

**I. T.**

by

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Over BLACK we hear:

The tranquil sounds of WAVES collapsing onto the shore.  
There's an ocean BREEZE. And a SQUAWKING seagull.

Then, we hear a voice. A gentle, sexy, FEMALE VOICE.

FEMALE VOICE  
How did you find this place?

A beat. And then, a MALE VOICE. Soothing. Sexy.

MALE VOICE  
I have my ways.

FEMALE VOICE  
It's perfect... I never want to leave.

MALE VOICE  
Then we'll stay...forever.

Slowly...an image fades up onto the screen.

Sparkling white sand and swaying palm trees overlook an azure ocean, as two gorgeous creatures, a MAN and WOMAN, lie arm in arm on this perfect beach. It looks like paradise, but...

...something's off. And as the image continues to crystallize, we PULL BACK, and see that this paradise is framed by the edges of a computer screen, and the impossibly gorgeous couple are just avatars, lying on a *virtual* beach.

The sound of *fingers typing* on a keypad. And then:

MALE AVATAR  
I got you something.

FEMALE AVATAR  
What is it?

Those *fingers* are at it again. Typing furiously, when...

...the male avatar hands a skinny box, with a bow on top, to the female avatar. She pauses, then opens the box revealing a gorgeous necklace.

FEMALE AVATAR (cont'd)  
It's beautiful... Thank you.

FADE TO BLACK.

OVER BLACK - To the beat of Amy Winehouse's *You Know I'm Good*, we begin our TITLE SEQUENCE as we FADE IN ON:

INT. ARTHUR HOUSE (BEDROOM) - MORNING

A DIGITAL ALARM CLOCK fills the FRAME. It's **6:59 AM**, when:

The clock changes. **7:00 AM**. We're expecting the buzz of the alarm, but instead, we get a soothing HUM, coming from a set of MOTORIZED WINDOW SHADES which are slowly opening.

At the edge of a king-size bed, we see a PAIR OF FEET drop down and hit the floor with a soft THUD as we CUT TO:

INT. ARTHUR HOUSE (BATHROOM) - MORNING

A state-of-the-art digital panel built into the wall. An index finger taps a button igniting the SHOWER. The pre-set temperature gage shows 99 degrees as the *sounds of the shower* abruptly morph into...

INT. ARTHUR HOUSE (BATHROOM) - MORNING

...a subdued little BUZZ as a masculine HAND squirts some toothpaste onto a BUZZING electric toothbrush.

INT. ARTHUR HOUSE (KITCHEN) - MORNING

That same HAND now TAPS A BUTTON on a top-of-the-line espresso maker producing a METALLIC GRINDING sound as suddenly a shot of liquid caffeine DROPS into a waiting cup.

EXT. ARTHUR HOUSE (DRIVEWAY) - MORNING

BEEP BEEP. We're looking at a slick Jaguar XJ Supersport. Those two BEEPS were the hazard lights FLASHING, indicating the automatic door lock unlocking as now we hear...

EXT. ARTHUR HOUSE - MORNING

...a SQUEAKING MECHANICAL DRONE. It's the automatic gate that secures the driveway slowly SWINGING open.

EXT. JAGUAR (MOVING) - MORNING

The Jaguar drives along a rural road where it crosses a set of train tracks at an idle railroad crossing.

INT. JAGUAR (MOVING) - MORNING

That HAND guides the steering wheel. An LCD monitor on the dash board illuminates our location on the GPS which is now:

EXT. HENRY HUDSON BRIDGE - MORNING

The Jaguar ZOOMS right through the E Z PASS lane into Manhattan as we become aware of a CRANKING sound. It's...

EXT. PARKING GARAGE - MORNING

...a garage door OPENING UP for the Jaguar, which drives into a small garage. As soon as it does, the garage door begins to automatically close, as we MATCH CUT TO:

INT. ARTHUR PUBLISHING (CONFERENCE ROOM) - MORNING

A MOTORIZED FLAT SCREEN TV lowering from the ceiling.

Then, the MOTORIZED conference room window shades begin closing, bringing us full circle as we eclipse the daylight coming in through the office windows, and the world goes BLACK as Amy Winehouse's voice fades away.

A quiet beat. And then, we FADE IN ON:

INT. ARTHUR PUBLISHING (CONFERENCE ROOM) - LATER

A classically handsome face. This is MICHAEL ARTHUR, the Jaguar owner, and the CEO of the boutique publishing house that bears his name. There's an easiness to Mike, a likability that draws you in from the moment he speaks:

MIKE

How accurate are these projections?

A dozen FACES sit around a long table, their eyes moving back and forth between the flat screen TV -- which displays several pie charts and growth charts -- and their boss. TREVOR, the head of business affairs, speaks up.

TREVOR

With Teddy Winter's track record, based on past sales, I think we're within two and a half percent.

Mike seems pleased, as he nods at ANDY, his well-groomed assistant who is running PowerPoint through his laptop.

Andy hits a key on the laptop and a new page appears on the screen. Under the heading **MARKETING STRATEGY**, are some words in bold including: **Catalogue Banner Ads. Joint Promos. Guaranteed Ladder Placement. All Airports.**

MIKE

So, next, Joan will walk him through the marketing strategy, and then--

A KNOCK on the door. A pretty RECEPTIONIST pokes her head in:

RECEPTIONIST

He's here. And he brought *all* three agents.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Must be good news because everyone brightens. The Receptionist disappears as Mike turns back to the table.

MIKE

Well... Guess he's really considering us... Alright, so we'll close with Frankie's jacket designs, which if you haven't seen them yet...might just put us over the top.

Mike smiles at FRANCIS, called Frankie, his stunningly beautiful Art Director as everyone turns eagerly to the screen and watches as:

The screen goes BLACK. Mike glances at Andy.

MIKE (cont'd)

We got the artwork?

Andy is staring at the laptop, repeatedly HITTING a key.

ANDY

Something's... Shit!... Shit, I think my computer crashed.

MIKE

You got everything backed up, right?...  
Andy?

Andy swallows. *Fuck!*

INT. ARTHUR PUBLISHING - SECONDS LATER

The panicked Andy races down the hall, when he turns down a small hallway, comes to a closed door, throws it open, and...

ANDY

Oh, thank God. You're here.

INT. ARTHUR PUBLISHING (CONFERENCE ROOM) - MINUTES LATER

Anxious eyes are fixed at the head of the table where we glimpse the back of a FIGURE, huddled over the crashed laptop, and running a diagnostic program through an iPad.

The soft TAPPING of the figure's *TYPING FINGERS* on the tablet ECHOES throughout the tense, silent room, when suddenly:

The presentation re-appears on the laptop *and* the flat screen TV as the entire room bursts into spontaneous APPLAUSE for their savior -- *the I.T. GUY*, ED PORTER, 30.

EXT. ARTHUR PUBLISHING - DAY

The boutique pub house is located on the top floor of an old Tribeca warehouse that has been converted into a sleek, stylish, art-deco office space.

INT. ARTHUR PUBLISHING (MIKE'S OFFICE) - DAY

We're CLOSE ON a grim-faced Mike. He waits a beat. And then:

MIKE  
How bad is it?

Mike is on a couch facing BILL, his older CPA, and Trevor, from Business Affairs.

TREVOR  
It's pretty bad, Mike... Our E-books are trending up, but...it's not making up for losses on the hard cover side.

Mike looks down at his iPad which is resting on the coffee table. He picks it up. Stares at it ruefully.

MIKE  
I can't believe that people are more interested in reading something on this, than...

His voice trails off as he eyes an enormous bookshelf -- stuffed with hard cover books -- that lines the wall.

TREVOR  
Listen, Mike, the Random House deal is still on the table. I think that--

MIKE  
Trevor, I'm not selling the business... Look, our fall list is coming together. Daniel Grayson's new book is phenomenal. And if we sign Teddy Winters--

TREVOR  
We better, Mike. Company needs a hit. Because if these projections are accurate, you need to consider the next step... Now... Cutbacks, layoffs, the whole thing.

Mike takes this in. He eyes Bill, and then looks at Trevor.

MIKE  
Would you excuse us?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Trevor nods, then stands and exits the office. Mike stares at his CPA, who finally speaks.

BILL  
He's right, Michael.

MIKE  
There's gotta be something you can do.  
Just to get me through the fall... Come  
on, Bill. I know you used to help dad.

Bill eyes the closed office door, *making sure no one is listening*, and then looks back at Mike as we DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ARTHUR PUBLISHING - DUSK

Mike exits his office, jacket on, briefcase in hand. He walks by Andy at his assistant's desk.

ANDY (ON PHONE)  
Enjoy the game.

Mike smiles. He will.

INT. ARTHUR PUBLISHING (HALLWAY) - MOMENTS LATER

Mike moves down the hall, when:

VOICE (O.S.)  
You know they say it's bad for morale  
when the boss leaves early.

Mike turns to see Frankie, his gorgeous jacket designer, standing in the doorway of the office kitchen, sipping coffee from a mug.

MIKE  
Is that what they say?

Frankie smiles as they take each other in. These two seem comfortable with each other. *Perhaps too comfortable.*

FRANKIE  
Knicks?

MIKE  
Court side.

FRANKIE  
Bastard.

Mike smiles. Then:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANKIE (cont'd)  
Well, see you tomorrow, Old Man.

And with that, Frankie brushes past him and begins moving down the hall back toward her office.

INT. ARTHUR PUBLISHING (RECEPTION/ELEVATOR/LOBBY) - LATER

Mike enters the reception area, nods "Goodnight" to the receptionist, and then spots an opened, empty, elevator. He moves toward it when the doors start to close.

VOICE (O.S.)  
Mike!

Mike puts his hand into the elevator, stopping the closing doors, and turns back to see Andy, a little out of breath.

ANDY  
Daniel Grayson just called. He's gotta go cross town. Something about his mom being sick. He's not going to make it.

MIKE  
(deflates)  
Thanks, Andy.

The disappointed Mike steps into the elevator, surprised to see that he is not alone. Ed, the I.T. Guy, a computer bag around his shoulder, stands in the corner of the car.

MIKE (cont'd)  
Sorry.

Ed smiles, *no problem*, as the elevator doors finally close. The elevator car begins its descent as that familiar, slightly uncomfortable, "elevator silence" pervades...

MIKE (cont'd)  
You know you saved our ass this morning... Sometimes, I don't know where we'd be without you guys.

ED  
I hope you sign him... Teddy Winters. I'm a big fan.

Mike smiles. *So does he.*

MIKE  
You like thrillers?

ED  
I like the good ones.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The elevator doors open, and Ed steps into the lobby first. He reaches the front door and holds it open for Mike, when:

MIKE

Say Ed, you a Knicks fan?... I have an extra ticket to the game tonight... Celtics... I'm just going to sit there by myself... Do you want to go?

Ed considers it for a second. And then:

ED

Sure.

INT. JAGUAR (MOVING) - DUSK

Ed is riding shotgun as Mike steers the Jaguar onto 6th Avenue and HITS THE BRAKES. It's bumper to bumper traffic.

MIKE

Ah, shit. We're going to miss tip off.

Ed notices a *TripStar* logo on the dash board panel.

ED

You have TripStar?

MIKE

Yeah. Came with the car. Still haven't figured out how to program the...

Ed leans forward and hits a button on a panel above the radio as the LCD screen lights up displaying the TripStar logo.

It's a touch screen and Ed is scrolling through a list -- like a table of contents page -- until he finds what he's looking for. He TAPS the screen. Waits. And then TAPS it again as we see displayed on the screen:

VOICE ACTIVATION SYSTEM INITIALIZING. A little wheel is spinning, when it stops.

ED

(addressing the car)  
TripStar traffic.

An automated TRIPSTAR VOICE echoes through the car speakers.

TRIPSTAR VOICE

Checking traffic.

Mike chuckles, amused, as the LCD screen lights up with a map of 6th Avenue. A red line, indicating heavy traffic, runs up the avenue.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ED  
Madison Square Garden.

There's a brief pause, and then the LCD screen changes with an alternate driving route.

TRIPSTAR VOICE  
Alternate route to Madison Square Garden.  
Turn left onto fifth street.

Ed nods at Mike who complies and turns onto fifth street where he sees that...

...the traffic is significantly lighter. *How fucking cool is that?* Mike smiles at Ed as...

EXT. 5TH STREET - CONTINUOUS

...the Jaguar ROCKETS down the street.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

Mike and Ed are seated court side, cups of beer in hand.

On the court, the Knicks are on defense, when star forward CARMELO ANTHONY is shoved to the ground.

MIKE  
That's a charge! Come on! Where's the call!?  
(to Ed)  
Can you believe that!?

Ed is smiling. Getting a kick out of watching his boss behave like man-child. But...

ED  
He wasn't planted.

MIKE  
What?

ED  
Carmelo... His feet weren't planted, so...technically wasn't a charge.

Mike glares at him, playfully.

MIKE  
What are you, from Boston?

ED  
No.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE  
(busting his balls)  
You a Celtics fan?

ED  
No. I'm from Rockland...grew up in  
Ramapo.

MIKE  
Ramapo High?

Ed hesitates, then nods, "yes".

MIKE (cont'd)  
We used to play you guys. County  
tournaments, things like that.

ED  
Point guard?  
(Mike nods)  
You any good?

MIKE  
Was I any -- Ed, you are looking at the  
Captain of the '86 Mamaroneck Tigers.

Ed nods impressed...when Mike adds:

MIKE (cont'd)  
We were two and nineteen.

Ed chuckles as Mike wistfully shakes his head, as if he's still burned by that miserable season. He shakes it off as a beautiful WAITRESS, who works the VIP seats, appears with:

WAITRESS  
Okay. Hot dog...and chicken fingers.

She hands the hot dog to Mike and the chicken fingers to Ed.

WAITRESS (cont'd)  
Can I get you anything else, Mr. Arthur?

MIKE  
I think we're good April, thanks.

The beauty smiles, catching Ed's eye. He can't help but watch her disappear into the service tunnel.

MIKE (cont'd)  
I know. Makes it hard to watch the  
game... You're not married are you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ED

Oh, no...I... My girlfriend...Daisy...  
We've been together for awhile now... I  
think I'm going to propose.

MIKE

No shit.

Ed nods, as Mike smiles, and raises his beer in a toast.

MIKE (cont'd)

Here's to it... It ain't easy, God knows,  
but...best decision I ever made.

Mike's cell RINGS. He glances at the caller ID.

MIKE (cont'd)

Speak of the devil. Excuse me.

(answers phone)

Hey Hon, I'm still at the game... No, he  
cancelled... Ed...

Mike turns away, and mutters under his breath -- not wanting  
offend Ed -- as he says:

MIKE (cont'd)

The I.T. Guy...

(regular voice)

What's that?... You're going in and --  
Are you home?...

Mike frowns. He lost her.

MIKE (cont'd)

The reception in our house is...

ED

I can fix that for you...if you like.

Mike glances at Ed, intrigued, as we DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ED'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Mike's Jaguar pulls up to this modest six story walk-up, in  
the heart of East Harlem.

INT. JAGUAR (IDLE) - NIGHT

ED

Thanks... That was fun.

Mike nods. *It was.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE

Listen, you sure you don't mind? Coming  
all the way up on a Saturday?

Ed shakes his head -- *Not at all* -- and opens the door.

ED

Goodnight.

Mike nods as Ed steps out of the car, and closes the door.

EXT. ARTHUR HOUSE (BACK YARD/POOL DECK) - MORNING

A WOMAN, early 40's, and still very much a beauty, exits the back of the house through a set of sliding doors. This is CICI, Mike's wife, and she carries herself with an effortless grace and elegance...even dressed in her robe and flip-flops.

We follow Cici through the Arthur's spacious backyard and down toward the pool which is covered by a reinforced vinyl pool-cover. Cici grabs a high-tech remote control from a coffee table and points it at a digital panel built into the wall of the pool house as...

...the pool cover begins to slowly recede to the sounds of a HUMMING, CRANKING MOTOR. The loud sound catches the attention of HITCH, the Arthur family dog, -- a lovable golden retriever -- who bursts through a doggie door up at the house and begins racing through the yard toward the pool.

EXT. ARTHUR HOUSE (BACK YARD) - MORNING

Cici swims laps as Hitch doggie paddles beside her.

EXT./INT. TRAIN (MOVING) - DAY

Ed sits at the window looking out at the bucolic scenery.

INT. JAGUAR (MOVING) - DAY

Mike drives Ed down a residential street. He guides the car around a small corner and turns into the driveway as the gate automatically opens revealing the Arthur's beautiful, two-story, home.

INT. ARTHUR HOUSE (HOME OFFICE) - DAY

Ed is seated at a desktop computer. Mike stands behind him.

ED

Your connection is slow... I can fix that  
too. If you want?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE

Yeah. That'd be great.

Ed removes a box from a plastic bag. On the box is a picture of a *MicroCell*, which is a wireless network extender.

ED

This might take an hour if...

MIKE

Oh... I'll be downstairs. Just holler if you need anything.

Mike exits as Ed turns to the screen, and starts TYPING.

INT. ARTHUR HOUSE (OFFICE) - LATER

The *MicroCell* is plugged into the router and Ed is just waiting on the "*Instillation in Progress*" bar to reach 100%, which it finally does, to a LOUD, satisfying DING.

INT. ARTHUR HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Ed exits the office. He's on the second floor, at the end of a long hallway. He begins moving down the hall when he stops, noticing a series of framed pictures hanging on the wall.

They are family photos. The Arthur's skiing in Vail...on the beach in Cancun...at Niagara Falls, etc. Ed slowly takes in the various pictures when he begins to hear something.

*Music.* Beautiful music, coming from the far end of the hall.

Ed follows the music to a door that is cracked open. He stops. And stares through the crack where he sees...

...Cici, in the music room, playing the cello. It's Johannes Brahms *Concerto for Cello*. And Cici plays it beautifully.

Ed stares at her, entranced, when Cici abruptly stops and frowns, as if she's displeased. She hesitates, and then, sensing a presence, turns toward the door where she sees...

...nothing. There's no one there.

INT. ARTHUR HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Ed moves down the stairs and steps into the foyer, when:

BARK! BARK! It's Hitch. He runs right at Ed, jumps up to his waist and rubs his moist nose into his crotch.

VOICE (O.S.)

Hitch! Down! Down!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The voice belongs to an adorable eight-year-old BOY, who approaches and pulls Hitch down by the collar. Ed glares down at the mutt. He must not be a dog lover because he doesn't seem particularly amused.

BOY

He's just being friendly. He won't bite you... I'm Taylor.

ED

Ed.

TAYLOR (FORMERLY BOY)

I know. Dad told us you were coming... Do you play Wii Sports?

INT. ARTHUR HOUSE (TV ROOM) - LATER

CLOSE on a fifty-foot flat screen. It's a video tennis game. And two avatars are in the middle of a competitive point as we PULL BACK TO REVEAL:

Ed and Taylor, going at it, when Taylor executes an awesome SLAM and wins the match.

TAYLOR

YES!... YES!... SUCKAH!

Ed chuckles. He seems to get a kick out of the kid.

TAYLOR (cont'd)

Double or nothing?

ED

We didn't bet anything.

TAYLOR

Oh.

ED

What other games do you have?

Taylor turns on the Wii starter screen, eyes the game icons.

TAYLOR

I've got Spider Man and Captain America... I'm *dying* to get *Call of Duty Black Ops*, but Mom says it's way too violent. It's like rated M. Have you played it?

Ed nods and Taylor shrinks, jealous. Mike peeks his head in.

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CONTINUED:

MIKE

Hey. I need to take Ed to the train, okay? And mom's going to start dinner, why don't you help her out.

TAYLOR

But dad we're still playing! Can't Ed stay for dinner?... Please?

MIKE

You're welcome to stay, Ed, we've got plenty of food.

