks down the stairs, shaken up but profoundly relieved. Even a little giddy. Then he stops.

EDDIE (V.0.)

Only then did it occur to me that someone might have followed me from Vern's apartment.

EXT. THE STREET - DAY

Eddie walks, trying to cast inconspicuous glances over his shoulder.

EDDIE'S POV - THE STREET

Is this guy following him? That guy? They all look innocuous. They all look threatening. He has no idea.

EXT. THE INT. EDDIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

EDDIE (V.O.)  
Finally, I just had to take the  
chance, and go home.

Eddie enters, and, casting a surreptitious look around, closes the door behind him.

INT. EDDIE'S DINING TABLE - DAY

The cash, the address book, and the bottle of pills are all laid out on the table. Eddie sits, looking at them, realizing that his life is now about to be jump-started.

A smile twitches at the corner of his mouth.

MUSIC UP UNDER:

EXT. MADISON AVENUE - DAY

Eddie is walking down the street, a brisk confidence in his step, that penetrating gleam of intelligence back in his eyes. We know right away that he's on MDT.

EDDIE (V.O.)  
Back on MDT, now hyper-aware, it  
seemed obvious what my immediate  
undertakings should be.

EDDIE'S POV - THE CHIC STORE WINDOWS - MENS' CLOTHES

We know it's all his for the taking...

EXT. CENTRAL PARK SOUTH - DAY

Eddie is walking, now elegantly and expensively dressed.

EDDIE (V.0.)  
Vern's cash, combined with an  
unprecedented surge of motivation,  
enabled me to do something about my  
appearance.

INT. A GYM - NIGHT

Eddie, who has had a haircut, is doing crunches on a board.

EDDIE (V.0.)  
The idea of a burger, a fry, a  
congealed doughnut, nauseated me now.

INT. EDDIE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Eddie sits at his computer, a salad beside him, his printer  
spitting out many, many more pages.

EDDIE (V.0.)  
I finished the book in four days.

INT. MARK SUTTON'S OFFICE - DAY

Eddie puts down a thicker manila envelope on Mark's desk.  
Mark is astonished.

INT. A SUGAR BOWL ON EDDIE'S TABLE - DAY

It contains ten tablets of MDT. Eddie's fingers reach in,  
take one.

EDDIE (V.0.)  
A tablet a day... kept the torpor  
away. And my day would be whatever I  
chose to make of it.

INT. THE MET - DAY

Eddie surveys paintings.

EDDIE (V.0.)  
I now had cultural appetites.

INT. A PIANO CONCERT - DAY

Eddie sits attentively in the audience, *reading the score* along with the music.

EDDIE (V.0.)  
I learned to read music in a week.

INT. THE EAST RIVER - DAY

Eddie runs, earphones on his head. We HEAR, dimly, French phrases.

EDDIE (V.0.)  
Brushed up on French and Italian.

Eddie becomes aware that there's ANOTHER RUNNER -- a powerful-looking man, gaining on him, closer behind him than makes him comfortable. Eddie flicks a glance over his shoulder.

EDDIE (V.0.)  
The only cloud was the oppressive feeling that I was being followed.

With a surge of effort, Eddie speeds up, sprinting across the street just after the light changes. WHIZZING TRAFFIC cuts the mysterious runner off, stops him from following. He remains, panting, at the light.

EDDIE (V.0.)  
Was I? Or was MDT a creator of groundless paranoia?

INT. EDDIE'S APARTMENT - DAY - (SERIES OF SHOTS)

EDDIE (V.0.)  
Either way, I wasn't taking any chances. The focal point of my existence quickly became... protecting my stash.

SEVERAL SHOTS as Eddie tries, then rejects, several HIDING PLACES. 1. He lifts the mattress, then stops himself. Please! 2. He lifts the lid on the toilet, then puts it back in disgust. Bad narc movie 101! 3. He peers behind the radiator, lifts a potted plant out of its pot, then puts it back -- nope.

EDDIE (V.0.)  
No place seemed safe.

Finally: 4. Eddie leans down, pulls the old rusty BROILER out of his aged stove. Hm.

EDDIE (V.0.)  
Being as I didn't spend much time  
browning creme brulees, I finally  
settled for the broiler.

CLOSE ON: 1. the plastic baggie of pills being DUCT TAPED inside the top of the broiler.

EDDIE (V.0.)  
MDT, MDT, take me where I'm meant to  
be...

INT. A BAR - NIGHT

Eddie stands there, in his new clothes, noticeably thinner, holding a drink. There is something commanding about his aura. ATTRACTIVE WOMEN check him out.

EDDIE (V.0.)  
I seemed to no longer repel women.

The CAMERA CIRCLES around Eddie and a BEAUTIFUL WOMAN.

EDDIE (V.0.)  
(playfully)  
So you're saying that any author  
who's commandeered adjective status,  
"Orwellian, Dickensian--"?

BEAUTIFUL WOMAN  
--is prosaic. Yes.

EDDIE  
And you would agree that a prosaic  
author's work rests on a foundation  
of acclaim--

BEAUTIFUL WOMAN  
Or zeitgeist--

EDDIE  
So you're saying praise and fame are  
unrelated to achievement, that the  
greatest hits CD cannot possibly  
contain good songs? That  
Shakespeare's catchiness belies  
mediocrity?

(MORE)

-- Really ~~EDDIE (cont'd)~~ interesting -- I mean, what is the fine line between something that resonates timelessly and the dull thud of a cliché?

BEAUTIFUL WOMAN

I...

She breaks off, shrugs, smiles. He's fascinating.

EDDIE

So, knowing your abhorrence of populist sloganeering, I take it you'd really rather not hear about what I, personally, think could launch a thousand ships?

He puts a finger under her chin. He means her face, of course. The woman smiles, and blushes.

EDDIE (V.O.)

Fish in a barrel.

As the CAMERA CONTINUES TO CIRCLE, WE CUT TO:

INT. ANOTHER BAR - ANOTHER NIGHT

As the CAMERA, in an unbroken movement is now circling around him as a European-looking crowd clusters around Eddie.

He is finishing a long story -- *in French*.

The crowd laughs appreciatively. Especially the women.

EDDIE (V.O.)

And it wasn't just women. I was, for the first time in my life, *interesting*...

The CAMERA CONTINUES its circle...

INT. ANOTHER UPSCALE BAR - NIGHT

And the movement continues in a third bar. Now, a sizable crowd is around Eddie.

EDDIE

...but wouldn't that rapid expansion devalue the stock completely in two years?

A well-dressed BROKER TYPE (Kevin Doyle) shakes his head.

BROKER TYPE

No, no, there are safeguards--

EDDIE

Against aggressive over-expansion?  
There aren't, because there are no  
safeguards in *human nature*. When it  
comes to power, we have no "off"  
button, we'll gobble up whatever  
territory, booty, dinero we can, and  
we'll *keep* gobbling -- we'll inflate  
until the balloon pops --I mean, look  
at history, the countries that ruled  
the world -- they all overreached --  
Portugal --? All that's left is salt  
cod and cheap condos -- the Brits--?  
Now they just sit on their dank  
little island, fussing over their  
suits. --But you're saying a  
*corporation's* going to put on the  
brakes? Say, "Ahhh, that's enough.  
We'll stop at a couple billion."

The crowd laughs. Eddie's tone hasn't been aggressive --  
it's been genial, amusing. Even the Broker type smiles  
sheepishly.

EDDIE (V.0.)

Even the people I beat forgave me.

EXT. THE BAR - NIGHT

Eddie leaves with several people. The Broker Type, who we  
will now know as Kevin, presses a card into Eddie's hand.

KEVIN DOYLE

You must have a portfolio, but if you  
don't, I'd be very interested in  
working with you.

Eddie politely takes his card. Smiles charmingly.

EDDIE

Thank you so much.

EDDIE (V.0.)

Of course, this seemed to work better  
with people I didn't know... than  
with people who knew me...

INT. A MODEST QUEENS LIVING ROOM - DAY

Eddie's MOTHER and FATHER, working class schlubs, sit on the floral sofa, staring at their now-dapper son.

EDDIE

...so, Mom, I did a little research about Aunt Helen's tumor, and her treatment is the medical equivalent of slathering the patient with leeches. There is one doctor at Johns Hopkins who is too dim to do this himself -- but he does know the people in Switzerland who are experimenting with non-invasive lasers, and I've gotten her on the list...

His parents stare at him. They don't know what to make of any of this.

EDDIE (V.O.)

I quickly returned to the unfamiliar audience.

INT. MARK SUTTON'S OFFICE - DAY

Eddie sits in a chair opposite Mark's desk. Another ELEGANT MAN is there, too, Mark's boss, DUNHAM.

MARK SUTTON

I want to apologize, Eddie, if I in any way communicated a lack of faith in your abilities.

Eddie smiles coolly. In control. It's Mark who's a little nervous.

MARK SUTTON

Mr. Dunham has read your pages, and we're prepared to make you what I hope will be a very exciting offer.

EDDIE

I might disappoint you there.

MARK SUTTON

Why?!



EDDIE

Because I, ah, now see that writing,  
as a profession, is for marginalized  
whiners not fit for anything else.

Sutton thinks Eddie's kidding. He laughs nervously.

EDDIE

No, I mean it, look at the life.  
Incarceration, loneliness, burrowing  
down into your own psyche,  
increasingly insulated from any  
truth, because you're not in the  
currents of the world any more,  
you're rattling around inside the  
cage of your brain, self-  
cannibalizing...

Dunham realizes he may be losing Eddie, and jumps in.

DUNHAM

You don't think a best-selling author  
would disagree?

EDDIE

Oh, if you're good, there's some  
remuneration, eventually, after  
paperbacks, but at best your  
career'll be oozing along like a  
snail, a few thousand more copies,  
whoop-dee-doo, you're "developing a  
readership," -- for what? So you can  
end up in Phoenix on a Saturday night  
reading from your own work at some  
holdout indie book store to a bored  
audience of ten? --Half of them  
there for the wine and cheese?

Mark Sutton stares at him, confused.

MARK SUTTON

But, ah, I understood that being a  
writer was your life... what in the  
world would you do instead?

Eddie looks away from them, into the future.

EDDIE

I don't think any goal will be really  
clear, Mark, until I'm sitting on a  
large pile of cash.

MARK SUTTON

And exactly how will you get that?

Eddie smiles to himself. He's thought of this.

INT. BOB HASKELL'S APARTMENT - DAY

BOB HASKELL, an intense-looking middle-aged man wearing a T-shirt and boxer shorts, answers the door. Eddie is standing there.

EDDIE

Kevin Doyle did call you...?

BOB

Oh, uh, yeah. Sorry, come in...

Eddie enters, taking it all in. The room largely empty, dominated by a large mahogany table -- once a dining table -- now covered with computers and printers. Bob immediately starts typing into a keyboard, pulling distractedly at his shorts with his free hand.

BOB

Lair of the beast, so you'll have to excuse the, uh... attire.

EDDIE

It's your apartment, Bob.

There are grooves in the carpet where the chairs used to be and a couple of faded spots on the walls where pictures once hung.

EDDIE

Recent divorce?

BOB

Three months. So, you're writing an article...

EDDIE

(smoothly)

Vanity Fair. Day Trading 101. Kevin said you were the guy.

Bob is intent on the screen.

BOB

Mm-hm. Mm-hm. Okay, nothing's moving. Rigid as a corpse.

(finally looking at Eddie)

(MORE)

So. Eddie BOB (cont'd) When you buy a share of stock, there's three approaches. There's fundamental analysis, you look at the company's financial health, growth potential, potential earnings--

ANOTHER ANGLE - LATER

Bob is still talking, and keying at the same time.

BOB

... but another approach is to look at numbers only, no real connection to current valuation. That's quantitative analysis, or "quants..." You use sophisticated algorithms to find minute price discrepancies...

ANOTHER ANGLE - LATER

Bob is still talking and keying.

BOB

... then there's technical analysis, you study price-and-volume patterns and basically try to understand the psychology surrounding a stock...

His eye drifts towards the screen. Without saying "excuse me" he starts to key in numbers again.

EDDIE (V.O.)

He talked about options, futures, derivatives, hedge funds, global markets... and I found that I actually understood what he was saying.

Bob's voice fades back up.

BOB

Then you've got guys like me, the new pariahs of Wall Street. Ten years ago it was the Gordon Gekkos. Now it's the geeks in baseball caps who sit in front of computers at home and pick off eighths, even sixteenths of a point per share... we're accused of distorting the market? Tough shit. I mean, come over here, look at this...

Eddie comes closer, as Bob keys, feverishly. After a moment:

BOB

Yes!

EDDIE (V.O.)

He'd bought at 59 and 7/16ths and  
sold at 59 and 11/16ths.

BOB

Five hundred dollars in ten seconds.

EDDIE

How many trades like that do you make  
a day?

