

Ops

"Blood and Oil" (Pilot)

written by

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FADE IN:

Sodium-vapor lights HUM above a South American industrial plant, making the air look even hotter than it is.

It's four a.m., and 90 degrees.

A chain-link fence and an empty road divide the factory from the slums beyond, some too-thin DOGS scavenging through the accumulated trash. The dogs look up.

A man is running.

We see only pieces: his feet on the wet asphalt, the messenger bag over his shoulder, the sweat forming a 'V' down his gray T-shirt.

CUT TO:

A PAYPHONE,

RINGING. The signage reads, "Nacional Venezuela."

CUT TO:

THE MAN.

We finally see his face. JOE MCGINTY, barely 30, is racing to get to that phone before it stops ringing.

He rounds a corner, bears down to reach the payphone. Grabs the receiver --

MCGINTY

iDiga!

The voice on the other end is male, Spanish-accented.

THE VOICE (FILTERED)

Under the phone, there is a map.
Go.

MCGINTY

How do I...

The line CLICKS. Dead.

McGinty feels under the base of the phone, finds a simple map made with a marker. Wherever he's going, it's close.

EXT. WAREHOUSE ALLEY - NIGHT

Following the map, McGinty makes his way amid three-story boxes. He turns around, trying to find his bearings.

Suddenly, two sets of HEADLIGHTS switch on behind him. He turns, facing the brilliant white light...

TRANSITION TO:

FLYING

along a remote desert road, scrub brush and trash flanking each side of the narrow path. The light is blazing white, washing out colors.

MUSIC is pounding, intense, built with layers of exotic instruments: flute-like zamrs, spike-fiddles and hand-drums.

TITLE OVER:

SOUTHERN AFGHANISTAN ONE WEEK EARLIER

A MILITARY CARGO VEHICLE

pulls into frame. It's going over 70, a thick wedge of dust rising behind it. As it passes, we look into the back, where two AFGHANIS with M4 rifles guard a tarp-covered object the size of four coffins.

INT. VEHICLE CAB - DAY

The driver is an American: THEO VANOWEN. Built like a wall, he's effortlessly intimidating. In his forty-odd years, he's fought on four continents and killed many men -- but not one more than he had to. He keeps both eyes scanning the road.

VANOWEN

Is it a camel?

MCGINTY

No. That's twelve.

A decade younger, McGinty is more MBA than Marine. Better with words than weapons, he's an expert negotiator who could talk his way past St. Peter. Both men wear body armor vests.

VANOWEN
A mountain?

MCGINTY
You're sure you've done this before.

VANOWEN
Yeah.

MCGINTY
Because it's not really a brute
force kind of game. You have to
have a system. You're constantly
trying to winnow it down to smaller
categories.

VANOWEN
You got your way, I got mine.

MCGINTY
Okay, but your way will never work.

VANOWEN
Is it a toaster?

MCGINTY
No! That's fourteen.

Noticing something in the distance...

VANOWEN
Heads up.

EXT. THE ROAD - DAY

A pile of BURNING JUNK blocks the road ahead. A half-dozen
AFGHANI GUNMEN spill out of two JEEPS and one stakebed TRUCK.
A ragtag group, they wear no uniforms, but carry M4 rifles.

INTERCUT WITH VANOWEN / MCGINTY

MCGINTY
And suddenly it's a toll road.

McGinty's not just being flip -- this is pretty common here.

MCGINTY (CONT'D)
We're good. We'll pay 'em off.

VANOWEN
How many cars have we passed in the
last hour?

MCGINTY

One.

VANOWEN

Two. And they're both behind us.

IN MCGINTY'S MIRROR,

we see a PICKUP TRUCK and a RUSTED CAR closing from behind. Inside are MORE AFGHANI GUNMEN, aiming.

Vanowen picks up the walkie, speaks into it --

VANOWEN (CONT'D)

Hold on!

Vanowen suddenly veers off the road.

