

WELCOME TO THE BUILDING

Written by

Romuald Boulanger

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CURRENT Entertainment



6310 San Vicente Blvd. Suite 500
Los Angeles, CA 90048
O (310) 271-8400

"If you want your neighbor to appreciate your tree, make sure its roots stay on your land.

Alain Kreutzer

INT./EXT. OPENING SCENE - NICE, FRANCE - DAY

AERIAL SHOT - THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA

The Mediterranean stretches out—calm, endless. Sunlight catching on the water. We move toward Nice, the Promenade des Anglais opening up below, people drifting through the heat, that easy summer rhythm. We keep going. The streets get tighter, quieter.

Then we land on a five-story Provençal building. Nothing special at first glance, just real, lived-in.

We slip straight through an open window.

INT. BUILDING - HALLWAY - DAY

Still One Continuous Shot. A woman stands at a door. Waiting.

FRANK (O.S.)

Coming!

The door swings open—FRANK BUTLER, in his sixties. weekend warrior in plaid and joggers—not to be stylish, but because it's practical.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Lucky timing! I was just heading out. Light delivery today.

He hands her one Amazon package. Then another. And another. Five in total, stacking them up like a pro.

WOMAN

(mock-guilty)

Thank you Frank! You won't tell my husband about all this, right?

FRANK

What 'all this'?

WOMAN

(gestures to the boxes)

These!

FRANK

I don't see a thing.

She gets it. Smiles. Walks away, arms full.

Frank slips on a down jacket without sleeves, Grabs a few letters. Steps out.

A hallway light flickers. One tap—fixed. Like it was never broken.

He moves, sliding letters into mailboxes, under doors. Clean. Smooth. Part of the rhythm.

A framed picture—crooked. He straightens it without breaking stride.

PAUL, 85, leans against the wall, inching toward the elevator

FRANK (CONT'D)
Paul! Late night out? Spent all evening picking up women?

PAUL
(chuckles, exhausted)
If only... Just trying to get a damn croissant.

FRANK
I'm heading out for groceries—I'll bring you one.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. BUILDING ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Frank pushes open the door. It creaks. A pause. He moves the door back and forth. Identifies the noise. One sharp nudge—fixed. No more creak.

MARGARET, 75, wrapped in a bathrobe, her tiny dog trotting ahead on a leash. She spots Frank—eyes the vintage Peugeot 504 Coupé parked out front.

MARGARET
(british accent)
You know you can't park there, Frank!

Frank doesn't even look at her. He squats slightly, talking straight to the dog

FRANK
Hey boss, looks like you're taking Margaret for a stroll. Let her do her business, and get her back home before she bites someone.

MARGARET
Why park right here? You've got a spot!

FRANK
Had to unload 40 kilos of fertilizer—for the garden. You the parking patrol now?

MARGARET

Oh, please, no! That's your job, isn't it? Shouldn't you be setting the example?

FRANK

Then why can't you stop playing meter maid every time you see a car out front?

MARGARET

I just like it when things are clean and proper! I don't care what people think.

FRANK

Funny you say that. The new couple on the third floor, they asked me the other day, "Isn't that old british bat on the fourth kinda... psycho?" And I told them, "No!"

(a beat)

"she's not on the fourth... she's on the fifth."

Margaret rolls her eyes used to Frank's antics.

A black SUV with tinted windows parks right behind Frank's car. Two burly men get out, one with a tattoo on his neck, the other concealing a weapon at his belt. Frank notices.

A third man, MR. CASALTA, in his sixties, sharp suit, highly charismatic, weathered face, and a menacing look.

He's got this thing—a silk handkerchief. He's always pulling it out, running it over his hands or wiping down a surface, like he's marking territory. Then, right before he tucks it away, he takes a quiet sniff.

It's not just habit—it's unsettling, like he's taking in every detail.

Trailing behind him: DYLAN, 25. Neat hair. Eyes down. Silent. He walks two steps behind like it's protocol, like he knows exactly where he stands.

Casalta approaches Margaret.

MR. CASALTA

Margaret right?

Margaret checks her watch.

MARGARET

You're 30 minutes early.

MR. CASALTA
I hate people who show up on time.

MARGARET
Thing is... I was gonna take my dog out
for a walk, but ok... Nice to meet you.

FRANK
(To Margaret)
And what about them?

MARGARET
(feeling obliged)
Do you mind parking in the guest spots?

CASALTA's eyes narrow, his smile cold.

MR. CASALTA
Yeah, I mind.

MARGARET
Okay, no problem, let's go.

Margaret walks toward the building with her dog, the three men
trailing behind. Frank watches them.

FRANK
(to the men)
Hey! If you're the cops, go easy. You
lock up my charming neighbor, she'll
drive your entire precinct nuts.

MR. CASALTA
(half-smiling)
No worries. We're not the cops.

FRANK
(nods)
Good to know.
(intrigued)
So... who are you?

CASALTA pauses, his smile fading into something darker.
Without a word, he throws a final look at Frank—cold,
menacing—before turning and shutting the door behind him.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS OF THE FRENCH RIVIERA - DAY

OPENING CREDITS ROLL.

The vintage Peugeot 504 Coupe tears down the sun-drenched streets, weaving around the tight coastal curves like it's on rails.

Frank sits behind the wheel, casually popping sunflower seeds, flicking the shells out the window.

The Mediterranean sparkles in the distance, cliffs rising up, palm trees swaying—it's the French Riviera at its best.

Frank zips past the rugged mountains looming behind him and pulls a smooth swing into a parking lot on the city's edge.

CREDIT SEQUENCE ENDS: **"THE SUPER"**

TITLE CARD - SUPERIMPOSE

"LA RIVIERA MARKET, NICE, FRANCE" / "SATURDAY - 10:00 AM"

INT. LA RIVIERA MARKET'S - DAY

In the produce aisle, a hand dives into the carrot bin, sifting through the pile. Not just grabbing the top ones—no. This hand is searching. Ruthlessly.

Fingers finally curl around something different—a pristine carrot buried at the bottom. A trophy.

Frank slides on his glasses like he's about to examine evidence at a crime scene. He holds the carrot up to the light. It's flawless.

WOMAN (V.O.)
And here we go again—Frank's
legendary Saturday morning carrot
auditions!

NINA, in her forties, an employee at LA RIVIERA MARKET, greets Frank. They share a smile.

FRANK
Hey, Nina. How's your morning?

NINA
Good! Feels like it's gonna be a
great day. We've got sunshine and—

—BAMMMM!

A store employee behind Nina is smashed into a shelf, nearly knocked unconscious. Nina and a few customers scream in shock.

A MAN in a hood, dressed in all black, pummels the employee on the floor, brandishing a knife. Frank watches from a distance, eerily still, while everyone else scrambles to flee.

MASKED MAN
(furious-in french)
Now give me the fucking cash!

He grabs the employee, slamming him into the register with a brutal yank, keeping everyone else at bay. The man's back is turned, focused, hurriedly shoving bills into his bag.

Then, there's a tap on his shoulder.

He freezes. Something presses lightly into his back, the kind of pressure that makes the heart race. Frank stands behind him, arm outstretched.

FRANK
Drop the cash. Now.

The man turns slowly, eyes dropping to what he expects to be cold steel. Instead, he's staring at... a carrot.

MASKED MAN
You gotta be kidding me. You're threatening me with a carrot?

He laughs, sharp and mocking.

FRANK
Don't make me use it.

MASKED MAN
Or what?

The man's smile fades as he tightens his grip on the knife, raising it toward Frank.

In one swift motion, CRUNCH! Frank slams the carrot into the man's right eye. Before the masked man can react, Frank fluidly disarms the knife, twisting his arm with brutal precision and pinning him against the cash register. The man lets out a guttural scream of pain.

A nearby child, about ten, stares at Frank, wide-eyed.

FRANK
(to the child)
Eat your veggies.

The man seizes the moment, yanking a bag off the counter and shoving it over Frank's head, pulling him backward violently.

Frank struggles, his breaths muffled, but with a sharp judo move, he flips the man over his shoulder. CRASH! The masked man slams into a display stand. Products scatter everywhere in a chaotic mess. Frank rips the bag off his head, dodging a wild swing just in time.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Stop!

The man grabs a broom. An employee tries to intervene but WHAM!—he's leveled by a brutal swing.

The masked man charges at Frank like a freight train. Frank, improvising, uses the bag in his hand like a makeshift weapon. He loops it around the man's arm, trapping the broom. A few quick maneuvers later, the man's arms are twisted behind his back, tangled in the bag.

Frank reaches into the man's pocket and pulls out a crisp 20 euros bill. He slaps it onto the counter in front of the wide-eyed cashier.

FRANK (CONT'D)

For the carrot... and the bag.
Keep the change.

Distracted for half a second, Frank misses the man's desperate wriggle. The masked man struggles free, limping heavily. He barrels through a customer, sending them spinning, and bolts out the door, vanishing into the street.

CUT TO:

INT. FRANK'S APARTMENT - DAY

The door swings open. It's a small apartment, neatly organized with modest furniture, casting a somewhat sad atmosphere.

Frank steps inside, sets the grocery bags down.

At the sink, water runs. He scrubs his hands. Takes a second. Just breathing. Processing.

In the kitchen, there's a photo of a woman in Frank's arms. He meticulously puts away the groceries in drawers and the fridge.

Frank's eyes drift to the window. Outside, Casalta's SUV still sits there. Frank pauses and takes a deep breath.

CUT TO:

INT. BUILDING HALLWAYS - DAY

Frank reaches the top floor and walks quietly toward a door at the end of a long hallway.

He listens carefully at the door. Complete silence. He removes his Jacket, folding it neatly. He rings the bell.

CUT TO:

INT. OUTSIDE MARGARET'S DOOR - DAY

The door swings open—revealing JEROME. One of Casalta's men. Built like a wrecking ball.

JEROME

Hm?

FRANK

I need to give this back to Margaret.
Is she around?

JEROME

(Straightening up)
She's busy.
I'll handle it. Thanks.

Jerome starts to close the door, but Frank swiftly jams his foot in the threshold. The door slams against it. Without flinching, Frank presses forward, forcing the door open just enough to make it clear—he's not going anywhere.

FRANK

I'd really like to see her.

Jerome holds back from charging at Frank, then turns inside the apartment.

JEROME

Ma'am?

A heavy silence.

The two men stare each other down until Margaret appears at the door.

MARGARET

What's going on?

FRANK

Everything alright?

JEROME

He wanted to return this.

He hands Margaret Frank's Jacket. Margaret takes it, eyes it, then steps toward Frank, holding it out.

MARGARET

This isn't mine.

Frank moves in closer, lowering his voice—just for her.

FRANK

(whispering)

I know. ...But if you ever need anything

MARGARET

For what?

A beat.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

They're here to buy my place. I need you to leave.

FRANK

Oh, didn't know you were selling your apartment.

MARGARET

I don't see why I would tell you. From what I know, you're not in a position to buy.

FRANK

(grins)

Fair point.

He casually snatches his Jacket from her hands, gives a nod, and walks off. Margaret watches him go.

CUT TO:

INT. MARGARET'S APARTMENT - DAY

Mr. CASALTA stands by the window, hands clasped behind his back, subtly rolling his silk handkerchief between his fingers, eyes fixed on the street below.

MR. CASALTA

Problem?

MARGARET

Oh, no! Just the American guy
downstairs—keeps to himself, totally
harmless.

CASALTA's eyes narrow slightly, his handkerchief running
through his fingers with almost mechanical precision.

MR. CASALTA

I'm not interested in a place with
nosy neighbors.

MARGARET

(nervous chuckle)

Frank? No, you've got it all wrong!
The owner practically covers his rent
in exchange for maintenance. It's
like having a built-in super. He
knows this place inside out. If
there's a problem, he's the guy to
call. Pretty great, especially since
you're buying for your son, right?

Margaret's eyes drift to DYLAN — the young one, hanging back,
awkward, leaning against the wall like he's trying not to be
seen.

CASALTA finally turns, face unreadable but for a tight smile.

MR. CASALTA

Yes.

(to Dylan, ironic)

So? You think you'll survive in a
place like this?

Dylan gives a tight, uneasy smile — the kind that says he's not
thrilled, but knows he doesn't get a vote.

CASALTA

(laughs to Margaret)

Hah! He still can't understand why I'm
not getting him a penthouse with a
view. You got kids?

MARGARET

Just my dog.

MR. CASALTA

You're not comparing your dog to my
son, are you?

MARGARET

(flustered)

Oh no! I—

MR. CASALTA

I'm joking.

He leans in, conspiratorial, aiming for Margaret's ear, but his whisper is loud enough for the whole room. Even Dylan hears every word.

CASALTA

(whispering, loudly)

My son? Spoiled. Soft. Sent him to boarding school in London from age eight to eighteen, thought it'd toughen him up, give him grit, maybe even make him want to work with me. Big mistake.

He comes back designing handbags.

(to Dylan)

Handbags!

(to Margaret)

And every couple months, he's asking for money to "follow his dream." Not anymore.

He turns to Dylan, the warmth gone.

CASALTA (CONT'D)

You want money? You earn it.

(back to Margaret, dry)

So now, I have the immense joy of him working for me. At least he's finally learning what real work looks like.

Margaret nods, unsure whether to smile or back away.

MR. CASALTA

Maybe living here will light a fire under him, make him actually earn that mansion he thinks he deserves.

MARGARET

He'll be fine here. Just a simple little spot, nothing fancy.

MR. CASALTA

Exactly, that's the whole point. Starts in a place like this, learns how to climb.

He steps closer.

MR. CASALTA (CONT'D)

You're quite the charmer, Margaret.

MARGARET
 (blushing, a little caught
 off guard)
 Oh, um... thanks.

MR. CASALTA
 (grinning)
 I can see you're a good person.

MARGARET
 That's... very kind of you.

MR. CASALTA
 So kind, in fact, that you're about to
 sell me this spot for half price.

Margaret's smile flickers, not following the turn.

Dylan takes a breath, quiet. There's a flicker of shame in his eyes. He quietly steps away, drifting toward the window, pretending to take in the view, anything to not be part of this moment.