BOB

Thirty, forty. I rarely hold a stock  
for more than ten minutes.

EDDIE

So, it's really not about  
information, is it?

BOB

Shit, no.

EDDIE

It's about identifying ripples in the  
charts and reacting quickly.

BOB

There are some very good simulation  
games you can buy...

Eddie is staring at the screen, blocks of information forming  
and connecting in his mind.

EDDIE

I don't think I'll be needing them.

Bob tears himself away for a moment, looks at Eddie.

BOB

Eddie. Watch yourself. Trading can  
get intense. Don't ever borrow money  
from family or friends... and don't  
start lying to hide your losses,  
either.

Eddie's mind is already dancing ahead -- to the money he's  
going to be making.

EDDIE

Got it, Bob.

BOB

And, uh, make sure you keep a foot in your *life*... you know, if you... you start getting irritable when you can't trade, like on a Sunday...? Or in the middle of the night...? You may need some counseling...

Of course, the poor desperate man is talking about himself.

INT. EDDIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Financial reading material covers every square inch of floor. Eddie now has three monitors operating side-by-side in his living room, all spewing forth financial information as he works the keyboard...

EDDIE (V.O.)

Armed with the last \$2,000.00 of poor Vern's money, I made \$12,000.00 in a day.

(beat)

It was too slow.

INT. A COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Eddie sits across from a sinister-looking young Russian in his early 30's. This is GENNADY.

EDDIE

Why not?

The two men stare at each other.

GENNADY

Because I don't see you before. And I don't fucking like you already. Why do I give you 100 thousand dollars?

EDDIE

I thought all you Russians were big shots. In control.

GENNADY

What -- I not in control? *I turn you down!*

He gets up, ready to walk, dismiss this.

EDDIE

Then, I'll have to model the script  
on someone else.

Gennady looks at him contemptuously, but bites.

GENNADY

What script?

INT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK - DAY

Eddie sits on a bench, waiting.

EDDIE (V.0.)

An hour later, I'd spun a plot about  
a young second-generation Russian who  
finds himself moving up through the  
Organizatsya.

Gennady appears. Hands Eddie a large paper bag. Eddie  
reaches for it; Gennady holds it aloft for one last second.

GENNADY

Okay, you take this... you *mine*. You  
don't pay, you know what we do?

EDDIE (V.0.)

He was determined to tell me.

GENNADY

We cut you around the waist, peel  
your skin, pull it up over your head  
and tie knot in it. And you don't  
die from that. You suffocate.

He lets the full picture sink in for a moment. Then:

GENNADY

Okay. So who we cast in this thing?

INT. LAFAYETTE TRADING FIRM - DAY

EDDIE (V.0.)

My new friend, Kevin Doyle, told me  
that you could leverage two and a  
half times your cash at a day-trading  
firm...

Eddie now sits at a terminal, KEVIN DOYLE behind him. (We may recognize Kevin as the broker type who gave Eddie his card in the earlier bar scene.) Kevin is watching Eddie, a little mystified.

INT. LAFAYETTE TRADING - BATHROOM - DAY

Eddie is alone in a stall. He takes TWO MDT TABLETS out of his wallet, downs them.

EDDIE (V.0.)

I'd been upping the dose for over a week. It seemed to cut my learning curve.

OVERLAPPING DISSOLVES: Another trader stands behind Eddie, watching. Second shot: three traders are watching. Third shot: nine traders are watching him, awed.

EDDIE (V.0.)

It was instinct. But informed instinct -- instinct based on huge amounts of research, which, thanks to MDT, was conducted more rapidly and comprehensively than anyone at Lafayette Day Trading would ever realize...

Kevin Doyle is flabbergasted as he watches Eddie.

OVERHEAD SHOT OF ROOM -- "GOD SHOT"--

As still more people drift over to where Eddie is sitting...

EDDIE (V.0.)

I'd heard the old metaphors about the stock market -- it was an ocean, a celestial firmament, a numerical representation of the Will of God...

EDDIE - CLOSE,

eyes taking in data, fingers reacting on the keyboard...

EDDIE (V.0.)

But that was half-assed. The stock market was nothing less than a template for human consciousness, a collective nervous system, a global brain.

(MORE)

And I was ~~jackled~~ (cont'd) booted up-- my mind, was living tissue inside the greater, functioning whole.

TRADER BEHIND HIM  
Why are you shorting that?

Eddie half-smiles, shrugs. He doesn't owe the guy an answer.

EDDIE (V.0.)  
Call it raving grandiosity brought on by the drug. But the fact remains...

EXT. LAFAYETTE DAY TRADING BUILDING - DAY

Eddie exits, cool and collected. And satisfied.

EDDIE (V.0.)  
At the end of the week my brokerage account contained... over a million dollars.

Eddie has a spring in his step.

EDDIE (V.0.)  
Word quickly got out.

INT. EDDIE'S LIVING ROOM - DUSK

Quick cuts of Eddie is playing back his messages:

EDDIE'S MACHINE  
You have... 19 messages.

EDDIE (V.0.)  
Four job offers... my bank, raising my line of credit... a reporter for the New York Post...

FEMALE VOICE  
...listen, return my call, Mr. Spinola, this article's about you's going to get written with your cooperation or without it... (BEEP!)

EDDIE (V.0.)  
(sardonic)  
All my new friends.



GENNADY'S VOICE  
 ...you stupid shit, I be there  
 Thursday for the money, ten  
 o'clock...

Eddie makes a jerk-off motion, crosses to his window, looks down.

EXT. EDDIE'S POV - HIS STREET - DUSK

here is a MYSTERIOUS BLACK CAR just sitting at the curb, in front of his building. No one gets in or out. Eddie turns back to his machine.

EDDIE (V.O.)  
 ...and finally, Kevin Doyle, trying  
 to sound casual.

KEVIN DOYLE  
 Eddie, I was having drinks with a  
 friend of mine, and... he said he'd  
 like to meet you.

INT. A FANCY ITALIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Lindy, Eddie's ex-girlfriend, is sitting across the table from Eddie. She peers at him, confused. Is this dapper stranger really her shlumpy ex?

LINDY  
*Carl Van Loon* wants to meet you?

EDDIE  
 Apparently he does.

She is pleased for him, but flabbergasted.

LINDY  
 But... you're not really in the  
 finance game. What can you do for  
 Carl Van Loon?  
 (shaking her head,  
 mystified)  
 Eddie-- I --

THE BEAUTIFUL HOSTESS appears at Eddie's side.

HOSTESS  
 Signori Spinola, Giorgio says that  
 the first white truffle of the season  
 is in.

EDDIE  
 (in Italian)  
 I naturally would like to smell it.

Lindy absorbs this, even more confused as the hostess goes.

LINDY  
 All right. What's *happened* to you?

EDDIE  
 You make it sound like something I  
 couldn't make happen for myself.

EDDIE (V.O.)  
 I was careful, with her, to take it  
 down a few notches. Cruise on a  
 lower speed.

LINDY  
 No, I don't mean... I mean, I knew  
 you could rally, but I just...

EDDIE  
 You didn't think I would.

Lindy will always be honest with him.

LINDY  
 No.  
 (beat)  
 I hope you didn't do it for me,  
 Eddie.

EDDIE  
 No. I did it for me. Apparently my  
 capacity for self-disgust wasn't  
 boundless after all.

LINDY  
 I'm so happy for you. And I'm so  
 sorry if I seemed... disloyal, or...

EDDIE  
 (beat)  
 Lindy. There was no betrayal from  
 you. Ever. The real question is,  
 how did you put up with that lump?

LINDY  
 Well... even at your worst, there was  
 a certain... teddy bear quality...

EDDIE

Teddy bears are round and soft and certainly incapable of inflicting their will on the world.

Lindy eyes this new, sharp Eddie, still the tiniest bit uncomfortable.

LINDY

Well. But they're comforting.

They regard each other. The waiter reappears with a plate containing a dirty-looking golf ball. Eddie leans forward and sniffs. He suavely nods approval.

EDDIE (V.O.)

Of course, we started up again.

INT. LINDY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Eddie is making out with her on her couch.

EDDIE (V.O.)

Her place...

INT. EDDIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

EDDIE (V.O.)

My place...

The place has been seriously transformed. Of course, it's nothing but a renovated tenement, but there are some new furnishings, rugs, lighting-- the total effect is now one of stylish prosperity.

She and Eddie sit on the rug in front of the coffee table, drinking expensive wine.

INT. THE BACK SEAT OF A CAB - NIGHT

Eddie and Lindy, dressed to the nines, are clearly returning from a fancy party... and passionately entwined, at the point of having hot sex, driver or no driver!

EDDIE (V.O.)

Every place.

INT. EDDIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lindy is in bed; Eddie stands, naked, at the window, looking out.

LINDY  
What are you doing, hon?

EDDIE  
Nothing.

LINDY  
Why do you keep looking out there?

He walks back over to her, looks down. She is snuggled up in Eddie's pillow, looking very pretty and vulnerable.

LINDY  
What, you think somebody's stalking you?

EDDIE  
No.

EDDIE (V.O.)  
It was only half a lie. I wasn't sure.

LINDY  
Is there anything you want to tell me, Eddie? Now's the time.

He looks back at her, eyes unreadable. He shrugs.

EDDIE  
With success comes enemies.

LINDY  
Old Chinese proverb?

EDDIE  
No proverb. An inevitability.

LINDY  
You should sleep. Isn't your Van Loon meeting tomorrow?

Eddie nods, sighs, turns away from the window. Then stops. He turns pale. Is sweating.

LINDY  
What. What.

Eddie takes a step. And suddenly...

*He's across the room.*

Boom. A skip in time.

EDDIE (V.O.)

Then... I found myself at the door.  
With no consciousness that I had  
moved.

He puts his hand on a table, steadies himself.

He catches a look, in the mirror, of this lean, handsome,  
dapper shark he has become.

EDDIE (V.O.)

It was only then that I realized... I  
hadn't eaten in three days.

LINDY

Are you all right?

EDDIE

I will be.

He hopes.

INT. THE ORPHEUS ROOM - NIGHT

Eddie sits at a table, discreetly wolfing a few appetizers.  
Kevin Doyle arrives, looking a little nervous.

KEVIN

Hey.

He sits, launches in.

KEVIN

He'll be here in ten. Now look,  
since we have a minute, be warned:  
Van Loon's mercurial. One minute  
your best friend, the next...you're a  
leper. And he needs direct  
answers... anything tentative and  
you've lost him forever. I think we  
should rehearse a few scenarios..

EDDIE

I'm *eating*, Kevin.

There is so much quiet authority in Eddie's tone that Kevin just shuts up. But a moment later, looking at the sweat on Eddie's brow, Kevin is pecking at him again.

KEVIN

You up for this? You sure? Because I've got a little bit on the line here--

EDDIE

Have a toast point.

Brazening it out again. Because Eddie isn't sure he can pull this off either.

ACROSS THE ROOM - LATER

There is that little stir from the hostess and staff that can only mean the entrance of a very rich and powerful man...

The BARTENDER eyes the flurry, instantly stops what he's doing, and starts mixing another drink.

EDDIE'S TABLE - LATER

The martini is put down on the table. We tilt up to CARL VAN LOON, a young 50, no less vital and intense than the hungriest 27-year-old shark on the make. But he affects geniality. He sits; the middle-aged man with him, PIERCE, does the same.

VAN LOON

So. Eddie Spinola.

He looks Eddie directly in the eyes.

VAN LOON

What's your secret?

A beat. Eddie looks at him back, directly in the eyes.

EDDIE

Medication. I'm on special medication.

Another beat. And Van Loon laughs. Pierce doesn't.

ANOTHER ANGLE - LATER - THAT NIGHT

Eddie is in mid-spiel, Van Loon listening intently.

EDDIE

--Yes, that's partially what I'm saying--

PIERCE

(contemptuously)

*Pattern recognition?* So that's your snake-oil? Look, if there's one thing we all understand, it's *understanding itself* -- that's how the business works...

(scoffing)

*Pattern recognition. Please.*

EDDIE

(pointedly)

Of course, not everyone can *understand* the patterns.

Kevin sucks in his breath. Pierce is annoyed. Van Loon mildly amused, but not necessarily impressed. Eddie continues with his unstoppable, MDT-fueled insights:

EDDIE

Look, there's no time for human judgement anymore. You see a chance, you blink, and it's gone. We are entering the age of decentralized, online decision-making, with the decisions being made by hundreds of millions of individual investors around the world, people making a killing in less time than it takes to sneeze, but without consulting each other. So it's not understanding how companies work. It's understanding how *mass psychology* works.

PIERCE

(scoffing)

And you have a formula.

KEVIN

(mediating)

Well, from 12 thousand to one point two million in six days--

EDDIE

Yes. I do have a formula, Mr. Pierce.

PIERCE  
 (snorting)  
 Delusions of grandeur.

EDDIE  
 I don't have delusions of grandeur.