EXT. BACK OF THE TRUCK - DAY

The two Afghanis cling on for dear life. The heavy cargo strains against its moorings.

Looking back, we see the two vehicles following them have gone off-road as well.

EXT. ON THE ROAD - DAY

The three vehicles making up the roadblock ROAR back to life, the gunmen piling back in.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

McGinty and Vanowen's truck leads the way across the scrub desert, kicking up a massive cloud of dust. The other five vehicles fall into a phalanx behind it.

INT. CAB OF THE TRUCK - DAY

Despite the pressure, Vanowen stays frosty. McGinty tries to pinpoint their location with a map and a GPS.

MCGINTY

They're not shooting.

VANOWEN

They want the cargo intact.

Spotting something in the distance --

VANOWEN (CONT'D)
Coming up on a road.

MCGINTY
(checking map)
Got it. Take it. Left.

INTERCUT INSIDE / OUTSIDE

Vanowen cuts onto the new road.

The nimble Jeeps are moving up quickly, trying to flank the truck to keep it from veering back across the desert.

MCGINTY (CONT'D)
(checking map)
Bridge ahead, one klick.

VANOWEN
No.

MCGINTY
It's on the map.

VANOWEN
I blew it up last year.

CUT TO:

EXT. UP AHEAD - DAY

We see that the road does in fact dead-end at a sizable ravine, fast approaching.

INT. THE TRUCK - DAY

Vanowen slows to a stop. McGinty shoots a look at Vanowen -- what's he doing?

Vanowen watches the approaching cars in his side mirror. His fingers curl around the shifter.

Suddenly, he REVS the engine and slams it into reverse.

He's an ace at the wheel, completely in his zone. He jackknifes the truck, ready to plow forward in a new direction.

He thrusts the stick forward, but gets only GRINDING GEARS. Pops the clutch and tries again. No go. Still trying...

VANOWEN
How much you pay for this truck?

The Jeeps move up on both sides, flanking them --

MCGINTY

Six.

VANOWEN

Get a refund.

A burst of MACHINE GUN FIRE SHATTERS the windshield, raining glass. Afghan gunmen yank open the doors, SHOUTING in Farsi as they drag McGinty and Vanowen out.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Vanowen and McGinty are thrown face down into the dirt. Everyone's SHOUTING at once.

MCGINTY

We're not soldiers! Not soldiers!

The LEADER approaches, his shadow falling across them.

Bearded, amped on adrenaline, he's every American's nightmare of a *mujahadin* insurgent. He switches his M4 to automatic, aims down at them -- and FIRES, two quick bursts.

McGinty flinches as the bullets kick up a spray of dirt next to his head. Vanowen doesn't react at all.

The leader smiles to his men. He likes fucking with people.

As he steps forward, delivering a vicious KICK --

CUT TO:

QUICK TITLE SEQUENCE

It's just the title, with a DRIVING BEAT to accompany it. The rest of the credits play over the continuing action.

INT. BACK OF A COVERED TRUCK - NIGHT

By the light of a swinging ELECTRIC LANTERN, we find Vanowen and McGinty side-by-side on a bench. They've been roughed up and blindfolded, hands zip-tied behind their backs.

Their Afghani day-hires flank them, similarly bound, and much the worse for wear. With the truck in motion, it's hard to keep from falling over.

One young Afghani GUARD with an AK-47 across his knees keeps a wary eye on the captives.

We HOLD ON McGinty and Vanowen for a long beat.

VANOWEN
Is it a rabbit?

MCGINTY
No. It's not an animal.

VANOWEN
I didn't ask.

MCGINTY
But you should have. Like, ten questions ago.

GUARD (IN FARSI)
Quiet! No talking!

After a beat...

VANOWEN
What am I at?

MCGINTY
Sixteen.

Freaked out, the guard shoves the barrel in McGinty's face:

GUARD (IN FARSI)
Shut up! Shut up!

Warned by the edge of strain in his voice, our guys shut up.