MARGARET
 Wait... what? Half price? I can't knock
 off 350,000 euros—that makes no sense.

MR. CASALTA
 Oh, don't act so surprised! Haven't
 you noticed prices spiraling out of
 control? I've had my coffee and
 croissant at the same beach bar every
 morning for 27 years, and just last
 week—BAM! That croissant shot up from
 two euros to three seventy overnight!

He grabs her by the collar, reenacting his outrage.

MR. CASALTA (CONT'D)
 I looked that waiter dead in the eye and
 said, "*You think I'm a fool? Doubling the
 price on me?*" And he says, "*Inflation!*"
 Psh. Well, you know how much I paid? Two
 euros. Because he respected me. You
 respect me too, don't you?

MARGARET
 (barely managing to speak)
 Y-yes...

He lets go, smiling as if nothing happened.

MR. CASALTA

See, it got me thinking. Now I'm checking prices on everything I buy. Don't take it personally—you're just part of the list. Had the same talk with my mechanic, my tailor, even my fruit vendor. Times are tough. So, I've brought a new offer—reflecting a more realistic price.

Casalta drops a contract on the table, sliding a pen to her. The room's friendly vibe evaporates. Margaret, visibly shaken, tries to hold it together.

MARGARET

I get it... you're negotiating. Look, I can do five percent off, but I can't go any lower—I've already put money down on a little house, with a small yard for my dog to run around in. I can't drop the price, I won't be able to swing the house; I'd lose my deposit.

Casalta sighs.

MR. CASALTA

Why don't we just ask Snoopy, then?
Dylan?

He notices his son has drifted away.

CASALTA

(calling out, to Dylan)
Hey! It's not the view you should be looking at! I'm busting my ass negotiating for you!
Go get the dog!

DYLAN

Dad... not the dog...

CASALTA

Get me the fucking dog!

MARGARET

What are you doing?

Dylan hesitates, looks around, spots the dog, and brings it over.

MR. CASALTA

(with a false warmth)
I love dogs...

His face turns steely, voice chilling.

MR. CASALTA (CONT'D)
 ... with fries. There was a time I had
 no money. Grilled up some dog on a
 barbecue once—tastes just like pork.

From the look on Dylan's face, you can tell he's heard this
 story a thousand times.

CASALTA
 So here's the choice: the number on
 that contract... or we go find some
 fries. A little taste of nostalgia, my
 "Madeleine de Proust."

MARGARET
 (pleading)
 Please... don't...

Casalta is back to smiling, stroking the dog as if nothing
 happened.

MR. CASALTA
 I didn't come to haggle all night,
 Margaret. Let's not drag this out.
 Just sign.
 (smirks)
 Look at my son, You're doing a good
 deed. he's thrilled to be moving
 in.

Dylan is clearly not.

CLOSE UP on Margaret's hand, trembling as she's forced to sign
 the contract.

CUT TO:

INT. FRANK'S APARTMENT - DAY

CLOSE UP on a vinyl record starting to spin. The sound
 crackles but is intoxicatingly natural, it's the song "LA
 BOHÈME" by CHARLES AZNAVOUR.

It's Frank who has put on the song.

He dons an apron and begins to take out the ingredients for
 his recipe. Like an artist, he cooks actively, meticulously.

A DYNAMIC CUT of all the steps, in rhythm with the music and
 Aznavour's powerful voice:

Frank washes, peels, and cuts vegetables: carrots, leeks, celery.

He studs a whole onion with cloves.

He boils water, adds all the vegetables, garlic, bay leaf, pepper... then a beautiful piece of beef.

Frank sets the oven timer—2 hours, 35 minutes. He carefully sets the table: one plate, silverware arranged just so. His hand lingers on the kitchen knife as he stares at the empty chair beside him, his gaze drifting, lost in thought when—

DING-DONG!

The doorbell rings, sharp and insistent.

DING-DONG! DING-DONG!

A second, more impatient buzz. Then—BAM, BAM, BAM—loud knocking echoes through the room.

Frank's reaction leaves no doubt that he's not expecting anyone. Curiously, he keeps his knife in hand and hides it in his pocket.

He moves slowly towards the door, the knocks growing more intense. Frank abruptly opens the door to find—

CUT TO:

INT. AT FRANK'S DOOR - DAY

SONIA COSTA, 28, is a sharp, street-smart french police officer with an athletic build and a confident stride.

SONIA
(in french)
Finally!

Frank glances around, confused.

SONIA (CONT'D)
(in french)
What took you so long?

FRANK
(in french)
Sorry, I don't speak French very well. English?

She nods.

FRANK (CONT'D)
(in english)
What's going on?

SONIA
Mind if I come in for a sec?

A beat.

FRANK
Why?

SONIA
To talk about what went down
earlier at the supermarket. People
called us, but by the time we got
there, you had already taken off.

FRANK
(smirking)
You're welcome, didn't need you coming
all this way to say thank you.

SONIA
(smirking back)
Oh, don't worry. No risk of that.
Just making sure you're in one
piece—and to tell you this: next
time, stand down. Clear?

FRANK
Oh.
Barely did a thing.

SONIA
I watched the camera footage. You
jabbed a guy in the eye—

FRANK
—with a carrot

SONIA
Probably snapped his arm, too.

FRANK
(pauses, dry)
I get it. You're his family?
Here to mourn?

SONIA
This isn't how things work Here. You
can't just do whatever you want.

FRANK

Seriously? That guy had a knife. He could've hurt someone.

SONIA

I saw.

She pauses, knowing he's got a point.

SONIA (CONT'D)

Could've gone south fast. You're not in America next time let us handle it.

FRANK

You weren't there..
I was only doing my civic duty.

Sonia gives him a small nod, then slips him her card. She starts to leave but pauses, glancing back...

SONIA

Oh, one more thing...

She looks toward the kitchen, a hint of curiosity in her eyes.

SONIA (CONT'D)

What's that smell?

FRANK

(grinning)
Could be me... or maybe it's the beef bourguignon.

Sonia smirks, smiles then walks off. Frank watches her leave, closes the door behind her.

CUT TO:

INT. FRANK'S APARTMENT - DAY

Frank moves to the window, watching as Sonia gets into her police car, parked behind Mr. CASALTA's sleek SUV. The engine hums as she pulls away.

Just as the car fades into the distance, Mr. CASALTA arrives, tracking its movement with a narrowed gaze. He shifts his focus to Frank's window—

MR. CASALTA

Hey!

Frank hesitates, unsure if it's directed at him.

MR. CASALTA (CONT'D)
(louder)
Hey! The american!

No more doubt. Frank opens the window.

MR. CASALTA (CONT'D)
You call the cops?
Something wrong?

FRANK
I don't know. You tell me.

MR. CASALTA
We're good over here, but you look a
little nervous. You scared of something?

FRANK
Should I be?

Mr. CASALTA forces a smile, eyes narrowing. After a long beat, he gets into the SUV, flanked by his bodyguards.

The car roars to life and speeds off, leaving nothing but the sound of the engine echoing in the distance.

CUT TO:

INT. FRANK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The dining table is perfectly set, every detail meticulously arranged. CLOSE UP on a wine glass as French red wine is poured to the brim.

Frank places a steaming plate of Beef Bourguignon on the table, the aroma filling the room. The dish is a masterpiece, worthy of a five-star chef.

Frank sits, taking in the smell with a nostalgic smile. This recipe is his madeleine de Proust—a taste that takes him back. He turns on the TV, settling in, savoring the first bite with a quiet, content grin.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - MICHEL BIALA'S OFFICE - DAY

MICHEL BIALA, 65, police chief with a generous potbelly, leans back in his chair, feet propped up on the desk, phone jammed to his ear. Through the glass, he catches sight of SONIA heading his way, all business.

MICHEL
(on the phone - in french)
I'll call you back!

He hangs up, straightens, and calls out.

MICHEL (CONT'D)
Sonia!

She steps into the office, pushing the already half-open door wider. *(they speak in french)*

MICHEL (CONT'D)
Two major things I need from you!

SONIA
(half-listening)
Yeah

MICHEL
Can you grab me a Poke Bowl? No
mango. Extra soy sauce

Sonia sighs, used to this routine.

SONIA
Got it. And the second?

MICHEL
So... how'd it go with our supermarket
cowboy playing action hero?

SONIA
(shrugs)
Just a super.

Michel stands, smirking, and flashes his phone screen at her.
He hits play.

CUT TO:

PHONE FOOTAGE - Frank in action, taking down the thief with
slick moves.

MICHEL
Just a super?

SONIA
Also a chef, apparently.

MICHEL
This video's going viral. We look like
rookies!
(MORE)

MICHEL (CONT'D)

27 days 'til I'm out, and civilians
are doing our job? We need to shut
this down. Now.

SONIA

(nods)

On it.

MICHEL

(beat)

You sure you're up for this?

SONIA

You doubting me?

MICHEL

I'm just saying, maybe COUSTEAU should
take it. He's got the experience.

Through the glass, COUSTEAU, late fifties, commands the room
effortlessly, like he's starring in his own show. His
weathered face, framed by a streak of gray, tells the story
of a cop who's lived every line—and isn't shy about letting
everyone know it. A cigarette dangles behind his ear, more
for style than use, as he leans casually against a desk,
spinning a story for a group of younger colleagues.

SONIA

Cousteau? I don't need his help—I can
handle this myself.

MICHEL

Look, it's not personal. You're young,
green. Maybe ride shotgun with him,
watch and learn.

SONIA

I earned this badge, Michel. I don't need
training wheels. Trust me—I got this.

MICHEL

Alright, alright. Don't screw it up. In 27
days, I'm on a lake, fishing in silence.
Let the guy stay in his kitchen, working
on his recipes. Speaking of which—

SONIA

(half-smiling)

Poke bowl. No mango, extra soy.

MICHEL

(grins)

Atta girl.

Sonia heads out, door clicking shut behind her.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - DAY

Sonia sits at her desk, eyes locked on a video playing in a loop: Frank, in the supermarket, using a carrot like a weapon. She's not laughing. She's studying every move.

Cousteau appears behind her, chewing something invisible.

COUSTEAU

Y'know... I've done stuff like that too. Using what's around. This one time, Apple Store, I wasn't even on duty. You probably heard about it...

SONIA

(flat)

Nope.

COUSTEAU

(surprised)

Really? Huh.

Anyway, this guy's stealing a phone, cuts the security wire, tries to bolt. Place is packed, no way I can chase him. So I grab a laptop: MacBook Air. The small one, eleven-inch. I frisbee that thing across the store. Boom!! nails him in the neck. He drops like a sack. Cuffed him right there.

(beat, less proud...)

Cost the department a laptop, but hey. Point is - don't be afraid to use what you've got around you.

SONIA

(deadpan)

Thanks for the tip. I'll keep it in mind.

Cousteau glances at her screen on the way out.

COUSTEAU

Guy's not bad though...

Kinda makes it look easy.

CUT TO:

INT. LA RIVIERA MARKET - DAY

TITLE CARD - SUPERIMPOSE

"SATURDAY - 11am"

Frank pushes his cart down the supermarket aisle. Suddenly, he hears applause. Confused, he turns to see the store employees, led by Nina, clapping and grinning at him.

Frank, clearly embarrassed, approaches.

FRANK

A guy shopping for groceries? Must be a rare sight to get this kind of applause.

NINA

It's more of a thank you.

MATHIEU, the employee who was assaulted by the man in the hoodie, steps up to Frank.

MATHIEU

Where'd you learn to fight like that?

FRANK

Didn't. Just got lucky.

MATHIEU

Come on...

FRANK

No big deal. What matters is, hopefully, that guy won't be back anytime soon, and no one's giving you guys trouble.

NINA

(takes a deep breath)
Tell him Mathieu.

MATHIEU hesitates. The air turns awkward. Frank senses the shift. Silence lingers.

FRANK

Tell me what?

MATHIEU stays quiet. Nina nudges him.

NINA

Go on, tell him.

MATHIEU
(nervous)
Nah, it's nothing!

FRANK
(casual)
Come on, MATHIEU. Spill it.

Mathieu looks at Nina's insistent expression.

MATHIEU
Okay... uh... there were three guys waiting
for me in the parking lot last night.

FRANK
And...?

MATHIEU
And... They were friends with the
guy with a knife. They were pretty
angry. He got hurt... They wanted
to know if I knew where you live.

FRANK
(serious)
And... do you know where I live?

MATHIEU
No! That's what I told them!

FRANK
(relaxed)
Well, then... no problem!

NINA
Mathieu... tell him the whole truth!
(snaps)
I wouldn't have told them ANYTHING!

MATHIEU
There were three of them!

FRANK
(calmly)
What did you tell them?

Mathieu paces, clearly ashamed.

MATHIEU
I... I got scared. I told them you
drove an old Peugeot 504 Coupe.

Frank stays cool, listening carefully. Mathieu hesitates, but there's more.

MATHIEU (CONT'D)

And... I took them inside and printed your receipt.

NINA

That receipt's got your membership number and your name... but not your address.

MATHIEU

I just wanted them gone. Figured with just your name, they wouldn't get far.

FRANK

(steady)

It's alright, Mathieu. You did fine.

MATHIEU

I'm really sorry. Please be careful and watch out for these guys. They are dangerous.

FRANK

(smiling)

I'd better stock up on carrots just in case.

Nina cracks a smile, and Mathieu visibly relaxes as Frank takes it in stride.

Frank begins to walk away, but after a few steps, he stops, something clicking. Frank looks up and spot some cameras in the corner. He turns back to Mathieu.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Mind showing me where you guys keep an eye on things?

Mathieu looks confused but gives a small nod. Yes.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - OPEN SPACE - DAY

CLOSE-UP: A paused video feed from a PARKING LOT CAMERA. In the grainy footage, MATHIEU is surrounded by three men.

FRANK (O.S.)

They were after me. No way our knife guy is working solo.

The video plays on Sonia's computer. She leans in, focusing on the screen. Frank stands behind her, watching. Sonia's small desk is lost in the buzz of the open-plan office.