A beat, as we PUSH IN on Eddie's face.

EDDIE  
 I have an actual *recipe* for grandeur.

Kevin stares in horror. Van Loon still says nothing.

EXT. THE ORPHEUS ROOM - NIGHT

Eddie simply stands there coolly; Kevin is nervously saying goodbye to Van Loon and Pierce, making small talk.

KEVIN  
 ..and, oh, you know, she's on the  
 wait list... Rosemary's pretty  
 devastated...

VAN LOON  
 My daughter went there. I'll call  
 the school for you.

Kevin blubbers with gratitude. Van Loon's car pulls up.  
 Kevin pumps his hand. Van Loon looks past Kevin -- to Eddie.

VAN LOON  
 Eddie. Ride?

It's the first real acknowledgement that he's taken Eddie seriously.

INT. VAN LOON'S LIMO - MOVING - NIGHT

Eddie and Van Loon regard each other. Finally, Van Loon speaks.

VAN LOON  
 I don't know who you are, Eddie, or  
 what your game is, but I'm sure of  
 one thing: you don't work in this  
 business. I'm up to my ass in  
 business graduates, and you don't  
 have their half-cocky, half-terrified  
 line of bullshit. Which is not to  
 say I like yours any better.



He picks up a file, hands it to Eddie.

VAN LOON

But you obviously pick your stocks in a way I haven't seen. So tell me. We're thinking of acquiring these companies. Take a few minutes. What's your take on them?

EXT. EDDIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Van Loon's limo pulls up.

INT. VAN LOON'S LIMO - NIGHT

Eddie snaps the file shut, hands Van Loon back his pen flashlight.

EDDIE

But these companies aren't the question, are they?

VAN LOON

What do you mean?

EDDIE

Well -- your company has no use for a Broadband outfit -- unless it's a component for part of a larger whole that encompasses media.. so there's a missing puzzle piece...

Van Loon's gaze is expressionless.

EDDIE

...another half of a global entity which a company like this would benefit.

(beat, whistles)

This must be some massive merger you're contemplating.

A flicker in Van Loon's eyes. Bullseye.

EDDIE

And there's really only one entity large enough to justify a merger with Van Loon Associates, and not merely be another one of your acquisitions...

VAN LOON  
Have you been talking to somebody-?

EDDIE  
Carl, it's just rationalization.

He says it like it's the simplest thing in the world. Which, to a person on MDT, it is. Van Loon grinds his teeth. Wanting to talk about it, but too skittish.

EDDIE  
Is Hank Atwood going to go for it?

A long beat.

VAN LOON  
You are either an amazing con artist or a very smart man.

EDDIE  
Is he?

A beat as the two men stare at each other.

VAN LOON  
You realize that if the press got one whisper of -- I can't fucking believe I'm even discussing this --

EDDIE  
It doesn't matter. It won't come off.

Now Van Loon chuckles, amused by Eddie's audacity.

VAN LOON  
The word "brazen" does not even begin to go there.

EDDIE  
But it could come off. If you back off Mexico.

VAN LOON  
What do you mean?

Eddie suddenly pulls back the bait.

EDDIE  
I don't think you'd want to hear about it from some shmuck who needs a ride home.

VAN LOON  
You're a gusty little prick, Eddie.

EDDIE  
Ooh. Now you're curious.

VAN LOON  
Yeah. I must admit. You've hit a couple pretty big buttons. Go on. Tell me what you think.

EDDIE  
(dismissive)  
It's getting late.

Van Loon laughs.

VAN LOON  
All right. You get your shot. Come to my office, tomorrow at ten, and tell me just exactly how the schmuck who needs the ride would re-structure this deal.

Eddie nods.

VAN LOON  
And you better be prepared.

EDDIE  
I'm at your disposal.

Eddie opens the car door. Van Loon eyes his building, scoffs.

VAN LOON  
You don't really live here...?

Eddie smiles.

EDDIE  
The Spartans weren't big on amenities.

VAN LOON  
Yes. And they eventually got their asses kicked.

He gets out. Van Loon drives off.

EXT. EDDIE'S BLOCK - NIGHT

EDDIE (V.0.)  
I didn't go in.

Eddie keeps walking by his building.

EDDIE (V.0.)  
I wanted to walk, move, digest,  
ingest...

His stride picks up, buoyantly.

EDDIE (V.0.)  
There are moments in life, moments  
when you know you've crossed a  
bridge. You're over the moat, your  
old life is over. Van Loon was my  
bridge. One week, two weeks from  
now, I would be eating in restaurants  
with ambassadors, cardinals,  
C.E.O.'s, network anchormen. I would  
be flying to Japan for meetings,  
vacationing in Medici villas.  
Sitting in my soon-to-be ex-apartment  
was not an option.

He steps off the curb.

EDDIE (V.0.)  
Suddenly...

A SHARP, JARRING  
CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSTON STREET - NIGHT

Eddie is stepping off another curb, God knows where.

EDDIE (V.0.)  
There was another skip.

He stops, rocked.

EDDIE (V.0.)  
How had I gone that last 20 blocks?  
I didn't know. I got another ten...

ON EDDIE WALKING...

EDDIE (V.0.)  
... then...

...in mid-step...

EXT. UPPER 5TH AVENUE - NIGHT

Eddie is walking past the Metropolitan Museum.

EDDIE (V.0.)  
I was back uptown. What had happened  
in the interim...?

A SHARP, JARRING  
CUT TO:

INT. A CLUB - NIGHT

Eddie is suddenly sitting at a bar, picking up a drink,  
people around him...

EDDIE (V.0.)  
What bar was this? Was it Harlem...?

A SHARP, JARRING  
CUT TO:

Eddie is dancing with a BEAUTIFUL BLACK WOMAN...

EDDIE (V.0.)  
Same bar? Different bar? How long  
had passed...?

He breaks away from her, starts for the door...

A SHARP, JARRING  
CUT TO:

INT. A CLUB LADIES ROOM - NIGHT

Eddie comes to in the act of banging THE BEAUTIFUL BLACK  
WOMAN savagely, against the stall door.

EDDIE (V.0.)  
And it happened again--

A SHARP, JARRING  
CUT TO:

EXT. HARLEM STREET IN FRONT OF BAR

Bam! A LARGE BLACK MAN crumples in front of Eddie -- goes down, hit, blood pouring from his nose. (Could he be the boyfriend of the girl Eddie's just banged?) Eddie stares at his bloody fist. It hurts--!

EDDIE (V.O.)  
And again...

INT. A LOFT - NIGHT

EDDIE (V.O.)  
And again...

Eddie sits on a plush sofa with several MIDDLE-AGED INTERNATIONAL TYPES, some chattering in Italian. He has a drink in his hand. There are paintbrushes, paints and canvasses strewn around... a live/work space...

EDDIE (V.O.)  
And again...

A SHARP, JARRING  
CUT TO:

(And now the images are speeding up:)

INT. A HOTEL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Eddie is walking down the plush corridor with an ATTRACTIVE MIDDLE-AGED LATIN WOMAN we saw at the artist's loft...

Now it's just FLASHES -- skimming stones of consciousness-- A WINE CORK being popped. A PLATE OF MUSSELS swimming in wine sauce. Ruffled SHEETS. And then...A BLUR OF MOTION -- bodies, a swirl of riotous color -- A FRENZY OF SHOTS: A CAB STOPPING. A GARGOYLE ON A BUILDING. A DOG LEASH ABANDONED IN A PUDDLE.

No rhyme, no reason, just image, image, image...

And then blackness.

EXT. THE BROOKLYN BRIDGE - DAWN

Eddie is walking, now with a limp.

EDDIE (V.0.)

When it finally stopped, I was on the  
Brooklyn Bridge. Would I ever know  
why?

He stops. Looks back. The familiar postcard view of  
Manhattan is ahead of him, looking like it always looks.

EDDIE (V.0.)

I only knew that I couldn't account  
for the last eight hours of my life.  
I had a limp.

His foot hurts when he puts it down.

EDDIE (V.0.)

There was nothing to do but walk  
home.

He turns around and limps back towards the island.

INT. EDDIE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Eddie is sleeping in all his clothes.

EDDIE (V.0.)

It was my first sleep in two days.

INT. EDDIE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Eddie, looking very groggy, is holding a THICK PACKET marked  
"Van Loon Associates, - BY COURIER." The files Carl Van Loon  
sent. Sitting on the dining table is an MDT tablets. He  
stares at them.

EDDIE (V.0.)

Should I take it? Would I start  
"skipping time" again?

He doesn't take it.

ANOTHER ANGLE - TIME CUT

Eddie is sitting in his reading chair, exhausted, going  
through the paperwork.

EDDIE (V.0.)

Even off MDT, I decided to give Van  
Loon's files a shot.

VAN LOON'S FILES - CLOSE

Eddie leafs through them... pieces of paper charting corporate growth, covered with charts, graphs, and mind-numbing statistics. PUSH IN ON Eddie's face, as he realizes...

EDDIE (V.O.)

They were incomprehensible.

INT. A WALL STREET OFFICE - DAY

The phone rings. Kevin Doyle picks it up.

KEVIN

Hello--? Eddie--? What are you talking about?

And we CROSS-CUT between them:

EDDIE

I can't make the meeting, I'm, uh... I'm sick.

It's a lame excuse, it sounds lame as he says it, but then, he's off MDT.

KEVIN

Yeah, well, you can't have some fucking flu right now -- he'll never give you this chance again!

EDDIE

I need to, ah, analyze the data--

We see the two men continue to talk, Kevin growing more agitated, Eddie growing more sheepish as we HEAR:

EDDIE (O.S.)

Already I recognized it... the thick tongue, the uncooperative synapses, frozen at the simplest question. It was regular Eddie, the Eddie of the Dark Ages, an Eddie that I couldn't imagine having been for all those years, and an Eddie that was nearly unbearable to be now.

We FADE UP THE SOUND on the two men:



KEVIN

... Don't you get it?! This is your test--!

EDDIE

Well, I can't pass a fucking test right now!

KEVIN

And how am I going to look if you don't?

Eddie looks pretty bad. He massages his temples.

EDDIE

Okay, Kevin. Okay.

He hands up on a still-yammering Doyle. He picks up the MDT pill, looks at it.

EDDIE (V.O.)

It was my first morning off MDT in a month. The beginnings of a headache began to curl around my head like a fat, greasy python.

Again, he looks at the MDT tablet, weighing his options.

EDDIE (V.O.)

But the time-skips had me scared.

He puts the tablet back down on the table.

INT. THE REGENCY HOTEL RESTAURANT - DAY

Eddie walks in, much more tentative in his stride, fear in his eyes.

EDDIE (V.O.)

Kevin had made it clear -- I'd just have to brazen it out.

This is the real Eddie, the non-MDT Eddie and he feels suddenly out of place with the curly maple paneling antique Persian carpets.

INT. BAR AREA - DAY

Eddie sits on a couch, Pierce on another chair, Van Loon opposite, watching him.

EDDIE (V.O.)

My thought -- such as I had one --  
was to tap dance with Van Loon until  
I could find out more about MDT.

VAN LOON

What do you know about Hank Atwood?

EDDIE

Uh... iconoclast... owns, um, a ball  
team...

He's struggling.

VAN LOON

Uh-huh. So this is "prepared,"  
Eddie?

He shoots Eddie a look of withering contempt. Eddie holds  
the stare and shoots a look back.

EDDIE

What is this, Atwood 101? Everyone  
knows about Atwood.

VAN LOON

Where was he two years ago?

A flicker in Eddie's eyes. What's the right answer?

EDDIE

Nowhere.

An agonizing pause. Then Van Loon nods.

VAN LOON

Two years ago Forbes didn't even have  
him on the radar.

EDDIE

Yeah, his Great Leap Forward.

Eddie is faking it. Pierce is looking at him intently. But  
Eddie's staying afloat.

VAN LOON

The guy comes on, out of nowhere, so  
fucking strong he has me on the run.  
Beat me out of two properties,  
invests in bumfuck countries the  
commies just got out of, places I  
wouldn't go near, sextuples his  
money.

Eddie's glance flicks to the TV behind the bar. A WOMAN'S PICTURE flashes on the TV screen -- and he recognizes it. It's the Italian woman he has memory flashes of having met last night!

VAN LOON

...Always picks the right technologies, invests in them, and a year later he owns them.

Eddie strains to hear the ANCHORWOMAN'S VOICE...

ANCHORWOMAN

... found dead in her hotel room last night, victim of foul play.

Eddie tries to keep his face immobile. Van Loon's voice drones on, distorted now, as we HEAR Eddie's heart pounding.

VAN LOON

...100 billion if he has a nickel... and I have to convince him, somehow, that *I* can raise his game.

ANCHORWOMAN

An unidentified eyewitness has reported seeing a man with a limp leaving the scene. Anyone with information should contact local law enforcement authorities. --Steve?

Eddie bolts upright.