The truck makes a sharp TURN, throwing the captives against the side. They've arrived.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

BLAZING HEADLIGHTS illuminate its interior as the trucks and Jeeps pull in. The warehouse has been completely stripped by looters, right down to the wiring and electric outlets.

Lots of chaotic action, Afghani gunmen jumping down from their vehicles, others running to meet them.

INT. BACK OF THE TRUCK - NIGHT

Vanowen and McGinty can HEAR everything but see nothing.

The guard jumps down from the truck, leaving the captives alone for a moment.

MAN'S VOICE
You are Americans?

REVERSE to find there's a fifth captive in the truck, also blindfolded. He's been there all along. He's in his forties, with a stubbly blond beard that looks as if he's spent a week in the desert. His name is ARTUR NILSEN.

NILSEN
I am Artur Nilsen. I am consultant
for Norway Statoil.

MCGINTY
Joe McGinty.

A little hesitant...

VANOWEN
Theo Vanowen.

NILSEN
You are soldiers?

MCGINTY
We're private contractors.

VANOWEN
We were making a delivery.

NILSEN
In Afghanistan?

MCGINTY
Our company provides security in
high-risk environments.

VANOWEN
We protect things for money.

A beat.

NILSEN
I have a daughter. Dagny. Dagny
Nilsen, in Kristiansand. If I die...

MCGINTY
You're going to be fine.

NILSEN
If I die, find her. Tell her she
is everything to me.

The back of the truck is THROWN OPEN. Armed men pull all five captives down, SHOUTING menacingly.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Guards herd the captives along with kicks and rifle-prods. The Afghani day-hires are separated from the group and shoved through a doorway to an unseen fate.

McGinty is forced down to his knees beside Vanowen and Nilsen. BLAZING HEADLIGHTS illuminate their faces. All three men squint as blindfolds are pulled off...

THE BIG BOSS

climbs down from the HUMVEE whose headlights are blinding them. As eyes adjust, the menacing silhouette resolves into BRIAN BARKER (38), an American in Kevlar and cargo pants.

VANOWEN

Son of a bitch.

Barker is senior operations director for SOS Security Solutions, a mid-size private military corporation. Vanowen's assessment is apt: He is a son of a bitch.

BARKER

Gentlemen. What brings you to this little corner of paradise?

MCGINTY

Barker.

VANOWEN

These are your men? Figures by the sloppy training.

Artur Nilsen looks, dazed, from one man to another. For just this moment, he has hope that maybe he's not going to die.

McGinty and Vanowen start to get to their feet. The Afghani guards angrily SHOVE them back down to their knees.

BARKER

Did I say you could stand?

(to his men)

Mr. Vanowen and Mr. McGinty are old friends. They used to be good little SOS employees, before they caught the entrepreneurial bug.

Stooping down in front of Vanowen...

BARKER (CONT'D)

How's business, Theo? You drawing a paycheck yet? I hope you're not tapping into your pension.

Vanowen is silent.

BARKER (CONT'D)

You know, it's one thing for McGinty. Most businesses go under. Guy with an MBA, he can work anywhere. But a man with your special talents... you're not getting any younger.

VANOWEN

At least I can sleep at night.

BARKER

Is that right? Let's see what that clear conscience was hauling.

CUT TO:

THE BACK OF THEIR TRUCK.

Afghanis clamber onto the truck bed, where the mysterious cargo is strapped down. They pull back the tarp to reveal

A VIKING RANGE.

Six burners of culinary wonder, complete with built-in grill.

Barker WHISTLES.

BARKER

She's a beaut. Hard to get that kind of firepower out here. How much was Sardar gonna pay you for delivery? Thirty? Forty?

MCGINTY

You got an \$80 million contract. What's one stove?

BARKER

It's not about money. It's about territory. And right now, you're in mine. Come sunrise, you're on the first truck back to Kandahar.

VANOWEN

Along with our men.

Barker half-turns to look at his lead gunman, who gives an almost imperceptible head-shake.

BARKER

The Hajis stay here.