SONIA
(squinting)
Interesting. Thanks for bringing it in. I'll handle it.

FRANK
I'm not here to dump this on you. I need a favor. You see that car?

The LICENSE PLATE is just visible on the paused video.

FRANK (CONT'D)
I want to know who owns it.

SONIA
(surprised)
Certainly not.
What for?

Frank leans in closer, lowering his voice.

FRANK
I just want to do my shopping without worrying who's waiting for me in the parking lot.

SONIA
Then shop somewhere else until I take care of it.

Frank pauses, thinking, then nods.

FRANK
Alright. Fine.

SONIA
Good.

He turns to leave, heading towards the elevator.

FRANK
(calling back)
But I'm not changing my grocery store just because of these jerks.

He waves casually from across the room. Sonia watches him go, expression unreadable, then gives a small wave back.

Once he's out of sight, she lets out a breath, plays the video again, and jots down the LICENSE PLATE on a piece of paper.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - MICHEL BIALA'S OFFICE - DAY

Sonia knocks, then opens the door. Michel is lounging, feet up on his desk, watching fishing videos on TikTok. They speak in french.

SONIA

Sorry to bother you, boss.

MICHEL

(not bothered at all)

No worries! You gotta see this guy—he's fishing with a rifle in the bayou. Just waits in his boat for hours... then BAM, shoots a fish like it's a deer.

A beat.

SONIA

Yeah... sounds like a robbery. Anyway, about the supermarket thing—Turns out the perp's in a gang.

MICHEL

(sarcastic)

No shit. And here I was thinking some daycare kids were running the operation. You've got killer instincts.

(beat)

Look, maybe I screwed up—maybe Cousteau should take this one.

SONIA

(firm)

No! Just give me a shot. I ran some plates—the car's tied to a crew. And now they're after the American who took out their buddy.

Michel immediately takes his feet off the table, all business now.

MICHEL

Shit. Last thing I need is some gang tearing up the place and wrecking my retirement. Who's this guy anyway?

SONIA

That's the thing. Officially, we've got nothing on him. Unofficially, though? I called the American consulate in Marseille—they said there's a sealed file under his name. Frank Butler. Classified.

MICHEL

(raising an eyebrow)

Classified? What the hell is a guy named Frank Butler doing with a top-secret file?

SONIA

I don't know, but I need you to pull some strings. Maybe get someone higher up to crack it open.

MICHEL

Alright, I'll dig into it.

SONIA

Thanks, boss.

MICHEL

(grinning)

And I'll send you that video. Seriously, you'll love it.

SONIA

(slightly annoyed)

Yeah...

She closes the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE THE APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Frank parks his car behind a moving van with its back doors wide open. Boxes and random stuff are crammed inside.

He steps out of the car and runs into Margaret, who's carrying a lamp and placing it into the van.

FRANK

(half-joking)

Thought parking here was off-limits?

MARGARET

(rolling her eyes)

Oh come on!

FRANK
(eyeing the van)
Already sold? Heading back to England?

MARGARET
What do you think?

FRANK
Need a hand?

MARGARET
Thanks, but no. My nephew got in from London this morning. He's already handled the heavy stuff. Just the dog's basket left upstairs.

She pauses, looking at Frank with a rare hint of warmth.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
You know, we might not have been besties, but... you're a good guy.

FRANK
(grinning)
Wait, you're telling me this now?
Just as you're about to leave?
Don't tell me you're hitting on me!

MARGARET
(scoffs)
Don't flatter yourself. Just be careful, alright?

FRANK
(confused)
be careful?

She hesitates, then...

MARGARET
The buyers in my apartment... they're quite scary.

FRANK
(laughing)
You're telling me someone's moving in who's worse than you? That's hard to believe!

For the first time, Margaret cracks a smile. She places a hand on Frank's shoulder, a touch that lingers just a bit too long, then turns and walks off. Frank watches her go, puzzled.

He gets back into his car, still thinking, and drives toward the parking lot.

CUT TO:

INT. FRANK'S APARTMENT - DAY

CLOSE UP on the vinyl record of La Bohème, spinning. This time, the scene is cut with more energy—quick, rhythmic shots:

Frank, wearing an apron, pulls out ingredients for his signature recipe. A montage of movements—chopping, peeling, slicing: Carrots sliced thinly, Leeks chopped, Celery snapped into perfect lengths, An onion, meticulously studded with cloves.

Water boils in a pot, veggies are added, followed by garlic, bay leaves, peppercorns... then: a beautiful slab of beef lowered gently into the pot. The oven timer ticks: 2 hours, 35 minutes.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Frank, in his bathrobe and pajamas, steps outside with a trash can. He heaves it into the large dumpster with a casual thud. As he turns to head back inside—

A convertible sports car SCREECHES to a halt.

SLOW MOTION: The car doors swing open, electro-pop pulsing through the frame. DYLAN steps out—same kid, whole new attitude. Gone is the meek son from before. Now he's swaggering, rich and wiry, artfully tousled hair, designer sweater hanging just right. He moves like the street owes him something.

Dylan strides forward, trailed by his entourage: Two guys who look like bodyguards—one built like a tank, the other tall and sharp-eyed—flank him. Behind them, a sharply dressed British friend keeps pace, perfectly in sync with Dylan's effortless swagger.

Frank clocks him instantly—Casalta's son.

Dylan takes one last drag of his cigarette, flicks it onto the ground. He pulls out a set of keys, barely acknowledging Frank as they swagger past.

Frank stands still, watching them enter the building. His eyes track the corridor light—it's Margaret's floor.

He looks at the car, arrogantly parked outside.

INT. FRANK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

In the soft glow of his living room, Frank leans over his plate, taking in the rich aroma.

He grins—a small moment of pride. It's boeuf bourguignon, his Saturday night staple.

He sinks into his chair, fork in hand, and takes a bite.

Eyes closed, he savors each bite, the taste hitting just right. This isn't just dinner—it's a ritual. His moment. He opens his eyes, a hint of nostalgia as he looks at the empty chair across from him.

CUT TO:

INT. FRANK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Frank's at the sink, absentmindedly rinsing a plate, but his attention is elsewhere.

Outside the window, Dylan and his two buddies spill out of the building, drunk and rowdy. Frank's eyes lock onto them.

He sets the plate down, water still running, fully focused on the scene unfolding below.

CUT TO:

EXT. IN FRONT OF THE BUILDING - NIGHT

Dylan stumbles, barely keeping his balance.

With a wild grin, he flings a beer bottle toward the trash can—CRASH! Glass explodes everywhere.

DYLAN

FUCK!

He rears back and kicks the trash can like he's scoring a goal, sending it clattering across the pavement.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

Let's get outta this shithole.

Laughter erupts from his friends as they struggle to get into the car, tires screeching as they peel out, the engine roaring into the night.

INT. FRANK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Frank calmly reaches over and shuts off the water, deep in thought.

CUT TO:

NT. POLICE CAR - DAY

Sonia sits in the driver's seat next to COUSTEAU, both holding kebabs. Between bites, Cousteau recounts one of his 'legendary' cases

COUSTEAU

(in french)

-Three guys, all armed, me with nothing but a badge and bad attitude. Five minutes later? They're arguing over who gets to hand me their gun. Hell of a negotiation, right?

Sonia isn't buying it—her eyes shift to the window. Something outside stops her cold.

SONIA

(Her eyes widening - in french)

"Holy shit."

COUSTEAU

(mouth full- in french)

What?

Sonia tosses her sandwich onto the dashboard and bolts from the car, leaving COUSTEAU baffled, mid-bite.

COUSTEAU (CONT'D)

(still chewing - in french)

What?!

CUT TO:

EXT. OLD NICE - DAY

Sonia cuts across the sunlit street, eyes laser-focused on a gun shop—the little gem known as Armurerie Marcel Perse, tucked at 3 rue de l'Hôtel de Ville.

She paces out front, all sharp impatience, glancing around like she's expecting trouble.

Then—the door swings open. Frank steps out, a small bag in hand, looking like he just picked up a loaf of bread.

SONIA

Hey Frank!

FRANK

(caught off guard)

Sonia?

SONIA

(eyebrows raised)

What are you doing here?

FRANK

(smirking)

I live around here, remember?

SONIA

(shaking her head)

No, not 'here' as in your neighborhood. I mean, *here*...

(points at the shop)

This shop.

FRANK

(casual)

Oh, that.

(suspicious)

You following me?

SONIA

No! Should I?

FRANK

Well, why would you?

SONIA

(grinning)

I dunno... maybe because I'm wondering—*"what's Frank Butler buying..."*

(she leans in)

What'd you buy?

FRANK

(teasing)

Should I tell you? You wouldn't give me that car info, remember?

SONIA

(very serious)

Nope. Could be very dangerous.

FRANK

For who?

SONIA

What are you up to, Frank?

Frank just smiles, staying silent.

FRANK

Are you asking me out?

SONIA

(laughing, caught off guard)

What? No! So, what were you really doing in there?

FRANK

I don't know... you might not be that interested.

SONIA

(suspicious)

Did you buy a gun?

FRANK

(shrugs)

Actually, I was doing Carl, the owner, a favor.

SONIA

Uh-huh, a favor?

FRANK

Yeah. He had a problem with a gun. I helped him out.

SONIA

(surprised)

You can do that?

FRANK

(exasperated, playfully)

Officer, what do you really want from me?

SONIA

I just want to make sure you're not about to get yourself into any trouble.

FRANK

(mock serious)

Well, did you track down those guys who are after me yet? Should I be worried?

SONIA

I'm on it. Haven't find them yet.

(she eyes his bag
suspiciously)

Should I be worried about what's in
that bag?

FRANK

(amused)

Maybe. Dangerous if you've got high
cholesterol. But, you know, everything
in moderation.

He opens the bag to reveal... apple raisin fritters.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Carl gave me these as a thank-you.
Want one?

COUSTEAU (O.S.)

Well, can't say no to that.

COUSTEAU steps up, grabbing an apple fritter. Sonia rolls her
eyes.

FRANK

Keep me posted when you find out who's
after me. Until then... excuse me.

He walks off with a grin. COUSTEAU looks after him.

COUSTEAU

(in french)

I don't like this guy. Feels like he's
playing you. Me? I'd have handled him
a lot harder.

Sonia doesn't answer, deep in thought. She hesitates, then
turns back toward the door, pushing it open

CUT TO:

INT. GUN SHOP - DAY

Behind a long counter, CARL, a thirty-something, is sorting
through boxes of ammunition. SONIA strides up, all business.
They speak in french--

SONIA

Hey.

CARL

Officer.

SONIA

The American who just left... what did you sell him?

CARL

I should probably check if I can answer that.

SONIA

(deadpan)

Oh, you're allowed.

(she flashes her badge)

See this? Not a Halloween costume.

Now, what did he buy?

CARL

(smirking)

Do you have legal grounds to ask?

Client confidentiality and all...

SONIA

(slightly annoyed but sharp)

You're right. Maybe I should just come back with my entire team—tear through your store, your inventory, all your paperwork... just to make sure you're playing by the rules.

(tightens)

I'll ask again: What was he doing here?

CARL

He didn't do anything illegal.

Carl sizes her up for a moment, then leans in, lowering his voice.

CARL (CONT'D)

You ever see that viral video of the 8-year-old who can solve a Rubik's cube in 3 seconds?

SONIA

(blinks)

What?

CARL

(smiling, mimics fast hand movements)

Your guy? He can do the same with any firearm from the Civil War to the Gulf war. Colt, Remington, Winchester... you name it. Dismantles, reassembles in seconds.

Carl repeats the hand movements with enthusiasm. Sonia's curiosity is piqued.

CARL (CONT'D)

He sold us a rare piece years ago, and since then? He drops by when we get models we can't figure out.

SONIA

Like what?

Carl grabs a gun from behind the counter, proudly presenting it.

CARL

Today, he fixed this. A Marlin.

SONIA

(dryly)

In exchange for... apple fritters?

CARL

Is that against the law?

Frustrated she's not getting anywhere, Sonia heads for the door. Just as she's about to leave--

SONIA

If something happens tomorrow with a gun you sold, my boss is gonna have this place in flames. So... your call.

CARL

(calling after her)

Oh... he bought a knife this morning.

Sonia spins around, her eyes narrowing.

SONIA

What kind of knife?

Carl opens a drawer and pulls out a huge Bowie Collins & Co Legitimus No.18 knife. Sonia gives a low whistle, clearly impressed.

CARL

Same model.
Old-school Marine Corps issue.

SONIA

And he didn't mention why?

CARL

(shrugs)

He's into collecting. Could be for his wall... or his kitchen. I hear he's big into cooking.

SONIA

Cooking, huh? Thanks.

She flashes a quick smile and heads for the door.

CUT TO:

INT. ABANDONED INDUSTRIAL HANGAR - DAY

BANG BANG BANG... CLICK CLICK-CLOSE UP on a Glock running dry.

ENRIQUE, 40s, rugged, sleeveless tee, tattoos peeking out, a flashy necklace dangling from his neck, lowers the gun with a smug grin.

This isn't just any crew—it's a notorious French gypsy gang, tight-knit and brutal, running the underworld with their own code.

He reloads smoothly, firing off another round into the old hangar wall.

BANG BANG BANG BANG BANG!

He's clearly in charge, surrounded by a dozen gang members, various cars parked in a tight circle. A HUMMER dominates the center.

Next to him, DARKO, 55, suave in an ARMANI suit, takes a slow drag from his cigarette.

DARKO

(Eastern European accent
creeping in)

Well? You like? This is the best you'll get. Few weeks ago, it was tearing up battlefields back home. Now? It's here—loaded, clean, and ready for your little street wars.

ENRIQUE

I'll take 'em.

DARKO, grinning, claps his hands. He moves to the trunk of one of the cars and places TWO SUITCASES inside.

Enrique gives a subtle nod, and one of his guys pulls out a phone, tapping away. BEEP – DARKO's phone lights up. He checks the screen and nods.

DARKO

Got it! Pleasure doing business.

Inside the car's passenger seat, SCOTTY, 20s, sits with a bandage over one eye, his arm in a sling – yep, it's the guy Frank took down. DARKO clocks him.