VAN LOON

So what is all this about fucking Mexico?

Eddie is pale, sweaty, faint. There's only one thing to do:

EDDIE

Excuse me.

Eddie dashes out. Van Loon and Pierce look at each other.

EXT. THE REGENCY - NIGHT

Eddie bursts from the door, VOMITS into the gutter.

EDDIE (V.O.)

*I couldn't have.*

He leans against a street sign, trying to right himself. He gasps for breath.

EDDIE (V.O.)  
...or could I?

INT. EDDIE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Eddie comes in, breathing wildly, panicked.

EDDIE (V.O.)  
If I could walk, talk, conduct  
business, seduce a woman, fight --  
without really remembering... could I  
kill someone? Was it even me? *Who*  
*was I?*

Immediately the PHONE RINGS. He nearly jumps out of his skin. He can't answer. He sits on the couch, head in his hands, rocking, as he counts the rings...

Finally, the machine picks up.

MELISSA'S VOICE  
Hi, Eddie... it's Melissa.

Eddie freezes.

MELISSA'S VOICE  
Look, um... Vern wasn't... *giving* you  
anything, was he...? Because that  
stuff -- that MDT-whatever -- it's  
really, really dangerous-- I mean,  
you don't know how dangerous--

Eddie picks up the phone.

EDDIE  
Melissa--?

MELISSA  
(surprised he picked up)  
Eddie--?

EDDIE  
Melissa, I want to talk to you.  
Please. Meet me somewhere...

MELISSA  
No. I can't--

EDDIE

Across the street. At two.

MELISSA

You can't see me, Eddie.

EDDIE

Please. Melissa -- you have to tell me what you're talking about!

But she's already hung up.

CLOSE ON - EDDIE'S DRESSER DRAWER - DAY

Eddie's hands rummage through everything...

EDDIE (V.0.)

It occurred to me that there were other people who might know about MDT...

His hands find what they're looking for. Vernon's LITTLE BLACK BOOK.

EDDIE (V.0.)

Vernon's other clients.

INT. EDDIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Eddie sits on the bed, the little black book open on his knees. Eddie looks at the page, then reaches for the telephone. Picks it up. Hears STRANGE CLICKS over the dial tone. Puts down the phone, fear on his face.

EDDIE (V.0.)

It was probably paranoia. But I didn't like it.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - DAY

Eddie walks, slipping through the crowd, trying to suppress his limp... he looks nervously behind him... is that MAN in the TAN RAINCOAT following him?

He tries to walk faster, but it makes his limp more pronounced.

He turns the corner. He seems to have lost the guy.

EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK - DAY

Eddie sits on a park bench, making calls on his cell phone.

EDDIE

Hello, may I speak to Paul Kaplan,  
please?

WOMAN'S VOICE

(suspicious)

Who is this?

EDDIE

I'm a journalist. From Electronics  
Today magazine.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Look... my husband died three days  
ago.

Eddie is floored.

EDDIE

I'm... I'm so sorry. Goodbye.

SMASH CUT TO:

Eddie has dialled another number.

EDDIE

I, ah, may I speak to Jerry Brady?

MALE VOICE

Jerry's in -- who's this?

EDDIE

A friend.

MALE VOICE

Jerry's in the hospital...  
(voice quaking)  
...and he's really sick.

EDDIE

Oh my God. What's wrong with him?

## MALE VOICE

We don't know. He just started getting these headaches a couple of weeks ago...? Then, uh, last Wednesday he collapsed at work...

## SMASH CUT TO:

Eddie turns to the last page of Vernon's book.

## EDDIE (V.O.)

It was the same story every time. Of the people I called, three were dead, and the remainder were sick.

Eddie dials the last number.

Instantly, there is a RING.

We RACK FOCUS TO--

The MAN in the TAN COAT, sitting a discreet distance from Eddie. *His phone is ringing.*

Eddie turns white.

The man takes out his cell phone and answers.

## MAN'S VOICE

Hello...? Hello...?

The man suddenly looks up.

*Locks eyes with Eddie.* Knows that he knows.

Eddie leaps up, begins to run.

The man leaps up and follows.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - DAY

Eddie runs as fast, as desperately, as he can.

## EDDIE (V.O.)

Off MDT, my body was in molasses.

He still has the limp from his blackout escapade, too. He can't run fast.

Tan Coat is gaining.

Eddie collides with pedestrians, steps on street sunglass displays, sends a saxophonist sprawling.

Tan Coat is gaining.

EDDIE (V.0.)

In the end, my stupidity saved me.

Eddie, panicked, not looking, runs for the crosswalk.

EDDIE (V.0.)

No New Yorker with his faculties  
intact steps off the curb against the  
light.

EDDIE'S POV - A HUGE TRUCK

is barrelling, unstoppably, right towards him--!

EDDIE

is frozen. The TRUCK SWERVES, up on the curb. Tan Coat must dive out of the way, knocking down pedestrians like bowling pins, as the TRUCK hits a STREETLIGHT, mangling it -- then is WHACKED -- twice -- by TWO CABS piling up behind it.

When Tan Coat extracts himself from the pile of prone pedestrians, his last glimpse is of--

EDDIE - DOWN THE BLOCK

disappearing down into a Subway entrance. Swallowed by a crowd.

TAN COAT

hesitates, but knows that he can't catch up. Eddie's given him the slip. This time.

INT. CHARLIE'S COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Eddie, limping, enters, looking around anxiously.

EDDIE (V.0.)

What was I dealing with? Who could  
tell me? I hoped against hope...  
that Melissa would show.

EDDIE'S POV - SCANNING THE PLACE

Not one person in it could possibly be Melissa.



EDDIE (V.O.)  
But she didn't.

Eddie turns to go.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)  
Eddie...?

Eddie turns back. There, sitting at a booth, is a rather thick-waisted, short-haired brunette middle-aged woman, wearing a large, shapeless sweater.

Eddie had looked right at her... and not recognized her. She bears no relationship to the siren Melissa of his memories.

Eddie tries to hide the shock on his face.

EDDIE  
Melissa...?

He goes to her, sits. Yes, it's the same person, but dramatically, tragically changed. Her face is puffy, her pallor blotchy. There are lines under her eyes and around her mouth, lines brought on by more than the passage of a few years.

Eddie tries to conceal his shock.

EDDIE  
You... how are you doing?

Melissa responds with a cynical shrug. Then, she eyes him.

MELISSA  
Don't tell me I look good, because I know I don't. I didn't want you to see me this way...  
(beat)  
You look good.

EDDIE  
I, uh... I lost some weight.

MELISSA  
Yeah, well, MDT'll do that to you.

They regard each other for minute, unsure of where to start. Old emotions. New emotions. Shock. Dismay. Affection.

MELISSA  
I know you've been doing it. I just read the Post. Eddie.  
(MORE)

Short-selling stocks? Second-guessing the markets? You? Come on.

Eddie doesn't know what to say.

EDDIE

Since when do you read the Post?

MELISSA

These days, the Post's about all I can read.

EDDIE

Melissa, what do you know about all this?

Melissa looks him right in the eyes.

MELISSA

MDT is lethal. Or can be. I know what I'm talking about. And I only took nine or ten hits.

EDDIE

When was this?

MELISSA

Vernon didn't tell you any of this, did he?

EDDIE

No.

Melissa snorts as if to say, typical.

MELISSA

Well, when he told me about this amazing new drug... I was like, down the hatch. And it was amazing. I read Brian Greene's *The Elegant Universe* in 45 minutes and *understood* it. My work rate increased tenfold overnight. My boss started to hate me -- they offered me his job. And then I got scared.

EDDIE

Why?

MELISSA

I'm not stupid. I knew no one could maintain that level of mental activity for very long and survive. I stopped taking it.

EDDIE

And...?

MELISSA

I started getting sick. Headaches, nausea. I went back to Vernon to see if I maybe shouldn't take another hit, or half a hit, and then he told me about... about the people who were dying. One guy didn't die, but he's a vegetable, his mother has to sponge him down every day...

(beat)

How much have you been taking, Eddie?

A long beat as they look into each other's eyes.

EDDIE

A lot.

MELISSA

Well, maybe they've worked out the bugs. Maybe... maybe this isn't the same batch...

Eddie hates the look in her eyes. His hands are at his temples.

MELISSA

You're off it right now, aren't you?

EDDIE

Yeah.

MELISSA

Are you getting a headache?

EDDIE

Finish your story.

MELISSA

Well, I didn't take more. And I didn't die. But after a while I found I couldn't concentrate on anything for longer than ten minutes. I missed deadlines. I got lazy and sluggish... put on weight... my memory was shot to bits. The magazine let me go. The marriage fell apart. Sex? Get out of here.

She leans back, looks him in the eyes.

MELISSA

That was four years ago, and I haven't been the same since. I can't read any more -- I mean, the fucking New York Post?

Eddie feels ill, physically ill, hearing this.

MELISSA

I also can't deal with stressful or emotional situations. I'm wired up, now, from seeing you, but after this, I'm going to have a migraine for three days. And I've got to pee. Which is another thing.

She gets up... goes into the Ladies Room. Eddie watches after her. We HOLD on Eddie's face...

EDDIE (V.O.)

How many times had I thought of her, over the years, the beautiful, shining Melissa of my youth...

We see FLASHES OF YOUNG MELISSA...

EDDIE (V.O.)

But that Melissa had unraveled in time and space and was a ghost now. I was never going to see her again, never bump into her in the street...

The tears gather behind Eddie's eyes. He can't help it. He puts his hand to his face to hide his emotions.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Eddie leaves with Melissa. He is controlling his tears -- barely.

MELISSA

You have some left? Good. Go home and take it. Take the dose down, but don't just stop -- that's what I did. Maybe you can taper off. Otherwise... the headache's just the beginning... I have to go--

Eddie, indeed, is rubbing his temples.

EDDIE

But when I run out--

MELISSA

I don't know. I have to go--

Eddie catches her arm.

EDDIE

Who invented MDT?

MELISSA

I don't know--

EDDIE

Do the police know? Did the police say they found any link between Vernon's murder and--?

MELISSA

No. They just assumed it was a coke thing.

EDDIE

Like our marriage?

She sees the look on Eddie's face.

MELISSA

I didn't mean it, Eddie.

Eddie looks into her eyes.

EDDIE

It wasn't a coke thing.

MELISSA

No.

A wisp of a smile between them. There had been something between them after all.

But there's nothing now.

MELISSA

Goodbye.

Eddie lets go of her arm. A middle-aged, puffy woman about to cry. She turns her back and moves away from him, stiffly, without looking back.

EXT. EDDIE'S POV - HIS APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Eddie stands in a doorway, looking at his building.

EDDIE (V.O.)

I was getting sicker by the minute.  
Did I dare go in and get my pill?

He looks around. No one seems to be there. Suddenly --

WHAM! He's pushed up against the wall of his building.

Not by Tan Coat.

By GENNADY THE RUSSIAN.

GENNADY

You fucking forget about me? Huh?

Eddie is stunned -- Gennady whacked his head against the building pretty hard. He still clutches the MDT tablet tight in his fist.

EDDIE

I... I... ahh...

GENNADY

One o'clock? And you not here?!

Eddie tries to catch his breath.

EDDIE

I'm here now!

INT. EDDIE'S LIVING ROOM - ON THE DOOR

The MDT pill is in the foreground, sitting, waiting for Eddie on the table. In the background, we see Eddie and Gennady come in.

EDDIE

I'll get you a check.

Gennady turns to ice.

GENNADY

A check? A check?! You out of your  
fucking mind?! What you think we  
are, some *financial institution*?

Eddie realizes his brain isn't working -- of course Gennady can't take a check.

EDDIE

Gennady, look--

GENNADY

I cut your balls off!

EDDIE

I wasn't thinking. Look, we just need to go to my bank--

OOF! Gennady has punched him in the stomach. Harder than he's ever been punched.

While Eddie is reeling, staggering from this, Gennady's eye falls on the LITTLE WHITE PILL on the table.

GENNADY

What's that?

Eddie is gasping for breath.

EDDIE

Aspirin.

Eddie tries to reach for it. Gennady catches his arm.

GENNADY

Don't look like no aspirin I ever see!

His voice drips with crude contempt.

GENNADY

What is it? Something good, eh?

In one swift motion, Gennady grabs the pill, puts it in his mouth, and swallows it!!!

Eddie is mute with shock.

INT. A BANK - CLOSE ON

Eddie's shaking hands are handing Gennady a thick envelope. Eddie looks desperately ill. He can barely stand.

Gennady, meanwhile, is coming on to MDT.

GENNADY

I feel good. What in that shit?

EDDIE

Aspirin and vitamins--

GENNADY

You fucking full of shit, Spinola. I  
be back Tuesday. Price went up, ten  
thousand for wasting my time today.

He wants to hit Eddie again, but thinks the better of it with  
all the bank cameras.