Off Ed's smile, we DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ARTHUR HOUSE (BACK YARD PATIO) - EARLY EVENING

A small fire is CRACKLING in an opened fire pit. Near the pit, seated at a table that's been set for five, is Ed.

Over at the grill, Mike is grilling a flank steak as Taylor takes pictures with Mike's iPhone.

Meanwhile Cici and ALEXIS, the Arthur's beautiful 15-year-old daughter, exit the kitchen through a sliding door and place a few side dishes onto the table. Her hands now free, Alexis promptly whips out her phone and begins texting away.

ALEXIS

Dad, I'm getting full bars!

MIKE

Well, you can thank Ed for that.

Alexis smiles at Ed, as Mike puts the steak on a platter, carries it to the table, and starts slicing.

TAYLOR

Everybody look at me.

Taylor has the camera phone pointed at the table. Everyone looks up at Taylor, except...

TAYLOR (cont'd)

Alexis!

CICI

Alex, put it down.

Alexis puts down the device, rolls her eyes, and looks up unsmiling, as Taylor SNAPS the picture.

MIKE

Alright, kiddo, hand me the phone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TAYLOR

See Dad, if you'd just get me my own phone I wouldn't have to use yours all the time.

Taylor's parents exchange a little smile, as everyone digs in. Mike SHIVERS, and nods at the fire pit.

MIKE

Hon, can you raise, the...?

Cici grabs one of those high tech remote controls, and points it at the fire pit as the flames magically rise.

ED

You play beautifully, Mrs. Arthur... I heard you when I was upstairs.

TAYLOR

Mom used to be famous.

MIKE

Cici was the soloist at the Met when we met. She used to play all over the world.

CICI

Thank you, Ed... Truth is I haven't played publicly since Alexis was born.

TAYLOR

But you're doing a concert next month, right, Mom?

CICI

It's a benefit for the conservatory where I teach... Unfortunately, I don't exactly play like used to.

ED

Have you tried Ableton?... It's a software program, like ProTools. It can be good for recording, playback...

CICI

(shakes her head)

I just started practicing for it really... What about you, Ed? You play anything?

ED

My mother plays...piano, violin, guitar. Everything really... You remind me of her actually.

(CONTINUED)

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Alexis' phone BEEPS. She grabs it and starts texting.

CICI

Alex.

ALEXIS

One sec. This is like super urgent.

Taylor leans over and whispers something in Mike's ear.

MIKE

Ask him.

TAYLOR

(to Ed)

Can I send you the picture I took?

ED

Are you on Facebook?

Taylor frowns.

CICI

Alexis is the only one on Facebook. Which is fine since she spends enough time on there for the four of us.

Right on cue, Cici glares at her daughter who finally puts it down.

ALEXIS

Okay.

TAYLOR

I have email.

ED

Perfect. Will you send it to me?

Taylor nods and smiles, excited.

INT. JAGUAR (MOVING/IDLE) - NIGHT

The Jaguar pulls up to the curb and stops. Mike is behind the wheel. Ed is shotgun.

MIKE

You sure I can't pay you?

ED

I have a guy. Didn't cost me anything.

MIKE

Well... Thanks, Ed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ed nods. Hesitates. And then looks at Mike.

ED

You have a very nice family, Mike.

Mike smiles, appreciates Ed's sincerity.

Ed opens the car door and begins stepping out, when:

ED (cont'd)

Oh, I almost forgot. I had to set a password for the Microcell, in case...

Mike whips out his iPhone, and pulls up the keypad.

MIKE

What is it?

ED

Oh, I just put *Alexistaylor*, I figured...

Mike stops. Thrown.

MIKE

How did you know...?

ED

I'm your I.T. Guy, Mike. It's my job to know.

Mike hesitates. *Guess that makes sense, but...*

ED (cont'd)

Well... Goodnight.

And with that, Ed closes the door and moves toward the station.

INT. TRAIN (MOVING) - NIGHT

Ed sits at the window, looking completely content, when he looks down at his iPhone. He's on Facebook. He types "**Alexis Arthur**" as immediately, a picture of a smiling Alexis pops up. Ed CLICKS on SEND FRIEND REQUEST, when:

DING. He's got a new email message. It's from: **Taylor Arthur**.

It reads: **Hi Ed. Here is the picture I took. Taylor.** Ed CLICKS on an attachment as the picture of Ed, seated at the table with Mike, Cici, and Alexis, opens up.

Ed stares at the photo, and smiles.

EXT. ARTHUR PUBLISHING - DAY

A light rain falls on the building.

INT. ARTHUR PUBLISHING (MIKE'S OFFICE) - DAY

Mike is on the phone. He sounds a tad annoyed.

MIKE (ON PHONE)

No. But I read the editor's report...

KNOCK KNOCK. The door opens, as Ed peeks his head in. Mike waves Ed in. He's carrying a plastic bag.

MIKE (ON PHONE) (cont'd)

That's all we're asking, Joyce. Just a quick pass on those last chapters...

Mike hesitates, then hangs up, shaking his head.

MIKE (cont'd)

Agents.

Ed nods. Then removes a box from the bag and hands it to Mike. It's an *Ableton* software package.

ED

I got this for Mrs. Arthur... Thought it might help her with the practicing... If she has any trouble installing it, she can just call me.

Mike eyes the package, clearly touched.

MIKE

Thank you, Ed, I -- This didn't cost you--

(Ed shakes his head "no")

Well... I'm sure she'll put it to good use.

Ed smiles and then turns to exit. Mike watches him for a beat, as if he's considering something, then:

MIKE (cont'd)

Say, Ed... Taylor's been hounding me since you left. His birthday party is next Saturday and...I don't want you to feel any obligation, but, would you like to come?... You can bring...Daisy?

Ed nods. Brightens.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ED

That sounds great.

MIKE

He'll be thrilled. He keeps asking when you're going to come over again... How's that going by the way? Daisy. Did you...?

ED

Oh... Not yet. I... I've been a little nervous about asking her.

MIKE

I was shitting bricks for weeks before I asked Cici--

ANDY'S VOICE (OVER INTERCOM)

I have Joel Jenkins for you.

MIKE

--Literally. Solid. Bricks.

Ed smiles as Mike grabs the phone.

MIKE (ON PHONE) (cont'd)

Joel... Hey. We loved it. Yeah. We're going to start prepping for the fall.

Ed hesitates, watching Mike, as we:

FADE TO BLACK.

BLACK. We hear nothing. Just silence. Until...

...a distinct, rhythmic, *scraping* sound. Sounds like:

SCRISH... SCRISH... SCRISH...

MALE VOICE

Hey. Can we stop a sec?

A loud SCRISH, as we FADE IN ON:

*A virtual frozen lake.*

Those sounds were ice skates, gliding along the ice. The skates are attached to the same two avatars from the beach. They are dressed in coats and winter hats, and are now standing still, on the lake, as a light snow falls.

MALE AVATAR

I wanted to talk to you about something.

The male avatar stares at the female avatar for a beat. Then:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MALE AVATAR (cont'd)

I was wondering if...if you wanted to meet...in real life?

Slowly, WE PULL BACK, revealing the edges of the computer screen, as the two avatars stare at one another.

Then, the *sound of fingers briefly typing*. This is followed by the Male Avatar breaking the silence:

MALE AVATAR (cont'd)

What do you think, Daisy?

At the mention of her, name -- *Daisy* -- we PULL ALL THE WAY BACK revealing:

An anxious Ed -- *heart in his throat* -- sitting before three state-of-the-art computer monitors, when:

FEMALE AVATAR

I can't...

Ed stares at the screen...*What? Did he hear that right?*

FEMALE AVATAR (cont'd)

I... We have to stop this, Gatsby... I can't do this anymore.

Ed is stunned. In disbelief. *No!*

He takes a moment, and then types...

MALE AVATAR

Why?

FEMALE AVATAR

I've started to see someone...in **real** life... It's just too confusing... I'm sorry.

Ed swallows. Devastated. Speechless.

INT. ARTHUR HOUSE (MUSIC ROOM) - NIGHT

Cici is playing the cello. It's Bach's famous *Cello Suite Number One*. As she plays we MOVE OFF Cici until we come to a laptop. On the screen we see that the *Ableton* software program is running, recording every sound.

Then, over the majestic sounds of Cici's cello, we CUT TO...

INT. ED'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

...Ed. Standing completely still. Expressionless. Almost...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

...catatonic...as he stares into a large fish tank, watching about two dozen tropical fish swim about. CUT BACK TO...

INT. ARTHUR HOUSE (MASTER BEDROOM) - LATER

...Cici. She's sitting up in bed now, listening to the recording through a set of head phones. Mike is next to her, working on his laptop. Cici removes the headphones, looking enlightened.

CICI

It's amazing. I can really hear where I'm off... Actually not as bad as I thought.

Mike smiles, when the land line RINGS. Cici glances at the clock, a touch alarmed. It's **10:55 PM**.

CICI (ON PHONE) (cont'd)

Hello?

INT. ED'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Ed is seated. His cell phone pressed to his ear. INTERCUT.

ED (ON PHONE)

Mrs. Arthur. Hi. It's Ed.

Cici hesitates, not sure at first, when:

CICI (ON PHONE)

Oh, Ed... Do you want to talk to, Mike?

Mike perks up, assuming something is wrong. He reaches for the phone, but...

ED (ON PHONE)

That's okay... How is the cell service...in the house? Better?

Cici pauses, flustered, then quickly recovers.

CICI (ON PHONE)

It is. Yes... And, thank you so much for the software...it's already been helpful.

ED (ON PHONE)

Good. I'm glad... Is Taylor there?

CICI (ON PHONE)

It's almost eleven, Ed. Taylor's sleeping.

ED (ON PHONE)

Oh...Guess I lost track of the time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

We see a clock on the wall behind Ed. But he makes no move to look at it. Instead, he just takes a beat, and then:

ED (cont'd)

I was going to ask him what he wanted for his birthday?

CICI (ON PHONE)

Ed, you don't have to...he's just excited that you're coming.

ED (ON PHONE)

So am I...

A slightly awkward pause.

CICI (ON PHONE)

Well...good night, Ed.

ED

Good night, Mrs. Arthur.

Cici hangs up, looks at Mike, -- *that was a little odd* -- but they both shrug it off as we CUT TO:

INT. ED'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Ed puts down his phone.

He's seated at his desk, in front of those three state-of-the-art computer monitors. He turns to the center monitor, which is open to Alexis' Facebook page.

Ed stares at the page...

...and then *clicks* on a tab and begins scrolling through dozens of pictures until he stops at one, and smiles.

*It's a photo of the Arthur Family, on a beach somewhere, their arms around each other, smiling.*

INT. ELMSFORD RACEWAY - DAY

Taylor's birthday party is in full swing as he and his FRIENDS race miniature electric-powered slot cars around a miniature race track using hand controllers. Mike, Cici, some PARENTS, and Ed, look on.

INT. ELMSFORD RACEWAY (PRIVATE PARTY ROOM) - LATER

Taylor's friends serenade the nine-year old in a rounding chorus of "Happy Birthday" as Cici presents her son a cake.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mike is capturing all the action on a little video camera. But he's not the only one.

On the other side of the room, Ed has his iPhone out, and is also documenting the scene by taking video.

INT. ELMSFORD RACEWAY (PRIVATE PARTY ROOM) - LATER

Taylor is opening presents. He unwraps a package, revealing:

TAYLOR

A telescope! Thanks, Jacob!

Taylor looks to a BOY with glasses, and smiles. Cici eyes the gift table and spots:

CICI

One more.

She grabs a small square box wrapped in Spider Man gift wrapping and glances at the attached card.

CICI (cont'd)

This is from...Ed.

Ed smiles as he watches Taylor grab the box and rip off the wrapping, revealing...

TAYLOR

An iPhone! No way! Awesome!!!

Mike and Cici exchange a shocked look -- *a fucking iPhone?* -- as Taylor hugs Ed.

INT. ARTHUR HOUSE (KITCHEN) - CONTINUOUS

Cici and an agitated Mike discuss the gift as they put the finishing touches on dinner.

MIKE

...I don't care! It's completely inappropriate! Whether he paid for it or not!

CICI

I understand that, but--

MIKE

But what!?!...

CICI

All I'm saying is, maybe it wouldn't hurt for him to have a phone.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CICI (cont'd)

It would teach him responsibility and truthfully, Mike, it would make things a hell of lot easier on me.

MIKE

Ceece, he can't keep his head out of those goddamn video games as it is! We give him a phone--

The land line RINGS. But the phone is not in its cradle...

INT. ARTHUR HOUSE (TV ROOM) - CONTINUOUS

...it's is lying on the couch, right next to Taylor, who is playing Wii. He pauses the game, and picks up the phone.

TAYLOR (ON PHONE)

Hello?

INT. ED'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Ed is sitting in his small kitchen, phone to his ear.  
INTERCUT.

ED (ON PHONE)

Hi, Taylor. It's Ed.

TAYLOR (ON PHONE)

Oh. Hi.

ED (ON PHONE)

So... Do you like your new phone?

TAYLOR (ON PHONE)

I don't know. Dad hasn't decided whether I can use it or not.

ED (ON PHONE)

Why wouldn't he let you use it?

TAYLOR (ON PHONE)

I don't know. Cause he's being mean.

CICI (O.S.)

Alex! Taylor! Dinner's ready.

TAYLOR (ON PHONE)

I gotta go.

ED (ON PHONE)

Oh, okay... I'll talk to you later then.

INT. ARTHUR HOUSE (KITCHEN) - MOMENTS LATER

Taylor enters the kitchen.

CICI  
Who was on the phone, honey?

TAYLOR  
Ed.

Taylor moves to the table as Mike and Cici exchange a look -- *they are starting to get just a little uncomfortable.*

INT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

Ed is in the park. He has a digital camera in his hand, and is awkwardly trying to take a picture of himself, when a YOUNG COUPLE walk by hand in hand.

ED  
Excuse me?...Um... Would you mind...?

The MAN nods and takes the camera from Ed.

MAN  
Where do you want...?

Ed looks around. Then moves next to a tree. He puts his hands by his side and smiles as the man takes his photo. The man moves to return the camera, when:

ED  
Would you mind just...?

Ed changes his pose, putting one hand on his hip. The guy hesitates and then raises the camera, as Ed looks into the lens and smiles.

EXT. LACROSSE FIELD - DAY

A high school girls' lacrosse game is in progress. Alexis, on attack, catches a pass and runs toward the goal, cradling the ball. She ducks, avoiding a DEFENDER, and fires toward the net, just beyond the outstretched stick of the goalie. GOAL!

In the stands Mike, Cici and Taylor, CHEER.

MIKE  
Nice shot, Alex!

CICI  
Way to go Alex!

MIKE  
She's getting good.

Cici nods, proud, when she squints, noticing something.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CICI

Mike.

Mike glances at her, and then turns, following her gaze to the near sideline where he sees:

*Ed, walking toward the stands.*

MIKE

(under his breath)

You gotta be kidding me?

The agitated Mike makes a move to stand, but Cici stops him and eyes the oblivious Taylor. Mike reluctantly settles into his seat, when Taylor spots Ed.

TAYLOR

Ed!

Ed smiles and waves as he makes his way up into the stands.

EXT. LACROSSE FIELD - LATER

The game is over. Alexis' team is huddled around their COACH, when they execute a small CHEER and move toward their waiting families. Alexis spots her family...and Ed.

MIKE

Great game, Alex.

CICI

Honey, that goal was fantastic.

ED

You played really well, Alexis... This is my first lacrosse game.

Ed smiles at Alexis, who glances at her parents as if to ask: *what the hell is he doing here?*

Mike is mum, although we can tell he's pretty *irked*. Cici tries to cut through the awkwardness by asking her kids:

CICI

You guys hungry?

TAYLOR

We getting pizza?

Cici smiles at her son and nods. Taylor looks up at Ed.

TAYLOR (cont'd)

You want pizza, Ed?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ED  
Sounds great.

Everyone takes a collective step toward the parking lot when, Mike puts his hand on Ed's chest, stopping him in his tracks.

MIKE  
(pointed, direct)  
I don't think so, Ed. It's going to be a family dinner. Okay?

Ed stares at Mike, taken aback. Taylor starts to protest but Cici SHUSHES him as she ushers her kids toward the car.

MIKE (cont'd)  
I'll see you at work.

And with that, Mike turns to catch up to his family, leaving the flustered Ed standing alone at the edge of the field.

INT. PIZZA RESTAURANT - DUSK

The Arthur's are seated at a booth as a WAITRESS drops off beers for the adults and sodas for the kids. Mike, still burning, is hiding behind a menu, while Taylor pouts.

TAYLOR  
Why did Dad have to be so mean to Ed?

ALEXIS  
Why do you care so much, he's a freakin' weirdo.

TAYLOR  
He is not!

CICI  
Hey!  
(to Taylor)  
It's Sunday. Your dad just wanted us to have a family dinner.

Cici glances at Mike. *Perhaps he could have been a little nicer. At least in front of the kids.*

MIKE  
I'm sorry, kiddo... Just, next time you want to invite Ed out just ask me and mom before okay?

TAYLOR  
Okay...but, I didn't invite him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mike and Cici glare at one another -- *troubled* -- as we  
DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ARTHUR PUBLISHING (MIKE'S OFFICE) - DAY

Mike is behind his desk, red-lining a manuscript, when he  
glances up, and we see that he's not alone.

Ed is on the other side of the desk doing some tech work on  
Mike's desktop. Mike eyes Ed for a beat, and then looks back  
down at the manuscript when:

ED  
Your graphics card was overloaded...  
that's why the performance was slow. I  
dumped the old content into the cloud...  
Should be fine now.

Ed stands, and takes a step toward the door, when:

MIKE  
Hey, Ed... How did you know about Alexis'  
lacrosse game?

Ed turns and looks at Mike. He hesitates, and then:

ED  
Alexis... It was posted on her Facebook  
page... We're friends now.

Mike nods, a touch relieved. Although we can tell that a line  
has been crossed. And that Mike is now wary of his I.T. Guy.

ED (cont'd)  
I'm sorry, Mike. I didn't mean to  
intrude... Daisy and I broke up... Guess  
I just wanted to get out of the house...

Mike frowns. Can't help but feel for the guy.

MIKE  
I'm sorry, Ed, that sucks... And I'm  
sorry if I snapped at you... Sunday is  
kind of a family day and...generally I  
like to keep the work stuff and family--

ANDY'S VOICE (OVER INTERCOM)  
Your wife's on the phone.

Mike raises his index finger indicating that Ed should hold  
on a second as he picks up the phone.

MIKE (ON PHONE)  
Hey.

INT. WESTCHESTER CONSERVATORY (PRACTICE ROOM) - DAY

Cici stands, a cell pressed to her ear. A YOUNG STUDENT sits patiently with his cello behind her. INTERCUT.

CICI (ON PHONE)  
Monica just called. She's sick. Can you get home to pick up Taylor?

MIKE (ON PHONE)  
I can't. I've got drinks with Grayson... He'll have to do after school club, Ceece.

CICI (ON PHONE)  
Oh shit... Alright. See you tonight.

Cici hangs up. Mike looks slightly troubled.

ED  
Everything alright?

MIKE  
This kid...bullies Taylor at after school club. Last time he came home with a couple of little bruises.

Andy sticks his head into the office.

ANDY  
Ed, Bryce has got a software problem.

Ed hesitates, glances back at Mike -- who dismisses him with a nod -- and then heads toward the door.

EXT./INT. OLD TOWN TAVERN - LATE AFTERNOON

Mike walks briskly into the tavern where he spots one of his prized authors, DANIEL GRAYSON, a distinguished looking 50-year old, seated at a booth with his prickly, no-nonsense agent, CHRIS.