DARKO (CONT'D)

(nods to Enrique)

What happened to your little bro?

ENRIQUE

(gritting his teeth)

Some American blindsided him in a supermarket on a fucking Saturday morning. That idiot thought he could go make a little cash on his own. So what does he do? Grabs a fucking knife like some street punk.

DARKO

I remember him as a kid. Running around like he owned the place. But out here? Can't have him in the street with nothing but his dick and a damn knife.

He thinks for a beat, then moves in on Enrique, low and quiet.

DARKO (CONT'D)

You know what? Here. A little gift from me. No charge.

He pulls out a GLOCK 42. Enrique takes the weapon, weighs it in his hand.

ENRIQUE

Appreciate it. I'll pass it along. But I'd be prouder if he took care of that American without it, with one arm, one eye. Family honor's on the line.

DARKO

You need a hand?

ENRIQUE

Nah, just need to find him first.

DARKO

Bet your guy has a routine at that supermarket. Wait 'til Saturday. He'll show up... and then BAM!
You thought of that, right?

Enrique tries not to show it – clearly, he didn't think of that.

ENRIQUE

Yeah, yeah... of course.

DARKO

Take care of yourself, amigo.

Enrique and his crew pile into their cars, engines roaring to life. DARKO stands there, smirking as the cars peel out, leaving him alone in the echoing hangar.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE THE BUILDING - DAY

Frank trims the hedges in the front garden.

CAMILLA, 25, juggling groceries and pushing a stroller, looks exhausted. Alongside her is her adorable 5-year-old daughter, LUANA, skipping cheerfully.

Frank drops his tools and hurries over, grabbing the groceries and holding the door open for her.

CAMILLA

Appreciate it, Frank! Merci!

Frank glances at the smiling baby, nods, and returns to trimming the hedge.

Just then, a HUGE MOVING TRUCK pulls up, followed by DYLAN's flashy sports car.

Four muscular movers—built like linebackers—hop out of the truck. They begin unloading boxes, while Dylan, looking like a wannabe influencer in his Balenciaga t-shirt, lights a cigarette. He's still surrounded by his sharply dressed British friend and the two guys who look like bodyguards. He tosses a set of keys to one of the movers.

DYLAN

(in french)

Fourth floor.

Dylan soaks in the sun while the movers head to the door, their arms loaded with boxes. One of them tries to yank the door open—it's locked. He bangs on it, still no luck.

Frank watches from the hedge, embarrassed for them. The mover continues to struggle with the door.

FRANK
(shouting)
HEY! Use the green fob on the keys!

The mover glances at the keys, swipes the green badge across the slot—click! The door swings open easily. No thanks from anyone. The movers march in.

FRANK (CONT'D)
(to himself)
You're welcome.

Dylan strides over, cigarette in hand, flashing that cocky grin that tries a little too hard. He takes a slow drag, sizing up Frank like he's already won something. With his father out of sight, he carries himself differently, louder, like he's running the show. All posture, no weight.

DYLAN
Hey, Yankee! What's your name?

FRANK
Why do you need to know?

DYLAN
(smiling)
Just trying to be neighborly. You know, make connections.

FRANK
Neighborly? Introductions usually go the other way.

DYLAN
Fair enough. I'm Dylan. Just moved in on the fourth floor.

FRANK
Alright, Dylan.
Welcome to the building.
And them?

Frank nods toward Dylan's entourage—his sharply dressed British friend and the two guys who look like bodyguards.

DYLAN
(points casually)
That's my best friend from England.
(gestures to the other two) And them?
Just security.

FRANK
You're in danger?

DYLAN
Nah. As you can see... I don't have a
worry in the world. And you are?

FRANK
The guy who likes it quiet.

DYLAN
(chuckling)
Like all boring neighbors.
Just messin'. What's your name?

FRANK
You can stick with "*the guy who likes
quiet.*" Works for me. Maybe if we get
friendly, I'll let you know more.

DYLAN
Looking forward to that. Viva America.

Dylan starts to walk away but pauses, turning back.

DYLAN (CONT'D)
Oh, heads up—I'm throwing a little party
this Saturday. Could get kinda loud.

FRANK
Thanks for the heads up. As long as
you keep things under control, I won't
bother you.

DYLAN
(laughing)
Is that a threat?

FRANK
Nah, just friendly advice. We got
folks with kids and some who work
early on Sundays here. Keep it
reasonable, and we'll be cool.

Dylan sighs, clearly bored of the conversation.

DYLAN
(ironic)
Yeah, sound serious.

Dylan saunters off, laughing to himself, grabbing a bag from the truck as he heads toward the building. Frank watches him disappear inside, then shakes his head and returns to his hedges.

CUT TO:

EXT. VIEUX NICE - CHEZ THERESA - DAY

Mid-afternoon on the Cours Saleya in old Nice—the legendary strip still buzzing as the lunch crowd fades. Restaurant staff bustle, packing up, a lazy, sun-soaked vibe hanging in the air.

At a tiny table, SONIA and COUSTEAU take their break, digging into one of Theresa's famous Pan Bagnat.

A file lands with a solid thud on their table. Sonia glances up to find MICHEL standing there, arms crossed. They speak in French.

MICHEL
(to COUSTEAU)
Hey, COUSTEAU, don't you need a cigarette break before getting back on shift?

COUSTEAU
Nah, I'm good. Trying to quit.

A beat. Then he gets the hint.

COUSTEAU (CONT'D)
Right. Got it. I'll leave you to it.

COUSTEAU stands, nods, and strolls off.

MICHEL
Thanks, won't take long.

SONIA
(nodding at the file)
What's this?

MICHEL
File on our American guy from the supermarket.

Sonia flips through the file... it's thin.

SONIA

Former mechanic... pretty vanilla.
So why'd they even bother sending
this to me?

MICHEL

Because that file's about as real
as me being a retired pole dancer.

SONIA

(smiling)

You were a pole dancer?

MICHEL

Don't start! Anyway, you were
right. I called in a favor from an
old buddy at the U.S. Embassy in
Paris. Cost me a lunch next time
I'm in town, but he sent me this...

Michel slides a second file across the table—a red one.

Sonia opens it, skimming a few pages, then looks up.

SONIA

This a joke?

MICHEL

Had the same reaction.

SONIA

It's all blacked out!

Huge black lines slash through nearly every word.

MICHEL

Only thing he told me? The guy's tied
to secret ops. That's it. Sonia, I've
never heard of a guy like this in my
entire career. Know why?

She shakes her head.

MICHEL (CONT'D)

Because you're not supposed to.
Guys like him? They don't exist.

SONIA

Well, he just bought a knife.

(she gestures wide)

This big. Might be for self-defense
but still...

Michel glances around the restaurant, making sure no one's listening in. He leans even closer.

MICHEL

Either way, I'm screwed. If he gets whacked, it's my fault for not protecting some american hero. If he goes on a spree? Riots. And my pension? Toast. Stay sharp. Keep me posted.

He walks away, leaving Sonia staring at the file on Frank. She closes it.

CUT TO:

EXT. RESIDENCE GARDEN - DAY

Frank's in full gardener get-up, crouched over, planting a tiny tree like it's a big deal. Just as he pats down the dirt, his phone rings. Unknown number. He pulls off his gloves, gives the phone a look, and answers.

DEEP VOICE (V.O.)

Frank. I'm in town.

Frank freezes. That voice--no way.

FRANK

(pulling himself together)

Hey. Why?

DEEP VOICE (V.O.)

For you.

FRANK

I can be... you-know-where in, what... 30 minutes?

DEEP VOICE (V.O.)

I'm already here.

Click. Silence. Frank stares at his phone, bewildered.

EXT. LA RIVIERA MARKET'S PARKING LOT - DAY

TITLE CARD - SUPERIMPOSE

"SATURDAY - 10:43am"

INT. CAR - DAY

ENRIQUE, SCOTTY, and two other gang members sit in a car parked right in front of the store entrance.

A man in his sixties, seen from behind, pushes a shopping cart. Enrique, eyes locked on him, nudges Scotty. They speak in french.

ENRIQUE
(To Scotty)
That him?

Scotty squints, trying to focus.

SCOTTY
Nah, not him.

GUILLERMO, a burly, tattooed guy lounging in the back, lets out an irritated sigh, clearly over it.

GUILLERMO
(agitated)
We've been here an hour, watching fuckers shuffle around with carts.

He glares at Enrique.

GUILLERMO (CONT'D)
Pff robbing a supermarket solo with a knife? Not our fucking problem. Told you dragging your brother's dumb ass around was a mistake. Now we're stuck cleaning up his amateur crap.

Before he can even finish, Enrique spins around in his seat and grabs Guillermo by the collar, yanking him violently.

ENRIQUE
What the fuck did you just say?

Guillermo chokes, hands up defensively.

GUILLERMO
Stop, man, stop!

Enrique tightens his grip, eyes burning.

ENRIQUE
We're here for Scotty. Got a problem with that?

Guillermo, struggling to breathe, shakes his head furiously.

GUILLERMO
No, boss! NO!

Suddenly, Enrique's phone rings. He releases Guillermo, picking up the call.

ENRIQUE
Yeah?

A muffled female voice on the other end. It's inaudible.

ENRIQUE (CONT'D)
How'd you get this number?

The voice continues, but Enrique cuts her off.

ENRIQUE (CONT'D)
I don't give a shit who you are!

He hangs up, pissed.

SCOTTY
Who was that?

Enrique doesn't answer, shoving the phone into his pocket as he gets out of the car.

CUT TO:

EXT. LA RIVIERA MARKET'S PARKING LOT - DAY

Enrique scans the parking lot, his eyes moving sharply from left to right. He pauses, narrowing his gaze as he locks onto something—a security camera perched on the corner of the building. He curses under his breath and heads back into the car.

CUT TO:

EXT. HILLTOP PARK - DAY

A man sits on an iron chair, back to us, facing the famous view over Nice (*colline du château*). The Bay stretches out, glistening like a postcard.

Next to him, an empty chair. Enter Frank. He takes the empty seat. Neither man looks at the other—they're both locked on the view. ROY, about 60, rugged face, smoking a fat cigar, tilts down his dark glasses as Frank sits.

FRANK
What the hell are you doing here, Roy?

ROY

That's what I'd like to know. What the hell am I doing here?

Frank squints, not getting it.

ROY (CONT'D)

You in some kind of trouble?

FRANK

No more than usual.

ROY

Well, apparently, Nice PD called the consulate in Paris about you. Word got back to D.C. Now they're curious why cops are sniffing around their boy. Next thing I know, I'm here.

FRANK

I thought you retired?

ROY

Come on, you know we never retire.

FRANK

Well, I did.

Roy looks a little regretful. Maybe a sore spot.

ROY

Yeah, well... you're different. You had a reason to get out.

Frank's expression darkens, pain slipping through.

FRANK

A "reason"? My wife would still be alive if I hadn't taken this job.

ROY

I'm sorry. If Hélène hadn't been in the wrong place at the wrong time, you'd be where I am now, grilling some other poor sap from the agency.

FRANK

I should've been me. Not her.

ROY

We took down every one of those bastards.

FRANK
Yeah, I heard.

They sit in silence, the weight of it all hanging in the air.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Every Saturday morning, we'd go grocery shopping together. She taught me her mother's Boeuf Bourguignon recipe. We'd make it while listening to her favorite record on repeat, then sit down and eat, just the two of us. We promised we'd keep it up every week. Every Saturday, it's my time with her.

ROY
Once a month, my ex takes her alimony check. Guess we all get the memories we deserve.

Frank smiles.

FRANK
So, where's the job got you these days?

ROY
You know I can't tell you that.

Frank nods, understanding.

ROY (CONT'D)
Let's just say, I'm eating a lot of pizza and pasta.

FRANK
Ah. So you're close. Makes sense why they picked you.

ROY
Still had to cross a border, so level with me. What's going on?

FRANK
Nothing. I got caught up in a supermarket robbery, stepped in, now the cops wanna know who I am. They're just doing their job.

ROY
Right.
So that idiot Walt in D.C.—he's tried everything to rope you back in.
(MORE)

ROY (CONT'D)

Now he's using this thing as an opportunity, hoping maybe, just maybe this time, you'll say yes to a few gigs down here.

FRANK

Ahh, there it is. The real reason. Figured as much.

ROY

Yeah. You're missed, Frank. You're here, your file gets pulled, they think, *"Hey, maybe he could use a hand... maybe it's time we step up"*.

FRANK

Nice try. I'll pass. But hey, glad to see you haven't changed and the only thing that'll probably take you down is an overdose of mozzarella.

Frank stands, pats Roy on the shoulder, about to walk off.

ROY

So... are you saying I've put on weight? Call me if you need anything. Same number as always.

FRANK

(in Italian)

Take care of yourself.

Roy takes a deep drag, savoring the view all over again.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - DAY

Enrique, Guillermo, Scotty, and the fourth guy are done waiting in the car—impatience thick in the air.

Then suddenly—Scotty snaps upright, eyes locked on something in the distance. He points.

SCOTTY

(in french)

That's him! It's him!

FRANK has just parked his car and is getting out.

Scotty immediately lunges for the car door, but Enrique grabs his arm, holding him back.

ENRIQUE
Sit your ass down, you idiot.

SCOTTY
I'm gonna smash him!

Scotty thrashes, but Enrique keeps his grip tight.

ENRIQUE
You're not doing shit. Stay put.

SCOTTY
Let me go, man, come on! What the hell!

Enrique pulls him back into the car, his voice dropping low, dangerous.

ENRIQUE
A cop just called me. She's seen the footage—they've got you idiots on camera from last time. We make a move now, we're burned. We wait.

Enrique's eyes flick back to Frank, who's now pushing a shopping cart into the store, completely unaware of the gang watching him.

ENRIQUE (CONT'D)
We wait for the right time, somewhere quiet, got it?

Scotty grits his teeth, staring at Frank's back as he disappears into the supermarket.

CUT TO:

EXT. LA RIVIERA MARKET'S PARKING LOT - DAY

Frank loads his groceries into the trunk of his car.