MCGINTY

Barker, what's your biggest piece of that eighty million? For guarding the pipeline, right?

BARKER

So?

MCGINTY

(re: Nilsen)

You know this guy works for Norwegian Statoil? They've got a twelve percent stake. That makes them your client.

Barker keeps his cool, but we can see his eyes flinch.

MCGINTY (CONT'D)

Wonder how the corporation would feel about being mixed up in a prisoner abuse scandal.

McGinty knows he's hitting a tender spot. Barker has no choice but to back down.

BARKER

(to Nilsen)

My apologies, sir. In a war zone, sometimes it's hard to tell friend from foe.

VANOWEN

Not really.

CUT TO:

EXT. AFGHANI CITY (KANDAHAR) - DAY

In a dark doorway, McGinty pays the two Afghani day-hires in U.S. cash. They eye the street nervously -- it's not good to be seen taking money from a foreigner -- and escape quickly.

McGinty steps out, rejoins Vanowen in the bright sunlight. They stroll.

VANOWEN

So it's smaller than a tuba. Not an animal. It's not purple.

MCGINTY

Not necessarily purple. That doesn't really...

VANOWEN

You got your way, I got...

Suddenly, an EXPLOSION. We don't see the blast, but HEAR it. Vanowen pulls McGinty down into a doorway as debris rains down: scrap metal, dust, a steering wheel.

A car bomb has detonated about half a block away. The remains are still burning.

A smoking BOOM-BOX radio lands beside Vanowen. He looks at it for a moment, while the ECHOES die down.

VANOWEN (CONT'D)

Is it a boom-box?

MCGINTY

What?

VANOWEN

The thing. Is it a portable stereo, a.k.a. a boom-box?

A long beat. With disbelief...

MCGINTY

Yeah. Good guess.

TRANSITION TO:

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY (CONNECTICUT)

A low-slung office building like a million others, with a sign advertising square footage available for rent.

TITLE OVER:

STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT

INT. OFFICE RECEPTION AREA - DAY

It's a rented office, cheaply furnished -- but it's home. There are two rooms: this reception area, and McGinty's office, visible through a glass wall with blinds.

TINA GIBSON (30's) is Falcon International Security's only other employee: bookkeeper, receptionist, keeper-afloat-of-things. To look at her, you'd never guess she's a single mom with a ten-year old son -- or Vanowen's half-sister.

McGinty's sitting on the edge of her desk, perusing an accounts payable printout. Tina points out a few lines.

TINA

We're at 30 days on the rent. And the Amex. But I'd start with the phones. They're cutting 'em off tomorrow at five.

MCGINTY

How much is the bill?

TINA

Thirteen hundred.
(off his silence)
Oh, and, Joe...

MCGINTY

Right, it's Friday. Cut yourself a check.

TINA

I did. But when can I cash it?

Vanowen has his feet up on the coffee table and is reading the new issue of "Firepower" magazine.

MCGINTY

Vanowen, you want to make yourself useful? Start calling your old jarhead buddies and find us a gig. Ideally something with a little profit margin this time.

VANOWEN

We hear anything on that DOD contract?

MCGINTY

They're going with Blackwell.

VANOWEN

Home of the eight hundred dollar screwdriver. Maybe they'll sub-out to us.

MCGINTY

That's a business plan. Feast on the crumbs.

VANOWEN

I'll take care of the phones. The rest of it...

MCGINTY
 (sighs)
 I'll get the money.

TRANSITION TO:

EXT. SOUTH AMERICA / WAREHOUSE ALLEY - NIGHT [FLASH FORWARD]

Two sets of headlights switch on. McGinty turns into the light. (We're continuing the opening scene.)

FOUR MEN stand by the cars. We can't make out their faces in the shadows. One of them is The Voice.

THE VOICE
 Throw it here.

McGinty takes the messenger bag off his shoulder. Tosses it. It lands in front of the cars, in the headlights' glow.

THE VOICE (CONT'D)
 Lift your shirt.