MIKE  
Sorry I'm late. I got a stuck on a call.

Grayson smiles -- *no worries* -- and nods at his drink.

GRAYSON  
We started without you.

MIKE  
Then let me catch up.  
(getting Waitress' attention)  
Talisker on the rocks, thanks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mike turns back to Grayson and Chris, and smiles.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (PLAYGROUND) - LATE AFTERNOON

A dodgeball game is in progress. About two-dozen excited KIDS SCREAM and SHOUT as they chuck nerf balls at each other.

In the middle of the chaos is Taylor, who smiles as he avoids getting hit with a ball. He begins to run after the errant ball, and as he does, we PEEL AWAY...

...AND MOVE across the black top, past the watchful eyes of a SUPERVISOR, and a GROUP OF GIRLS playing hopscotch...

...all the way up toward a fence that looks down onto the playground, where we see:

*ED...leaning against the opposite side of the fence, looking down at the action below.*

INT. OLD TOWN TAVERN - LATE AFTERNOON

A smiling Mike is on his second Scotch as he says:

MIKE

It's a fantastic piece of work, Daniel.  
It's your best book since TIMBER FALLS.

CHRIS

We think so too... Which is why we want to make sure Arthur Publishing is going to throw everything behind it.

MIKE

(a little annoyed)  
We always do, Chris, you know that.

Chris nods. But then:

CHRIS

I guess what I'm asking is, come the fall, are you still going to have the *resources* to throw everything behind it?... You're one of the few boutiques still standing, Mike. That's a real tribute to you and your company, but... we've heard rumors. And if Arthur Publishing goes under, we'll lose out on holiday sales. And we can't afford that.

Mike looks stung as we DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ARTHUR HOUSE (DRIVEWAY) - NIGHT

The automatic gate swings open as a still agitated-looking Mike pulls into the driveway.

INT. ARTHUR HOUSE - NIGHT

Mike enters the house, hangs up his coat, and steps into the living room. He hesitates. The house is strangely quiet.

MIKE

Hello?

INT. ARTHUR HOUSE (STAIRS/HALLWAY/OFFICE) - MOMENTS LATER

Mike is on the steps. He reaches the second floor, and begins moving down the hall, when he hears a sound that makes him smile.

It's Taylor, GIGGLING. Mike follows the sounds of his GIGGLING son to the home office where he sees Taylor, seated at the desk-top computer.

MIKE

Hey, kiddo.

TAYLOR

Hey, Dad. Look, Ed showed me how to make an avatar.

Mike crosses to the computer. On the screen he can see an avatar that is beginning to look like Taylor.

MIKE

Oh, yeah? When did he do that?

CICI (O.S.)

Hey, Hon, didn't hear you come in.

Mike turns to his wife, standing in the doorway, and can see immediately that *something's off with her*.

CICI (cont'd)

So...guess who was at after school club when I picked up Taylor?

Mike looks at her, not sure what she means, when:

A TOILET FLUSHES. And the bathroom door across the hall opens, revealing:

ED

Hey, Mike.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mike's jaw drops as Ed steps into the office, moves past Cici -- *and the stunned Mike* -- and kneels next to Taylor. He hits a couple of keys on the keyboard, and Taylor smiles.

TAYLOR

Check it out. It looks just like me.

Mike slowly turns, but instead of eyeing the computer, he *glares* at the oblivious Ed, as we DISSOLVE TO:

EXT./INT. JAGUAR (MOVING/IDLE) - NIGHT

The Jaguar pulls into the train station parking lot. Mike is *burning*, staring straight ahead, unable to look at Ed.

ED

Thanks for the ride... Um... Is everything okay?

A beat. And then:

MIKE

No, Ed. Everything's not okay... What are you doing? Showing up at Taylor's school?

Ed is caught off guard. Surprised by Mike's agitation.

ED

After you told me what had happened, I...I felt bad...for Taylor, I...I figured someone should be there in case... I'm sorry, Mike, I thought you would be pleased.

MIKE

You thought I'd be pleased?... After I told you, *today*, that I like to keep--

ED

Mike, I only came to the house because Taylor invited me over...for dinner... I never would have -- Did I do something wrong?

Mike takes a beat, and then:

MIKE

This isn't working out, Ed.

Ed is turning white.

ED

Wh...what do you mean?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE

I mean you make me *uncomfortable*. You make my wife...*uncomfortable*... You're fired.

Ed looks like he's been sucker punched in the gut. He's starting to TREMBLE. He opens his mouth to speak, but all that comes out is:

ED

Wh... What?

MIKE

I don't want you coming in tomorrow. Not even for your stuff. We'll box it up and send it you. Understand?

Ed's world is shattering. The TREMBLING getting more intense.

MIKE (cont'd)

I'm sorry... Please, get out of the car.

Ed reaches for the door with his TREMBLING hand, as we CUT TO:

INT. TRAIN (MOVING) - NIGHT

ED. In the bathroom. Hunched over the toilet, VOMITING.

INT. ARTHUR HOUSE (BEDROOM) - NIGHT

Mike is getting ready for bed. Cici is already in bed. Seems a little downcast.

CICI

Taylor's going to be heart-broken.

Mike sits on the bed. Puts a sympathetic hand on Cici.

MIKE

I'll talk to Taylor tomorrow.

Cici nods, as we DISSOLVE TO:

EXT./INT. JAGUAR (MOVING) - MORNING

Mike drives Alexis to school. The girl is working her phone, texting away.

ALEXIS

(to herself)

Oh my God... Oh my God! Carly just broke up with Steven.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE  
That's huge.

ALEXIS  
I know, I can't...

Alexis stops herself, and glares at her Dad. She forgot for a second who she was talking to. Mike smiles, as the car pulls up to the school. Alexis is about to step out, when:

MIKE  
Hey, hold on... I had to fire Ed last night, so... I think it might be best if you...de-friended him, or whatever you call it.

ALEXIS  
Ew. I'm not friends with Ed.

MIKE  
I mean on Facebook.

ALEXIS  
I know. I'm not friends with him. He sent me like a thousand requests but I ignored them.

Mike seems a bit flustered. But Alexis doesn't notice.

ALEXIS (cont'd)  
I gotta go. Love you.

And with that, Alexis hops out of the car, and runs toward a gaggle of girlfriends standing outside the school.

Mike takes a beat, shakes it off, and pulls away.

INT. ARTHUR PUBLISHING - DAY

Mike is at his desk working when Andy peeks his head in:

ANDY  
Teddy Winters' agents are on the phone.

Mike is caught off guard. But quickly recovers.

MIKE  
Put'em through.

Andy nods and exits as Mike glances at the blinking light on his phone, takes a deep breath, and then picks up the line.

MIKE (ON PHONE) (cont'd)  
This is Mike.

INT. ARTHUR PUBLISHING (MIKE'S OFFICE) - LATER

ECU - AN EXPLODING CHAMPAGNE CORK, AS WE PULL BACK TO REVEAL:

Mike's core team, about a dozen employees, APPLAUDING.

MIKE  
Just a little liquid token of my  
appreciation.

Mike pours each of them a taste and raises his plastic cup.

MIKE (cont'd)  
This would not have happened without all  
your hard work, so thank you. All of you.

Everyone raises their cups and downs their taste.

MIKE (cont'd)  
Now get the fuck out of my office.

Everyone CHUCKLES and begins filing out.

MIKE (cont'd)  
Frankie.

Frankie turns, as Mike approaches.

MIKE (cont'd)  
You think we can get Teddy some revised  
art work by next week?

FRANKIE  
Have I ever let you down, Old Man?

She smiles...and then walks away.

INT. ARTHUR PUBLISHING (HALLWAY) - DAY

Mike, looking pleased as punch, moves through the reception area and down a small hallway where he enters the men's room.

INT. ARTHUR PUBLISHING (MEN'S ROOM) - MOMENTS LATER

Mike, at the urinal, finishes his business, flushes, and approaches the sinks. He flips on a faucet and begins washing his hands, when he glances into the mirror over the sink:

AND JUMPS, STARTLED.

*Ed is standing behind Mike, his back to the far wall, **staring** at him. He looks pale. Like he hasn't showered or slept.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE

Jesus, Ed... What are you doing here?

ED

I just...wanted to apologize...if I--

MIKE

Ed...

ED

Please...I just want things to go back to the way they were... Please...

Mike is taken aback by the sheer desperation. It's not just sad, but *brutally childlike*.

MIKE

I'm sorry, Ed, but you need to lea--

ED

**PLEASE!!! PLEASE!!!**

Ed turns and PUNCHES the wall! Again, and again, and again!

Mike watches, stunned, frightened, when Ed stops and takes a deep calming breath. He looks down at his hand. The knuckles are bruised, and bleeding. He then looks up at Mike. Stares at him. Then turns, and exits the bathroom.

INT. TRIBECA GRILL - DAY

Mike is seated across from Daniel Grayson. They've finished their lunch and are each nursing espressos.

MIKE

...at the very least a U.K. tour. Your sales have always been strong there. And this one's a no-brainer for that market.

Daniel nods. He likes the sound of that. He finishes his espresso and looks at Mike.

GRAYSON

Look, Mike, I wanted to apologize for Chris yesterday. He's a prick.

MIKE

He's an agent... Don't worry about it. He's just doing his job.

A WAITER appears holding a leather bound check holder. Mike's card is sticking out. The Waiter smiles at Mike awkwardly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WAITER

I'm sorry, Mr. Arthur, but your card has been declined.

MIKE

That's not possible. Run it again.

The Waiter hesitates, and then, with a lowered voice...

WAITER

I did...three times. I'm supposed to cut it, but...

The Waiter sheepishly places the credit card back on the table. Mike takes the card and smiles awkwardly.

MIKE

Must be some mistake.

Mike opens his wallet and fishes around for an alternative.

GRAYSON

Don't worry about it. I got it.

Grayson takes out his card and hands it to the waiter.

GRAYSON (cont'd)

You've been buying my lunch for the better part of 20 years.

Mike tries to smile, but he's too damn embarrassed.

EXT. GREENWICH STREET - DAY

Mike walks down the street talking to the credit card company.

REPRESENTATIVE (ON PHONE)

Yes, Mr. Arthur, I checked your records. Looks like you cancelled the card, today.

MIKE (ON PHONE)

What?

REPRESENTATIVE (ON PHONE)

At 12:47 PM... I'm looking at the notes right here. Says you gave us your password.

Mike stops cold. *That sonofabitch...*

The CALL WAITING alert BEEPS. It takes Mike a moment to snap out of it. He glances at the phone and sees: CICI CALLING.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE (ON PHONE)  
 Could you hold on for second, please?  
 (answering Cici's call)  
 Hey.

INT. WHOLE FOODS - DAY

Cici is standing in front of the CASHIER with a salad, and holding three credit cards in her hand. A line of ANNOYED CUSTOMERS stand behind her, *glaring*. INTERCUT.

CICI  
 Hey, did you cancel the cards? I'm at Whole Foods. Everything's been declined.

INT. ARTHUR HOUSE - NIGHT

Taylor shuffles down the stairs, and moves into the living room, where we see Cici, and then Mike, pacing, on the phone.

MIKE (ON PHONE)  
 ...And you'll be able to put a rush on the new cards?...

Taylor passes his parents and moves through a set of opened sliding doors into the TV room where he turns on the Wii, grabs his joystick, and glances up at the starter screen.

*A new game has been downloaded: **CALL OF DUTY: BLACK OPS**. The very game that Cici said was too violent and did not want him to play.*

Taylor's eyes BULGE with excitement. He glances back at his parents and then tip-toes toward the sliding doors, and quietly closes them.

INT. ARTHUR HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Mike hangs up the phone and sits next to Cici on the couch.

MIKE  
 Nothing. No suspicious charges.

CICI  
 You really think it was, Ed?

MIKE  
 He knew the password, Ceece. The calls were made...not even ten minutes after I told him he wasn't getting his job back.

CICI  
 You changed the password?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE

Of course.

CICI

Well, he was obviously upset. I'm sure that will be the end of it.

EXT. ARTHUR HOUSE - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

All is quiet...

INT. ARTHUR HOUSE (BEDROOM) - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

Mike and Cici are sound asleep, when Cici opens her eyes.

CICI

Mike?... Mike.

Mike opens his eyes. Looks at his wife.

CICI (cont'd)

Do you hear that?

INT. ARTHUR HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Mike exits the bedroom into the second floor hallway as we become aware of a faint sound. Mike hesitates, and then follows the sound, moving down the hall, toward the stairs.

It sounds like...*music*. And as Mike begins moving down the stairs, we can begin to make out the song, and the lyrics:

***I put a spell on you/Because you're mine/You better stop the things that you're doin'/I said 'Watch out! I ain't lyin'***

Mike comes to the bottom of the stairs. It's dark down here. He pauses, looking around, and then opens the hall closet, grabs a baseball bat, and steps into the living room. His anxious, vigilant eyes take in the room, as he slowly moves through it, following the music, until he comes to the opened sliding doors to the TV room.

Mike stops. And stares into the dark room, his heart BEATING FAST. The room appears to be empty. And so he steps inside, and follows the music to the source.

The family stereo. A high-end puppy, built into the wall.

Mike stares at the stereo. The LCD display is illuminated and reads "I PUT A SPELL ON YOU." Mike stares curiously at the display, as we CUT TO:

INT. ED'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Ed is seated in front of those state-of-the-art monitors. The middle screen is illuminated, and opened to a **Smarthome** web page. In the corner are the words: **Arthur Home Account**.

INT. ARTHUR HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Mike is where we left him. Staring at that LCD display, when finally, he presses the power button, killing the song. He turns, and nervously glances around his now quiet, still house, as we CUT BACK TO...

INT. ED'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

...Ed, as a smile slowly creeps across his face.

INT. ARTHUR PUBLISHING (MIKE'S OFFICE) - DAY

Bill, the old CPA, slides a manila folder across the desk to Mike. Mike opens it up and sees several documents inside.

BILL

Your signature on these will represent that you did this alone. **Without** my consultation.

Mike hesitates, just for a moment...and then starts signing.

BILL (cont'd)

In a few months, if a couple of your titles pop and there's an influx of cash, I should be able to square everything.

MIKE

Thanks, Bill.

Mike finishes signing and hands the folder back to Bill who stands, and exits. Mike watches him go and then EXHALES trying to purge his stress, when:

KNOCK KNOCK It's Frankie. She pokes her head in.

FRANKIE

Hey, you got a sec?

Mike nods, as Frankie enters. His stress is palpable.

FRANKIE (cont'd)

You alright?

MIKE

Yeah, fine.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Frankie glares at him. *Bullshit*. She then walks around his desk, behind Mike, and puts her hands on his shoulders.

MIKE (cont'd)  
(with a smile)  
What are you doing?

In a second, he has his answer, as Frankie begins digging into his shoulders and giving him a killer massage.

FRANKIE  
Trying to get rid of the stress that's  
plastered all over on your face.

*Damn, she's good.* Mike closes his eyes.

MIKE  
Jesus.

As she continues to massage Mike's shoulders, WE PEEL AWAY, and move toward Mike's desktop computer...

...and the little camera lens at the top. We move closer, and CLOSER to that tiny lens, as if we're about to penetrate it, when suddenly:

WE PULL BACK FROM THE TINY LENS AND SEE THAT...

*We're looking at a different computer...*

INT. ED'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

...*Ed's computer*. The I.T. Guy is watching Frankie massage Mike shoulders on his middle screen. He then glances at the screen to his left and begins typing into the keyboard.

INT. ARTHUR PUBLISHING (MIKE'S OFFICE) - CONTINUOUS

Frankie continues to work on the appreciative Mike's shoulders, when, once again, WE PEEL AWAY...

...but this time, we move down to the edge of Mike's desk where his iPhone sits. We move closer to the phone when the LCD screen lights up -- *as if by magic* -- as we suddenly...

**...shoot out of the office like a laser, darting up, and across the city's skyscrapers, BOUNCING off a cell tower atop the Chrysler building...**

**...and then dashing over the city, when we RICOCHET off a tower on the George Washington Bridge and...**

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

*...hurtle across the Hudson River, into Westchester County, where we hit a third tower, atop a power line and come crashing down, right into:*

INT. WESTCHESTER CONSERVATORY (PRACTICE ROOM) - CONTINUOUS

Cici's in the middle of a lesson, when:

HER PHONE RINGS.

CICI

Excuse me.

Cici stands and moves toward her purse which is resting on a piano. She reaches inside, grabs her phone and sees the display. It reads: **MIKE CALLING.**

CICI (ON PHONE) (cont'd)

Hey, I'm in the middle of a...

But Cici stops, as she hears a GUTTURAL MOAN.

CICI (ON PHONE) (cont'd)

Mike?

A brief silence, but then, another, APPRECIATIVE MOAN.

MIKE (ON PHONE) (O.S.)

Oh... God... Frankie...

Cici's face falls, a sudden pit in her stomach.

INT. ARTHUR HOUSE (KITCHEN) - NIGHT

The Arthur family is seated around the kitchen table, finishing dinner. Hitch is at Taylor's feet. Cici seems distant. Mike and Alexis are in the middle of a discussion.

MIKE

(exasperated)

Alex, *Death In Venice* is considered one of the best books of the 20th century.

ALEXIS

It's about a pedophile who stalks a boy around Venice for 100 pages and then dies. If that's one of the best books of the 20th century than I hate to tell you, Dad, but 20th century lit really sucked a fat one.

TAYLOR

What does sucked a fat one mean?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Cici glares at Alexis, who just rolls her eyes and stands.

ALEXIS

I gotta go write this stupid paper.

Mike looks at Cici.

MIKE

(playful, re: Alexis)

I want a DNA test. That is not my daughter.

TAYLOR

Can I go play Wii?

MIKE

You get 20 minutes, okay, kiddo?

Taylor nods and runs off. Mike eyes his wife. And now that they're alone...

MIKE (cont'd)

You alright? You've been quiet all night.

Cici takes a beat. And then hits him with it.

CICI

Are you fucking Frankie Bailey?

Mike stops. Utterly floored by the question.

CICI (cont'd)

You accidentally called me...this afternoon... I heard you, Mike.

Mike looks baffled...when he finally remembers.

MIKE

Jesus, Ceece, she -- She came into my office. Right after Bill left. She could tell I was stressed...and...started massaging my shoulders.

(takes her hand)

Ceece, that's all it was. I swear.

Cici nods. And then:

CICI

(vulnerable)

She's very beautiful.

MIKE

Stop.

(looks deep into her eyes)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MIKE (cont'd)  
You're very beautiful... And I'm still  
crazy about you.

A tear runs down her cheek, as she smiles.

INT. FRANKIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Frankie is at a computer, putting the finishing touches on a jacket design in photo shop when:

DING. The IM window opens on the screen. A little square picture icon of Mike appears next to his name: **Michael Arthur**. And then, the following text: "*Hey you.*"

Frankie smiles. And then sets her fingers to the keys. She types: "*Hey yourself.*"

Frankie stares at the screen, when:

DING. "*What are you doing?*"

Frankie hesitates, then quickly types: "*Working on the artwork for Grayson. What are you doing?*"

Frankie waits a beat, staring at the screen.

DING. "*Nothing. Just thinking about earlier :)*"

Frankie BLUSHES as we CUT TO:

INT. ED'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ed is at the computer. On the middle screen is the IM exchange between Frankie and Mike. Ed types into the keyboard, when another line of dialogue -- **as if written by Mike** -- appears on the screen. It reads: "*Can we do it again?*" Ed smiles to himself as he awaits her reply.

INT. ARTHUR HOUSE (TV ROOM) - NIGHT

Taylor is in the middle of playing CALL OF DUTY: BLACK OPS. On the screen, one soldier gruesomely disembowels his enemy.

Cici opens the sliding door and peeks her head in.