He gets in, starts the engine and pulls out of the parking spot.

Enrique's car eases into motion, tailing him at a cool, steady distance.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY

Frank drives through the city, blending into the flow of traffic.

Behind him, Enrique and his crew follow like shadows. Silent. Patient. Waiting for their moment.

CUT TO:

INT. ENRIQUE'S CAR - DAY

Tension thick as a blanket. Scotty can't sit still, his leg bouncing with impatience. His eyes never leave Frank's car ahead.

SCOTTY
(to himself, gritting his
teeth, in french)
C'mon, just pull over already...

He suddenly flips open the glove compartment, pulling out the Glock 42 gifted by DARKO. He checks the chamber—loaded. A flicker of pride in his eyes. He's more than ready.

CUT TO:

EXT. IN FRONT OF THE BUILDING - DAY

Frank pulls into his usual spot, right by the entrance. He steps out, opens the trunk to unload his groceries—then pauses.

In the distance, Enrique's car rolls up, slow and deliberate. Frank squints, clocking Enrique, Scotty, and their crew as they step out. Scotty's bandaged eye and sling give it away. Frank knows this won't end peacefully.

They start walking toward him, but before they can get close, a massive SUV screeches to a halt behind Frank's car. Mr. CASALTA's SUV.

A man in a black suit jumps out, an automatic weapon casually slung over his shoulder. He circles the SUV, opens the door for Mr. CASALTA.

Enrique freezes. His eyes lock onto the weapon, calculating the odds.

ENRIQUE
(to his crew, low, in french)
Back off.

SCOTTY
(angry, defiant, in french)
You kidding me? I'm not leaving
without smashing that guy's face in!

Enrique, unfazed, grabs Scotty by the collar, yanking him toward the car.

ENRIQUE

I said, we're leaving.

The others hesitate, then follow suit. Before climbing in, Enrique turns, locking eyes with Frank across the distance. The tension is electric.

MR. CASALTA

Need a hand?

FRANK

Appreciate it, but I'm good.

MR. CASALTA

My son just moved in here.

Frank stays silent, eyes narrowing.

MR. CASALTA (CONT'D)

The place is a dump, honestly. But hey, when I was his age? I started in a nine-square-meter room. You make it work.

FRANK

Would've bought Margaret's place myself. Nice view and all. Guess it was outta my league.

MR. CASALTA

(grinning)

Oh no, got it for half-price. People tend to give me what I want—just takes a little shaking up.

Frank freezes. Casalta just admitted to roughing up Margaret to close the deal. Frank's face hardens, but he keeps his cool.

FRANK

(cold, pointed)

Good to know. I'll keep that in mind if I ever buy it off you.

A beat. Their eyes lock. Then Casalta laughs, low and smug.

Another one of Casalta's men steps out of the SUV, lugging a crate of champagne.

MR. CASALTA

For my son. He's throwing a party tonight.
Guess I'm too old to make the list.

FRANK

He told me about it.

MR. CASALTA

Lucky you.

FRANK

I won't be going.

MR. CASALTA

Probably a wise choice.

FRANK

What's that supposed to mean?

MR. CASALTA

Call it a gut feeling. I don't like your
vibe. So, stay away from my son.

FRANK

Gladly.

Frank grabs his grocery bags and shuts the trunk. CASALTA hands him a card.

MR. CASALTA

Sorry I didn't mean to offend you. If
something happens, give me a call.

Frank walks toward the building entrance. Just before heading inside, he turns back.

FRANK

You know... we've got something in common.

CASALTA raises an eyebrow, intrigued.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I don't like your vibe either.

CASALTA's gets back into the SUV.

CUT TO:

INT. FRANK'S HOUSE - DAY

In the kitchen, Frank is unpacking groceries, placing items in the fridge. He casually dials a number and puts the phone on speaker. He continues to unload bags when—

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

Hello?

Frank glances at the business card in his hand: Sonia's.

FRANK

(uncertain)

It's Frank Butler...

SONIA (O.S.)

Frank! I was just about to update you.
I spoke to the guys from the parking
lot.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. FRENCH RESTAURANT - DAY

SONIA is at a table with friends, mid-meal. She excuses herself, stepping aside to take the call.

FRANK (V.O.)

So, did you give them my address?

SONIA

(confused)

What? Of course not! Look, I was ordered
to keep them calm. If it were up to me,
I'd clean house—but that's not my call.
My boss wants this incident closed, no
escalation.

FRANK

Well, I think they were parked outside
my place, like five minutes ago.

SONIA

(surprised)

What the hell? Are they still there?

Frank glances out his window.

FRANK

Nah, looks clear now.

SONIA

Well, call me if they show up again.
Seriously.

A FRIEND approaches Sonia, smiling.

FRIEND
(in french)
Sonia, come on, it's cake time!

SONIA
(to Frank)
I gotta go, it's my friend's birthday.
Keep me posted, okay?

FRANK
Hey, sorry to bother you. Enjoy the
cake.

Frank hangs up. Sonia stares at the phone for a beat, thinking, then shakes it off and heads back to her friends with a smile.

CUT TO:

INT. FRANK'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

As per his usual Saturday night tradition, Frank sets the needle on a spinning vinyl of "La Bohème" by Charles Aznavour. But this time, it's not about cooking.

Quick cuts reveal him pulling a small box from the back of a cupboard, another from the drawer, and finally one stashed inside a large plant pot.

With care, he opens the boxes, each containing metal parts. Piece by piece, he assembles them into a finely customized gun, now sitting on the kitchen counter. Frank looks at it for a moment, satisfied.

Instead of holstering it, he casually places the gun inside a cornflakes box on the table. He stops, thinks for a beat, then digs into a bag, pulling out the huge knife from earlier.

Moving towards the front door, he eyes the row of shoes—his boots among them. Without hesitation, he slips the knife into one of the boots, making sure it's hidden but easily accessible.

CUT TO:

INT. FRANK'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - EVENING

Frank slides his famous Boeuf Bourguignon into the oven, setting the timer: 2 hours and 35 minutes.

Satisfied, he heads to the couch, cracking open the Book of Five Rings by Miyamoto Musashi novel. He gets comfortable. Suddenly—the rumble of engines. The noise pulls Frank from his book. Annoyed, he crosses to the window.

Four vans, music blaring, tinted windows, screech to a halt outside the building. The doors open.

Out steps a crowd—flashy-dressed women, flanked by five muscular men, their belts heavy with visible guns.

Frank watches them closely. Judging by their gear and swagger, they're either private security or ex-special forces. They disappear into the building. No doubt—they're here for Dylan's party.

CUT TO:

INT. FRANK'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

TING! The oven timer goes off, pulling Frank's attention from the window. His Boeuf Bourguignon has reached perfection.

Frank retrieves the dish and sits at the table, pouring himself a glass of wine. As he begins to enjoy the meal, the sound of screaming and laughter invades the peace.

Hysterical, drunken voices of women, coupled with the loud, alpha-male laughter, echo through the hallway.

Frank tries to shake it off, taking a deep breath. He forces himself to remain calm. It's just a party. Then his phone rings.

FRANK

Hey, Tony. Yeah, yeah, I know
you're up early tomorrow. Just some
kids blowing off steam—I'm sure
it'll wind down soon. I'll go up if
it keeps up, alright? Alright, good
night.

He hangs up, jaw tight.

CUT TO:

INT. FRANK'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Frank scrubs his dishes as the music upstairs rattles the walls. The pounding bass makes it sound like people are jumping in sync, causing his ceiling light to flicker. The phone rings again, and he picks up.

FRANK

Hello, Mrs. Roman. Yes, I hear it too. Must be even worse for you, being right next door. Don't worry, I'll handle it.

He hangs up, but the phone rings again. He answers.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Hey, Noah. Yeah, fifth floor. They're "celebrating." Remember your housewarming? Right, you only had six people. Don't worry—I'll give them a minute to cool off. I'll handle it.

He hangs up, eyeing the picture frame of his late wife as it wobbles from the vibrations. Frank steadies it carefully, glancing at his watch.

CUT TO:

INT. FOURTH FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

Frank, wrapped in a bathrobe, steps slowly toward Dylan's door, the relentless thump of bass pounding through the walls. He hesitates for a second, then presses the doorbell.

He waits, tapping his fingers against his leg. No answer.

Frank rings again, this time holding it longer.

A click.

The door swings open, revealing GORDON—green hair, glitter smeared across his chest, shirtless except for tight leather pants. He holds a drink in one hand, and his eyes drift over Frank with vague curiosity.

GORDON

Oui?

FRANK

Hey, uh... sorry to bother you. Can I speak to—

(pauses, trying to recall)

Dylan?

GORDON

Oh, you want Dylan? He's busy... DJing right now.

FRANK

Perfect. Actually, it's about the music. It's great that he's in charge. Could you ask him to, maybe... turn it down? Just a bit. For me... and, y'know, everyone else in the building.

There's an awkward pause as Gordon just stares, then bursts into laughter.

GORDON

Right, right. Sure thing, man.
Watch this.

Gordon spins around, shouting into the chaos of the party:

GORDON (CONT'D)

(in french)

Dylan! TURN IT UP, MAN!
I LOVE THIS TRACK!

The volume cranks up another notch. The bass shakes the hallway. Gordon grins, turning back to Frank, leaning in like they're sharing a secret.

GORDON (CONT'D)

Here's a tip—invest in some earplugs, man. Works wonders. BYE!

And slam—the door shuts in Frank's face.

Frank stands there, blinking, processing.

After a long pause, he shakes his head, then rings the bell again. A beat.

The door swings open once more. It's Gordon again, this time looking annoyed.

GORDON (CONT'D)

Seriously?

FRANK

(calmly)

That wasn't a request. Turn it down.
Now.
For everyone's sake.

Gordon leans closer, his face now twisted into a sneer.

GORDON

(in french)

Go fuck yourself.

The door slams shut again, this time harder. Frank stands frozen, absorbing the insult.

CUT TO:

INT. DYLAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The party's thumping, music blasting, and Dylan is surrounded by security and women, manning the DJ booth. But something's off... that doorbell keeps ringing. One of the girls leans in close, shouting over the music.

GIRL
(in french)
Hey, someone's at the door!

Dylan yanks off his headphones, irritated.

The DING. DING. DING. is relentless.

He slams down his headphones, kills the music, and heads toward the door, his bodyguards following closely behind.

At the entrance, they spot Frank, calmly holding Gordon's head against the doorbell.

DING. DING. DING.

Frank lets go, and Gordon crumples to the floor, out cold.

FRANK
Look, I don't want to be here, and I
definitely don't want anymore trouble.
But your friend? Way outta line.

Dylan stares, stunned.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Here's the deal—you turn the music
off. Right now. And we forget this
ever happened.

He locks eyes with Dylan, sharp and unrelenting.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Let's not make this a thing.

Dylan looks stunned but quickly regains composure.

DYLAN
Why didn't you say so earlier, man? No
need to go all Rambo on the guy!

FRANK

I tried... but, well... things escalated.

DYLAN

Look, sorry about the noise. We'll keep it down. Promise.

Frank, surprised at how well this is going, nods.

FRANK

(calmly)

Really? Good, thanks.

Parties are great, but there's a line.

He steps in closer, locking eyes with Dylan, his tone firm.

FRANK (CONT'D)

People live here, man. You just moved in—don't piss off the whole building right out of the gate

DYLAN

Totally get it. You did the right thing coming up. Party's dying out soon anyway. And yeah, this is on me. When my dad told me he was getting me a place I didn't realise it was gonna be this kind of shit hole—no offense! Not like the places I usually throw my parties in.

FRANK

Thanks.

DYLAN

No worries, man. Thanks for giving us the heads up.

FRANK

(points to Gordon)

Oh, and uh... sorry again about... "that".

DYLAN

Good night then.

Dylan grins and shuts the door. Frank stands there for a moment, relief flickering—but it doesn't last. Something nags at him. He exhales, forcing himself to walk away.

CUT TO:

INT. DYLAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Two of Dylan's security guys move in close, eyeing him as they approach. They speak in French.

BODYGUARD 1
Boss, we shutting this down?

Dylan takes a slow sip of champagne, smirking like he's got everything under control.

DYLAN
For him? Yeah. Party's over.

He nods towards the door.

DYLAN (CONT'D)
Go handle it.

Without another word, the two men exchange a glance and head out.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE FRANK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Frank's hand twists the key in the lock, pushing the door open just as—The music blares back to life, even louder than before. Voices scream, laughter roars—it's like his effort meant nothing.

Frank stands there for a moment, disheartened. He takes a deep breath, letting the door drift halfway closed behind him.

Then—

WHAM!

A brutal kick slams into his back, sending him crashing forward into his apartment.

CUT TO:

INT. FRANK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The door SLAMS open. Before Frank can react—

THUD!

A baton CRACKS against the back of his skull. He drops like a stone, out cold.

The two bodyguards don't stop. They kick and beat him, even though Frank's already unconscious, sprawled on the floor. One bodyguard pauses, ready to leave. In french--

BODYGUARD 1

Let's go.

The other hesitates, glancing around Frank's place.

BODYGUARD 2

Nah.

He rifles through drawers, his curiosity piqued.

BODYGUARD 1

We're done here.

Bodyguard 2 smirks, pulling a baseball bat from a closet.

BODYGUARD 2

What do you think of this?

Suddenly, they're in full raid mode. Knocking things over, upturning drawers, and trashing the place.

On the floor, Frank's eyes flicker open--just barely. He watches, helpless, as they ransack his apartment.

A framed photo of his wife hits the ground, glass shattering. One of the bodyguards steps on it, completely oblivious.

Frank grits his teeth, rage seething inside him, but he's too weak to move.

His eyes dart to the cornflakes box--the one hiding his gun. Then to his boot--the one with the knife. But he can't do a damn thing.

BODYGUARD 2 (CONT'D)

Hey, check the fridge.

Bodyguard 2 pulls out Frank's perfectly cooked Boeuf Bourguignon, stuffs it in the microwave, and plops himself down at the table to eat.