McGinty lifts his T-shirt, turns to show he's not armed, and not wearing a wire.

THE VOICE (CONT'D)
 Ya.

One of the Venezuelans steps out of the shadows. He's barely 18, a scared teenager. THE BOY unzips the bag to reveal \$100,000 in bound twenties. He starts counting the cash as he transfers it to another bag.

MCGINTY
 That's it. That's everything. It ends tonight.

The Boy finishes his count...

THE BOY
Es todo.

The Voice motions with his hand. From behind them, a

WHITE VAN

moves into the light.

FROM A NEW ANGLE

we look down on the scene. We're peering through a sniper's scope, crosshairs darting from the van, to the Boy, to McGinty.

BACK TO SCENE

McGinty watches the white van approaching.

MCGINTY

If you've hurt her in any way...

THE VOICE

We are not monsters.

Suddenly, a SHOT. The Boy falls, dropping face-first into the hood of a car. Cash spills out of the bag.

SNIPER P.O.V

The crosshairs pivot to ANOTHER MAN in the shadows. A SHOT. He falls.

BACK TO SCENE

The men in the shadows OPEN FIRE, aiming at the rooftops with automatic rifles.

McGinty looks up. The sniper is just a starburst FLASH in the night.

Suddenly, McGinty falls to the asphalt. He's not sure why -- it's like the ground slipped from under him.

He looks at his hand. It's sprayed with blood.

TRANSITION TO:

INT. BEDROOM - DAY (CONNECTICUT) [PRESENT]

McGinty's shirt hits him in the face. He's in bed, post-coital. The room is modest but cozy, a couple's first home.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Get a move on. I need to be back at the office.

BROOKE COLESON (30) is getting dressed with brisk efficiency. They were college sweethearts who married young, and it's not hard to see why.

Brooke a legislative director, and every bit as sharp as McGinty.

MCGINTY

Can I take a shower? I can let myself out.

BROOKE

Joe, you can't just come and go as if you still lived here. We need to respect boundaries.

MCGINTY

You're right. Me using your bathroom when you're not here would be, like, weirdly intimate.

Brooke pulls a short stack of clipped legal papers from her briefcase, hands it to McGinty. There are red arrow-tags for what he's supposed to sign. She uncaps a pen for him.

MCGINTY (CONT'D)

I haven't even read this yet.

BROOKE

It's the same as what you got in the mail three months ago.

McGinty lifts a corner, peering underneath.

BROOKE (CONT'D)

You're not agreeing to anything. You're just acknowledging that you've received it.

MCGINTY

So we'll be...

BROOKE

Separated. Divorce is one more checkbox.

MCGINTY

So we're not going to?

BROOKE

Why, do you want...

MCGINTY

Do you?

BROOKE

It doesn't matter to me.

McGinty picks up the pen. Not looking up from signing --

MCGINTY

I'm gonna need some money from the joint account. It's a cash flow thing, just to make payroll.

BROOKE

Joe!

MCGINTY

I'll put it back in a couple weeks.

BROOKE

(frustrated)

The point of mediation was to avoid this kind of thing.

MCGINTY

The point of mediation was amicability. I think I'm being amicable.

There's obviously something being unsaid.

BROOKE

How much?

MCGINTY

Ten thousand.

Anticipating her next objection...

MCGINTY (CONT'D)

One contract. That's all we need to put us in the black. They're spending \$18 billion in Iraq. If we can just get a nibble, a foothold -- like that water plant protection job...

Brooke doesn't want to hear it.

MCGINTY (CONT'D)

What?

BROOKE

Joe, you should hear yourself. War is not a business.

MCGINTY

Didn't seem to bother you when I was at S.O.S. You'd rather I work for an evil multi-national?

BROOKE

I'd rather you were safe. You were behind a desk, Joe. I didn't have to worry about you being reckless.