CICI  
Hey, sweetie, it's time for bed.

Cici stops seeing the horrific violence on the screen.

CICI (cont'd)  
Where did you get this game?... Taylor?

Taylor freezes. Busted.

INT. ARTHUR HOUSE (TAYLOR'S BEDROOM) - LATER

Taylor, wearing pajamas, gets into bed. Looks like he's been crying. Mike sits on the bed as Cici stands in the doorway.

TAYLOR

You're not mad at me?

Mike looks at his son and his heart melts.

MIKE

No. I'm not mad at you... But I need you to listen to me. Ed is...he's troubled. Do you know what I mean by that?

TAYLOR

It means that he's sick...  
(pointing to his head)  
...up here.

MIKE

That's right... So I need you to promise me that if you see him, or if he tries to contact you, call you, anything...that you'll tell me and mom right away... Can you promise me that?

TAYLOR

I promise.

Mike smiles. And then hugs his son.

EXT. ARTHUR HOUSE (POOL) - MORNING

Cici swims her laps as Hitch doggie paddles alongside her.

INT. ARTHUR HOUSE (KITCHEN) - MORNING

Morning chaos. Taylor is at the kitchen table eating cereal. Alexis is next to him, texting away on her iPhone. Mike is at the island counter, a cell phone pressed to his ear, staring down at his iPad and some beautiful jacket art on the screen.

MIKE (ON PHONE)

Looks great. Grayson's going to love it.

Cici, dressed for work, hurries into the kitchen.

CICI

Taylor, sweetie, come on. I'm late.

Taylor clears his bowl, while Cici fills the doggie bowl.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE (ON PHONE)  
Yeah, he's coming at ten. Alright.

Mike hangs up and glances at his watch.

MIKE (cont'd)  
Alex, we gotta go.

EXT. ARTHUR HOUSE (DRIVEWAY) - DAY

Mike and Alex get into the Jag. Mike throws the car into Reverse, backs toward some bushes, and then puts the car into Drive as he re-directs the vehicle toward the front gate, when:

HE SLAMS ON THE BRAKES.

Cici's Lexus is sitting in front of the *closed* gate. Cici rolls down the window and looks back at Mike and shrugs.

CICI  
It won't open.

MIKE  
Back up.

Cici backs up enabling Mike to drive forward. He stops the Jag at the front of the gate...*but it doesn't open.*

MIKE (cont'd)  
You gotta be kidding me.

INT. ARTHUR HOUSE (DRIVEWAY) - LATER

An antsy Mike is on his cell phone. Cici is by his side. We can hear a Smarthome REP through the line.

REP (ON PHONE)  
I'm just running a technical override program. Should only be another second...  
Okay. How about now?

Mike glances at the gate. It doesn't budge.

MIKE (ON PHONE)  
Nope.

REP (ON PHONE)  
Hmm... Are you sure?

Mike stares at the gate *two inches from his nose.*

MIKE (ON PHONE)  
Pretty sure.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REP (ON PHONE)

Oh, geeze...well then, I'm afraid we'll have to send an electrician over to do a manual override.

MIKE (ON PHONE)

How long will that take?

REP (ON PHONE)

We guarantee under an hour, Sir.

Mike anxiously eyes his watch -- *you gotta be fucking kidding me!* -- as we CUT TO:

EXT./INT. JAGUAR (MOVING) - DAY

The Jaguar speeds down that rural road that runs over the train tracks. Mike is on the phone with Andy.

MIKE (ON PHONE)

Just stall 'em when they arrive.  
Hopefully I can get there in forty-five.

Mike hangs up and eyes the clock. It's **9:50 AM**.

INT. ARTHUR PUBLISHING - DAY

Mike steps out of an elevator to see Daniel Grayson and Chris, his prickly agent, seated in reception.

MIKE

I'm so sorry.

INT. ARTHUR PUBLISHING (CONFERENCE ROOM) - DAY

Mike and his department heads are seated around the conference table. Grayson and Chris face the flat screen TV as JOAN, the head of marketing, addresses them.

JOAN

...our art department has created several terrific designs. As always, we'd love your input, so, why don't we take a look.

Joan nods at Frankie, who TAPS her iPad and then looks at the flat screen as the title, *ABERNATHY'S GHOST*, appears in white font over a black background.

Slowly, a crimson color, like blood, begins dripping down from the sixteen white characters. It looks like a super cheesy, animated, B-movie poster.

CHRIS

Is this some kind of a joke?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mike and Frankie exchange an alarmed look as Frankie eyes her iPad, and begins furiously investigating. On the flat screen, the crimson blood continues to pour down from the white characters and run down the page.

MIKE

Andy.

Andy grabs a remote and TURNS OFF the screen. Mike turns to Chris and Grayson.

MIKE (cont'd)

I'm so sorry. That's not what we prepared.

Mike looks to Frankie...

FRANKIE

It's not here... I don't...

Frankie shakes her head, baffled, as Grayson and his agent exchange a troubled look.

INT. ARTHUR PUBLISHING (CONFERENCE ROOM) - LATER

DEREK, the chunky new IT Guy, is seated next to Frankie. He's studying his own tablet which is connected to Frankie's iPad. Across the table Andy has his own laptop open and is searching for something.

DEREK

Looks like the file was downloaded from a remote site, off network.

MIKE

What does that mean?

DEREK

It means someone hacked into the system, erased the original file and replaced it with this one here... I can try to do a system re-set but there's no guarantee.

Mike is *seething*, but he swallows it, as he turns to Grayson and the impatient-looking Chris.

MIKE

It's alright. Frankie emailed me the file earlier this morning.

Andy looks up from the laptop.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANDY

It's not here, Mike... There's no email from Frankie.

MIKE

That's not possible, she...

Mike looks to Frankie, who is checking her phone.

FRANKIE

It's gone, Mike. The email I sent you... it's gone.

Chris glances at Grayson. He's had just about enough.

INT. ARTHUR PUBLISHING (ELEVATOR BAY) - DAY

Grayson and Chris step into an opening elevator when:

MIKE (O.S.)

Daniel!

Mike runs to them and stops just outside the elevator.

MIKE (cont'd)

I'm sorry about today... It's just a little glitch. I don't want you to think--

GRAYSON

Look, Mike, I don't know what's going on here, but...I can't risk my book on whatever it is... We have an offer from Penguin and...I'm going to accept... I'm sorry.

And with that, the elevator doors close.

INT. ARTHUR PUBLISHING (CONFERENCE ROOM) - LATER

A furious-looking Mike, is standing behind Derek, who is studying his tablet which is still connected to Frankie's iPad. Frankie, Andy, and a few others are still in the room.

DEREK

This guy probably installed a sniffer which means he can see everything on the network. Employees credit cards, bank accounts, passwords...

MIKE

You guys can do that?

DEREK

It's pretty easy, Mr. Arthur.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE

Well, can we shut him out?

DEREK

Possibly, but he probably has a DDOS in place.

MIKE

A what?

DEREK

A back door. He could have set it up at any point while he was working here so in case...if you fired him and wanted to shut him out by changing your passwords, he could get back in.

MIKE

So, what are you saying. We need to install a new system?

DEREK

You could, but, that's an expensive option for what could ultimately be a temporary solution.

MIKE

What do you mean?

DEREK

I mean if the guy's determined, he could get into either yours or one of your employees accounts through spam, and once he's into one account on the company server it's not long before he's back into every account.

Mike is beside himself.

MIKE

Then how do we stop him?

DEREK

It's tricky... The truth is, if he's really motivated, it's almost impossible to block him out.

MIKE

It's fucking illegal isn't it!?

Derek nods. It most certainly is.

EXT. VARICK STREET - DAY

Mike crosses a street and heads toward a police precinct on the far side of the block, when:

His phone RINGS. Mike glances at the ID: UNKNOWN NUMBER.

MIKE (ON PHONE)  
Hello?

VOICE (ON PHONE) (O.S.)  
Hello, Mike.

Mike FREEZES, recognizing the voice: *Ed*.

ED (ON PHONE) (O.S.)  
They won't be able to help you.

MIKE (ON PHONE)  
What are you talking about?

ED (ON PHONE) (O.S.)  
The police.

Mike **eyes** the police station in front of him...

...and then spins around, looking in every direction.

MIKE (ON PHONE)  
You following me!? Huh!? You pathetic  
piece of shit!

EXTREME CLOSE UP on Mike's phone, as suddenly...

***...we shoot into the sky, way up into the atmosphere and into space where we bounce off a satellite, and then shoot back down to earth at warp speed where we crash right into...***

INT. ED'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

***...Ed's computer.***

Ed is staring at his monitors. On the middle screen is a Google Map ZOOMED IN ON Varick Street. A little red dot -- Mike -- BLINKS next to the words: *New York Police Department. 1st precinct.* INTERCUT.

MIKE (ON PHONE)  
What do you want, Ed?

A beat. And then...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ED (ON PHONE)

I want you to know what it's like -- to  
lose *everything*.

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY

Mike sits in a waiting area, sipping a cup of crappy vending machine coffee. He eyes his watch and frowns, when:

VOICE (O.S.)

Michael Arthur?

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - LATER

Mike sits across from DICK REYNOLDS, late 40's, a no-nonsense detective in the cyber crimes unit. Reynolds is taking notes as he asks his questions. They are mid-conversation.

REYNOLDS

Do you have any proof that Mr. Porter  
cancelled the credit cards?

MIKE

He's the only one that knew the password  
outside of myself and my wife.

Reynolds nods and then continues.

REYNOLDS

Were there any unauthorized charges made  
before you cancelled the cards?

Mike shakes his head, "no".

REYNOLDS (cont'd)

Did he take or move any money from either  
your personal or corporate accounts?

MIKE

No.

REYNOLDS

Well... Mr. Arthur, I'm sorry, but  
there's really not much to go on here.

MIKE

This sonofabitch sabotaged my business.  
It could cost me millions of... It could  
cost me my company... Please.

REYNOLDS

Can you prove that?... That he sabotaged  
your business?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE

Of course not! I thought that was your job!

Mike takes a beat, trying to calm himself.

MIKE (cont'd)

Look, he's been harassing me, and my family. He ah...he downloaded a violent video game on my son's Nintendo...

Mike stops. Knows that sounded pathetic, when it hits him:

MIKE (cont'd)

This morning...I didn't realize it at the time, but he electronically manipulated the gate to my house, we couldn't--

REYNOLDS

If he's harassing you and your family we can file a restraining order.

MIKE

A restrain -- He could be doing this from half way around the goddamned world! What's the point of a fucking restraining order?!

REYNOLDS

Mr. Arthur, I get it, believe me, but unless the guy's stolen money, or made a specific threat...or unless you have proof of his hacking, there's really nothing we can do.

Mike shakes his head, when:

MIKE

Wait a minute...he did threaten me. Just now. On the phone. He said... He said that he wanted me to know what it's like to lose everything.

Reynolds digests this, thinking...

REYNOLDS

Did you take something away from this guy?

MIKE

Besides his job?

Reynolds nods. Mike shakes his head, frustrated.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

REYNOLDS

You want my advice?... Make peace with the guy. Grovel if you have to. Do whatever you gotta do. But just make peace... He'll leave you alone after that.

EXT. EAST HARLEM STREET - DAY

Mike crosses the street toward Ed's six-story walk-up.

EXT. ED'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Mike eyes the tenant list, spots Ed's name, and RINGS the BUZZER. He waits. Then RINGS again, when a HISPANIC MAN exits the building. Mike catches the door, and steps inside.

INT. ED'S BUILDING (STAIRWELL/ED'S APARTMENT) - DAY

Mike climbs the stairs, all the way up to the top floor which levels off onto a hallway with four doors. Mike eyes the numbers on the doors and then moves to apartment 21.

He hesitates, then raises his fist, and KNOCKS.

MIKE

Ed?

Mike waits a beat. And KNOCKS again.

MIKE (cont'd)

It's Mike Arthur. Would you open up, please?

No answer. Mike frowns. Then KNOCKS again. Harder. This time, as he hits the door...

...it SQUEAKS open. Just a crack. Mike pauses, uneasy. Then puts a hand to the door and pushes it open, revealing Ed's apartment.

This is the first time we're really getting a look at the place. It's a one bedroom, with a large living room and kitchen. But one thing stands out:

The place is pristine. Nothing out of order. Not even a speck of dust.

*It's completely sterile.*

MIKE (cont'd)

Ed?

Mike steps into the apartment. It's quiet. Eerily so.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Along one wall is an enormous book shelf with various books, paraphernalia and about a half-dozen model airplanes. There's also the fish tank with all those fish swimming around. At the far side of the room, sitting atop a large desk, is the computer with the three state-of-the-art monitors.

Mike stares at the monitors and then turns toward a closed door. It must be the bedroom. Mike tentatively steps toward the door, puts his hand on the doorknob, and slowly turns it.

CREEEAAAKKK

Mike stands in the doorway. There's a twin bed in the corner. Next to the bed is a desk with another computer on it. Several model airplanes hang from the ceiling.

Mike steps through room. On the far wall are a few framed posters. All of airplanes. There's a B2 Bomber, a Concord Jet, an Airco D.H. Mike eyes the posters and then turns around toward the wall by the door...

...where he sees a series of framed pictures hanging on the wall. Mike squints -- *there's something familiar about these pictures* -- and then slowly crosses toward the wall, when he stops. And stares at the familiar photographs of...

...the Arthur family *skiing in Vail, on the beach in Cancun, at Niagara Falls, etc.* Mike studies the photos when he spots:

*Ed. He has photo-shopped himself into every picture, making it look like he's part of the family.*

*The photos of Ed were taken that day in Central Park.*

Mike catches his breath and then he takes out his iPhone. He engages the camera application and is about to take a photo of these pictures when he stops, staring at...

...the *satellite signal* on the phone. Mike hesitates, and then thinks better of it, as he glances around the room looking for something, when he sees a small digital camera on the desk, next to the computer.

Mike grabs the camera, turns it on, and points the lens at the photographs...as we CUT TO:

INT. JAGUAR (MOVING) - LATE AFTERNOON

Mike cruises down the Saw Mill Parkway talking to Detective Reynolds on the blue tooth. On the passenger's seat, right next to Mike, is the *digital camera*.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REYNOLDS (ON PHONE) (O.S.)  
Listen, why don't you bring those photos  
by in the morning. If it's what you say,  
it just might be enough to get a warrant.

MIKE (ON PHONE)  
Thank you, Detective.

Mike smiles, that's all he wanted to hear.

EXT. JAGUAR (MOVING) - DUSK

Mike pulls off the parkway.

EXT./INT. JAGUAR (MOVING) - DUSK

Mike drives down that familiar rural road with the train  
crossing. He downshifts, and guides the car onto the train  
tracks, when suddenly:

*The car STALLS -- right in the middle of the tracks.*

Mike JOLTS forward, and then JERKS back, his seat belt saving  
him from smacking his forehead on the dash. He looks rattled,  
but shakes it off, as he shifts into park, and then turns the  
ignition...

...but the engine doesn't turn. It doesn't even make a sound.  
Mike tries it again. Nothing. He SIGHS.

MIKE  
Tripstar help.

Mike glances at the LCD screen on the dash. It's dark. Looks  
like the engine isn't the only thing that's dead. And so he  
grabs his phone, finds a number, and hits the CALL button as  
a line RINGS, and a TRIPSTAR REP answers.

TRIPSTAR REP (ON PHONE)  
Tripstar. This is Steven.

MIKE (ON PHONE)  
Yeah, hi, my car just died in the middle  
of the road. Can you try and re-start it,  
please?

TRIPSTAR REP (ON PHONE)  
Sure. Do you have your TripStar account  
number?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE (ON PHONE)

Um... Yeah, just a...

(takes a sheet out of the glove  
box)

It's 57BR3WW1.

Mike stops, waiting for the Rep to respond. But...

MIKE (cont'd)

Hello?...

Mike glances at his phone.

It's dead.

*What the fuck?*

Mike HOLDS the power button on the phone. But nothing happens, when suddenly:

DING DING DING DING DING DING DING.

Mike's eyes widen, as he glances up to see:

*The FLASHING red lights of the railroad crossing sign, as the crossing bars descend.*

Mike turns to his left, to see the train tracks stretching out ahead for miles. There's no sign of a train. He then turns to his right and sees...

*...empty tracks stretching out for about a mile and then curving behind a tree line.*

Mike tosses the phone onto the passenger's seat and tries the ignition again...and again...when he hears:

*The sound of GRINDING GEARS CHUGGING along a track.*

Mike turns toward the sound, and sees the BRIGHT HEADLIGHT of a train emerging from behind the tree line.

*Jesus Christ!* Mike tries the car again. No dice.

MIKE (cont'd)

DAMNIT!

Mike POUNDS the steering wheel in frustration, knowing he's got no choice. He's gotta bail. He reaches for the door, grabs the handle and pulls...

*...but the door won't open.*

He tries again. And again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MIKE (cont'd)  
FUCK!

Frantic now, he reaches across the seat to the passenger side door and furiously pulls the handle. But it's locked.

MIKE (cont'd)  
WHAT THE FUCK!

**THE TRAIN WHISTLE BLOWS!**

Mike eyes the train. It's less than half a mile away and closing fast. Mike SWALLOWS, and then turns his attention to the driver's side window...

...and begins frantically ELBOWING the glass. But the reinforced glass doesn't budge.

MIKE (cont'd)  
JESUS CHRIST!

Mike looks desperately around, when his eyes fall on the already opened glove box.

*There's a leather pouch inside.*

Mike grabs the pouch, reaches inside, and pulls out a spare lug nut wrench and begins furiously STABBING at the driver's side window, when:

**THE TRAIN WHISTLE BLOWS AGAIN!**

*It's a quarter mile away, and closing fast.*

Mike continues to PUMMEL the window when a spider web of cracks begin spreading throughout the glass.

**AGAIN, THE TRAIN WHISTLE BLOWS!**

*It's about one thousand feet, maybe less.*

Mike drops the wrench, and quickly maneuvers his body so he's prone. He then raises his leg, and KICKS the window with the heel of his shoe, once, twice, then a third time as the glass finally...

...SHATTERS INTO A BILLION BITS.

Mike doesn't waste a beat. He pushes himself -- feet first -- through the opening as the train's headlight envelops the Jaguar in a blinding white light.

Mike is almost out, when...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

...his eyes fall on the *digital camera* next to his phone on the passenger's seat. Mike reaches for the camera as --

**THE TRAIN WHISTLE BLOWS, ONE LAST TIME!**

-- but it's just out of reach. And so Mike closes his eyes, pushes himself through the car window, HITS the ground and ROLLS away as fast as he can, just as...

...THE LOCOMOTIVE COLLIDES WITH THE JAGUAR DEMOLISHING IT IN A FIERY EXPLOSION!

INT. BEDFORD POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Mike sits in a converted interrogation room with Cici. He looks scratched up, drained, and thoroughly exhausted.

Through a window in the room, we can see Reynolds entering the station. The city detective shakes a few hands and is escorted into the room. He pulls up a chair. He eyes Mike, and Cici with surprising compassion, then says:

REYNOLDS

I've been on the horn with the TripStar people... There's no evidence that your account was hacked.

Mike looks at Reynolds -- *You've gotta be fucking kidding me!?* -- but he's too drained to scream. Much less speak. But then, the detective surprises him.

REYNOLDS (cont'd)

But I'm guessing this wasn't a coincidence... Losing those photos you took might make it a little tricky, but...the judge owes me a favor... I'm going to press for a warrant. Tonight.

Mike SIGHS relieved.

INT. ED'S APARTMENT BUILDING/ED'S APARTMENT - DAWN

A hand POUNDS on Ed's door as we PULL BACK TO SEE:

Reynolds, standing with three "CYBER UNIT" cops. Reynolds waits, then POUNDS again, when the door opens, just a crack, revealing a sleepy looking Ed, peeking out from behind one of those flimsy little door chains.