BODYGUARD 2 (CONT'D)

Mmm, this is fucking good. Want some?

Bodyguard 1 declines, standing guard. Frank's eyes narrow, barely containing his fury as he watches the man devour his food. After a few minutes, they're done.

They pocket some cash, snatch the bat, a collectible baseball, a bottle of wine... and the cereal box holding Frank's gun.

BODYGUARD 2 (CONT'D)

I love these! There's this hilarious commercial for them on TV. Got milk upstairs?

BODYGUARD 1 shrugs, uninterested. They leave. The door clicks shut behind them.

Frank lies motionless on the floor--beaten, furious, but alive. His apartment? A total wreck.

The clock on the wall flicks to 11:40 PM.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. FRANK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The clock now reads 1:12 AM. The music from the party is so loud it shakes Frank's walls.

On the floor, Frank stirs awake, blinking into the darkness. He groans, every muscle screaming in pain. Slowly, he pulls himself up, dragging to the kitchen where he downs a glass of water like a man starved.

He stops, stares out into the void. A decision hardens in his eyes. He stands.

INT. FRANK'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Water cascades down Frank's back.

His breathing is calm, controlled. He cranks the faucet colder--then even colder. The icy spray hits like a slap.

Frank winces but doesn't flinch. He needs the shock, to jolt him fully awake. He pushes the faucet all the way to freezing, standing under it until his body can't take anymore.

Then, he shuts it off.

Droplets slide off his face. He's wide awake now.

INT. FRANK'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

MONTAGE--Frank gears up. Dark clothes. Black tactical shoes.

He reaches into the boot for the knife strapped to his ankle.

His eyes fall on the shattered photo of his wife.

Frank pauses. He crouches, picks it up, and gently cleans the glass. His eyes soften, the weight of grief catching him for a moment. He takes a breath, pulls out his phone.

SONIA (O.S.)

Hey Frank.

Frank hesitates, then speaks.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Sonia is now at a bar with friends, the music and laughter spilling into her phone.

SONIA (O.S.)

Frank?

FRANK

Yeah. Sorry to call so late.

SONIA

No problem! I'm wide awake. What's up?

FRANK

The neighbors are throwing a party.

SONIA (O.S.)

Okay...?

FRANK

And... my place got broken into.

Sonia's tone shifts.

SONIA (O.S.)

A break-in?

Anyone hurt?

Frank stares at the bruises on his arms.

FRANK

Just me.

(a pause)

For now.

SONIA (O.S.)

Wait, what do you mean "for now"?

FRANK

If you don't send someone, I'll handle it myself.

SONIA (O.S.)
 Hold on! okay? I'm close. I'm on my way!
 Just... don't do anything until I get
 there.

FRANK
 (sighs, regretting the call)
 Forget it. I didn't mean to ruin your
 night.

He hangs up.

SONIA
 Frank? Frank!
 (in french)
 Fuck.

Sonia clenches her jaw and steps away from her friends,
 scrolling through her contacts. Her thumb hovers over Cousteau's
 number. She hesitates, tension flickering across her face. Then,
 with a sharp breath, she locks her phone. She returns,
 apologizing as she grabs her Jacket.

SONIA (CONT'D)
 (in french)
 Sorry guys, work. I gotta go.

Her friends protest, but Sonia is already heading for the door,
 determination in her stride.

CUT TO:

EXT. IN FRONT OF THE BUILDING - NIGHT

Sonia's car screeches to a stop. She steps out, scanning the
 scene like a hawk. The music blares from upstairs. Her hand
 instinctively moves to her radio.

SONIA (INTO RADIO)
 (in french)
 1222, on the scene.

DISPATCHER (O.S.)
 (in french)
 Copy that, 22.

SONIA
 (in french)
 Looks like a rowdy student bash. Gonna
 see if we can lower the volume.
 Checking on my contact first.

DISPATCHER (O.S.)
(in french)
Alright, 10-4

Sonia heads straight toward the source.

CUT TO:

INT. OUTSIDE FRANK'S DOOR - NIGHT

The door opens, revealing a weary Frank. Sonia stands, her face hardening as she glances past him at the wreckage inside.

FRANK
You didn't have to come. Should've
just called French 911.

SONIA
No way. You did the right thing.

Her eyes sweep the trashed apartment. It's worse than she expected.

SONIA (CONT'D)
What happened in here?

FRANK
Got a bunch of calls from neighbors
about the party upstairs. Went to
check it out.

Sonia's face shifts, deadly serious.

SONIA
Are you hurt?

FRANK
I'm fine. Just want the noise shut
down... Let's go.

Frank starts to move, but Sonia blocks him.

SONIA
You're not going anywhere.

FRANK
(firm)
I'm not letting you go up there alone.

SONIA
(dry)
First off, I'm not alone.
(flashes her gun)
(MORE)

SONIA (CONT'D)

And second? You pull that hero crap again, and I'm the one answering for it. If my boss finds out you got involved and it goes sideways, it's on me.

FRANK

Not up for debate. I'm coming.

SONIA

I'm telling you—stay put.

FRANK

Nope.

SONIA

(snaps)

Oh, come the hell on! I'm sick of everyone thinking I can't do my fucking job!

Frank hesitates. His eyes say what his mouth won't.

SONIA (CONT'D)

That's what I thought. So back the fuck off and let me do my job.

FRANK

Alright... but, please. I need names. Especially two guys: one with hiking boots—yellow laces, six feet, beard. The other? Dagger tattoo on his forearm. They're the ones who did this.

Sonia's jaw tightens, her expression all business. Frank hands her a business card.

FRANK (CONT'D)

From Casalta. He owns the apartment—or, well, his son lives there.

Sonia glances at the card and freezes.

SONIA

Shit. Pierre-Ange Casalta? The Pierre-Ange Casalta?

Frank gives her a blank look, not following.

SONIA (CONT'D)

He's Corsican. Runs "business" along the coast. And by business, I don't mean selling "souvenirs" on the beach.

(MORE)

SONIA (CONT'D)

Alright. Stay put. Tomorrow, you're filing a formal complaint.

FRANK

OK. Thanks.

SONIA

I'll check in later.

Frank gives a nod of gratitude. Sonia heads out, eyes sharp, as Frank quietly closes the door behind her.

He glances at the photo of his wife again. A quiet sense of pride flickers across his face—he managed to keep his cool.

CUT TO:

INT. 4TH FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

Sonia strides toward the apartment where the party's raging.

A WOMAN paces in the hallway, cradling a wailing baby, looking utterly drained.

WOMAN

(pleading, in french)

The noise keeps waking him up... we can't take it anymore.

SONIA

(firm, in french)

Head back inside, I've got this.

The woman shuffle back to her apartments, muttering frustrations as Sonia approaches the source of the chaos. She rings the doorbell.

The door swings open to JILL—sexy mini-skirt, huge smile, clearly in full party mode. JILL turns to shout over her shoulder.

JILL

(to the room, in french)

Who the hell ordered a stripper?

Sonia keeps it cool, showing her badge. JILL sizes her up, eyes narrowed. They speak in french

JILL (CONT'D)

(to the crowd)

Should've sprung for the full costume—just a badge isn't doing it.

SONIA

(steady)

I need to speak to the party organizer.

JILL

Oh, he's in his room—strict orders, no interruptions.

SONIA

(flat)

OK. Turn the music down.

JILL

I wouldn't know how to touch that DJ stuff.

Suddenly, one of the bodyguards, the same guy from Frank's place with the yellow laces, appears at the door.

BODYGUARD 1

(cool)

Don't worry, Officer. We'll take care of it.

Sonia spots the yellow laces and clenches her jaw. Just then, the second bodyguard—dagger tattoo on his arm—steps forward.

BODYGUARD 2

We'll turn it down. No problem.

The door closes. Inside, the music immediately lowers, the party continues, but the chaos calms.

Sonia takes a few steps toward the elevator, but something gnaws at her. Passing the WOMAN's door again, the baby's cries pierce through.

She stops, thinks for a second, and just as a GIRL with a phone steps out of the party apartment, Sonia moves swiftly, catching the door before it shuts. She slips inside.

CUT TO:

INT. DYLAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A few bodies are strewn across the floor, either knocked out from alcohol or something stronger. The music's down, but the chatter, the laughter, the chaos—it's loud.

She pushes her way through the living room, catching stares from surprised partygoers.

Unfazed, Sonia scans the room like a hawk.

SONIA
(to a small group, in french)
The owner?

They glance at each other, smirking, before stepping aside. No answers.

She clocks one of the bodyguards—the one with the dagger tattoo—grabbing Frank's cereal box and tucking it under his arm.

He opens the fridge, pulls out a carton of milk, and then slips into a room at the back. Her instincts kick in, and she follows, sliding inside just before the door shuts.

INT. DYLAN'S APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

BODYGUARD 1, spots her and storms up.

BODYGUARD 1
(in french)
Where the fuck do you think you're going?

Sonia speeds up, reaching for a door. She throws it open—

Inside, DYLAN lounges on a couch, flanked by two girls. Champagne glasses, cigarette smoke, the works.

Before Sonia can say a word, BODYGUARD 1 shoves her inside and slams the door shut.

He sets the cereal box and the milk down on the floor.

CUT TO:

INT. DYLAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sonia spins around, glaring at the guard. They speak in french.

SONIA
Don't even think about touching me.

DYLAN
Whoa, whoa, whoa! What the hell's happening here?

SONIA
Are you throwing this party?

Dylan shoots daggers at the guard.

DYLAN

Why's a cop standing in my fucking room?

BODYGUARD 1

She's here 'cause of the music.

DYLAN

(to Sonia)

We turned it down!

SONIA

Yeah, but there's still too much noise. People have families here, and I think it's in everyone's best interest if—

—She turns mid-sentence, her eyes locking onto the bed... and the two duffel bags stuffed with drug packages, laid out like a damn Christmas display. Stacks of cash too—neatly arranged, covering half the bed. Easily a hundred grand. Maybe more.

Sonia freezes, her words catch in her throat. Dylan flashes her a sheepish grin, then gestures to Bodyguard 2 with a lazy wave.

DYLAN

Get her outta here.

Before Sonia can react—BAM! Bodyguard 2 slams her with a brutal punch. She drops to the floor, out cold.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

(exploding)

What the hell?! I said to get her OUT, not knock her out!

BODYGUARD 2

(shrugs, defensive)

Hey, wasn't clear! Thought you meant—

DYLAN

(cutting him off)

Oh, come on!

He storms off, muttering curses under his breath, leaving Bodyguard 2 awkwardly looming over Sonia.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

(to his guards)

What the fuck do we do with her now, huh? Jesus Christ!

BODYGUARD 1

(defensive)

I handled her at the door!

(MORE)

BODYGUARD 1 (CONT'D)

How did she sneak back in? Boss, I'm just saying—your dad's not gonna be thrilled about you leaving the drugs and cash spread out on the bed like that...

DYLAN

(cutting him off)

You giving me a fucking lecture now?

BODYGUARD 1

(backpedaling)

No, no, I'm just saying—this kind of mess doesn't happen with him.

He jabs a finger at Bodyguard 2, who shifts uncomfortably.

BODYGUARD 1 (CONT'D)

You were supposed to be on watch, genius!

Bodyguard 2, offended, snaps back.

BODYGUARD 2

Are you serious right now? That was your one job, Mr. Bodyguard-of-the-Year!

BODYGUARD 1

Yeah? Well, I wasn't the one scrolling through TikTok while a cop waltzed in!

BODYGUARD 2

(smirking)

Right. And knocking out a girl cop—that's your thing now?

They start bickering like school kids. Dylan shakes his head in disbelief. He pulls out his phone, stepping away. It goes to voicemail.

DYLAN

(leaving a message)

Yeah, Dad. We've got a bit of a situation here. Call me back.

He glances at Sonia's unconscious body, frustration simmering.

CUT TO:

INT. FRANK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Frank meticulously tidies up the mess. Time drags on as he paces around the apartment, checking his watch every few minutes.

It's starting to wear on him. He moves towards the window and spots Sonia's car still parked outside.

CUT TO:

EXT. IN FRONT OF THE BUILDING - NIGHT

Frank circles Sonia's car, peering inside. No sign of her. He leans against the hood, waiting. A few minutes pass, but something's off.

He checks his watch again, glances at the party upstairs, feeling a gnawing sense of dread.

CUT TO:

INT. DYLAN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sonia's still on the floor, unconscious.

Dylan, high and twitchy, starts pacing, his nerves fraying. Bodyguard 1 hands him Sonia's badge. They speak in french.

BODYGUARD 1
I checked. She's legit—real cop.

DYLAN
Fuck! Shit!

Bodyguard 2 crouches, checking Sonia's pulse.

BODYGUARD 2
She's still breathing. Want me to take care of her, boss?

Dylan, strung out, snaps. He grabs Bodyguard 2 by the collar, slamming him into the wall.

DYLAN
(ironic)
Oh, brilliant idea! Yeah, let's kill a cop in my apartment!

Bodyguard 2 mutters an apology as Dylan shoves him away. Pacing again, Dylan's mind races.

DYLAN (CONT'D)
First, clean this fucking shit up.
Hide the stash. Now.

The guards scramble to stash the drugs. Dylan crouches beside Sonia, eyeing her.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

And let my fucking dad deal with her.
Either she wakes up and forgets this
whole mess, or...

(pauses, smirking)

Dad'll know what to do.

Sonia stays motionless.

CUT TO:

INT. DYLAN'S APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Frank limps down the hallway, stretching to ease the pain. He stops at Dylan's slightly ajar door and nudges it open with his foot.

Inside, the place is packed with young partygoers—drinking, laughing, oblivious.

FRANK

(to the crowd)

Seen a cop around?

GOYA, mid-20s, drink in hand and dressed to impress, smiles at him.

GOYA

Yeah, some chick came through here.

Went that way.

(points down the hallway)

RAUL, 27, troublemaker type, earrings and all, strolls up, cocky.

RAUL

(confidently)

Well, look who it is—the american
stirring up shit earlier. Why don't
you just leave?

Frank takes a breath, sizing him up. He scans the room, then steps towards the front door and pushes it wide open.