THE MONITOR --

We see Gennady give the camera a gay little wave, then turn  
and walk out.

EXT. THE STREET - DAY

Eddie lurches along the street, staggering like a drunk,  
barely able to walk. People avoid him, veering away.

EDDIE (V.O.)

I wasn't going to make it home. But  
someone was near... someone who could  
help me...

INT. LINDY'S OFFICE - DAY

Lindy clearly has a mid-level executive job; her office is  
better than a cubicle, and she has a bit of a view. There is  
a KNOCK. A FEMALE ASSISTANT appears in the door.

FEMALE ASSISTANT

Lindy...? I wouldn't have let him  
in, but I know you know him...

EDDIE appears in the door, looking deathly ill.

LINDY

It's all right, Lisa.

The girl goes. Lindy, sensing something dire, leaps up and  
closes the door.

Eddie immediately collapses on the floor. Lindy sinks to her  
knees, panicked.

LINDY

Eddie--! Eddie, what is it--! I'm  
calling a doctor--

EDDIE

No!



LINDY  
Oh, Jesus Christ, Eddie -- *is this*  
*drugs?!*

EDDIE  
Not what you think--

He grabs his head and groans. He looks so bad, so truly ill,  
that she can't get as mad as she'd like.

LINDY  
What, are you telling me, all this  
energy of yours, all this focus...  
has been some fucking DRUG?

EDDIE  
I'm sick, Lindy...

She looks down at him.

LINDY  
Oh, fuck. Oh Christ. What am I  
supposed to do--?!

EDDIE  
I have to get more.

LINDY  
I don't want to hear about this--!  
Go to a doctor--!

EDDIE  
Doctors can't handle this! They  
don't know this stuff! They don't  
know what it does--!!

Eddie's PHONE rings. He and Lindy look at each other. He  
answers it.

EDDIE  
Hello?

INT. VALERIE (HIS LANDLADY'S) APARTMENT - DAY

Valerie is on the phone. And we CROSS-CUT BETWEEN THEM:

VALERIE  
What the hell are you doing up there?

EDDIE  
W-what?

There are, indeed, LOUD NOISES coming from above her.

VALERIE

Are you tearing up your floor or something?!

Understanding in Eddie's pained eyes. He clicks off the phone.

EDDIE (V.O.)

I knew what was going on.

INT. EDDIE'S APARTMENT - A SERIES OF QUICK SHOTS - DAY

MALE HANDS are ripping the place to pieces. Pulling the toilet from the wall. Cutting open the mattress. Taking apart Eddie's computer.

INT. LINDY'S OFFICE - DAY

LINDY

...a smart drug...?

EDDIE

It was supposed to be legal.

LINDY

Oh, Eddie... you fucking jerk.

EDDIE

I have a supply -- stashed --

LINDY

(knows what's coming)

No.

EDDIE

Lindy... I'm sick. Can you go--? Can you get it for me--?

LINDY

Why?! WHY WOULD I DO THAT?!

EDDIE

Because I could die.

LINDY

So I'm supposed to just GO?! In the middle of a work day?! To your APARTMENT to get you more DRUGS?

INT. EDDIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

The MALE HANDS have found Eddie's hiding place. They LIFT the old BROILER of the STOVE...

...and *the MDT is not there.*

The broiler is slammed closed down in anger.

INT. LINDY'S OFFICE - DAY

EDDIE

Not to my apartment. I moved it.

LINDY

You did--? Why?!

EDDIE

I was smart. I was on MDT.

LINDY

Then where did you keep it--?

He looks at her, guiltily.

LINDY

Oh, you prick.

INT. LINDY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Lindy enters. Tense, panicked. She walks to a SQUARE END TABLE, takes the lamp off it. The table is actually a box -- she lifts the lid.

She reaches in... and pulls out the PACKET OF MDT.

LINDY

You asshole... *in my fucking HOUSE?!*

Furious, she stuffs it into her purse and goes for the door.

EXT. LINDY'S BUILDING - DAY

As she leaves, we see that we are in the POV of...

A MAN

across the street. He clicks open a CELL PHONE.

INT. LINDY'S OFFICE - DAY

There is a KNOCK on the DOOR. Lying on the floor, trying to breathe, Eddie ignores it. His PHONE rings again. It takes a lot of effort just to answer it.

EDDIE

Hi -- Have you got it?

And we CROSS-CUT BETWEEN:

INT. A MOVING CAB - DAY

Lindy is on the phone. Her voice is tense, terrified.

LINDY

Yes. --Eddie, there's someone following me.

EDDIE

Are you sure?

LINDY

He got into the cab behind me, and they're making every turn I'm making!

EDDIE

Don't get out.

LINDY

What the fuck did you put me in the middle of--?! I'm calling the cops--

EDDIE

They'll confiscate it. I'll die.

LINDY

(panicking)

What am I supposed to do?-- --Oh God, we're in traffic, we're stopped dead. He's getting out, Eddie -- he's walking over here--

Eddie, helpless on the floor, can do nothing.

EDDIE

LINDY--!!!

EXT. FIFTH AVENUE - DAY

Lindy bolts from the cab just as TAN COAT puts his hand on the opposite door.

She takes off into Central Park.

And he's after her like a shot.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

Lindy veers off the path, through the trees, zig-zagging, trying to find a place not to be seen.

TAN COAT

Zig-zags too, not far behind her.

LINDY

Comes to a section of huge, decorative BOULDERS and ROCKS. Dives behind one of them.

Ahead, she can see the outdoor ICE SKATERS, couples, families, enjoying the ice. It seems surreal.

Several yards behind her is TAN COAT, looking behind every tree, every trash bin.

Lindy picks up the phone, keeping her voice low, although she's hyperventilating.

LINDY

Eddie, I'm hiding, but I'm stuck.  
He's going to find me!

And we CROSS-CUT BETWEEN:

INT. LINDY'S OFFICE - DAY

EDDIE

Okay, forget about me. Call the cops!

LINDY

It's too late!

Tan Coat pulls out a KNIFE.

LINDY  
He's going to kill me, Eddie!

EDDIE  
Listen to me. Can he see you?

LINDY  
(crying)  
You *fucking asshole*--

EDDIE  
Can he see you?!

LINDY  
Not yet. --I don't know what to do!  
What do I do--!

EDDIE  
There is something.

LINDY  
What?!

EDDIE  
Listen to me. Reach into the bag and  
take one of the pills.

LINDY  
S-swallow one of those things?!

EDDIE  
Yes.

Tan Coat is getting closer.

EDDIE  
You will know what do to, Lindy.  
Take one, and you'll know.

LINDY  
He's got a knife -- I can't think my  
way out of a knife--

EDDIE  
You'll come on in ten seconds. And  
yes, you will think your way out,  
that's what it does. Are you taking  
it--?

LINDY  
(a beat)  
Yes. --Oh God. He's so close.

EDDIE

Lindy. I know you never believed it,  
but... I do love you, Lindy.

(a beat)

--Lindy? Are you there? LINDY--!

A beat. We PUSH IN on Lindy's eyes. Which are changing.  
Growing more steely. Determined.

LINDY

Eddie...? I feel it.

She hangs up. Eddie is left looking at the phone.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

Tan Coat is perhaps five yards behind Lindy and getting  
closer. But she's not crying any more. She's looking at--

THE ICE SKATING RINK,

and the skaters, whirling across the ice.

LINDY'S

eyes flash. She knows what to do.

Suddenly, she BOLTS from her hiding place behind the rock,  
tearing down the hill as fast as she can.

Tan Coat is behind her like a shot.

EXT. THE ICE SKATING RINK - DAY

Lindy races down the hill, pushing past the line of people,  
and onto the ice...

Tan Coat is clearly desperate -- he doesn't give a shit who  
sees him chasing her. In a flash, he's on the ice after  
Lindy, running and sliding. People collide with him, he  
pushes skaters aside, sending them sprawling...

Just as he's closing in on Lindy...

Lindy wheels around, grabs a SIX YEAR OLD GIRL under the  
arms, and HOISTS HER INTO THE AIR, swinging her legs at Tan  
Coat as hard as she can!

The little girl's skates arc through the air -- whoosh! --  
and connect, CUTTING Tan Coat's FACE.

Badly.

He sinks to his knees, hand to his cheek, welling blood.

People scream and scatter.

Lindy keeps her wits about her. She runs, sliding across the ice, and leaping the fence, with surprising grace.

She's gone.

INT. LINDY'S OFFICE - DAY - ON EDDIE'S HAND - CLOSE

as an MDT pill is put into it.

A WIDER SHOT shows Eddie swallowing it with a glass of water.

LINDY

sits across the room, looking at him, her expression cool and composed.

They look at each other, a look of understanding. They both know what MDT is.

INT. W HOTEL - LOBBY - DAY

Eddie finishes checking in, Lindy beside him. He seems completely restored to his sharp, snappy self. The desk clerk gives him a key.

He puts his arm around her, leads her to the elevators.

INT. W HOTEL - ROOM - NIGHT

Eddie takes Lindy's hands, sits her on the bed.

EDDIE

I think it's best that we stay here  
for a couple of days. Obviously,  
now, we'll be able to think our way  
out of this.

He kisses her hands. Looks into her eyes.

EDDIE

I'm back. All right?

Lindy looks at him for a long moment.



LINDY  
Who's back, Eddie?

EDDIE  
I can take care of you. Of anything.  
(taking her hands)  
Listen to me. A lot's going to  
happen for us. And everything that I  
will have now... everything that I'm  
going to become... I will share with  
you.

She looks him right in the eyes. Drops his hands.

EDDIE  
What.

She gets up, turns away from him.

LINDY  
I understand that stuff now, Eddie.  
And I don't blame you for taking it.  
I could never have imagined, no  
matter what anyone told me, what it  
can do. It's... invincibility, isn't  
it? And I know that I will think  
about wanting to take it again every  
day for the rest of my life.

There's a matter-of-fact chill in her voice that Eddie hasn't  
heard before.

LINDY  
I just came up to say goodbye. I  
don't ever want to see you again.  
I'm not even going to stay in New  
York. I'm going back to Chicago.  
Don't try to find me, and don't try  
to help me.

She gets up, goes for the door.

LINDY  
It's your show now.

She goes. He knows there's no point in stopping her.

She's done with him.

EXT. W HOTEL - EDDIE'S WINDOW - DAY

Eddie's face looks down...

EXT. EDDIE'S POV - THE STREET

He sees Lindy briskly walking away.

RACK FOCUS as Lindy passes, GENNADY. Leaning against a sign post. Lighting a cigarette. And looking up at Eddie's hotel. Waiting.

EXT. W HOTEL - DAY

Gennady stands there, looking up at the hotel. So he's a little surprised to find EDDIE walking right up to him.

EDDIE  
Looking for me?

Gennady quickly gets aggressive:

GENNADY  
You think you can run out on me? You think I don't know where you are?

EDDIE  
My place was broken into. I can't stay there.

Something is jammed into Eddie's ribs. Something under Gennady's coat. Eddie doesn't blink.

GENNADY  
Walk.

Gennady walks him around the corner, down some stairs, to the (deserted) ground entrance of someone's apartment. Eddie remains cool.

EDDIE  
I'm under the impression our appointment's tomorrow.

GENNADY  
I want some more of that shit.

EDDIE  
What shit.

GENNADY  
The pills.

He whacks Eddie, hard, across the face. Eddie, stoic, on MDT, doesn't react.

EDDIE

Well, so do I. You took the last one.

GENNADY

So you get me more.

EDDIE

I can't get more -- the dealer's dead.

Now Gennady smiles.

GENNADY

Oh. Well. Too bad for you. Because how you gonna go to those fancy meetings with your nose fed to my dog?

Eddie doesn't like that Gennady knows anything about his business life. A beat.

EDDIE

I can make some calls.

GENNADY

One hundred pills.

EDDIE

A hundred can't happen. The dealer's dead, I have to call three people to even get a line on--

The gun barrel is brought up beneath Eddie's chin.

GENNADY

You know I don't really do this. So clean, like this. What I do to you, I do in stages.

EDDIE

I might... be able to get ten.

GENNADY

Ten. Fuck your ten.

EDDIE

(holding his ground)

Ten. And no guarantee there's more.

Gennady looks at him for a long, menacing moment.

GENNADY

Oh, I think guarantee.

But he's accepted the ten. For now.

He PUSHES Eddie against the wall, hard, knocking the wind out of him.

EDDIE (V.O.)

Self-pity and MDT were not compatible. One has to go on...

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - CLOSE ON - A SMALL ENVELOPE

being put into Gennady's hand. A wider shot reveals Eddie, watching Gennady with contempt as he grabs a fistful of nuts off a bar table as he goes. Pig.

EDDIE (V.O.)

...Patch up what's left...

INT. CARL VAN LOON'S OFFICE - DAY

VAN LOON

I won't deny you pissed me off, Eddie.