REYNOLDS

Edgar Porter?... We've got a warrant to search the place.

Ed hesitates. And then...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ED  
Can I see it?

Reynolds slips Ed the warrant between the crack and stares at the I.T. Guy, who takes his sweet time reading it. Reynolds turns to the cops, irritated, and then looks back at Ed, who finally undoes the chain and opens the door.

ED (cont'd)  
Can't be too careful these days. Neighbor downstairs was robbed just last week.

REYNOLDS  
That's tragic. Would you turn and face the wall please?

But Ed doesn't move. He appears suddenly distracted, staring at something. It's the cyber cops' feet...

*...as they track in traces of dirt on the bottom of their shoes.*

The dirt, the grease and grime...it seems to upset him.

REYNOLDS (cont'd)  
Mr. Porter?...

Ed snaps out of it and then turns to the wall as Reynolds begins patting him down. Meanwhile, two of the cops take a seat in front of the three computer monitors, as the third cop, sporting a trucker mustache, begins the physical search, as he approaches the bookshelf and begins searching through -- and then tossing -- the books and paraphernalia to the floor.

Reynolds finishes the pat down when Ed spots the mustached cop running his fingers along one of the model airplanes.

ED  
Please, that's--

But it's too late. The cop has tossed the airplane to the floor where it BREAKS into several pieces.

Ed looks despondent as he stares down at the broken plane. But he sucks it up and begins picking up the pieces as...

*...Reynolds moves through the room. He passes the fish tank, and steps into the bedroom where he eyes the bed, the desk with the computer, and the far wall with the framed posters of the airplanes. He then turns around...*

*...and eyes the wall by the door. Yesterday, this wall was adorned with those framed Arthur family photos with Ed photo-shopped into the pictures. But now...*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

...the wall is simply covered with more framed posters of aviation marvels. Reynolds crosses to the *redecorated* wall and stares at it, as we DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ED'S APARTMENT - LATER

The living room has been overturned. The mustached cop did quite a number. The other two cops are still seated by the state-of-the-art monitors pouring through Ed's system on tablets that are connected by cable to the computer.

Reynolds is seated at a table drinking coffee, when he looks up to see, Ed -- seated on the floor, his back to the wall -- *staring at him*.

Reynolds seems caught off guard, when the mustached cop exits Ed's bedroom, holding a red lock box. He crosses to Reynolds, sits, and removes six flash drives from his pocket.

MUSTACHED COP

Found these drives, and this box.

The cop removes an iPad from his computer bag, grabs one of the drives he discovered and plugs it into the tablet.

REYNOLDS

(to Ed, tapping the lock box)

You got a key for this?

Ed stands, crosses to a wooden bowl by the front door, and grabs a key chain with several keys. He locates a small silver key, and then places it on the table for Reynolds.

ED

Whatever it is you think I've done,  
Detective...I assure you, I'm innocent.

Reynolds eyes Ed, then picks up the key, inserts it into a key hole, and opens the box revealing just a passport, a wad of cash, and a few documents. Reynolds frowns, and then closes the box.

INT. ED'S APARTMENT (BEDROOM) - DUSK

Reynolds, seated on the bed, yawns, exhausted, as he watches one of his cops run diagnostics on the desktop by the bed. The cop shakes his head, and then looks at Reynolds.

REYNOLDS

It's clean, Dick.

Off Reynolds frown, we DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ARTHUR HOUSE - NIGHT

Muted cello music fills the house as we come upon the kitchen, where Mike is supervising Taylor's Math homework.

MIKE

You got it...just carry the one and--

RING RING. It's the land line. Mike stands and grabs it.

MIKE (ON PHONE) (cont'd)

Hello?

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Reynolds sits at a booth with the cyber unit cops, a cell phone pressed to his ear. INTERCUT.

REYNOLDS (ON PHONE)

It's Reynolds... We didn't find anything.

Mike deflates.

MIKE (ON PHONE)

So what does that mean?

REYNOLDS (ON PHONE)

Means either he's innocent. Or he's really good.

Mike shakes his head, *unbelievable*.

REYNOLDS (ON PHONE) (cont'd)

Look... I'm gonna do some digging around on this guy. See what comes up... But listen, Mike, if he had been harassing you, I'm pretty sure our little search party there will scare him off. The guy may be crazy, but, he's not stupid.

INT. ED'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ed is meticulously running a vacuum along the floor. He's done quite a clean-up job. The place looks spotless.

INT. ED'S APARTMENT - LATER

Ed stares at his fish swimming around their tank, when he reaches into the tank, and grabs a little plastic treasure chest at the bottom.

Ed dries the chest with a little hand towel, and then opens it up revealing a small rectangular, air tight, metallic box.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He removes the box, and PRESSES a tiny button on the side as the box POPS OPEN. Ed then overturns the box onto his palm...

...as a dry *flash drive* falls into his hand.

INT. ARTHUR HOUSE (TV ROOM) - NIGHT

Alexis and Taylor are watching TV, when Mike and Cici enter. Mike grabs the remote and pauses the TV as he and Cici sit on a large ottoman across from their kids.

MIKE

Listen...we need you guys to stay off the computers for awhile.

CICI

Your cell phone too, Alex.

ALEXIS

What?... Mom!?

TAYLOR

Is this because of Ed?

MIKE

I'm afraid so, kiddo.

Alexis is reeling.

CICI

Any school work you need to do, Mrs. Decker said that you could use--

ALEXIS

For how long!?

MIKE

Until we tell you it's safe to go back on.

Off Alexis' appalled look, we CUT TO...

INT. ARTHUR HOUSE (ALEXIS' ROOM) - LATER

...Alexis, lying on her bed, SKYPING with her friend ALY on her iPhone.

ALY (ON SKYPE)

Oh my God. That is so lame. What are you gonna do?

KNOCK KNOCK. We can hear Mike's voice.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE (O.S.)

Alex?

ALEXIS (ON SKYPE)

Shit. I gotta go.

Alexis hangs up, grabs a textbook that was already open on the bed, slides the phone under the book, and pretends to be reading, as Mike opens the door, and stares at his daughter.

ALEXIS (cont'd)

What?

MIKE

I thought I heard you talking.

ALEXIS

Well, you heard wrong.

Alexis goes back to her pretend reading. Mike studies her.

MIKE

It should just be for a couple of days, okay?

ALEXIS

Whatever.

Mike nods, resigned, and then closes the door.

INT. ARTHUR HOUSE (MASTER BEDROOM) - NIGHT

Cici is sitting up in bed, studying sheet music as Mike sits on the edge of the bed and begins unbuttoning his shirt.

MIKE

We should confiscate her phone.

CICI

She'll hate you. For not trusting her...and taking away her phone.

Mike frowns, but feels like he's got no choice.

CICI (cont'd)

What should we do?... I need my phone, Mike. I've got students, the concert...

MIKE

I'm sure he'll leave us alone... Just turn it on when you need it, okay?

Cici nods, as we DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ARTHUR HOUSE (BATHROOM) - NIGHT

Alexis is in the shower, washing her hair, when we CUT TO:

OUTSIDE THE SHOWER. A thick, foggy steam permeates the room, when slowly...as if from an unseen POV...

*...we begin to PUSH IN on the closed shower curtain. We're getting closer, and CLOSER, when the running water stops and:*

Alexis THROWS OPEN the curtain and grabs a towel.

INT. ARTHUR HOUSE (ALEXIS' ROOM) - MOMENTS LATER

Alexis enters her room wrapped in towel. She moves toward her dresser, removes the towel and begins drying herself off. As she does, we move away from the 15-year-old...

*...and begin slowly creeping toward her bed, where we see her iPhone propped up against her pillow...*

*...the tiny camera lens, facing the naked Alexis.*

INT. FRANKIE'S APT - NIGHT

Frankie is curled up in bed watching TV, when her cell phone BUZZES. She grabs her phone, stares at the screen and smiles.

The IM window is open on the screen, and "**Michael Arthur**" has instigated a chat with: "*You awake?*"

Frankie eyes the clock. It's **1:15 AM**. She types: "*Isn't it past your bedtime, old man?*"

Frankie stares at the screen, awaiting his reply, when the phone BUZZES and new dialogue appears: "*Can't sleep.*"

Frankie pauses, contemplating, then quickly types: "*What's on your mind?*"

Frankie waits, staring at her phone, when, it BUZZES: "**You.**"

Frankie smiles, blushing like a school girl.

INT. ARTHUR PUBLISHING (MIKE'S OFFICE) - DAY

Mike is at his desk, red-lining a manuscript when Andy pokes his head in.

ANDY

There are two men in the lobby here to see you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE

You're going to have to give me a little more than that Andrew.

Andy hesitates. And then, with a hushed voice:

ANDY

They say they're with the IRS.

Mike FREEZES as all the color leaves his face.

INT. ARTHUR PUBLISHING (CONFERENCE ROOM) - DAY

Mike sits across from two all-business IRS agents, one MALE, one FEMALE. We pick things up mid-conversation.

MIKE

An anonymous tip?

FEMALE AGENT

It wasn't just a tip, Mr. Arthur. We received several documents...anonymously. Now we have no idea if they're authentic or would even necessarily suggest any wrong doing on your or your company's part, but we want to take a preliminary look at your books. If all looks good, there will be no reason for a full scale audit.

Mike nods, giving them his best poker face.

INT. ARTHUR PUBLISHING (MIKE'S OFFICE) - DAY

Mike and his Editorial staff, are having a meeting. An EDITOR is discussing a manuscript, but Mike is distracted, anxious.

INT. ARTHUR PUBLISHING (HALLWAY) - DAY

The preoccupied-looking Mike moves down the hall when Joan, from marketing, and Trevor from business affairs approach. They seem upbeat. Excited. Trevor hands him a folder.

JOAN

We were just heading toward your office.

TREVOR

(re: the folder)

Those are the latest sales projections for Teddy Winters' book.

JOAN

It's even better than we thought.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mike opens the folder and glances at the figures as Trevor and Joan begin walking him through the specific projections. But their voices are soon DROWNED OUT as Mike looks up...

...past the opened folder before him, and sees that he's standing directly across from the conference room.

Through a glass partition Mike can see various files, papers and opened binders strewn across the conference room table.

The IRS agents have their laptops open and Bill, Mike's accountant, is in the middle of explaining a document to them, when he glances up...

...and catches Mike's eye through the glass. Mike and his accountant make brief eye contact, as we DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ARTHUR PUBLISHING (BATHROOM) - LATER

Mike FLUSHES a urinal and approaches the sink. He begins washing his hands, when he catches his reflection in the mirror...

...and FREEZES. The anxiety that was so palpable earlier, has now been replaced by something far more potent: FEAR.

INT. ARTHUR PUBLISHING (MIKE'S OFFICE) - NIGHT

The troubled-looking Mike stands at the window, staring out at the city, a glass of scotch in his hand, when:

VOICE (O.S.)

What are you still doing here?

Mike turns around to see Frankie standing in the doorway of his office. She catches the distressed look on his face.

FRANKIE

You've got that look again.

Mike tries to shake it off.

FRANKIE (cont'd)

I just finished the specs for Teddy Winters' book. Wanna see 'em?

MIKE

Sure.

Mike finishes his scotch, and puts the glass down next to a bottle of Macallan 35. He takes a step toward Frankie when:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANKIE

Um, I think you're forgetting something there, Old Man.

Mike stops, not sure what she means, when he looks up and catches her eyeing the bottle of scotch. Mike smiles.

INT. ARTHUR PUBLISHING (FRANKIE'S OFFICE) - LATER

Mike and Frankie, glasses of scotch in hand, huddle close together, staring at a striking sketch on her drafting table.

A tall, SHADOWY FIGURE looks up at a rural two-story house where a WOMAN stands on the porch, in what looks like a nurse's outfit. The title, DEVIL'S BARGAIN, has been written in Gothic block letters below the drawing.

Mike is impressed. He points to the shadowy figure.

MIKE

That's Farley?

FRANKIE

(nods "yes", pointing)  
And that's Nurse Cross.

Mike nods, when Frankie reaches over him, *brushing his side*, and flips the page revealing another visually arresting sketch. This one portrays a sleepy main street in what could be a small Southern town circa 1940.

FRANKIE (cont'd)

The less obvious approach.

Mike takes it in, equally impressed.

MIKE

They're terrific, Frankie.

Frankie smiles as they down their scotch. Frankie then picks up that bottle of Macallan 35 -- which is resting on her desk next to her opened laptop computer -- and begins pouring another round. It's heavy pour.

MIKE (cont'd)

Whoa. Easy there. That's a--

FRANKIE

Five hundred dollar bottle of scotch. I know... My last boyfriend was a bit of an aficionado...and a total prick.

MIKE

Scotch drinkers usually are.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mike smiles as he raises his glass in a silent toast. They CLICK glasses and take a sip, when...

...Frankie looks up at Mike...and their eyes meet. Mike takes her in...and then:

MIKE (cont'd)  
I should get going.

Mike puts down his drink, and takes a step toward the door, but Frankie blocks him. Stares at him through her seductive, azure eyes...

...and then slowly leans toward him, and kisses him softly on the lips. Mike hesitates...

MIKE (cont'd)  
Frankie, I...

She stares at him, wanting more, and then WHISPERS:

FRANKIE  
It's okay...

She kisses him again, and again he hesitates, but only for a second, when he gives in, and slowly kisses her back, tasting her lips, and then the inside of her mouth as it starts to get heated.

*Very heated.*

*Groping, touching, kissing...and then...*

Frankie drops down to her knees, UNZIPS Mike's fly...

...and buries her head in his crotch.

Mike closes his eyes. Releases an aching, charged MOAN, when suddenly:

His eyes open. And that flush of pleasure evaporates from his face, as the reality of what's happening hits him like a ton of bricks.

MIKE  
Frankie stop... Stop!

Mike abruptly turns around, and ZIPS himself up. Frankie stays frozen on her knees, looking shocked, humiliated.

MIKE (cont'd)  
I'm sorry.

And with that Mike steps around Frankie and exits her office.

INT./EXT. BMW (MOVING) - NIGHT

Mike drives away from the city, moving over the Henry Hudson bridge in an old BMW. He looks sick, queasy, as if he can't believe what he just allowed to happen.

EXT. ARTHUR HOUSE - NIGHT

The BMW pulls into the driveway.

INT. BMW - CONTINUOUS

Mike cuts the engine. But he makes no move to exit the vehicle. Instead, he just sits there, drained, devastated.

INT. ARTHUR HOUSE - LATER

Mike enters the house and is greeted by Hitch. He kneels down, rubs the dog and looks up, hearing the muted sounds of Cici's cello.

INT. ARTHUR HOUSE (HALLWAY/PRACTICE ROOM) - MINUTES LATER

Mike moves down the upstairs hall, when he comes upon Cici's practice room. The door is cracked open, and inside Mike can see his beautiful wife, her back to him, playing her cello.

The piece -- *Dvorak's Cello Concerto* -- is incredibly moving. And as Mike watches his wife...

...a single tear runs down his cheek. Cici finishes the piece, and Mike wipes the tear, just as she looks up...

...and catches his reflection in the window. She turns. And Mike manages a smile. But Cici frowns. She looks stressed.

CICI

I'm not ready. I never should have agreed to this.

Mike crosses to her and kisses her on the cheek.

MIKE

If you play half as good tomorrow, you'll bring down the house.

Cici SNIFFS. As if she smells something.

CICI

You smell funny...like French perfume.

MIKE

Oh...I had a last minute dinner with Cal Franklin at Bouley...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mike swallows. Feeling guilty as all hell.

MIKE (cont'd)  
I'm going to get ready for bed.

Mike turns and exits as Cici prepares to try the piece again.

INT. ARTHUR HOUSE (MASTER BATHROOM) - LATER

Mike is in the shower, furiously scrubbing himself.

INT. ARTHUR HOUSE (BEDROOM) - NIGHT

Mike and Cici are sitting up in bed. Cici has her headphones on and is listening to her playback of the Dvorak piece. Mike is reading through a manuscript, when...

...Cici removes her headphones, and rests her anxious head on her husband.

CICI  
Tell me I'm going to be okay.

MIKE  
You're going to be terrific.

Cici smiles, kisses him on the cheek and then rolls over, turns off her light, and closes her eyes.

Mike turns, and eyes his wife. He's got that sick-to-his-stomach look again. He swallows. And then looks back at the manuscript on his lap, as we DISSOLVE TO:

INT./EXT. BMW - MORNING

Mike chauffeurs a pouting Alexis -- who just sits there, avoiding eye contact with her father -- up to the high school and shifts into park.

MIKE  
So, what's the plan here, you're just never going to talk to me again?

Alexis rolls her eyes, grabs her stuff, exits the car and SLAMS the door. *Guess so.*

Mike frowns to himself and pulls away.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL (CLASS ROOM) - DAY

Alexis sits in English class half-listening to the teacher's lecture when she hears a GIGGLE behind her. She turns...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

...and sees a FEMALE CLASSMATE surreptitiously glancing at her phone as a MALE CLASSMATE leans over, looking on, when:

They both look up at Alexis...

...and GIGGLE again. Alexis turns forward, when she catches the eye of a MALE CLASSMATE *staring* at her.

THE BELL RINGS.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL (HALLWAY) - DAY

Alexis moves through the crowded hallway. Pockets of STUDENTS are crowding around each other, excitedly eyeing their mobile devices as...

..a CACOPHONY OF SOUNDS fill the hallway. There are BUZZES, DINGS, short RINGS. Like the entire school is getting a text.

Those that see Alexis walk by, stop -- *and stare at her*. There's GASPING. LAUGHING. POINTING. WHISPERING.

Alexis, suddenly self-conscious, continues down the hall when:

A HAND LANDS ON HER ARM, AND SHE JUMPS STARTLED.

It's Aly, her best friend. The girl looks white.

ALY

Did you just post something on Facebook?

Alexis shakes her head, "no". Aly swallows, then pulls Alexis by her arm and leads her toward a private corner, away from the prying eyes of the student body. Alexis looks terrified.

ALEXIS

What's going on?

Aly hesitates, then takes out her phone.

ALY

Someone posted a picture...*on your Facebook page*, and now everybody's forwarding the link.

ALEXIS

What picture?

Aly hands the phone to Alexis, who looks down at the screen and sees:

A PICTURE OF HER -- **COMPLETELY NAKED** -- DRYING HERSELF OFF AFTER THE SHOWER.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALY  
I'm so sorry, Alex.

INT. ARTHUR PUBLISHING - DAY

Mike steps off the elevators and nods his "good morning" to the receptionist.

INT. ARTHUR PUBLISHING (HALL) - DAY

Mike moves through the offices, when he walks by the conference room and -- through the glass window -- sees the same two IRS agents, pouring over a binder of documents.

Mike studies the agents for a beat, and then continues on his way, down the hall, where he stops in front of Frankie's office. But she's not there.

VOICE (O.S.)  
You looking for Frankie?

Mike turns to see a pretty ART ASSISTANT.

ART ASSISTANT  
She called in sick. Can I help you with something?

INT. ARTHUR PUBLISHING - MOMENTS LATER

Mike approaches his office, when Andy spots him from behind his assistant's desk. He stands.

ANDY  
Your wife's on the phone. Says it's urgent.

Mike nods as he steps into his office, takes off his jacket and sits at his desk, where he picks up the phone.

MIKE (ON PHONE)  
Hey. Everything alright?

Mike -- listening to what sounds like a hysterical Cici -- *slowly turns to stone*, as she fills him in.

EXT. PARKING GARAGE - DAY

Mike's BMW SCREECHES out of the garage.

EXT./INT. BMW - DAY

The BMW MOTORS across the Henry Hudson Bridge.