The crowd stares, confused.

FRANK

I'm asking you, kindly, to wait
outside. All of you. Leave.

Raul laughs, and the whole room joins in. Frank walks up to Raul, calm, unwavering.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Seriously. Leave.

Raul's bravado falters for a second, but he keeps pushing.

RAUL
You're nuts, man. Why would we do that?

FRANK
Because, otherwise, I'll fold you in half, use your pants to wipe the floor, and tie your legs around your neck until you stop breathing.

Raul's smirk disappears. He backs down, slowly realizing Frank isn't bluffing.

RAUL
Alright, alright. No need for that.
(to the girls, in french)
Come on, let's step outside.

The group follows him out.

Frank waits until they're gone, then slams the door shut. He drags a heavy piece of furniture across the floor, blocking the door from the inside. Exhausted, he heads to the bar for a drink.

Out of nowhere, a GIANT MAN grabs Frank and slams him into the wall.

They grapple, wrestling before finally facing off.

The guy's massive—easily 6'5", built like a linebacker.

FRANK
(sighs)
Alright. Let's do this.

The man pulls a gun. Frank moves, fast. Before the guy can blink—Frank snatches the weapon, fluid, effortless. CLICK. SNAP. CLACK. In three seconds flat, the gun is in pieces. Ten of them. Scattered. Useless. Frank tosses the empty frame back.

The man swings. Hard. Frank dodges—just barely and grabs a whiskey bottle, he slams the bottle into the guy's head. SMASH!

The guy doesn't budge. NOTHING. Frank is sweating bullets now.

A pause.

The guy wobbles, then collapses like a felled tree, face-first. Frank steps back, barely dodging the fall.

Bending down, Frank notices a shard of glass from the bottle sticking out behind the guy's ear.

FRANK (CONT'D)
(to himself)
Well, that explains it.

Suddenly, the sound of a toilet flushing. Another bodyguard exits the bathroom, newspaper in hand, freezing when he sees Frank standing over his unconscious buddy.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Quite the party, huh?

The bodyguard, unsure of what to make of it, slowly approaches.

FRANK (CONT'D)
By the way... did you wash your hands?
Didn't hear the faucet.

The bodyguard steps closer, pulling out a knife.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Ah, playing pirates now, are we?

Frank draws his own knife. The tension crackles in the air.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Look, we don't need to do this. Walk
away, I won't stop you. No need to die
tonight.

The guard doesn't take the hint and lunges. Frank dodges, their knives clattering to the floor.

Fists fly as they brawl, Frank eventually smashing the guard's head into the kitchen sink. The guard slumps, unconscious.

Frank, still irritated, grabs the man's hands, shoves them under the running faucet, pours soap over them.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Manners. Wash your hands, for God's sake.

Frank picks up his knife and walks away, leaving the water running.

CUT TO:

INT. DYLAN'S APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Frank moves like a ghost, quietly edging toward the back door.

A PHONE BUZZES. Dylan's phone. Frank freezes, ears locked in.

CUT TO:

INT. DYLAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dylan snatches the phone.

DYLAN
(stressed, in French)
Dad! Finally!

The bodyguards stand stiff, like nervous dogs, glancing at each other.

INTERCUT WITH

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Casalta leans back in a private dining room, a cigar balanced between his fingers. Around him, faces straight out of a Scorsese movie—slicked-back hair, heavy stares. He exhales a slow stream of smoke, unbothered. This isn't his first rodeo.

CASALTA
What now?

INT. DYLAN'S APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Frank edges closer, the hallway dimly lit. He cracks the door open to find Sonia sprawled on the floor—unconscious..

CUT TO:

INT. DYLAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dylan, pacing, tiptoes around Sonia's body, speaking in french

DYLAN
No, she's a real cop. One of your
guys knocked her out!

INTERCUT WITH

-Casalta, still seated at the restaurant, his cigar now resting in an ashtray. His voice is cold, calculated.

Casalta
Why was she there?

DYLAN

No idea!

CasaLTA

I told you to keep it under control.

DYLAN

Don't start, okay? Just—can you come?

CaSALTA

Oh, now I'm invited?

DYLAN

Dad, stop! It's not that bad. She's not dead! That's good news, right? Just one little problem... she saw the packages.

Casalta's expression hardens.

CASALTA

Jesus Christ. What were they doing at your place? Rule number one: never bring that shit home!

DYLAN

Look, I brought them here so I wouldn't have to swing by the stash tomorrow.

CaSALTA

Let me get this straight. A cop walks into your place, sees the stash, and you knock her out? Idiots.

DYLAN

You can talk to her when she wakes up. Scare her a little. Then just... let her go. It'll be fine.

CasALTA

No, it won't. You're gonna do exactly what I say. You finish her. And you make her disappear.

Dylan chuckles nervously, thinking it's a joke. But the silence on the other end makes it clear—his father isn't kidding.

He glances at the guards, edging further away, trying to keep it discreet—but he's unraveling.

DYLAN

(masking panic)

Dad, no. You can't put this on me.
Come on—you're the best at handling
this kind of shit.

CaSALTA

Funny. Heard you like playing the
big man when I'm not around.
Well—now's your chance to prove
yourself

DYLAN

I'm not you!

CaSALTA

You will be. Tonight, you learn. I
won't always be here!

DYLAN

Neither will I!
I never wanted to be in this
business anyway.

CASALTA

And tell me, kid—what's paying for
all your business-class flights?
Your fancy dinners? Your lavish
summer holidays—all of it?
That little brand of yours hasn't
made a dime in five years. Your
Paris show the other night? Thirty
freeloaders stuffing their faces,
buying nothing. You really think
all this just pays for itself?

Dylan's face crumbles, but he says nothing.

CUT TO:

INT. DYLAN'S APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Frank crouches in the shadows, watching, waiting.

CUT TO:

INT. DYLAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The bodyguards are tense, waiting on edge. DYLAN's father
explains something inaudible, but the tension mounts. Dylan
listens, then...

DYLAN
(into phone)
No please!

Casalta's voice roars again.

DYLAN (CONT'D)
Okay!! Fine. Fine.

Casalta hangs up. Dylan sighs, then waves over BODYGUARD 1.

DYLAN (CONT'D)
Get me some booze and give me a line
of coke.

BODYGUARD 1
Boss, maybe not the best time for that...

DYLAN
(sarcastic)
Oh, I'm sorry, did you just get
promoted to my life coach?

BODYGUARD 1 flinches.

DYLAN (CONT'D)
The booze and drugs aren't for me,
genius. They're for her!

BODYGUARD 1
For... the cop?

DYLAN dramatically points to Sonia.

DYLAN
Yes, Einstein. We stage it like an overdose.

BODYGUARD 2 rubs his temples, still processing the twisted
plan.

BODYGUARD 2
We're throwing her off a balcony?

DYLAN
She needs to be dead before he gets
here. This mess? That's on you idiots.
Alright, screw it. We give her a nose
full of coke, stick a bottle in her
hand, and—oops!—she takes a fall. Looks
like a suicide or a bad accident.

BODYGUARD 1
(slow nod)
I'll grab the bottle.

Bodyguard 1 heads for the door, where Frank is still lurking.
The door creaks open—

CUT TO:

INT. DYLAN'S APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

But Frank has shifted to avoid being spotted. A beat passes,
then the bodyguard strolls by, bottle in hand.

CUT TO:

INT. DYLAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The two bodyguards lift Sonia, her limbs limp as they carry
her out.

CUT TO:

EXT. DYLAN'S BEDROOM TERRACE - NIGHT

They drag Sonia to the stone edge of the balcony. Dylan Blows
coke up her nose and down her throat. He grabs a bottle, fills a
glass, and swigs it, shaking off his nerves. He jams the bottle
into Sonia's limp hand, ready to push her when—

BODYGUARD 1

(in french)

The bottle's gonna shatter when she
hits the ground!

Dylan rolls his eyes.

DYLAN

Thank you, Captain Obvious. But hey,
glass in her hand—classic suicide look.

Behind them, a shadow slips in unnoticed—Frank.

Dylan braces to shove her off when—

BODYGUARD 2

They'll know she didn't drink!

Dylan, agitated but realizing he's right, snaps:

DYLAN

Fine! We'll make her drink.

He lifts Sonia to pour alcohol into her mouth. Sonia, still groggy, chokes and suddenly wakes up, nearly slipping off the balcony. She grabs Dylan, pulling them both to the ground. Dylan cracks his head but quickly recovers, kicking her hard in the stomach.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

Stupid bitch!

Sonia writhes in agony as Bodyguard 1 laughs.

BODYGUARD 1

Nice kick!

BAM! The base of a metal ashtray smashes into Bodyguard 1's head—he's out cold. It's Frank.

Bodyguard 2 and Dylan freeze. Frank stands there, knife in one hand... the other buried in a cereal box!

Sonia watches from the ground, grimacing in pain, barely able to move. Dylan's hand inches toward his gun—

BAM!

Frank fires. The cereal box erupts, spraying a storm of flakes everywhere. The chaos reveals his pistol, aimed steady. The shot? Deliberate. It misses Dylan by a hair.

Frank's eyes lock on Dylan, cold and unflinching.

FRANK

Slowly.

DYLAN

(To Bodyguard 2)

You were supposed to handle him! Guess I have to do everything myself.

FRANK

We're leaving. We'll settle this at the next tenants' meeting.

DYLAN

Oh, you're not leaving.

Dylan's cocky grin fades as Frank's grip on the gun tightens.

Suddenly—click. A cold barrel presses against the back of Frank's skull. It's the bruiser Frank fought earlier—beaten to a pulp, but still on his feet. He wrests Frank's gun away and tosses it over the edge.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

(smug)

I said... you're not leaving.

In a flash, Frank spins, grabbing the thug's gun arm. With a quick, brutal twist—BAM! The gun fires, point-blank into the thug's skull. The body crumples to the floor.

Dylan, panicking, lunges. The two crash to the ground, grappling.

BODYGUARD 2 charges toward them – but Sonia pushes herself up, shaky but defiant, stepping into his path.

She raises a half-full liquor bottle, hands trembling, but she's ready. Cousteau's advice, Frank's carrot clip, it all clicks: Use what you've got.

SONIA

Stop! One more step and I stab you
with this!

She slams the bottle against the terrace railing: Nothing. She slams it again – Still nothing. Awkward. Tense. She forces a threatening glare as the bottle stays perfectly intact.

BODYGUARD 2 smirks, then slaps her. Hard. Sonia drops. He grabs the bottle, smashes it cleanly, and advances on Frank, holding a jagged shard like a blade.

Just as he raises his arm to strike—

BAM!

A shot cracks the air. The bodyguard drops – dead before he hits the floor.

Sonia, still on the ground, Dylan's gun in her hands. She fired. She doesn't even blink.

Dylan seizes the moment, driving his elbow into Frank, breaking free. He sprints at Sonia, who scrambles to aim, but she's too slow—Dylan disarms her in a flash.

He spins, gun pointed straight at Frank—

But Frank's ready. He lunges forward, delivering a crushing blow to Dylan's arm. Dylan won't release the gun, his grip tightening. Frank grabs him by the wrist.

FRANK

Stop it!

BAM! BAM! BAM! BAM!

Frank forces Dylan's hand onto the trigger, emptying the gun into the ceiling. CLICK, CLICK, CLICK--out of bullets. Frank shouts again, desperate.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I said, STOP!

But for Dylan, it's kill or be killed. He rushes Frank, wild and reckless. Frank sidesteps, Dylan stumbles--then--

Dylan teeters at the edge of the balcony, exchanging one last look with Frank. His final words--

DYLAN

Oh sh--

He plunges off the side, hitting the ground below with a sickening thud. Dead.

Frank exhales, finally letting the weight off his chest. He reaches out, pulling Sonia to her feet. For a moment, they catch their breath.

It's over.

Or so they think.

Cars screech to a halt outside. Frank leans over the balcony railing--

CUT TO:

EXT. IN FRONT OF THE BUILDING - NIGHT

Three black sedans surround Dylan's body.

Mr. CASALTA, Dylan's father, bolts out of the car, kneeling beside his son. Rage and sorrow twist his face as he lets out a guttural scream.

He pulls out his silk keepsake, handling it delicately, inhaling the scent, then gently placing it over Dylan's eyes. He looks up, his eyes locking with Frank's from the balcony.

Five of CASALTA's men step out of the cars. CASALTA, livid, marches up to one of his men, yanks a gun from the inside pocket of the guy's jacket, and aims it up at Frank on the balcony. BAM BAM BAM. Frank ducks back, scrambling for cover.

CASALTA's men head straight for the building's entrance.

CUT TO:

INT. DYLAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Frank throws Sonia's arm over his shoulder, helping her walk. She's still shaky.

SONIA
We need backup.

FRANK
Wait—you didn't call this in?

Sonia pats her pockets—no phone.

SONIA
They took my phone.

Frank supports her as they head out of the room.

CUT TO:

INT. DYLAN'S APARTMENT - ENTRYWAY - NIGHT

They reach the front door, blocked by a massive piece of furniture.

SONIA
They've locked us in! They're insane!

FRANK
No, that was me.

Sonia stares at him, confused.

SONIA
What?!

Frank braces himself, shoving the furniture aside with all his strength.

SONIA (CONT'D)
To keep them from getting in?

FRANK
To keep them from getting out.

Sonia watches Frank, stunned by his cold logic. He finally clears the way and cracks open the door, peeking out.

CUT TO:

INT. DYLAN'S APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Frank and Sonia move cautiously when—A SHADOW suddenly appears on their left! Frank is ready to attack—

But it's just CAMILLA, the neighbor, the young mother. She screams too.

CAMILLA
(frightened)
Oh Frank, it's you!

FRANK
(whispers)
What the hell are you doing here?!

Camilla trembles, barely able to get the words out.

CAMILLA
I heard gunshots... I called the police. We were trying to leave, but Luana ran out... I can't find her!

SONIA
Luana?

FRANK
(to Camilla)
Her daughter. Five years old.

Frank looks at Camilla—she's a wreck.

FRANK (CONT'D)
She can't have gone far.