He lets her take the separation papers from his hands.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Wearing a rock-climbing harness, Vanowen dangles two stories above the parking lot. With a cheap handset, he's clipped in on two telephone wires, part of a tangled switching box mounted to the side of the building.

He pokes around with his Leatherman tool to find other available circuits.

VANOWEN
(to the phone)
Let me know if the line goes dead.

INT. OFFICE RECEPTION AREA - DAY

Tina's on the other end.

TINA
Will that mean you've fallen to
your death?

INTERCUT VANOWEN / TINA

VANOWEN
Funny.

Tina's 10-year old son MATTY is doing his homework, his head cradled in his hands, staring at a history book.

TINA
I'll tell Matty his uncle was killed
in action stealing phone service.

Matty looks up.

VANOWEN
If they didn't want us to take 'em,
they shouldn't have put 'em on the
building. Crap!

He accidentally drops a plastic line cap. Looks down as it falls, nearly beaming a BUSINESSMAN walking below.

The Businessman looks up. He's Nilsen, the Norwegian from Afghanistan -- cleaned up and wearing a \$4000 suit.

NILSEN
Mr. Vanowen?

VANOWEN

Hey!

(to phone)

Tell McGinty I got us a client.

INT. MULLANE'S MUG - DAY

The bar next door to the office. Nilsen, McGinty and Vanowen sit in a corner booth. They're almost the only customers.

NILSEN

Statoil is competing for a large investment in Venezuela. I will travel there next week to finish negotiations.

MCGINTY

Still pretty choppy in Venezuela. Elections didn't go so well.

NILSEN

Sometimes in business, the greatest profit is in the most dangerous places. This you understand.

McGinty and Vanowen nod. They're all on the same wavelength.

NILSEN (CONT'D)

My daughter, Dagny, will come with me. I saw on website, 'VIP Protection.' She is VIP. To me.

VANOWEN

I take it you're not using SOS?

NILSEN

My experience as captive made me appreciate benefits of small company.

VANOWEN

Can't get smaller than us.

Shooting Vanowen a look...

MCGINTY

What he means is that we'll be able to shift some personnel around. We can oversee your case personally.

Nilsen raises a glass to toast.

NILSEN

Skal!

MCGINTY / VANOWEN

Skal!

CUT TO:

EXT. MARACAIBO - DAY (SECOND UNIT)

We glimpse crowded street markets, President Chávez smiling from storefront posters. SOLDIERS with red berets and machine guns are omnipresent, keeping the peace through sheer numbers.

TITLE OVER:

MARACAIBO, VENEZUELA

EXT. PRIVATE AIRSTRIP - DAY

With the Andes in the background, a PRIVATE JET pulls to a stop at the midpoint of a blacktop runway, where it's met by two bullet-proof Mercedes.

VANOWEN

gets out of the lead car. Wearing sunglasses and a freshly-ironed shirt, he's a world away from his desert camouflage. Two of his FOUR LOCAL HIRES scan the horizon for trouble.

McGinty is first out of the jet. Nilsen carefully climbs down after him, followed by his daughter DAGNY.

Technically Norwegian, Dagny has travelled so much in her 16 years that she's thoroughly cosmopolitan -- and jaded. Her English is flawless.

Vanowen approaches, shaking hands with Nilsen.

VANOWEN

Welcome to Venezuela.

MCGINTY

Dagny, this is my partner, Mr. Vanowen.

Quickly sizing him up...

DAGNY

So, he's the brains and you're the muscle?

NILSEN

Dagny.

VANOWEN
 Nah, I'm the brains. All this...
 (re: his muscles)
 ...just vanity.

Reaching the cars, he opens the back door for Dagny.

DAGNY
 I want to ride in front.

VANOWEN
 Better off in back.

Dagny's eyes narrow slightly. She's not used to "no."

DAGNY
 Daddy?

NILSEN
 We will do as they say.

DAGNY
 Why? They work for us.

NILSEN
 Dagny, get in the car. Now.

DAGNY
 No.

NILSEN
 Dagny, please.

Now that he's practically begging...