EXT./INT. BMW - DAY

VRROOOOMMMMMM - The car now SPEEDS down the Saw Mill Parkway, weaving in and out of traffic.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

The car SCREECHES to a stop in the school lot.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

An anxious Mike sprints down an empty hallway, when he comes to the Main Office. He hurries inside, runs past the SECRETARY, and stops cold seeing:

Cici and Alexis seated on two chairs. Alexis is flushed. Her eyes stained with tears. Cici has been crying as well. Alexis takes one look at her dad and breaks down, SOBBING, as Mike rushes toward her, and hugs her tight, his heart breaking.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL (PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE) - DAY

The PRINCIPAL, a dry, unsympathetic man is seated in an arm chair across from the Arthur's who are on a sofa, huddled close, their arms around their devastated daughter.

PRINCIPAL

I'm sure you can appreciate that we take these matters very seriously. If Alexis did not post this picture, then we need to launch...

But as the Principal continues, his words are lost on Mike. A furious rage and anger is growing from his gut, coursing his veins with an undiluted hatred he's never experienced before, as he sits there, acutely focused on *just one thing*...

EXT./INT. BMW - DAY

The car ZOOMS across the Henry Hudson Bridge, heading back into the city, as an intense, determined-looking Mike, sits at the wheel, his rage-filled eyes fixed just over the dash.

EXT. ED'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

The BMW SCREECHES to a halt in front of the building.

EXT. ED'S APARTMENT BUILDING - LATER

Mike paces furiously outside the building, when an ELDERLY WOMAN approaches, rolling a folding hand-cart with a bag of groceries. Mike watches impatiently, as she takes out a set of keys, finds the right one, and slides it into the door.

INT. ED'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Mike BOUNDS up the steps.

INT. ED'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Mike approaches Ed's door. And rings the BUZZER. He waits a beat. And then angrily KNOCKS, when:

The door opens -- just a crack -- revealing Ed on the other side of that flimsy door chain. He looks at Mike, and then, after the slightest hesitation, *smiles*.

ED

Oh, hey Mi--

But before he can get the word out, Mike KICKS in the door, busting the chain. The impact sends the I.T. Guy flying backwards as he trips and lands flat on his back.

Mike -- *like a wild animal that's been let out of its cage* -- charges the fallen Ed, grabs him by the collar, lifts him up off the floor, and THROWS him across the room right toward the state-of-the-art computer monitors.

Ed SMASHES into the left monitor as it topples over and falls off the desk CRASHING to the floor.

The dazed Ed balances precariously, leaning against the edge of the desk, when Mike pursues him, GRABS him again, and CHUCKS him against a bookshelf at the far wall.

Ed COLLIDES with the shelf and then falls to the floor as several books, and a model airplane topple off the shelf and come CRASHING down on top of him.

Mike walks over to Ed and looks down at him.

ED (cont'd)

You're making a mistake--

But Ed doesn't get to finish the thought, as Mike SWINGS his leg back and KICKS Ed right in the teeth, SPLITTING his lip as blood GUSHES FURIOUSLY from his mouth.

WHACK! Another KICK. Square on the jaw. And Mike's not done.

He lifts his leg and JAMS the heel of his shoe into Ed's face, POPPING him flush on the nose as a GEYSER OF BLOOD SHOOTs out of Ed's nostrils.

Mike then drops to his knees, GRABS Ed by the hair, and lifts his head so that it's right in Mike's face. Mike takes in Ed's battered visage with a hint of satisfaction, and then:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE

You fuck with me, or my family again,  
you're dead...

And with that, Mike SLAMS Ed's head to the floor, gets to his feet, and exits the apartment, leaving the I.T. Guy flat on his back, COUGHING up bits of teeth and blood.

INT. WESTCHESTER CONSERVATORY (DRESSING ROOM) - NIGHT

Cici sits alone in her dressing room, touching up her eye-liner. She looks positively dazzling in a Carmen Marc Valvo Chiffon Beaded-Waist Gown.

There's a KNOCK at the door as a STAGE MANGER, dressed in black, pokes her head in.

STAGE MANAGER

Three minutes, Mrs. Arthur.

Cici nods, as the stage manager closes the door. She then turns back to the mirror, stares at her reflection, and takes a deep, calming breath, when:

BUZZ BUZZ - It's coming from her small designer purse. She opens it up, and sees a little orange light FLASHING on her phone. She removes the phone and sees that she has a new text message from: UNKNOWN NUMBER.

Cici taps the screen, and the message opens, revealing a line of text which reads: "*Click link for good luck message.*"

Cici stares curiously at the text, and the highlighted link. She hesitates, then slides her thumb over the link, and CLICKS as...

...the screen goes black...and then...a BURST OF COLOR, as a video plays. The video is grainy, out of focus. We can hear soft, smacking, sounds, like people kissing.

Cici stares down at the screen, as the focus begins to sharpen, and she can suddenly see:

*Mike and Frankie kissing in Frankie's office. The camera angle is about waist high. A bottle of Macalan 35 is in the foreground as we realize -- this is from the perspective of Frankie's opened laptop that was sitting on her desk.*

Cici watches, stunned, as...

*...the kiss gets heated, and Frankie drops to her knees and buries her head in Mike's crotch. Mike MOANS, when...*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

...the screen goes BLACK. Cici can barley breath. She just sits there. Frozen. In shock. When the door opens.

STAGE MANAGER (cont'd)  
Mrs. Arthur? It's time.

But Cici doesn't move. Just sits there, in stunned silence.

INT. WESTCHESTER CONSERVATORY (AUDITORIUM) - NIGHT

Cici sits alone on the stage -- her eyes closed -- playing Dvorak's Cello Concerto.

She's extraordinary. In a reverie. As if she's succumbed and is letting her emotions guide her performance.

Mike watches from the packed house, flanked by his two children. He's as captivated as the rest of the audience as he watches Cici conclude the piece in a stirring, moving crescendo.

The auditorium is suddenly silent, as the audience catches it's collective breath. And then:

A BURST OF CLAMOROUS APPLAUSE as the house rises to its feet amid cries of "BRAVA!"

On the stage, Cici doesn't smile. In fact, she barely reacts at all. She just slowly opens her eyes and stares right through the ecstatic audience.

INT. BMW (MOVING) - NIGHT

Mike is behind the wheel, driving his family home. Cici sits in the front seat, looking catatonic. The kids are in the back as the oblivious Mike glances at his wife, and smiles.

MIKE  
It was transcendent Ceece. I haven't heard you play like that since...

But Cici is silent. Mike eyes his wife. And for the first time sees that something's not right.

MIKE (cont'd)  
You okay?

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

The BMW pulls over to the side of a quiet road.

INT. BMW/EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Mike eyes the numb-looking Cici, concerned.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE

Ceece?

Cici takes a beat, then grips the door handle, steadying herself, opens the door, and steps out of the car.

MIKE (cont'd)

Cici?

Mike and the kids watch as Cici takes a few unsteady steps along the side of the road, when suddenly, her legs give out and she falls to her knees and begins DRY HEAVING.

Taylor and Alexis look scared.

ALEXIS

Mom?

Mike, suddenly anxious, hops out of the car, and hustles to his wife. He kneels, and puts a hand on her back, but the moment he touches her, she violently RECOILS and SLAPS him.

Mike is taken aback...*the hurt and betrayal on her face suddenly palpable.*

CICI

Get away from me...

Mike is too stunned to move. And so she starts HITTING him.

CICI (cont'd)

GET AWAY!!!

INT. BMW (MOVING) - LATER

Mike is behind the wheel again. He now looks about as drained as Cici, who is back in the passenger's seat, staring out the window. Alexis and Taylor sit muted, in the back, as the family drives in a painful, stunned silence.

Mike steers the car onto their block, and then guides the vehicle around a small corner to the driveway, when:

HE SLAMS ON THE BRAKES, SEEING:

Three police cruisers parked in front of the gate. About a half dozen COPS stand by the vehicles. Three of them approach, as Mike rolls down his window.

COP

Michael Arthur?

MIKE

Yes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COP

Would you step out of the vehicle please?

Mike glances at Cici, and then does as instructed, when suddenly two cops GRAB him, SPIN him around, YANK his arms behind him, and SNAP a pair of handcuffs around his wrists.

COP (cont'd)

Mr. Arthur, you are under arrest for the assault and battery of Edgar Porter.

The cop begins to *read him his rights* as he is escorted toward one of the cruisers.

In the BMW, Taylor starts to cry. Alexis looks scared.

ALEXIS

Dad, what's happening!?

Mike glances back at Cici.

MIKE

Call Stan Kaufman.

But Cici barely reacts. She's far too numb. Mike is placed into the back of the cruiser and the door is closed. He turns and looks at his wife and kids.

MIKE (cont'd)

Cici! Call Stan!

The cruiser pulls away from the property as Mike turns, and eyes his family through the back window as we FADE TO BLACK.

A long, quiet, beat. But then, we begin to hear:

The sounds of a STRUGGLE. And then:

ED (O.S.)

You're making a mistake.

FADE IN ON:

A VIDEO MONITOR. A familiar scene -- *Mike beating the shit out of Ed in his apartment* -- plays on the monitor. The camera looks like it was strategically placed in an upper corner of the room, AS WE PULL BACK TO REVEAL...

INT. POLICE STATION (INTERROGATION ROOM) - DAY

...a seething Mike, and his attorney, the middle-aged STAN KAUFMAN, watching the incriminating video.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE  
(under his breath)  
I should've fucking killed him.

Mike turns away, as Stan shuts off the TV. A beat.

STAN  
Bail's going to be at least three hundred thousand... Can you cover that?

Mike hesitates. Not sure.

MIKE  
Might have to borrow against the company.

Stan looks at Mike. There's something he's not telling him.

STAN  
I called Bill. Figured I'd set that up for you, but...

Stan slides a folder across the desk. Mike opens the folder, glances at a document inside...*and his heart sinks.*

STAN (cont'd)  
The IRS believes you falsified documents to hide assets from last quarter... They're freezing everything until the matter is resolved.

MIKE  
(desperate)  
They can't do that, Stan... I'm prepping the fall list now. If I can't pay the vendors...my employees...

Mike sinks in his chair, utterly despondent.

STAN  
If you plead guilty to fraud, I can probably plead it down. You'll do six months. Maybe less... But the assault charge... Mike, the assault charge is trickier. Particularly with the video... I'll do my best but...you're looking at five years. Minimum.

EXT. ARTHUR HOUSE (DRIVEWAY) - DAY

Cici's Lexus pulls into the driveway and stops.

INT. LEXUS - CONTINUOUS

A depressed-looking Cici is behind the wheel. Mike, looking equally glum, is shotgun. They sit in silence, when:

CICI

I don't want you in the house.

And with that, Cici exits the car, leaving Mike all alone.

INT. CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL (MIKE'S ROOM) - DAY

Mike enters the room rolling a small suitcase. He takes in the space, looking numb, defeated.

INT. ARTHUR PUBLISHING - MORNING

Mike exits the elevator, passes an unmanned reception desk and then moves down the hall. The office is quiet. The few EMPLOYEES that Mike does pass, eye him uncomfortably as he walks by. Mike continues on, when he stops, seeing:

Frankie's office. It's empty. She's cleared out all her stuff. Trevor spots Mike and approaches.

TREVOR

You got a sec?

INT. ARTHUR PUBLISHING (MIKE'S OFFICE) - MORNING

Mike and Trevor are seated on the couches. Trevor eyes his boss, as if he feels sorry for him, when he says:

TREVOR

Teddy Winters is going to Little Brown. His agent sent a fax this morning... I've get messages from at least a half dozen reps requesting their authors be relieved from their contracts so they can find a new publisher in time for the fall.

Mike nods, as if he was expecting that.

TREVOR (cont'd)

I called Random House... They've lowered their price...substantially. But they know the value of the library, and...they still want to buy... I know this isn't what you wanted, Mike, but...you've got no choice.

Off Mike's dejected look, we DISSOLVE TO:

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT (REYNOLDS OFFICE) - DAY

Reynolds is typing up a report, when a SECRETARY enters and drops a folder onto his desk, right next to a photo of the detective with his two TEENAGE DAUGHTERS.

SECRETARY

This came for you, Dick.

The label on the folder reads: **EVAN PRICE.**

REYNOLDS

Who the hell is Evan Price?

The Secretary shrugs, and exits. Reynolds frowns, and stops typing. He grabs the folder and opens it, revealing...

...a small stack of documents. Paper clipped to the first page is a faded color photo of a LITTLE BOY sitting on his YOUNG MOTHER'S lap. Reynolds begins shuffling through the documents, when he stops. Something has caught his eye.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

Mike is seated at a bench, when Reynolds approaches, holding a cup of coffee, and a folder under his arm. He sits.

REYNOLDS

How you holding up? You alright?

Mike shrugs. He's been better. Reynolds takes a sip, then:

REYNOLDS (cont'd)

Edgar Porter is not under investigation, so what I'm about to tell you...you didn't hear it from me... His real name is Evan Price. He changed it, five years ago, when he was released from an institution in Buffalo. He had been ordered there by the State after pleading incompetency to stand trial on two federal charges. Kidnapping and endangering the welfare of a minor...

Mike leans in. All ears.

REYNOLDS (cont'd)

He was working as the I.T. Guy at an elementary school up in Rockland when he got a little too close to one of the secretaries and her six-year-old daughter. A restraining order was filed... But then one day mom woke up to find that her daughter had vanished...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REYNOLDS (cont'd)

There was no trace of the girl...until that night, when Ed dropped her off at the house like it was nothing... Apparently they'd spent the day at Jones Beach... She was unharmed... After his release, he moved to the city, changed his name and sent a resume to Caliber Services. That's the placement center your company used when you hired him. Apparently Caliber never ran a background check...and neither did you.

A beat. Reynolds takes another sip.

REYNOLDS (cont'd)

I've got two teenage daughters, Mike. If it happened to one of them...I would have killed the sonofabitch.

(a beat)

There's only one way to beat the assault charge... You gotta prove Ed was behind it. You do that, there's not a jury in the world that would convict you.

MIKE

How do we...? You guys already searched--

REYNOLDS

Maybe there's another way...something we haven't tried yet.

Reynolds hands Mike the folder.

REYNOLDS (cont'd)

You didn't get this from me, Mike, we clear?

(Mike nods)

You hang in there...

And with that, Reynolds stands and walks away. Mike eyes the detective, and then opens the folder. It's filled with several documents and that photo of Little Ed on Mom's lap.

Clipped to the first document is a piece of paper with a name, *Hank Stone*, and an address, *429 E. 3rd St.*

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Mike, holding the folder under his arm, moves down a quiet sidewalk in the heart of Alphabet City, when he comes upon a run down walk-up. The address is 427. He continues on to the next building -- also a dilapidated walk-up -- and stops. The address here is 431.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mike stops, confused. He eyes the scribbling on the paper -- *Hank Stone. 429 E. 3rd St.* -- and then looks back at the previous building...

...when he spots a flight of steps between the two buildings, that head down one level below the street.

Mike approaches the steps, looks down, and sees what looks like an abandoned bar, with boarded up windows. A crooked sign hangs above the door with the word "BAR" on it. Next to the sign is the address: 429.

Mike hesitates, then walks down the steps, and approaches the door. There's a little square pane of glass at eye level. And so Mike puts his face to the glass and peeks inside to see:

Some overturned tables and chairs, an empty bar, a few unplugged neon beer signs.

Mike frowns. But then he gives it try.

KNOCK KNOCK.

He waits a beat. Then KNOCKS again.

Nothing. The place is clearly abandoned. Mike sighs, resigned, and then turns back toward the steps when:

HE SLAMS RIGHT INTO A MAN, STARING DOWN AT HIM.

The man is bearish, stocky, early 60's. He would have been quite a formidable presence in his prime. Still is.

The startled Mike catches his breath, as the man just stares at him, unflinching, through cold, steely eyes.

MIKE

Hank?

The man doesn't move. Just glares at him.

MIKE (cont'd)

I'm looking for Hank Stone, do you...? My name's Mike Arthur, Detective Dick Reynolds sent me.

The man slowly smiles, turning immediately from a ferocious bear to a jolly giant. He gives Mike a friendly -- but hard -- SLAP across the shoulder as he brushes past and opens the door with a set of keys.

MAN

Well, come on in.

INT. BAR/HANK'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Mike steps inside, and surveys the debris strewn about the place. Everything is covered in a layer of dust.

HANK (FORMERLY MAN)

Dick said you'd be stopping by. Sorry about the mess. I'd offer you a drink, but...

(eyeing the bare bar)

... 'fraid we're a little dry.

(eyeing the folder)

That for me?

Mike hands the folder over to Hank. He opens it, glances at a few of the documents inside, and then:

HANK (cont'd)

Follow me.

Hank begins walking toward a dark hallway at the back of the bar. Mike hesitates, not sure what to make of this guy, when Hank stops and turns.

HANK (cont'd)

It's okay. I won't bite.

Mike heads toward Hank, moving around the scattered debris, and follows the man into the dark hallway.

MIKE

So, you're a private investigator?

HANK

Not exactly... P.I.'s have to register with the state. They also have to acquire their intel through legal means... I assure you, Mr. Arthur, I'm no P.I...

They've come to the end of the hall which opens up onto a large room. Hank flicks on a light switch, revealing...

...a windowless basement office littered with electronic parts, and antiques. In the middle of the debris is a grey industrial desk with two state-of-the-art monitors. Hank sits at his desk, turns on his monitors, and looks up at Mike.

HANK (cont'd)

What I do...well, it's not a public service, you understand? I charge seven hundred an hour...plus expenses.

Mike glares at him. *Is he fucking kidding?*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE

Seven hundred dollars?

HANK

That's right.

(eyeing the contents of the folder)

Dick said they got you on an assault charge?

(Mike nods, a beat)

These things go one of two ways, Mr. Arthur. Either your boy here ends up in jail...or you do...So what's it gonna be?

Off Mike's resigned look, we DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HANK'S OFFICE - LATER

Mike is seated next to Hank staring at the two monitors. Thousands of digits are blazing across the screen.

MIKE

What is that?

HANK

I can track his tech purchases by running his name and alias through the system. Eventually she'll spit out the serial numbers of every machine and device he's ever purchased.

MIKE

What do we do when we get the numbers?

HANK

(with a smile)

We get inside *his* machines.

INT. HANK'S OFFICE - LATER

Hank is in front of the monitors, sporadically typing. Mike is next to him, staring intently at the screen. On one monitor, a list of about 15 serial numbers runs down the screen. On the other monitor is a sequence of code. Hank types in some code, hits the return key and waits, as...

...additional code appears on the screen. Hank frowns.

HANK

He's good. Everything's pretty well encrypted... Don't worry. We'll get it.

Hank begins typing again as we DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HANK'S OFFICE - LATER

Hank is still at the desk, only now he's got a half-eaten turkey sandwich and fountain soda. Mike is on his feet, wandering around the office, admiring the antiques.

Hank takes a bite of his sandwich and types some code. He waits, staring at the monitor, when additional code appears.

HANK  
Goddamnit!

Mike turns to Hank.

MIKE  
Anything else you can try?

Hank considers.

HANK  
I can run a 'brut-force'...basically it's a program that will identify his personal password or passwords by cycling through every single permutation and combination of letters and numbers until it hits it... But it could take days, weeks, even months. By then he could have cleaned out his system, if he hasn't already or...

MIKE  
I could be convicted...

HANK  
I don't suppose you have any idea what his password might be?

Mike thinks for a beat, when it hits him:

MIKE  
*Alexistaylor.*  
(crossing to Hank)  
My kids' names. That's how he got in.

Hank shrugs. It's worth a shot. He types: **ALEXISTAYLOR**. Then glances at Mike, and HITS the return key as...