Camilla takes a second to process Frank and Sonia's bruised state.

CAMILLA
Who did this to you? What the hell is going on?!

FRANK
(deadpan)
Just a little neighborly dispute.

Frank turns to Sonia, she looks beat.

SONIA
We sit tight until backup gets here.

Camilla nods, scanning the hallway, desperately calling out.

CAMILLA
Luana? Luana??

Frank helps Sonia limp along, heading toward the emergency exit.
Camilla vanishes, frantically searching for her daughter.

CUT TO:

INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Sonia grips Frank for balance as they painstakingly descend the stairs, step by step.

CUT TO:

INT. DYLAN'S APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

CASALTA's men sweep the floor. They enter Dylan's apartment.

CUT TO:

INT. DYLAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Armed, focused, and methodical, CASALTA's men navigate the wreckage from the party and earlier fights. They search for Frank and Sonia--But find only the bodies of Dylan's men scattered across the floor.

CUT TO:

INT. 4TH FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

Two of CASALTA's men exit Dylan's apartment and head into the emergency stairwell.

CUT TO:

INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Frank glances over his shoulder.

Shadows. Footsteps. He picks up the pace, pulling Sonia along faster.

The men spot him and start barreling down the stairs.

Thinking fast, Frank grabs a broom from the landing. He silently places it across the stairwell at knee height--

The two men trip hard, crashing violently down the steps.

Before they can react, Frank pounces, knocking them out with a series of quick blows. He takes a moment to catch his breath, then helps Sonia back to her feet. In her eyes: she's impressed by the way Frank reads the room, grabs what's there, and turns it into action. Like it's instinct.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE FRANK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Frank and Sonia emerge from the emergency exit, moving slowly, cautiously, when—One of CASALTA's men steps out of the elevator at the end of the hallway.

He spots them. Draws his gun. But—LUANA, the little girl, suddenly appears, stepping out from behind a piece of furniture, right in the middle of the hallway. She's crying, terrified.

The man hesitates, gun aimed—Frank raises a hand, his voice calm but commanding.

FRANK

Hey.
Wait.

The man's gaze flicks to the child. His finger inches off the trigger. Slowly, he lowers the gun.

Frank approaches Luana carefully, glancing at the nearby utility closet crammed with maintenance supplies. He crouches down, speaking softly.

FRANK (CONT'D)

(to Luana)

It's okay, sweetheart. Can you wait
for me right here?

Luana shakes her head, refusing.

FRANK (CONT'D)

(to Sonia)

Take her with you.

SONIA

No way. I'm staying to help you.

FRANK

One of us has to look after her,
and—look, I'm claustrophobic. You'd be
doing me a huge favor.

Sonia hesitates, but finally gives in, lifting Luana into her arms, cradling the girl close as she tucks her safely inside.

CUT TO:

INT. CLOSET - NIGHT

Sonia holds Luana tightly. Frank carefully shuts the closet doors.

Light seeps through a small crack, casting shadows of Frank's movement. Sonia, eyes shut, listens—

BAM! A gunshot. Frank lets out a guttural scream.

Inside, Sonia can only guess what's happening from the sounds—

BIM! Blows landing hard. Glass shatters—BOOM! Something heavy hits the door.

Sonia freezes, unsure if it's Frank or the attacker.

The noise escalates—chaos outside—then... Silence.

Sonia and Luana breathe shakily. The door suddenly swings open—

It's Frank, blood trickling from a cut on his temple.

FRANK

(to Luana, with a big smile,
in french)

Everything's fine! You ever count the
lightbulbs in the hallway?

Luana shakes her head.

FRANK (CONT'D)

(in french)

Well, let's make it a game. Count them
all, no peeking down, or you lose!

Luana grins, eager for the distraction. Frank pulls them out of the closet, limping...

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE FRANK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Luana, head up, counts the lights as they walk. Sonia, eyes down, takes in the carnage:

The man Frank fought lies on the floor, throat slashed by Frank's knife, blood pooling.

Frank reaches his apartment door, unlocks it, and pushes it open—only to reveal ROY, standing casually inside.

ROY
(grinning)
Hope you don't mind—I came in through
the balcony. The front's a little
crowded.

Roy steps into the hallway, pulling Frank into a quick hug. Behind them, Luana and Sonia slip inside Frank's apartment for cover.

FRANK
(sighs, mock relief)
Well, finally.
Took you long enough.

ROY
(chuckling)
Sorry, pal. Got your message just as I
sat down with a salad. Trying to keep
the waistline in check, you know?
(grinning)
Alright. Come on, let's get you out of
here—

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Don't. Move.

The air thickens. It's CASALTA, shotgun locked and loaded, tears streaking his enraged face. His bloodshot eyes burn with vengeance..

CASALTA
(icy)
Turn around. Slowly.

FRANK
(calmly)
Look, I'm sorry, none of this shit
should've happened—

CASALTA
(interrupting, furious)
You killed my son!

FRANK
It was an accident.

CASALTA
Accident? Oh...

In a flash—BOOM! The shotgun fires. ROY jerks back, the blast tearing through his skull. He crumples to the floor, lifeless.

CASALTA (CONT'D)
(smirking, cold)
Oops. Accident.

Frank's breath catches, his face carved with shock and fury. Casalta raises the shotgun again, finger tightening on the trigger—BOOM!

The blast tears into Frank's leg. He drops, gripping his thigh, teeth gritted against the pain.

Before Casalta can finish him, four figures emerge from the shadows: ENRIQUE, SCOTTY, and two of their thugs.

SCOTTY
(points at Frank)
Back off, grandpa. That one's ours.

CASALTA
(icy, unimpressed)
You've got two seconds to get out.

ENRIQUE
(smirking)
Nah, you're leaving.

CASALTA
(deadpan)
Do you know who the fuck I am?

A pause. Enrique squints, recognition dawning—it's a face he knows from the business.

ENRIQUE
Oh shit.

CASALTA
Yeah *shit*.

Without hesitation, Casalta swings his shotgun toward Enrique.

CASALTA (CONT'D)
Get. Out.

SCOTTY
(defiant)
Man, we'll fuck you up too!

ENRIQUE

No, Scotty, don't—it's Casal—

—Scotty ignores him, slamming a baseball bat into Casalta's arm. The shotgun discharges wildly—BANG!—hitting one of the thugs, who drops like deadweight.

ENRIQUE (CONT'D)

Fuck!

CASALTA levels his gun at Scotty. Enrique has no choice now. He roars and tackles Casalta, the two crashing to the floor, trading vicious punches.

BAM! Another shot shatters the chaos, this one blasting into a wall.

Frank, injured and breathless, watches from the corner, unsure how this is going to end.

Scotty, Enrique, and the last gang member pile on CASALTA, but the old man fights like a cornered animal, holding his own.

The shotgun skids across the floor, spinning—coming to a stop at Frank's feet.

Frank stares at it, pain etched on his face. He drags himself across the floor, grabs the weapon, and lets his fingers glide over it, impressed.

Meanwhile, CASALTA pulls a knife and slashes Scotty's arm.

Enrique jumps on CASALTA's back but gets thrown off hard, smacking his head against the wall—knocked out cold.

CASALTA stabs the final gang member, leaving only Scotty, barely standing with his wounded arm.

FRANK

(enraged)

Enough!

CASALTA and Scotty freeze, both breathing hard.

Frank points the gun at the two of them, his hand trembling. Gritting his teeth through the pain, he slides down against the wall.

He's managed to tie off a makeshift tourniquet with his belt, blood staining the fabric.

CasALTA
Fine. Let me finish him off, and
we'll call it even.

STAB!—Casalta buries his knife into Scotty's skull. Scotty drops like a stone.

FRANK
(horrified, shouting)
No!

CasALTA
What, another friend?

Frank can't answer, rage tightening his throat.

CASALTA (CONT'D)
(chuckling)
Here's the thing—see that button on
the side of the gun? It only fires
with my fingerprint. You're holding a
damn paperweight.

Frank checks—there's a thumbprint scanner. He pulls the
trigger—CLICK. CLICK.

Casalta grins, but it vanishes as Frank, in a blur of mechanical
precision, dismantles the shotgun. Wires twist, circuits
spark—it's reassembled in seconds. Now fully operational.

Casalta steps back, impressed... but before Frank can aim—THUD.
THUD. THUD. Six armed men storm into the hallway, rifles raised,
backing Casalta up.

CASALTA (CONT'D)
(smirking, to Frank)
Nice work. Too bad you're not faster.

Suddenly—CLICK. A pistol cocks. SONIA steps into the doorway,
gun raised.

SONIA
(sharp, commanding)
Nobody move.

The henchmen glance at her, unconvinced. Casalta sneers..

CasALTA
You're the fucking cop.
You really think you've got the
upper hand? If you shoot, we
retaliate—and you die in a second.

SONIA

(calmly)

See that tank above your head? Big, pressurized, full of something that goes BOOM when it shouldn't.

She gestures to the canister, steadying her aim.

SONIA (CONT'D)

One shot, and this hallway becomes a graveyard.

The men glance at each other, unease growing.

CASALTA

You're lying.

Sonia cocks her gun, steadying her aim.

SONIA

Try me.

The standoff thickens. Outside, the wail of police sirens grows louder. Frank raises his hand, aiming at the canister too.

SONIA (CONT'D)

(smirking)

What? You think I'll miss?

FRANK

(smirking back)

No. I just like a bigger firework show.

SONIA

(tight, calm, to Casalta)

Drop your weapon or we all go down.
Your move.

Casalta seethes, the moment slipping through his fingers.

CasALTA

Fine. You win.

(to his men, firm)

Drop 'em. Now.

One by one, the guns hit the floor—except for one guy. He keeps his aim locked on Frank and Sonia, finger tight on the trigger.

Casalta moves in, slow, steady. Without breaking stride, he snatches the gun from the man's grip with his left hand.

He turns back, arms raised—one gun in each hand.

A slow, careful descent. Knees bending, lowering the weapons, eyes locked on Sonia and Frank.

Frank exhales. The tension starts to ease—

—UNTIL CASALTA WHIPS THE GUNS UP AND FIRES!

BAM! BAM!

Frank takes one to the shoulder, dropping hard.

The second shot—just misses Sonia, punching into the wall behind her. Casalta charges. He grabs for Sonia's gun—and finds himself holding a... toothbrush!

Confusion. Then pure fury.

Before Sonia can react, he clamps down on her throat, squeezing like a vice. Frank fights through the pain. Steadies his aim. One clean shot—

—BOOM.

Casalta's head snaps back. His body crashes to the floor. His men scramble for their weapons—

—RED AND BLUE LIGHTS FLOOD IN.

OFFICER
(yelling, from O.S.)
Freeze! Drop your weapons!

SWAT storms in, subduing Casalta and his crew. Sonia flashes her badge, pointing to Frank.

SONIA
(to officers, pointing to Frank)
He's with me.

One officer looks Frank over, bloodied and barely conscious.

OFFICER
(pointing at Frank)
Who the hell is this guy?

SONIA
(smiling)
Just the super.

The officers start handcuffing CASALTA and his men.

CUT TO:

INT. FRANK'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

Sunlight filters through the windows.

Frank and Sonia sit at the table, bruised, bandaged, and spent. The med team patched them up—fresh dressings, aching bodies. But they're alive. Beside them, two steaming cups of tea

A few police officers linger, the tension in the room having finally deflated. Michel walks in with a relieved grin.

MICHEL

(shaking Frank's hand)

The man, the myth, the legend—the American. Can't resist playing the Super... hero, huh?

FRANK

(nods toward Sonia)

If I'm alive, it's thanks to her, your officer. She saved me... with my toothbrush.

Michel squints, confused. His gaze lands on the table, where an electric toothbrush with a sleek black handle sits innocuously.

Sonia picks it up, flips it around, holding the handle like a pistol. For a split second, it does look like a weapon.

SONIA

(smirking)

Lost my gun. No carrot.
Had to get creative.

MICHEL

I always knew she had it in her.

Sonia forces a smile.

MICHEL (CONT'D)

Anyway, thanks to you two for shutting this thing down. Saved us a ton of headaches. Though... you sure left one hell of a scene. But don't worry — we'll handle the cleanup. We've sent everyone we could to the hospital. The rest? Locked up tight. Nobody's gonna bother you again.

(beat)

We ran Casalta's name through the system — turns out there's an open complaint from the previous owner. Apparently, he forced her to sell at half price.

(MORE)

MICHEL (CONT'D)

Figured you'd like to hear this place is up for auction. We'll make ensure she gets what she's owed.

Frank nods, a faint smile playing on his lips.

MICHEL (CONT'D)

(to Frank)

Now... time to get back to living your life.

Frank hands Sonia a Tupperware container.

SONIA

What's this?

FRANK

(grinning)

Boeuf bourguignon. Heat it for 1 minute 10 at 900 watts. Then let me know if it's any good.

MICHEL

That's sweet. We'll give it a try.

Sonia clutches the Tupperware, shooting Michel a sharp look.

SONIA

(deadpan, in french)

It's just for me, Michel.

Michel shrugs it off, a flicker of jealousy in his eyes. He moves closer to Sonia.

MICHEL

(in french)

Take as long as you need to recover, but get back to the office soon, before I walk out of this circus. I've got a couple cases I was going to assign to Cousteau, but after what you've shown me—you're better suited for them.

SONIA (smiling)

Thanks, boss.

MICHEL

Take care.

Michel heads out. Sonia turns to Frank, smiling, holding up the Tupperware.

SONIA

If it's that good, maybe I'll move into this building and make it a regular thing.

FRANK (SMILING)

As long as you keep it down for the neighbors...

SONIA

Seriously though, the first time I came here, I thought--this is the kind of place I'd love to live. So, if the super hears about any openings...

FRANK (GRINNING)

I'll keep my ears open. Actually, I think a spot just freed up tonight. Timing couldn't be better...

SONIA (SMIRKING)

Thanks, Frank. If I move in, with you next door, no one would dare mess with us.

They share a smile. Normally, nothing worse than tonight could ever happen here... unless...

FADE OUT.