

Die Hard – Synopsis

John McClane, a wisecracking New York City cop, comes to LA for Christmas. His wife, Holly, has recently taken an executive job there; she took the kids with her, too. McClane begrudges Holly packing up like that, but he loves her and hopes to work things out. Wandering through the company holiday party in the sleek new high-rise, Nakatomi Plaza, McClane feels out of place and things aren't going that well with Holly either.

It gets a lot worse when a band of European terrorists invade the building. Led by the suave and brilliant Hans Gruber, they're seriously armed and organized. They lock down the building, seize control of the computer system, cut off all outside communication. The terrorists gather the only people left in the building, those attending the party, and keep them docile with their automatic weapons. Gruber is in total control.

Except over McClane. Who has slipped into a stairwell unseen.

Gruber escorts the head of the company, Mr. Takagi, into an office and demands a computer code that will unlock a vault containing 640 million dollars worth of bonds. Takagi refuses. Gruber blows his head off. Nearby in hiding, McClane watches. He realizes Gruber is fully capable of killing the hostages—including his wife.

Armed with only his wits, McClane is the only one with a shot at saving the day.

Hans has his tech specialist set about breaking the computer code, a complex routine that requires going through seven computerized locks. McClane tries to alert authorities by tripping a fire alarm, but the ruse fails, only signaling to Hans that there's a rogue loose in the building. Climbing through air-ducts, sliding down elevator shafts, McClane manages to evade capture and even kills a few terrorists along the way. He finally catches the outside world's attention by sending a dead body hurtling onto a squad car.

The LAPD shows up. And the FBI. And the media. It's a circus out there. But the terrorists keep them all at bay with missiles.

Gruber still controls the building. One by one, the tech guy opens the locks. McClane manages to stay free and slow them down, but he's still operating solo—injured, bleeding, running out of steam. Finally the bad guys open the vault and seize the wealth of bonds. How will they make their getaway? As they herd the hostages to the roof, McClane realizes they'll unleash a massive explosion that kills the hostages and seemingly kills the terrorists, too. In the mayhem, they'll escape. Good plan, but McClane clears the hostages, seconds before the rooftop erupts in flames.

But now Gruber has seized Holly, to prevent McClane from impeding his getaway. McClane doesn't like people messing with his wife. He sends Hans out a thirty-story window. But Hans grabs Holly's wrist, pulling her, trying to yank himself back inside. McClane releases the latch on Holly's Rolex. Hans plummets to his death.

Game's over. McClane and Holly have never been happier to be together.