*...the monitor goes BLACK.* Hank sits up, as Mike leans in in anticipation, when...

*...more code runs across the screen. The men deflate.*

MIKE (cont'd)  
Where's that folder?...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Hank grabs the folder and hands it to Mike who opens it up to see that picture of the little boy on his mother's lap. Little Ed is smiling, looking up at his mother as if she were the only thing in the world.

Mike studies the photo...and then scans some of the documents, when something catches his eye.

MIKE (cont'd)  
His mother was a music teacher... Stony Point elementary school.

Hank eyes Mike. Not sure what his point is.

MIKE (cont'd)  
My wife teaches music...cello...

Mike turns the page, looking at the next document, when...

MIKE (cont'd)  
She abandoned him...at the school...disappeared. March 1988... He was six.

Mike reads on. And discovers...

MIKE (cont'd)  
...She was bipolar... Looks like he was raised by the State...

HANK  
What was her name?...

Mike scans a document.

MIKE  
Rochelle... Rochelle Price.

Hank turns back to his computers, sets his fingers to the keyboard and types: '**ROCHELLE**'. He HITS the return key as:

The screen goes BLACK. Mike and Hank stare at the screen, when an image slowly FADES IN. It appears to be...

*...a dance club. Swing MUSIC plays. But as the image crystallizes we see that it's not a real dance club, but a virtual one. A HANDSOME AVATAR moves through the club, and we move with him...*

Mike glances at Hank confused, but Hank is beaming.

HANK  
We're in... Our boy's on-line... Looks like he's playing some virtual game or...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Hank types a few keys on his keyboard, when a little box appears in the lower right corner. The box is black, but then, an image FLICKERS, and comes into focus.

IT'S ED. SITTING AT HIS COMPUTER.

MIKE

That's live?

Hank nods, and smiles. He HITS a few more keys as the virtual world disappears and a *still photo* comes into focus:

*It's the picture Taylor took of Ed, at the Arthur house, with Mike, Cici, and Alexis.*

HANK

That's his desktop...

Hank types the name: **ARTHUR** and HITS return as a list of "files", beginning with the word "ARTHUR" appears, running down the screen. Hank eyes the files.

HANK (cont'd)

...and that's a list of all the files he's accessed from your company...and your home.

Hank scans the files, highlights one and CLICKS as...

*...Alexis' Facebook page appears.*

MIKE

My daughter's Facebook -- Can we prove he posted the picture?

Hanks takes a beat. And then smiles.

HANK

We just did.

Excited, Mike grabs his cell, and begins dialing a number.

HANK (cont'd)

What are you doing?

MIKE

Calling Reynolds. We can arrest him.

Hank starts laughing. Mike stops. Looks at him. *What?*

HANK

This isn't legal, Mike. What we're doing here...it's not exactly admissable.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MIKE

I don't understand, then how do we...

HANK

Cops' searched his place, right? Searched all his systems. Didn't find anything... Means there probably wasn't anything to find.

Mike shakes his head. Not following.

HANK (cont'd)

Our boy's good. If the cops are banging on the door, someone with his skills could do a remote wipe in seconds and bury any trace of what he'd done so deep that your typical cyber cop wouldn't be able to find it... But it'd be a lot of work to have to start from scratch...to hack back into all those accounts.

MIKE

Meaning what?

HANK

Meaning he probably had everything backed up...on a drive...a drive the cops didn't find... If there is a drive, and we can get our hands on it...our boy would go to jail for a long, long time.

INT. ED'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ed is at his computer, playing a virtual life game. On the screen, his HANDSOME AVATAR is flying a fighter plane, which he guides to an abrupt landing on an aircraft carrier, when:

DING. The IM window opens on the screen. And someone with the user name **RP27**, has typed the following text: "*Evan?*"

Ed stares at the window. And the name -- EVAN -- when:

DING. "*Evan Price?*"

Ed stares at his former name. Then types: *Who is this?*

Ed waits a beat and then...

DING. "*Are you the Evan Price, born July 15 1981, Nyack, NY?*"

Ed's jaw drops. He takes a beat. Then types: "*Who are you?*"

Ed waits a beat. Staring intently at the screen, when:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DING. *"Rochelle Price."*

Ed FREEZES, staring at the screen like a statue, when:

DING. *"I'd like to see you."*

Ed is still frozen. His heart in is throat...

DING. *"I want to explain what happened."*

Ed stares at the words as tears fill his eyes.

DING. *"Please, Evan."*

Ed takes a breath. Wipes his tears, and then puts his fingers on the keys and types: *"How do I know this is really you?"*

Ed leans in, waiting for the reply, when:

DING. A *link* appears in the dialogue box. Ed takes a moment, and then drags the cursor to the link and CLICKS as...

...the entire screen goes black, as the virtual world disappears. Ed stares at the black screen, waiting, when...

...a picture appears. It's out of focus, but sharpens quickly, and when it does, we see:

*The picture of little Evan, sitting on his mother's lap.*

EXT. MANHATTAN SKYLINE - MORNING

It's a beautiful day. Not a cloud in the sky.

EXT. ED'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Ed exits the building, holding a bouquet of flowers. He looks different. He's gotten a hair cut. And he's dressed up, wearing a pair of pleated khakis, a collared shirt, and a navy blue tie, under a Corduroy Sports Coat.

He moves down the street, passing a white cargo van parked on the corner, completely oblivious to...

...a small camera sticking out of the rear corner of the van.

INT. CARGO VAN - CONTINUOUS

Hank and Mike are seated on the floor of the otherwise empty van -- a rental -- huddled around a laptop. On the monitor they see Ed making his way down the street when he ducks down the stairs of a subway tunnel and disappears. Hank looks at Mike and smiles. *Showtime.*

INT. ED'S APARTMENT BUILDING (HALLWAY) - DAY

Hank is on his knees, trying to pick the lock to Ed's door with an electric pick. Mike is behind him, when...CLICK... Hank smiles, turns the door knob, and opens the door.

INT. PENN STATION - DAY

Ed approaches an automated pay kiosk. He then removes a handkerchief, wraps it around his finger so he doesn't have to touch the screen directly, and CLICKS on the link to buy tickets for the Long Island Railroad.

INT. ED'S APARTMENT - DAY

Mike, and Hank, a computer bag over his shoulder, move through the living room when they come to those state-of-the-art monitors atop the large desk. Hank sits, opens the top desk drawer, and begins rummaging through it.

MIKE

What are we looking for?

Hank smiles as he pulls a flash drive out of the drawer.

HANK

Anything that looks like this.

Hank continues to search the drawers when Mike spots a small set of shelves in the corner. He moves toward them and then reaches up to the top shelf, where he grabs...

...a flip camcorder. Mike frowns as he realizes that *this is the camera that got him*.

HANK (cont'd)

It's not recording is it?

Mike shakes his head, and puts it back on the shelf.

EXT. MONTAUK POINT - DAY

Ed, carrying that bouquet of flowers, approaches the famous Montauk lighthouse. He looks nervous. And so he takes a deep breath, fixes his hair, then eyes his watch. It's **12:45 PM**.

INT. ED'S APARTMENT (BEDROOM) - DAY

Every drawer in Ed's bedroom is opened and looks like it's been thoroughly searched. Even in the bathroom -- which is off the bedroom -- we can see opened cabinets and shelves.

Hank is sitting on Ed's bed, his laptop open. A flash drive is plugged into the computer and he is checking the contents.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mike is standing in a walk-in closet, surveying clothes, books, and board games, when he spots: *The red lock box.*

ON HANK NOW...as he disconnects the flash drive, and drops it on a small pile of discarded flash drives next to him. He frowns, frustrated, when Mike approaches with the lock box.

EXT. LIGHTHOUSE - DAY

Ed is at the entrance, glancing at the various TOURISTS when he notices an attractive WOMAN -- a brunette, late 40's -- heading right toward him. He eyes her, hopeful, when...

...she smiles at him. Ed instantly lights up, and raises his hand to wave when she...

...walks right by him and into the arms of an attractive GREY-HAIRED MAN. The couple kiss, then walk arm in arm down toward a bluff. Ed watches the couple go, disheartened.

INT. ED'S APARTMENT - DAY

Hank, seated at edge of Ed's bed, reaches into his computer bag and removes the electric lock pick and a small pouch. Mike, leaning against the wall, watches as...

...Hank UNZIPS the pouch revealing about a dozen different sized picks. He selects the tiniest one, attaches it to the end of the electric device, turns on the MOTOR, and then guides the pick inside the keyhole of the lock box, when...

...the lock turns, making a soft, **CLICK**. Hank puts down the pick, and opens the box to see:

*A small external flash drive...*

...sitting atop the passport, cash, and documents that Reynolds previously saw in the box.

INT. ED'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Mike and Hank are huddled over Hank's laptop, their eyes fixed on the screen when an icon appears: *Ed Porter's Personal.*

Hank DOUBLE CLICKS the icon as a window opens, revealing a long list of files -- beginning with the word "**Arthur**" -- running down the length of the screen. Mike's not sure what he's looking at, although Hank seems to have a pretty good idea as he highlights a file and CLICKS, as suddenly:

*Alexis' Facebook page opens up.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HANK

We got 'em.

But Mike looks confused.

MIKE

We're still obtaining this illegally.  
Won't it be inadmissible?

But Hank just turns to Mike, and smiles.

EXT. LIGHTHOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

Ed is now seated on a park bench near the lighthouse. He watches as an excited LITTLE BOY runs toward the bluff and into the arms of his DAD, as his MOTHER looks on, LAUGHING.

Ed looks down at the flowers. They've wilted a bit. He eyes his watch. It's **5:15 PM**.

INT. TRAIN (MOVING) - DUSK

The melancholy Ed sits, staring out the window.

INT. ED'S APARTMENT BUILDING (STAIRWELL) - NIGHT

Ed reaches the top of the stairs and moves to his apartment.

INT. ED'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Ed enters, places his keys in that wooden bowl by the door, and steps toward the kitchen, when he stops, as if he caught something out of the corner of his eye. Slowly, he doubles back toward the main room and FREEZES, seeing:

*The lock box.* It's sitting -- **open** -- on a table in the middle of the room. As if it's taunting him.

Ed steps toward the box, and looks inside to see the passport, cash, and folded documents...*but no flash drive.*

Ed hesitates...*thinking*...when it clicks:

***He was set up.***

But just as it registers...

**POUND POUND POUND.** It's the front door.

REYNOLDS (O.S.)

Mr. Porter, it's the police. We have a warrant.

Ed turns around, startled, when again:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

**POUND POUND POUND.**

REYNOLDS (O.S.) (cont'd)  
Come on, we know you're in there.

Ed races toward the far side of the room, and looks out the window, down to the street below, where he sees:

FOUR COPS standing by several police vehicles.

EXT. ED'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Reynolds, two UNIFORMED COPS and two familiar CYBER COPS, stand outside the door, waiting, when:

The door opens wide, revealing Ed. Reynolds hands Ed the warrant as the officers enter the apartment.

REYNOLDS  
Check him.

A uniformed cop begins to pat Ed down as the other officers move about the place. A cyber cop sits at the monitors.

Reynolds glances around, when he spots the now *closed lock box* on the table. He tries to open it, but it's locked. And so he looks at Ed, as the cop finishes the pat down.

REYNOLDS (cont'd)  
Mr. Porter... Can I have the key?

Ed **glares** at Reynolds -- *just a beat too long, as he realizes what's about to happen* -- then crosses to that wooden bowl by the door, where he grabs his key chain, locates that small silver key, and then places it on the table for Reynolds.

ED  
Would it be alright if I used the bathroom?... I just got home.

Reynolds nods as Ed disappears into his bedroom. The detective then sits before the lock box, inserts the key into the lock and opens it. He then eyes the officers.

*They're pre-occupied. And so Reynolds reaches into his pocket, removes the **flash drive** and plants it in the box.*

REYNOLDS  
Hey, Bobby.

Reynolds picks up the drive and walks it over to the cyber cop sitting at the monitors. The cop plugs the drive into the computer as Reynolds retreats to the fish tank. He studies the fish swimming around when, the cop calls out to him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COP

Dick.

Reynolds turns to the cop, who **nods** at him. Reynolds in turn nods at one of the uniformed cops as together, they move toward the bedroom, and step inside to see:

The closed bathroom door. Reynolds approaches. He can hear the sink RUNNING inside. He KNOCKS.

REYNOLDS

Mr. Porter, would you come out here?

Reynolds waits, but...no answer. He KNOCKS again.

REYNOLDS (cont'd)

Mr. Porter?

Again. No answer. Reynolds glances at the cop, and they both draw their guns. They wait a beat. And then Reynolds SLAMS his body into the door as it flies open revealing...

...an empty bathroom...a breeze blows in through a wide open window in the back. Reynolds races to the window, and looks out to see...

...a fire escape that opens up onto a back alley, five stories down. Reynolds grabs his walkie.

REYNOLDS (ON WALKIE) (cont'd)

He ran. Back alley. North Side.

INT./EXT. CARGO VAN - CONTINUOUS

Mike and Hank are huddled by the laptop watching video surveillance of the front of the building, when they see those same four cops, who were standing by their vehicles, suddenly spring to action and race down the street.

HANK

Uh oh.

EXT. ED'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Reynolds and his crew tear out of the building. The uniformed cops run South as the cyber cops run North. Reynolds watches them go, and then -- *with no one looking* -- he changes the channel on his walkie and speaks:

REYNOLDS

Hank, he ran... Can you track him?

INT. CARGO VAN - MOMENTS LATER

Mike hovers over Hank who is furiously typing into the laptop, when he stops, *defeated*:

HANK  
That sonofabitch.

INT. SUBWAY CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT

Ed is standing in the car, holding onto a rail.

EXT. ED'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Reynolds stands alone, in front of the building, looking increasingly agitated, when he picks up his walkie.

REYNOLDS (ON WALKIE)  
Anyone got a visual?

VOICE (ON WALKIE) (O.S.)  
Negative.

Reynolds changes the channel on his walkie.

REYNOLDS (ON WALKIE) (O.S.)  
Any luck, Hank?

INT. CARGO VAN - CONTINUOUS

Hank and Mike are hovered over the laptop. Thousands of digits are blazing across the screen. Hank picks up a cell phone, and speaks into as if it were a walkie. INTERCUT.

HANK (ON PHONE)  
Sonofabitch changed the password. I'm running a brute force, but I wouldn't count on it.

Reynolds frowns.

INT. JFK AIRPORT (INTERNATIONAL TERMINAL) - NIGHT

Ed stands in the terminal staring up at the massive DEPARTURES BOARD overhead.

INT. JFK AIRPORT (INTERNATIONAL TERMINAL) - LATER

Ed stands in line at a check-in desk for American Airlines. A Hasidic Jewish family, with a brood of kids, is in front of him. The MOTHER balances a shoulder bag on one shoulder, and an adorable LITTLE BOY over the other.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The boy, wearing a skull cap with his corkscrew curls running down the sides, notices Ed, as the two make eye contact.

Ed smiles, and the boy GIGGLES, burying his head in his mother's shoulder. The boy then slowly looks up -- as if he's playing peek-a-boo -- and smiles again. Ed brightens, then raises his hand and gives the boy a little wave.

EXT. ED'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

A small POLICE PRESENCE is staked outside the building now. Reynolds is talking to a few COPS when he spots Mike, approaching the cargo van, holding a bag of take-out food. The two men eye each other for a beat, and then Reynolds turns back to the cops.

INT. CARGO VAN - CONTINUOUS

Mike steps into the van and tosses Hank a sandwich. Hank nods his thanks, unwraps the sandwich, and starts to eat. Mike unwraps his own sandwich, takes a bite, and studies Hank.

MIKE

So, what were you Hank...before you weren't a P.I.?... C.I.A.? F.B.I.?

Hank shoots Mike a coy smile and then takes another bite of his sandwich, when:

DING. It's the laptop. Mike and Hank slide over to the screen and see that...

...the flashing digits have ceased. On the screen now are 12 letters strewn together:

**ALEXISTAYLOR.**

MIKE (cont'd)

That it?

HANK

Guess our boy isn't as smart as we thought. Starts with **A**. Only 12 characters. No numbers... That's why we got it so fast.

Hank begins PUNCHING at the keys of the laptop when a map appears -- a *GPS map* -- of southern New York. There's a BLINKING BLUE DOT on the eastern end of Long Island.

HANK (cont'd)

That's him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Hank HITS a few keys and the screen ZOOMS IN on the blinking blue dot revealing that...

*...it's over the Atlantic Ocean just off the coast.*

MIKE

He's in the water?

Hank hesitates, and then grabs his walkie.

HANK (ON WALKIE)

Dick!

REYNOLDS (O.S.) (ON WALKIE)

Yeah.

HANK (ON WALKIE)

Check the passenger lists on all the flights out of JFK in the last fifteen. Our boy's airborne.

INT. CARGO VAN - MINUTES LATER

Hank and Mike are on edge, waiting for word. Hank takes the last bite of his sandwich, then kind of smiles to himself.

HANK

Kinda crazy, isn't it?

MIKE

What's that?

HANK

The lengths we go to protect ourselves. Buy the house...you get the alarm system, security gate, those little censors on the windows...

(picks some food out of his teeth)

... We create little passwords so that everything's protected. The credit cards, bank accounts, medical insurance... It's information most of us wouldn't even share with our kids... And then what do we do?... We turn *all* of that information over to some stranger with a business card making sixty-five bucks an hour.

Mike takes it in. Guess he never really thought of it that way. He glances up at Hank, when, over the radio they hear:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VOICE (ON RADIO) (O.S.)  
 Detective, we got it... He made a cash purchase for a one-way, American Airlines, flight 157, non-stop to Tel-Aviv. Flight went airborne 22 minutes ago.

Mike looks at Hank as the CHATTER over the radio continues.

MIKE  
 Can they ground the flight?

HANK  
 Won't have to. Our boy just made his second mistake.  
 (with a smile)  
 Of the all the countries you can fly to from JFK, guess which one has the easiest extradition with the U.S.?

Off Hank's smile, we DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ARTHUR HOUSE - NIGHT

Mike's BMW pulls into the driveway.

INT. ARTHUR HOUSE - NIGHT

Mike enters the house and is immediately greeted by the excited Hitch. Mike rubs the dog's belly when Taylor pokes his head out of the TV room and runs to his father.

TAYLOR  
 Dad!

MIKE  
 Hey... What are you doing up?

TAYLOR  
 It's Friday. Mom said I could stay up. Are you coming to my game tomorrow?

MIKE  
 I don't know kiddo, I might have to go into the office, take care of few things.

Mike spots Alexis at the top of the steps. He brightens at the sight of her, but Alex just turns her back on him and retreats down the second floor hall.

EXT. ARTHUR HOUSE (BACK YARD PATIO) - NIGHT

Mike and Cici are seated at the outdoor table. She has a mug of hot tea. Mike's in the middle of explaining...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE

...They're going to arrest him when he arrives in Tel Aviv... I spoke to Stan. There'll be some formalities but... they're going to drop the charges... It's over Ceece...

CICI

What about the IRS?

Mike frowns. There's no easy answer for that. He reaches out and puts his hand on top of hers.

MIKE

We'll get through it...together... I want to come home.

Cici looks at him. She's still hurting. Badly.

CICI

I'm sorry.

Cici suddenly withdraws her hand and walks back into the house, leaving Mike all alone.

EXT. ARTHUR HOUSE - MORNING

The morning sun shines through the trees throwing streaks of light onto the property.

INT. ARTHUR HOUSE (MASTER BEDROOM) - MORNING

Cici is in bed. Staring at the clock. It's **8:00 AM**. She looks tired. It's been awhile since she's had a good night's sleep.

INT. CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL (MIKE'S ROOM) - MORNING

The same goes for Mike. Who is lying awake. Staring at a framed picture of his family which he's placed on the bedside table.