EDDIE

I was ill. I shouldn't have gone to the meeting. And I tried to cancel, but Kevin imploded on me--

Van Loon looks at Eddie penetratingly.

VAN LOON

I didn't know who or what I was talking to.

EDDIE

A hundred and five, is what you were talking to, Carl. Delirium.

VAN LOON

Look-- there can't be any instability -- not when you're playing at this level.

EDDIE

I sent over my revised projections for your merger.

VAN LOON  
I didn't ask for your projections.

EDDIE  
I know, but I think if you look at them--

VAN LOON  
I already have.

A long beat as the two men size each other up. Van Loon looks away, but a tiny smile creases the corner of his mouth.

VAN LOON  
As a matter of fact, there were firings over your projections.

EDDIE  
I'm sorry.

VAN LOON  
...some things my team missed. So, oddly enough, I find myself... needing to fill a position.

Eddie stays cool. He's in.

INT. VAN LOON CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

EDDIE (V.O.)  
Six weeks after I started MDT, I was helping broker the largest merger in corporate history.

Eddie sits with Van Loon, Pierce, and several POWERFUL-LOOKING MEN, conferring. They look at an elaborate chart/graph that Eddie is sketching... even Pierce, his detractor, looks impressed.

INT. W HOTEL - NIGHT

Eddie is eating a luxurious room service dinner, going through files and projections.

EDDIE (V.O.)  
I found that if I maintained an even dose... remembered to eat... drank no alcohol... the blackouts didn't recur.

Eddie shakes one MDT pill into his hand, downs it.

INT. LAYFAYETTE DAY TRADING - DAY

Eddie is back on the trading floor, a crowd around him.

EDDIE (V.O.)  
I was quickly back up to speed...

INT. A MADISON AVENUE TAILOR'S SHOP - DAY

Eddie is being fitted for new suits.

EDDIE (V.O.)  
I learned to think ahead, by several moves.

EDDIE  
Is it possible to construct an...  
imperceptible compartment?

TAILOR  
Certainly, sir. How large?

EDDIE  
Quite large.

The Tailor nods, makes a note. He's certainly not going to ask any questions.

EDDIE  
I would never again stash my MDT, not  
in an apartment, not in Fort Knox.

INT. EDDIE'S HOTEL BATHROOM - DAY

Eddie straightens his tie. Then opens his suit jacket, reaches in, and pulls along a seam. An invisible POCKET OPENS. He removes the plastic bag, takes a pill, and swallows it.

INT. A WINDOWLESS ROOM - DAY

Eddie, buzzing with charismatic authority, is speaking to TWO BEEFY MEN, who are professional muscle. (Note: one has very elaborate tattoos on his fingers.)

EDDIE  
I don't want it apparent that I have  
any security.  
(MORE)

You won't precede me, you'll follow me, never less than ten steps behind... 'inconspicuous' does not begin to describe you. You're not there. You're a CEO'S wife -- you're wallpaper.

The men nod. They understand.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Eddie is having lunch with several POWER PLAYERS. They are listening, mesmerized, to what Eddie is saying...

EDDIE (V.O.)

I would not go back. And I would not be stopped.

His eyes flicker upwards. His two SECURITY MEN are seated at the bar. The CAMERA PANS to find...

Also seated at the bar, is the DETECTIVE who questioned Eddie at the police station!

Eddie gets up, "casually" wanders over to where the detective is sitting, pretends to order another drink. He does not make eye contact with the detective, or look like he's talking to him.

EDDIE

I thought we straightened this out, Detective.

DETECTIVE

This isn't about Vernon Gant, Mr. Spinola.

Fear begins to prick the back of Eddie's neck. But he strives for casual annoyance.

EDDIE

What is it about?

The DETECTIVE hands Eddie a magazine.

THE NEW YORK DAILY NEWS - CLOSE

It is turned to the middle, and there is a picture of Eddie, candid, on the trading floor. That fucking article!

DETECTIVE

A witness identified the Donatella Alvarez suspect as this person.

(MORE)

DETECTIVE (cont'd)  
 You want to tell me about your  
 whereabouts on the night of June 12?

Eddie keeps his cool, does not look scared. Wanders back to the table, says a few cool words, and strolls back to the detective. The detective gets up. Shall we go?

EDDIE (V.O.)  
 Luckily, I could now afford Morris  
 Brandt, the best lawyer in New York.

EXT. POLICE PRECINCT - DAY

Eddie walks down the steps, with a beautifully dressed shark lawyer, MORRIS BRANDT, 50's.

EDDIE (V.O.)  
 Time was bought, and I was released --  
 for now.

Eddie's two SECURITY GUYS, waiting, fall into step ten paces behind him.

MORRIS BRANDT  
 You're lucky somebody wiped the room.  
 Weak circumstantial at best. Just  
 between us -- were you there?

EDDIE  
 I don't remember.

MORRIS BRANDT  
 (shrugs)  
 Busy life.

He's heard it all, and doesn't really care.

INT. CARL VAN LOON'S CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

EDDIE (V.O.)  
 Carl Van Loon and Hank Atwood  
 remained unaware that, Thursday next,  
 I would be in a witness lineup as a  
 possible murderer.

Eddie is making a presentation to the Van Loon Associates -- and a skeptical-looking OLDER GUY -- HANK ATWOOD.



EDDIE

...well, a unified front between Van Loon and Atwood would be lethally effective, and not a moment too soon.. SyCorps, Andine and others are jockeying for the same industrial concessions in Mexico that both our companies are secretly sniffing out...

HANK ATWOOD

How do you know this?

EDDIE

Well, the governmental bribe structure is, in itself, corrupt, so of course information about its inner workings, like anything, can be bought. And there are other barbarians waving cash at the gates. I have a list here, in descending order of threat...

Atwood rubs his temples, seemingly distracted. But then, he looks at Eddie piercingly.

ATWOOD

Go on.

INT. VAN LOON'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY

The meeting has broken up. Atwood is leaving, surrounded by minions. Van Loon leans into Eddie.

VAN LOON

Eddie...? What's your read.

EDDIE

It flew. Of course, he's not going to tell you right now...

Van Loon notices -- Atwood is using a cane.

VAN LOON

Jesus. He seems frail.

EDDIE

Might be an act.

VAN LOON

Yeah, doesn't track. He's not even 60.

Atwood's gone. Van Loon looks at Eddie.

VAN LOON

So, Eddie. What are you going to do?

EDDIE

When this is over?

(smiles)

I'll think of something.

VAN LOON

Will you? You haven't asked the question.

EDDIE

What question is that, Carl?

VAN LOON

If all this comes off... what your take is going to be.

Eddie smiles at him, cool and composed.

EDDIE

I guess I'm in your hands.

VAN LOON

Well, given the scale of your contribution, Eddie, it won't be anything less than forty... I don't know, say, forty-five.

Eddie shoots him a look.

EDDIE (V.O.)

I was new at this, but forty-five thousand seemed a little light.

Van Loon reads the look and laughs.

VAN LOON

*Million*, Eddie. That's forty-five million dollars.

INT. A HUGE, DELUXE EMPTY APARTMENT - (THE CELESTIAL) - DAY

Eddie is being shown the apartment by a thirty-something female REALTOR.

The apartment is still under construction -- brand new -- and enormous, with a wall of floor-to-ceiling windows in the living room showing off spectacular views.

REALTOR

... three restaurants, healthclub, of course, a private screening room, wine cellar, walk-in humidor... unparalleled, three-tier security system...

Eddie looks out over the city, feeling a surge. Yes.

EDDIE

What is the asking price?

REALTOR

Nine point five.

Eddie almost laughs. No problem! She scrutinizes him carefully for signs of sticker shock, but there are none. We see an almost sexual excitement dance in her eyes...

INT. EDDIE'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

EDDIE (V.O.)

It was, as it turned out, a good moment to move.

Eddie comes in. The room has been completely ripped to pieces -- just like Eddie's apartment.

Eddie just smiles. Because there was nothing for anyone to find.

EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK - DAY

EDDIE

No one knew, or would ever know, that I now carried the pills with me at all times.

Eddie stands, waiting, his two security guys lurking 10 steps behind.

GENNADY appears, now with TWO RUSSIAN THUGS of his own. This is new, and Eddie wasn't expecting it. Gennady's security guys eye Eddie's security guys, and vice versa. Gennady is wearing a suit and looks much more sophisticated.

Eddie hands Gennady a small envelope. Gennady takes it. In his eyes is a penetrating intelligence.

EDDIE (V.0.)

Right away, it was obvious he was on MDA.

Gennady whips out a silver lighter and lights himself a cigarette. His movements are elegant, refined.

GENNADY

Next week...? I require twenty pills.

EDDIE

Next week? You can fuck yourself.

(beat)

Not that you'll feel anything.

Gennady's eyebrow goes up. Gennady's security guys reach into their jackets. So do Eddie's guys. Gennady's eyes flick over the situation, motion to his guys to keep still.

Gennady laughs, an unpleasant sound.

GENNADY

I don't think your Forbes 400 new financial friends would appreciate the details of your little dilemma with the police?

Gennady turns with a flourish and walks off. Over his shoulder, with smug confidence:

GENNADY

Thursday. You have them here.

EDDIE (V.0.)

Fucking MDT. Made the blind see, the lame walk, and could give a crude, simian lower life form... a brain.

Gennady turns, walks to the curb, where a NEW BLACK TOWN CAR is waiting for him and his boys.

EDDIE (V.0.)

Obviously, this could not go on. But there is very little on this earth that 45 million dollars can't solve. And tomorrow at nine, Atwood would sign the papers.

INT. VAN LOON'S OFFICE - DAY

Eddie, Van Loon and associates are all waiting in the conference room. The clock on the wall reads 9:40. Van Loon looks glum. A long silence.

PIERCE

Well, you want to call it?

ASSOCIATE #1

Cold feet.

VAN LOON

There was all last night to tell us that.

Van Loon pushes the intercom.

VAN LOON

No call?

SECRETARY'S VOICE

Not yet.

EDDIE

Okay, the decision could have changed -- that makes sense -- but the discourtesy doesn't.

(beat)

It's still on.

PIERCE

(sarcastic)

Oh, based on your graphs and projections?

EDDIE

(calmly repeating)

I saw his eyes: it's on.

PIERCE

You know, remind me: who the fuck, exactly, are YOU?! --I'm sorry, Carl, I'm about at the end with this unqualified, posturing little--

VAN LOON

Pull it back, Pierce.

PIERCE

Since when this little pisher the fucking Delphi Oracle?!

VAN LOON

Pierce--

SECRETARY'S VOICE

(interrupting)

Mr. Van Loon, Mrs. Atwood is here.

Eddie and Van Loon look at each other. What?

Van Loon nods at Eddie; the two men get up. Pierce starts to get up too.

VAN LOON

Pierce, you can stay.

Pierce looks bitter -- chastened -- as Van Loon and Eddie go.

INT. CARL VAN LOON'S INNER OFFICE - DAY

Van Loon and Eddie enter, to find MRS. HANK ATWOOD, a well-dressed, well-preserved and beautiful 50, standing at Van Loon's desk.

MRS. ATWOOD

I wanted this to be as confidential  
as possible.

Van Loon and Eddie can't imagine what's coming next.

MRS. ATWOOD

My husband experienced some pain and  
dizziness this morning. He's at  
Lenox Hill, undergoing tests.

She speaks with great dignity, distraught, but tightly controlled.

MRS. ATWOOD

Obviously, it wouldn't be in our best  
interests for this to be reported by  
the press, as it might put some of  
his interests at risk. I just want  
you to know that he have every  
intention of signing the contract,  
and, as soon as he is able, we will  
proceed.

EXT. VAN LOON'S BUILDING - DAY

Eddie and Van Loon flank Mrs. Atwood, walking her to her car.

EDDIE

I realize that this is a useless  
platititude, but... if there's anything  
that we can do...

VAN LOON

Obviously we want to be as helpful  
and respectful as possible...

MRS. ATWOOD

Thank you so much. I rely on your  
discretion.

She shakes both of their hands. A driver has the door open  
for her; she gets in, now out of earshot.

VAN LOON

(low)

You think there's a proxy?

EDDIE

Cagey fuck like him giving away power  
of attorney?

Eddie shakes his head. The two men look at each other  
darkly.

The driver closes her door, turns -- and now Eddie can see  
his face.

It's TAN COAT. With a huge, angry scar slashed across his  
cheek.

Eddie and Tan Coat look at each other. A steely moment of  
recognition. Tan Coat turns away, gets in the driver's side.  
Van Loon watches the car pull away.

VAN LOON

Well. He'd better get better.

We PUSH IN on Eddie's face. Who now knows.

EDDIE (V.O.)

But Atwood wouldn't get better.  
Because Atwood was out of MDT.

EXT. MIDTOWN STREET - DAY

Eddie, beautifully dressed, walks. Ten paces behind walk his  
SECURITY GUYS. He is thinking.