EXT. AMERICAN AIRLINES FLIGHT 157 - DAY

The plane is over Israel, well into its descent, when the landing wheels come down.

EXT. ARTHUR HOUSE - MORNING

Cici, wrapped in her robe, exits through the sliding kitchen doors and begins moving down toward the pool, which is covered by the reinforced vinyl pool-cover.

EXT./INT. BEN GURION AIRPORT - DAY

Flight 157 taxis into the gate over the watchful eye of two INTERPOL AGENTS standing inside the terminal.

INT. MIKE'S BMW (MOVING) - DAY

Mike, dressed for work, drives down the highway.

EXT. ARTHUR HOUSE (POOL DECK) - MORNING

Cici enters the pool deck, grabs the high-tech remote control from the coffee table, and points it at the digital panel, as the motor CRANKS, and the pool cover begins to recede.

INT. BEN GURION AIRPORT (GATE) - DAY

Exiting PASSENGERS step into the terminal from the jet bridge under the watchful eye of the two Interpol Agents.

EXT. ARTHUR HOUSE - MORNING

Hitch tears out of the house through the doggie door and begins running down the little hill toward the pool deck.

INT. BEN GURION AIRPORT (GATE) - DAY

The Agents continue to study the unloading passengers. One of them glances at a photo of Ed in his hand.

EXT. ARTHUR HOUSE - MORNING

Hitch continues to hustle down the hill, getting closer to the pool deck.

INT. BEN GURION AIRPORT (GATE) - DAY

The Agents eye each exiting passenger, *when the traffic ceases*. The agents glance at each other curiously, as...

EXT. ARTHUR HOUSE (BACK YARD) - DAY

...Hitch gets closer...and closer.

INT. PLANE (PARKED) - DAY

The Agents run onto the plane and see that -- with the exception of the CLEAN-UP CREW -- the plane is empty.

EXT. ARTHUR HOUSE (BACK YARD) - DAY

Hitch hits the pool deck, running fast towards the pool.

INT. PLANE (PARKED) - DAY

The Agents are checking the airplane bathrooms. Furiously busting open the doors as...

EXT. ARTHUR HOUSE (POOL DECK) - DAY

...Hitch reaches the pool -- just as the vinyl cover completely recedes -- and JUMPS IN. Cici chuckles to herself, watching her dog, when she sees that...

...something's wrong. Hitch is SQUEALING. *In pain.*

CICI  
Hitch?... What is it?

INT. PLANE - DAY

The Agents are in the rear of the plane, checking the last of the bathrooms. The first one is empty. The second one too. They approach the final bathroom, push open the door...

...and FREEZE.

EXT. ARTHUR HOUSE (POOL DECK) - DAY

Cici hurries toward the SQUEALING Hitch -- who paddles weakly, struggling to stay afloat -- when she stops, seeing:

*Vapors of steam rising off the surface of the pool.*

INT. PLANE - DAY

The Agents are right where we left them. Staring into that last bathroom, which we now finally reveal to be:

*Empty.* The Agents glance at each other at a loss.

EXT. ARTHUR HOUSE (POOL DECK) - DAY

Cici curiously eyes those vapors of steam rising off her pool when she turns toward the digital panel at the pool house wall and SQUINTS to see the temperature gage.

**170 degrees.**

VOICE (O.S.)  
Hitch?

Cici turns to see a concerned Taylor, standing in the yard, wearing his Little League uniform.

TAYLOR  
Hitch!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Taylor sprints toward Hitch, and is about to jump into the pool, when:

CICI

Taylor!

Cici GRABS her son and SQUEEZES him tightly to her chest.

INT. MIKE'S BMW (MOVING) - DAY

Mike drives along, when his phone RINGS. He grabs it.

MIKE (ON PHONE)

Hello.

EXT. ARTHUR HOUSE (POOL DECK) - DAY

Cici drags Hitch toward the side of the pool with a skimmer. She gets on her knees, puts her hands in the water, and instantly WINCES in pain as she pulls Hitch out of the pool.

Hitch collapses as Taylor runs toward him. Cici looks at her hands. They are bright red. As if they've been scalded. Taylor drops to his knees to attend to Hitch who is WHEEZING horribly. But as soon as he touches the dog, he RECOILS.

TAYLOR

He's hot!

INT. BEN GURION AIRPORT (BAGGAGE CLAIM) - DAY

The Hasidic family we saw earlier at JFK is greeting some RELATIVES. The mother -- holding that adorable little boy again -- puts down her son, and her shoulder bag, and HUGS an OLDER MAN. As she does...

...WE MOVE IN ON HER SHOULDER BAG...

And that's when we see *Ed's phone*, peeking out of a side pocket.

INT. ARTHUR HOUSE (KITCHEN) - DAY

Alexis, rubbing the sleep out of her eyes, stumbles into the kitchen. She crosses to the fridge, opens it, and grabs a container of orange juice. She then closes the fridge, and turns toward the cabinets, when:

SHE SLAMS RIGHT INTO ED.

EXT. ARTHUR HOUSE (POOL DECK) - DAY

Cici and an anxious Taylor kneel over the WHEEZING Hitch.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CICI

I'm going to call the vet. Do you want to stay with him?

Taylor nods as Cici stands and hurries toward the house.

TAYLOR

(petting Hitch)

It's going to be, okay, Hitch.  
Everything's going to be okay.

INT. ARTHUR HOUSE (KITCHEN) - CONTINUOUS

Ed stands alone in the **quiet** kitchen. He can see Cici, out the window, moving toward the house, when he looks down at a set of kitchen knives. He grabs one. It's a small utility knife. He puts it in his pocket, and then grabs a second knife. This one's much larger. A sharp chef's knife.

EXT. SOFTBALL FIELD - DAY

A high school girls softball game is in progress. Reynolds stands at the fence, a cell phone pressed to his ear.

REYNOLDS (ON PHONE)

...look, he'd have to be pretty stupid to come after you, but...

INT. MIKE'S BMW (MOVING) - DAY

Mike has the phone pressed to his ear, listening.

REYNOLDS (O.S.)

...I thought you should know.

Mike hangs up the phone. He looks unsettled. He then looks back at his phone and presses a button, engaging the speed dial. He puts the phone to his ear and listens as...

...the other line RINGS...and RINGS...

MIKE

Come on, pick up.

But the line keeps RINGING, when the voicemail picks up:

TAYLOR (PRE-RECORDED)

Hi, it's the Arthur family. We're not here right now, so please leave a message. Thank you.

BEEP.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE (ON PHONE)

Hey. It's dad... Whomever hears this first, please call me. Right away.

Mike hangs up. His mind racing, when he...

...YANKS THE STEERING WHEEL AS...

The car SWERVES over the grass divider and begins heading in the opposite direction.

EXT. ARTHUR HOUSE (POOL DECK) - DAY

Taylor sits alone kneeling over his WHEEZING dog. It's been awhile. He's getting anxious. He looks toward the house, and calls out:

TAYLOR

Mom?

Taylor stares at the house, when, the sliding door opens...

...and Ed steps out...

Ed smiles at Taylor and begins moving down through the yard, toward the pool deck, getting closer, and closer, until finally...he reaches the boy.

ED

Hi Taylor...

Taylor looks confused and more than a little frightened.

TAYLOR

I'm not supposed to talk to you.

ED

Who says?... Your dad?

(Taylor nods)

Oh... Well, your dad and me...we had a little misunderstanding... He was mad at me for a while... But that's over now.

A beat as Taylor absorbs this.

TAYLOR

Ed?... Why are you here?

Ed hesitates. Eyes the WHEEZING dog.

ED

Hitch needs water, Taylor... Why don't we go inside so we can fill his bowl and bring it out to him... What do you say?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Taylor pauses, then nods, "okay". Ed stands and holds out his hand. Taylor takes a beat, staring at Ed's hand...

...and then takes it. Ed smiles, now holding the boy's hand, as together they begin walking up toward the house.

EXT. ARTHUR HOUSE (DRIVEWAY) - DAY

The BMW SCREECHES into the driveway and BRAKES ON A DIME as Mike steps out of the car, takes a quick glance around, and then hustles toward the house when...

...he stops at the front door, and stares at the digital panel. He hesitates. Then puts his fingers to the key pad.

INT. ARTHUR HOUSE - DAY

Mike steps inside. The house is still. Quiet.

MIKE

Hello?

No answer. Mike moves to the stairs. Looks up.

MIKE (cont'd)

Cici!?!... Alex!?! Taylor!?!...

Mike waits... But there's no answer. And so he turns toward the living room on the other side of the foyer.

MIKE (cont'd)

Hello?

Mike begins moving through the living room, when he stops, seeing that the sliding doors to the TV room -- *are closed*.

Mike slowly approaches. Puts his fingers into the door slit. And slides it open revealing:

His family -- Cici, Alexis and Taylor -- sitting on the couch, their backs to Mike, facing the TV, watching of all things...

*...video from Taylor's birthday party.*

Mike SIGHS, relieved, and begins moving around the couch, passing a large luxury fireplace built into the wall.

MIKE (cont'd)

Hey. What's going--

...but the words get caught in his throat, as he sees:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

*They're tied up -- individually -- duct tape around their ankles, wrists, and mouths. They're trembling, terrified, as tears stream down from their faces.*

VOICE (O.S.)  
Hello, Mike.

Mike turns to see Ed, in the corner, holding that chef's knife in one hand, and a long fire poker in the other. But before Mike can even blink, Ed rears back...

...AND CRACKS HIM ACROSS THE SKULL WITH THE POKER AS WE:

FADE TO BLACK.

The sounds of RIPPING duct tape as we FADE IN ON:

Ed, taping Mike's ankles together with duct tape. Mike, looking horribly dazed, slowly comes to.

ED  
Did you think that was funny?...  
Pretending to be my Mom?...

Ed TEARS OFF another piece and begins tying Mike's wrists. As he does, we DRIFT TOWARD Cici...

...all the way around to her back, where we see her wrists pressed against the thick thread line in the couch. She is slowly working those wrists UP AND DOWN trying to cut through the tape, when we CUT BACK TO ED...

...AS HE SLAPS one last piece of tape around Mike's mouth and then grabs the chef's knife, and brings the razor-sharp blade to Mike's face.

Mike is losing consciousness again, and so Ed SMACKS him.

ED (cont'd)  
I need you stay awake for this, Mike... I want to see that look in your eyes...when you lose *everything*.

And with that, Ed slowly turns his head -- *and the knife* -- until he's looking up at Mike's family, seated several feet away, tied up on the couch.

Mike PLEADS through the duct tape, but all that comes out is a terrified GRUNT.

ED (cont'd)  
It didn't have to be this way, you know...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Ed looks back at Mike and for the first time, we see that he is TREMBLING as the adrenaline courses his veins.

Mike looks up at Ed and IMPLORES him with a GRUNT.

ED (cont'd)  
I'm sorry. It's too late. You should have... You should have thought of that, before you... I didn't do anything wrong...

Mike, terrified, GRUNTS again.

ED (cont'd)  
(under his breath)  
I didn't do anything wrong.

Ed, still TREMBLING, has a vacant look in his eyes now -- as if he's a million miles away -- when suddenly...

...he snaps out of it, and with a terrifying calm, looks down at Mike and says:

ED (cont'd)  
I'm going to start now.

Slowly, Ed rises to his feet. And approaches the couch.

Mike GRUNTS, WAILING, PLEADING as...

...Ed -- *gripping the knife* -- walks slowly past the terrified Cici...

...and Alexis...

...when he comes to a stop, standing directly above the last figure on the couch...

...*Taylor*...

The horrified Mike WAILS, BEGGING for his son's life. But it's no use.

Ed -- *completely fixated on Taylor* -- can no longer hear him.

ED (cont'd)  
I'm sorry, Taylor... Your dad doesn't deserve you.

And with that, Ed raises the knife, holds it for just a beat...

...and then swings it down toward Taylor's chest, when:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

*Cici lunges at Ed, SHOVING him toward the wall where he BANGS his head on a mantle and stumbles backwards, falling...*

*...right into the luxury fireplace.*

Ed looks dazed. Not only from striking his head, but being caught off guard. He looks across at Cici, who is reaching for something on the coffee table -- which she GRABS -- and then turns toward Ed revealing...

*...a high-tech remote control.*

Before Ed can even process what's happening, Cici points the remote right at him:

**WHOOOOOOOOSSSSSSSSSSSSHHHHHHHHHHH!**

A furious BURST OF FLAMES ignite in the fireplace as suddenly:

***Ed is on fire. SCREAMING like a banshee as he...***

*...stands out of the fireplace -- his upper body engulfed in flames -- and stumbles toward a wall of windows that look out onto the backyard.*

The Arthur family watches, astonished, as the SHRIEKING Ed...

PLOWS THROUGH THE WINDOWS IN A HAIL OF BROKEN GLASS, FALLING TO THE GRASS SEVERAL FEET BELOW WHERE HE BEGINS ROLLING DOWN THE HILL IN BALL OF FIRE.

As he rolls, the flames begin to get squelched, until finally...

*...they cease, as Ed comes to a stop, face down on the concrete floor of the pool deck.*

TIME FREEZES...as the Arthur family, in total, and complete shock, stare out the window and see:

Ed. Lying still. Smoke rising from his body.

Cici snaps out of it and tears the tape off her mouth and ankles and rushes to her kids, whom she hugs tighter than she ever has in her life. She tears the tape off their mouths.

Alexis is SOBBING. Taylor is TREMBLING. Cici removes the tape that was binding their ankles and wrists, and hugs them once more, when she turns her attention to Mike.

She kneels by him and RIPS off the tape from his mouth as...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

...the couple stare at one another for a beat. Then, Cici begins unwrapping the tape that was binding his wrists and ankles as Mike slowly sits up and looks out the window...

...at Ed, lying still, on the pool deck.

TAYLOR

Is he dead?

Mike gets to his feet, and looks at his kids.

MIKE

I want you guys to go next store to Mrs. Decker's, okay?... Mom and I will be there in a minute. Go.

Alexis takes Taylor's hand as they hurry toward the door.

Mike eyes Cici, and then looks back across the lawn, and down at Ed. He glares at his I.T. Guy, *determined*, and then GRABS the poker.

MIKE (cont'd)

Call the police.

Cici nods as Mike approaches the shattered window, steps carefully over the broken glass, and makes his way outside...

EXT. ARTHUR HOUSE (BACK YARD/POOL DECK) - CONTINUOUS

...and down the little hill, to the pool deck, and Ed.

Mike stands over the body. The skin on Ed's arms and neck is charred and blistered. Much of his hair looks like a Brillo pad, singed to his skull. Mike takes the poker. Prods Ed.

And that's when he hears it. A soft, WHEEZING sound. Mike turns, and for the first time sees:

Hitch, lying by the side of the pool, barely conscious. Mike stares at his dog with a mix of anger and sadness, when:

ED BOLTS UP AND SWINGS HIS ARM INTO MIKE'S CALF.

Mike SCREAMS as he looks down to see the *utility knife* buried in his calf.

Startled, Mike drops the poker as Ed TACKLES him at the waist, and the two men fall right on top of the outdoor coffee table, landing on the remote control, inadvertently hitting a button as...

...the vinyl pool cover begins to slide across the pool...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mike and Ed roll off the table directly onto the concrete floor with Ed landing on top of Mike.

Ed reaches down, YANKS the knife out of Mike's calf and then THRUSTS the blade down toward Mike's chest, about to stab him when...

...Mike catches Ed at the wrist, temporarily stopping the knife's progress.

But the blade is just inches from Mike's chest. And although he PUSHES AGAINST Ed's wrist with all he's got, Ed -- *straddling him* -- is in the position of strength, as he slowly guides the blade to Mike's heart.

Mike's gotta change tactics and fast, and so, keeping one hand on Ed's wrist, he reaches out...

...and SQUEEZES Ed's groin with everything he's got. Ed SCREAMS, still trying to force the knife into Mike's chest...

...but the pain is too great and distracting as Ed loosens his grip on the knife, which -- *pushing against the force of Mike's wrist* -- suddenly flies out of Ed's hand, and skids across the pool deck, right onto...

...the vinyl pool cover which is making its way across the pool.

Ed and Mike -- both temporarily distracted by the knife -- turn back to each other when Ed closes his fist...

...AND CLOCKS MIKE IN THE JAW.

The blow temporarily stuns Mike, as Ed turns, and spots the fire poker lying just a few feet away. He quickly scoots toward it, grabs it, and gets to his feet.

Mike, who is drifting in and out, suddenly comes to, as he looks up at Ed, gripping the poker, and staring down at him.

Ed smiles at the defenseless Mike, and then slowly raises the poker above his head -- *the sharp tip pointing down* -- and THRUSTS the weapon down towards Mike's chest, when:

SOMETHING JUMPS ONTO ED, KNOCKING HIM RIGHT IN THE CHEST...  
IT'S NOT A PERSON...

...BUT A DOG...

**HITCH.**

Ed stumbles backwards and falls right into the pool...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

...CRACKING HIS HEAD ON THE CONCRETE EDGE AS HE...

...quickly sinks to the bottom. Above him, the vinyl pool cover finishes its trek across the pool and slides CLOSED.

Mike sits up and looks down at the covered pool. Everything is still, when...

...he sees something -- *Ed* -- BUMP the pool cover from underneath.

There's another BUMP. Then another.

But Mike just stands there, watching...

*...as the BUMPS grow increasingly desperate, as the I.T. Guy frantically tries to break through the vinyl cover...*

But the material is too strong. And soon...

*...the activity ceases. And the pool is still.*

Mike eyes his exhausted, but heroic, WHEEZING dog, lying at the edge of the pool, when:

CICI (O.S.)

Mike?

Mike turns to an alarmed looking Cici standing on the patio. She quickly hurries down toward her husband.

CICI (cont'd)

You alright?

Mike gets to his feet and looks to his wife as she reaches him and stops. The two stare at each other for a moment...

...and then Cici puts her arms around him. Mike hugs her back, holding her close, tight, like he'll never let go again, as in the distance...

...we hear the sounds of police SIRENS.

FADE TO BLACK.

TITLE CARD: **ONE YEAR LATER.**

FADE IN ON:

INT. HALLWAY/ELEVATOR BAY - DAY

It's a generic hallway, with two elevators. It's quiet, when a door opens at the end of the hall...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

...and Mike appears, escorting a young FEMALE AUTHOR and her AGENT to the elevators.

MIKE

...that's it. Just nine employees.

AGENT

I gotta say, Mike, I never thought I'd see the day.

MIKE

Well, you have to change with the times.

The elevator opens, and Mike extends his hand to the author.

MIKE (cont'd)

Iris, it was a real pleasure. Your book is fantastic.

The Author smiles and enters the elevator. The Agent is about to follow her, when he stops, and looks at Mike, discreetly.

AGENT

So that business with the IRS?

MIKE

It's behind me now.

Mike manages a smile as the Agent steps onto the elevator and the doors close.

INT. ARTHUR E-BOOKS - MOMENTS LATER

Mike steps through a door, into a modest office space. He passes a small reception area. On the wall is the logo:  
**ARTHUR E-BOOKS.**

He moves down a hall, passing several opened offices, when a FEMALE VOICE calls out:

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

Mike.

Mike stops, and turns towards a partially opened office door, where we can barely glimpse two FIGURES inside. Mike moves toward the door and pushes it open as we're now:

CLOSE ON MIKE, as he steps into the room.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.) (cont'd)

Mike, I'd like you to meet Lee Jacobs...

Mike turns to the second *unseen* figure and starts to smile, when:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.) (cont'd)  
...Our new I.T. Guy.

Just the sound of those very words -- **I.T. Guy** -- causes Mike's face to *tighten*, as we slowly...very slowly...

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END