EDDIE (V.0.)

Well. Why be surprised? How many other meteoric rises might be explained by MDT? At least I *had* some; my life wasn't in jeopardy. Only my money...

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY - CORRIDOR

EDDIE (V.0.)

...and my liberty.

Eddie stands with his favorite POLICE DETECTIVE and his lawyer in an anteroom leading to an institutional door. His lawyer talks to him, low.

MORRIS BRANDT

I've been all over them... we can't allow any disparity in race or physical type between you and the rest of the lineup -- they're as close to your clones as I could possibly get away with -- it's going to be one big handsome blur to this guy--

A FEMALE COP approaches Eddie.

FEMALE COP

Mr. Spinola...? I need you to change your jacket.

Eddie stiffens.

EDDIE

Why?

MORRIS BRANDT

Oh, that's me... I want everyone in the same shirt, better for the blur factor...

Eddie is frozen.

FEMALE COP

Mr. Spinola?

Eddie is still clutching his jacket, not wanting to give it to her.

EDDIE

Where are you keeping it?



FEMALE COP  
 (annoyed at his fussiness)  
 It'll be right over here.

MORRIS BRANDT  
 Don't blame you, that's a nice one.  
 Had it made, huh?

EDDIE  
 Yeah.

MORRIS BRANDT  
 Antoine Kaddish?  
 (as Eddie nods)  
 Yeah, I'm not there yet. Wife won't  
 let me indulge.

Eddie's lawyer fingers the material. Eddie is trying not to show how very disquieted he is.

MORRIS BRANDT  
 Mm-mm-mm. Thing of beauty.

Eddie, teeth gritted, wants to belt him. Still does not let go of the jacket.

FEMALE COP  
 Mr. Spinola...?

Eddie hands her the jacket, takes off his shirt, puts on the blue shirt, stoically follows her through the grubby door.

INT. THE LINEUP - EDDIE'S FACE

FEMALE COP'S VOICE  
 Please turn to the right.

Eddie and four other dark-haired guys turn to the right. Eddie looks at the black one-way window.

EDDIE (V.O.)  
 Who was out there? The woman's  
 husband? Was some bellboy I  
 undertipped about to end my life?

INT. POLICE STATION - ON EDDIE'S SMILING LAWYER

MORRIS BRANDT  
 Not the dimmest clue. He was  
 dithering.

Eddie blinks at him.

MORRIS BRANDT

"Maybe the third from the right... No  
not him..." --Oh. Here you go.

He hands Eddie back his jacket. Then snatches it away again.

MORRIS BRANDT

Sure you don't want to throw this  
into my fee?

Eddie's eyes are steely. The lawyer feels the molten stare  
and hands the jacket back.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DUSK

EDDIE (V.O.)

They'd kept me all day.

Eddie rushes down the steps, two at a time, looks at his  
watch.

EDDIE (V.O.)

I'd missed my meeting with Gennady.

INT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK - DUSK

Gennady, wearing a gorgeous cashmere coat, waits, now with  
THREE SECURITY GUYS.

Gennady looks at his watch, then says something low and  
sinister in Russian to his associates.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Eddie has his phone to his ear.

EDDIE (V.O.)

And there were four messages from Van  
Loon.

INT. VAN LOON'S OFFICE - DUSK

Eddie sits with Van Loon, watching a monitor, which has a  
live new feed to a financial channel.

FEMALE NEWSCASTER

...And the Dow has been yo-yoing all day, amidst speculation that Van Loon Associates and Hank Atwood have negotiated a merger...

Van Loon is furious, agitated.

VAN LOON

Have you been talking to anyone?

EDDIE

Not a word, Carl.

VAN LOON

Where have you been, Eddie--? This is the second time you've turned to vapor--

EDDIE

Personal time, Carl. Phone off. You're not telling me there's been any movement.

VAN LOON

No. Atwood's in a coma.

Black looks between them as the newscaster continues.

EDDIE (V.O.)

It had gotten out, somehow. But I felt thick, stupid, tired. A small throb was beginning behind my eyes. I had been unable to take my MDT, and I was overdue.

He shoots Van Loon a glance. Van Loon is miserably fixated on the TV.

INT. VAN LOON'S HUGE, SLEEK BATHROOM - DUSK

Eddie stands in a stall. Reaches into the lining of his coat. Unfastens the opening of the compartment.

THE OPENING - CLOSE

*There is nothing inside.*

EDDIE,

panicked, feels again. Nothing. The MDT is simply not there!!!

He begins to hyperventilate. Spin in place. Push against the stall walls, trying not to scream.

EDDIE (V.O.)

Was it Brandt? Or someone else? The police station? A coat room? How? How?

He bursts from the stall, alone in the bathroom. Stares at himself, terrified, in the mirror.

EDDIE (V.O.)

Off MDT, I'd never figure it out. In an hour I'd be useless. In two I'd be sick. In 24, dead.

INT. VAN LOON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Eddie bursts from the bathroom. Trying not to look too wild-eyed.

VAN LOON

Eddie--? This came for you.

Eddie looks at a LARGE BOX on Van Loon's desk. Indeed, his name is on it. Eddie, mystified, approaches it. As Van Loon continues to stare at the TV, disinterested in the box, Eddie gingerly opens it.

INT. THE BOX - CLOSE

Inside are the SEVERED HANDS OF EDDIE'S SECURITY GUYS. (One black hand, one with the distinctive tattoos.)

*Gennady.*

Clearly these guys are dead. Eddie grabs the box and starts from the room.

VAN LOON

What are you doing, Eddie--?  
EDDIE--!!!

But Eddie's gone.

INT. VAN LOON ASSOCIATES - DUSK

People are leaving for the night. Eddie shoves past them, still holding the damning box, frightened, jacked up, desperate, shoving people out of the way to get to the elevators.

INT. A LIMO - NIGHT - MOVING

Eddie sits in the back seat, the box freakishly sitting beside him.

EDDIE (V.O.)  
I couldn't think.

ON EDDIE'S FACE

His brow is beaded with sweat.

EDDIE (V.O.)  
Only MDT could help me. I had no  
MDT. And then...

PUSH IN on Eddie's eyes.

EDDIE (V.O.)  
One thought did come.  
(beat)  
Was there anywhere...

We begin to REWIND... in Eddie's mind... through many IMAGES we've seen in this movie... stopping briefly at all the places Eddie has stashed his MDT.

EDDIE (V.O.)  
... anywhere at all...I could have  
left one pill...?

We STOP at the END TABLE in Lindy's apartment, peer inside. Empty. We STOP at the UNDERSIDE of the GRILL on Eddie's old stove. Nothing. We continue to REWIND -- but every image we stop on reveals... nothing.

EDDIE (V.O.)  
I had to keep thinking. Somewhere  
safe...

INT. THE CELESTIAL - EDDIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Eddie sits at his huge new steel dining table, the evil box on the table in front of him, head in his hands.

(The room is filled with labeled boxes he has never had a chance to unpack.) The TV is on in the background. It's a financial channel. We see MRS. HANK ATWOOD is giving a statement.

MRS. HANK ATWOOD

There is absolutely no truth to the rumor of this merger. None whatsoever. My husband is having some tests, this is a difficult time, and I would appreciate your directing further questions to our attorney...

She motions at the gentleman next to her.

--Who is also Eddie's attorney, MORRIS BRANDT.

The one who was so helpful with the police. *The one who held his jacket.*

Bitter amusement in Eddie's eyes. At least he knows.

The APARTMENT BUZZER buzzes. Eddie freezes. Looks at the door. It BUZZES again.

EDDIE (V.O.)

It wasn't downstairs security, alerting me to a visitor. It was my inner door. Someone was in the building, ten feet away, right now.

Eddie walks to his phone, picks it up. Pushes the button, puts it to his ear.

It's dead.

He pushes the "on" button again and again. Nothing.

The buzzer BUZZES again.

Eddie rushes to the door, opens the COAT CLOSET. In the closet is a state-of-the-art SECURITY MONITOR.

Gennady and TWO MEN are outside his door!

Suddenly the MONITOR goes BLACK.

Eddie flicks the switch on the monitor. Nothing. Eddie flicks the switch again. It's dead. Someone, somewhere, has figured out how to disarm it.

The buzzer BUZZES again. Eddie backs away from the door. We HEAR Eddie's shallow, panicked breathing. He lunges for his briefcase, pulls out his CELL PHONE.

THE CELL PHONE - CLOSE

It reads "No Signal."

EDDIE (V.O.)

I knew damn well there was a signal.  
But an MDT-stoked brain could figure  
out how to do anything.

BAM! The first slam on the door begins. BAM! The second.  
The door holds, but Eddie begins to back away in horror.  
BAM!

We slowly FADE TO BLACK. And FADE IN ON:

EXT. THE CELESTIAL - EDDIE'S TERRACE LEDGE - NIGHT

EDDIE (V.O.)

And so... here I am.

And now we pick up Eddie where we left him, standing on the  
ledge. He drains the last of the scotch in his hand -- the  
"last drink" he spoke of earlier.

EDDIE (V.O.)

Of course they would kill me, slowly  
and horribly. But this choice would  
at least be mine.

We now hear the ZZZZZZZZ! of some major power tool drilling  
at the door, punctuated by more BAMS! -- one way or another  
they're going to get in.

Eddie takes a breath, tries to jump. He can't.

EDDIE (V.O.)

But we are instinctive creatures. We  
want to live. So, my foggy brain  
continued to try to remember... where  
one tablet of MDT... might have been  
left.

We PUSH IN on Eddie's eyes... We are still REWINDING in  
Eddie's mind... images of where we've seen him keep MDT...  
nothing... nothing... nothing... We STOP at the SUGARBOWL on  
Eddie's dining table. Then go forward -- no, wait!--  
rewinding, stopping again on the SUGAR BOWL. Pushing in on  
the sugar bowl.

Eddie spins around, looks back into his apartment, eyes  
intense.

EDDIE (V.O.)

It was possible. And possible was  
enough.

INT. THE CELESTIAL - EDDIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Eddie is tearing through boxes as the POUNDING and DRILLING become deafening... he rips open a box labeled "Kitchen" -- it's full of BOOKS. Mis-labeled.

JUMP CUTS as he rips open other boxes... his hands frantically scattering CDs, cutlery, cans of food...

The door begins to give.

Under the deafening DRILL: MORE JUMP-CUTS as Eddie hysterically tears the packing paper off of promisingly-shaped objects. --No. A glass. --No. A vase. --YES!

The sugar bowl.

With sugar still inside!

Eddie rummages, frantically, among the sugar cubes as the door gives a few inches, groaning, and we glimpse blurred faces on the other side...

EDDIE'S HAND

pokes, wildly, among the cubes... pushing them aside, revealing at the bottom of the bowl--

ONE MDT TABLET

looks back up at him. Yes. It's really there!

Eddie grabs it, just as, with a splintering CRASH --

The door goes down.

Eddie steps back, brings the pill up to his mouth...

But as he steps, he TRIPS on a SOUP CAN he's scattered... he FALLS backwards... his HAND hits the side of the coffee table...

The MDT TABLET goes flying... (slow motion)... as...

...also in slow motion, Gennady and his two thugs smile as they advance into the room...



THE MDT TABLET... flies... flies... towards a GRATE in the floor -- a heating vent -- and HITS it... rolling...

... before *disappearing forever down the grate.*

Eddie knows that's it. His life has ended. He sucks in his last breath -- then, with a YELL, he rushes back for the terrace... for his suicide leap...

Thug #1 is quicker. Gets to the door first. Eddie will not have the luck to be able to jump. He's trapped between Gennady and the first thug.

Thug #2 disappears down the hall. We HEAR him starting to tear things up. Gennady remains, smiling at Eddie, perfectly calm.

GENNADY

Where do you keep it.

Eddie is now backed to the wall. Nowhere to go.

EDDIE

I'm plum out.

Gennady just smiles -- that was an unfortunate choice -- and clicks open a BLACK ATTACHE CASE. It is filled with sinister-looking silver instruments, and knives.

INT. EDDIE'S STUDY - NIGHT

Thug #2 has found, behind a bureau, a SAFE. He calls excitedly, in Russian, to the other room.

INT. EDDIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Gennady stops, looks up, and then gives an order, again in Russian, to Thug #1, who grabs the tools (with which they disabled the door) and disappears into the study.

Gennady and Eddie are alone. Gennady picks up a particularly delicate, yet sharp-looking KNIFE.

GENNADY

This is a waste of my time, you know that? I am getting out of this part of the business... starting import-export company. Very exciting stuff. A lot on my plate. I need to learn to delegate...

Eddie is backed up against a table, which is covered with stuff he's scattered, which includes a BUTCHER BLOCK with A KNIFE in it...

Gennady starts arranging his instruments.

GENNADY

First, I will cut skin from you, flay you... you stay alive nice long time... then maybe we cut meat from you, steaks... or maybe softer parts... I get inspiration...

He looks up, smiles, to see the effect his words have on Eddie.

ON EDDIE

Staring back at Gennady, hard, a fuck-you stare. We can't see behind Eddie's back, but we can see the butcher block, and the knife is gone.

GENNADY

senses something is not right. Looks at Eddie quizzically.

GENNADY

What--

*Eddie brings the knife up as hard as he can, right into Gennady's stomach.*

Gennady gasps in surprise, chokes, writhes. Eddie drives the knife home, harder, grabbing Gennady's other hand, which lashes at Eddie with the fillet knife...

The men fall to the floor in a death-struggle. Eddie exhausted, off MDT, but determined not to let go.

Gennady writhes, flails, but doesn't cry out... he's already choking on blood. Eyes shocked, surprised. Eddie turns the fillet knife back on Gennady, slashes at his other arm; blood spurts.

But it's not necessary. Gennady's eyes are glazing. His gurgling gets quieter. He's quite dead.

Eddie lies alongside him, panting, arm grazed and welling blood from where Gennady's filleting knife slashed him, suddenly weak and exhausted. From the other room comes the BRRRRRRR! sound of the drill -- the boys, oblivious, are hard at work on the safe. Eddie tries to get up, then falls back.

EDDIE (V.0.)

I couldn't move. That last bit of energy had wrecked my MDT-depleted body... I was going into the pit, fast...

Eddie tries to get up, but starts to get the shakes... no, more of a convulsion... he sinks back to the floor...

EDDIE (V.0.)

I could not get up. I would die here, too...

There is a break in the convulsion. Then another one starts.

EDDIE (V.0.)

Only MDT could help me, and the last of it was in this creature's bloodstream...

Gennady's BLOOD wells around Gennady's body in a crimson puddle. A puddle that's creeping closer and closer to Eddie's face, which is lying, convulsing, on the floor...

ON EDDIE'S EYES

between convulsions, suddenly looking. Looking at the blood. It creeps closer to Eddie's face. Eddie is trying to move, trying to push his face closer to the blood... he's there...

And now he turns his face down into the blood.

*And begins to lap it up.*

INT. EDDIE'S STUDY - DAY

The Thug finally gets the safe open. Inside is only one item -- the TATTOOD SECURITY MAN'S SEVERED HAND. And its middle finger has been arranged in a vehement fuck-you.

The thugs are not amused.

INT. EDDIE'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - NIGHT

The thugs are coming down the hall, muttering angrily...

INT. EDDIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mouth smeared with blood, Eddie is dragging himself by the elbows, across the room. Footsteps coming. Fast.

INT. EDDIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - THUGS' POV

They burst into the room, see Gennady dead on the floor. The camera WHIP-PANS around. No Eddie.

BEHIND THE COUCH

Eddie lies, panting. We HEAR the thugs' curses, exclamations.

And then it hits.

We PUSH IN on Eddie's eyes.

He feels it.

His old friend. MDT.

THE THUGS

look up at a NOISE. Just in time to see Eddie bolting out the front door of the apartment.

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE EDDIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

They come thundering out -- see a flash of Eddie disappearing into --

INT. THE OPEN DOOR OF THE APARTMENT NEXT DOOR - NIGHT

We are in jittery, handheld THUG'S POV shot as they burst back in, barreling by rooms, looking in them, pressing on to more rooms...

A MAN'S SHADOWY SHAPE AHEAD, IN THE KITCHEN --

Thug #2 BLASTS his GUN... the MAN crumples, the glass doors behind him EXPLODE..... the MAN goes down...revealing Eddie standing behind him -- (he's been holding up his neighbor's body) and, just as this registers --

WHACK! -- Eddie gives THUG #1 a savage shot with a fireplace poker. Thug #1 goes down, unconscious... the gun skitters across the floor... THUG #2 dives, reaches for it. Eddie grabs a piece of the shattered glass and, in a vicious swipe, brings it down on the Thug's hand.

But this thug is not a tough Russian motherfucker for nothing. Bleeding profusely, he doesn't let go of the gun... his bloody hand comes up, tries to aim...

Eddie DIVES BACKWARDS, through the broken glass door to the patio. The thug stumbles after him...

EXT. EDDIE'S NEIGHBOR'S TERRACE - NIGHT

EDDIE'S HAND, still holding glass, CUTS the awning-rope holding up the awning...

The awning comes down on the thug, a huge canvas curtain DROPPING between the Thug and Eddie. BLAM! BLAM! Several holes appear in the canvas as the thug tries to shoot Eddie anyway, but Eddie has leapt out of the way.

THUG'S POV - UNDER THE CURTAIN

As he wrestles it off... he sees Eddie, on the ground, prone, just watching him calmly. He starts to smirk.

Eddie touches a MATCH to the ground.

The FLAME shoots across the floor to the thug, who now realizes he's standing in a puddle, the overturned can of BBQ fluid next to him. In an instant, his LEGS AND PANTS are on fire. Now the man screams. Shoots blindly. But - click! -- is out of bullets.

He rushes at Eddie, screaming, on fire, in animal rage. Eddie brings up a wrought-iron patio chair to meet him, catching him squarely in the ribs. He gasps, bends over... looks up at Eddie, beaten...

The face that looks back is without pity.

EXT. THE CELESTIAL - 20 STORIES BELOW, A WIDER TERRACE - DAY

We are looking up at the penthouse. A SHAPE is dropping, fast, towards us -- the shape of a man.

It's here! The man's head EXPLODES against the railing like a pumpkin as the rest of him disappears down, out of sight.

EDDIE (V.O.)

Later, it would be noted that my neighbor was in the music business. One of his drug deals had obviously gone bad...

(beat)

And the night was still young.

INT. A HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

A MAN is on a gurney. A NURSE puts a sheet over his head. Before our view of his face disappears we realize -- it's Hank Atwood. Dead.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

Tan Coat is sitting, stoic and red-eyed in a chair. He senses something. Slowly turns his head and looks.

EDDIE is sitting in the chair next to him. The two men look at each other for a moment. Then:

EDDIE

I'm sure you're not a little curious about what's happened to your boss. I certainly am. If my attorney was really working for Mr. Atwood, to save his life, then why is he dead? At what point was the Pony Express supposed to ride in with the life-saving medication?

(a beat)

Or, did the Pony decide that he should be running his own Pony show? Minus the dog.

Tan Coat stares at him, his face without expression.

INT. A CONNECTICUT UPPERCLASS LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

AN UPPERCLASS HOUSEWIFE enters, in sweats, from the gym. Immediately notices something is not right...

INT. HER LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The place has been ransacked.

INT. HER BEDROOM - NIGHT

She rushes in. We SEE her husband's MORRIS BRANDT'S body -- twisted grotesquely on the bed -- neck broken.

A PICTURE has been thrown to the floor. The WALL SAFE behind is open.

The SAFE is empty.

FADE OUT:

TITLE: Eight months later

INT. A POLITICAL CAMPAIGN OFFICE - DAY

Desks, employees, volunteers, ringing phones. REUBEN, LATE 20's, sharp, a JAMES CARVILLE-TYPE, sits on a desk with casual authority, is on the phone.

REUBEN

...actually, no, there's no more tickets. --Yeah, I know, an overbooked fundraiser -- there's a first -- well, here he comes, I'll ask him -- Edward!!

We see Eddie striding down the corridor, wearing a sharp suit, looking more dignified than we've ever seen him, more adult. The snap and crackle of something new -- power -- is in his step. TWO MALE AIDES flank him. Reuben approaches, falls into step with them.

REUBEN

I think we're looking at a second, overflow event--

EDDIE

Not an option.

REUBEN

No, not, is not the option, there's a wave of contributors coming in, that I've never seen in any campaign -- it's the debate, it just put you over...

EDDIE

We doing another one?

REUBEN

(smiles)

They won't return my calls about another one. There's also a Newsweek bite, pretty big one--

Eddie arrives at the door to his office.

A VERY BEAUTIFUL YOUNG FEMALE INTERN,  
 Holding a clipboard, is waiting for him.

EDDIE  
 I've got a lunch.

The young woman looks up through the door and smiles at Eddie, her eyes shining with the idealistic admiration that will surely lead to sex.

REUBEN  
 Not yet.

EDDIE  
 Excuse me?

REUBEN  
 Not. Yet. John Steadman is here.  
 (off Eddie's blank look)  
 --Eiben-Chemcorps? Look, they're  
 your biggest contributor, give him  
 his two shitty little minutes.

Eddie sighs, capitulating. Puts his hand on the door.

EDDIE  
 Eiben-Chemcorps. What are they --  
 research?

REUBEN  
 Pharmecuticals.

Eddie shoots him a look.

INT. A LARGE, CASUAL OFFICE - DAY

Eddie comes in to find JOHN STEADMAN, 50's, well-dressed and gentlemanly, waiting.

STEADMAN  
 Mr. Spinola.

EDDIE  
 Nice to see you.

He shakes Steadman's hand, but Steadman doesn't get up. Odd. In fact Steadman looks uncommonly relaxed, almost slouched in his chair, looking up at Eddie with a subtle gleam in his eye that Eddie doesn't recognize.



EDDIE

We appreciate everything you've done  
for us--

STEADMAN

Well, you've done most of it for  
yourself. Senator Spinola.

He says this with a kind of casual, prescient authority. And suddenly, we know he's right. Eddie will win.

STEADMAN

I mean, everything from here's a  
technicality, isn't it, Eddie?

Again, that smile. Eddie doesn't know what this guy is about. And nobody calls him "Eddie" any more.

STEADMAN

The election, a couple of terms... I  
think we both know where it's  
heading...

(a beat)

If... you can maintain.

EDDIE

I'm really not sure what you're--

STEADMAN

Have you asked yourself what you're  
going to do when you run out?

Eddie blinks at him. Did he just say what Eddie thought he said?

EDDIE

I don't think I --

STEADMAN

How much do you have left -- three  
months' worth? Four?

Eddie is now dead silent. Just watching this man.  
Listening. Not wanting to admit to anything.

STEADMAN

We can help you there.

Eddie stares at him. Is it possible? Is he really talking to someone who makes MDT?!

STEADMAN

We've gotten some of the bugs out.  
It's longer lasting -- you'll only  
need one a week. And you can have a  
drink without blackouts. I'd  
certainly be missing cocktail hour if  
I were you.

A long beat. Eddie goes over to the window, turns his back  
to Steadman, looks out. Without turning around:

EDDIE

Have you been watching me from the  
beginning?

STEADMAN

No. Those of you who indulged...  
distinguished yourselves very  
quickly. You made yourselves clear  
to us.

EDDIE

Who's "us?"

Steadman just smiles, waves the question away.

STEADMAN

You went the furthest with it the  
fastest, so of course, to us, you're  
the most interesting.

EDDIE

How did it get on the street?

STEADMAN

Security breach. That was never our  
intention. We took care of it.

Meaning, they took care of Vern.

STEADMAN

It will never again be on the street.  
It will never publicly exist.  
Obviously I don't need to detail the  
advantages for you.

A long beat.

EDDIE

Why would you invest in me? Why  
don't you take it?

Steadman is amused by the question.

STEADMAN

We don't have to take it. You'll  
take it for us.

Eddie doesn't like the guy. Eddie doesn't like this  
conversation. Sharply:

EDDIE

And do what in return?

STEADMAN

Well, given where you're heading,  
some of our ideas are kind of...  
grandiose. But, I think, achievable.

Eddie takes this in.

EDDIE

And if I don't like your ideas?

STEADMAN

Then we'll say Godspeed. And your  
candle will shed a brief, but lovely,  
light.

Eddie knows now. They own his ass. Because he needs their  
MDT. More than anything.

STEADMAN

Come on. Let's get some lunch.

He starts for the door. Eddie remains still. Something  
flickers in his eyes -- maybe the last flicker we'll ever see  
of the old Eddie.

EDDIE

Tell me something.

Steadman stops, looks back at him.

EDDIE

Did I kill that woman?

Steadman looks puzzled that Eddie would ask.

STEADMAN

Do you really want to know?

Eddie thinks. His eyes harden. No, he doesn't.

EXT. SPINOLA CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS - STREET - DAY

Eddie and Steadman come down the stairs together. Powerful men, power suits, power stride.

EDDIE (V.O.)

Would it really be so bad? Doesn't every man on the path to greatness have to tolerate the wind-drag of compromise? Weren't the changes that needed to be made more important? And they'd be improvements. My improvements. --Foreign policy, the courts, even the Constitution could stand a little tweaking...

Waiting at the curb is a CAR. A man standing, holding the door open for Eddie and Steadman.

It's TAN COAT. Just doing his job. For his new boss.

EDDIE (V.O.)

I'd have a scotch with lunch. Maybe two.

The camera remains on the buzzing hive that is Eddie's building, people excitedly coming and going, as we--

FADE OUT