DAGNY
 Fine.

She gets in. Vanowen shuts the door behind her. He gives McGinty a can-you-believe-this-shit look.

MCGINTY
 What's the word?

VANOWEN
 Half the city's on strike. Riots
 in the south. On the way over I
 saw a guy get shot at a roadblock.

A beat.

MCGINTY
 Great weather, though.

EXT. ROMERO ESTATE - NIGHT

Ensnconced on a hilltop high above the city, it's a serene slice of Paradise.

SERIES OF SHOTS

shows the security setup, Señor Romero's staff of a half-dozen bodyguards plus the four hired by Vanowen:

- One guard with a rifle stationed on a high balcony
- Another guard patrolling the garden
- Two guards in a car parked on the driveway, blocking the wrought-iron entrance gate

VANOWEN AND MCGINTY

sit at a table going over maps and floor plans. An attractive, dusky-skinned CATERING WAITRESS offers McGinty a mushroom-cap hors d'oeuvre.

MCGINTY

Gracias.

McGinty is mesmerized as she turns and walks away.

VANOWEN

Thought you were allergic to mushrooms.

Busted, McGinty wraps it up in a napkin.

GONZALES (O.S.)

Suicida!?

Vanowen and McGinty turn to see HECTOR GONZALES approaching. Gonzales is Romero's chief of security: squat, powerfully built, with a broad, friendly grin.

VANOWEN

Gonzales, what the hell?

They do a manly, back-slapping hug.

VANOWEN (CONT'D)

Joe McGinty... Hector Gonzales.

MCGINTY

Good to meet you.

VANOWEN

Haven't seen you since Nicaragua.

GONZALES

Been keeping the bullets away.
Working for Romero now.

He jerks a thumb toward ROMERO (60's), a stogie-chomping pillar of Venezuelan society, chatting with Nilsen and a half-dozen OIL EXECES at the garden party.

GONZALES (CONT'D)

Hey, you look good, man. You
stayed in shape. Me --
(slaps his own gut)
I got soft. I admit it.

MCGINTY

I'll leave you two to catch up.

McGinty makes his exit. We sense Vanowen would be just as happy to have never seen this man again.

ON THE PATIO

Romero, cigar in hand, chats with his guests.

NILSEN

Señor Romero, do you believe the
president will step down?

Romero smiles. A survivor of many administrations, he is nothing if not diplomatic --

ROMERO

As a representative of the
Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, I
assure you there is no crisis.
This unrest will quickly pass.

(slyly)

But as a citizen, I can tell you
this: If he resigns, it will become
much easier to get Big Macs... and
harder to get Cuban cigars.

All LAUGH, including BETTY-ANN CARLSON (49), a senior VP at Confederated Oil and a Texan tip-to-toe. Her broad accent, pageant smile and folksy disposition belie her considerable savvy. She didn't rise to this position on charm alone.

BETTY-ANN

I can understand Mr. Nilsen's
concern. It'd be nice to know for
sure who we're dealing with.

Nilsen introduces McGinty, who's just joined the group:

NILSEN

Joe McGinty... Ms. Carlson,
Confederated Oil.

BETTY-ANN

(shaking hands)

Betty-Ann. We save Carlson for
cursing.

MCGINTY

Cursing?

BETTY-ANN

As in, 'That witch Carlson, she
swooped in and stole my deal.' You
see, Artur and I are both trying to
woo this lovely girl...

(touches Romero's arm)

...and convince Venezuela of our
noble intentions.

MCGINTY

Here's to young love.

McGinty catches a glimpse of Dagny as she disappears with
Venezuelan teenager MARTA (15) and another girl, up a
staircase and out of sight.

MCGINTY (CONT'D)

Excuse me.

He moves to follow Dagny and Marta.

INT. ROMERO ESTATE, FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

FELIX ROMERO (17) and his FRIENDS are watching television.
Felix is breathtakingly handsome, with olive skin, long dark
hair and lashes a girl would envy.

ON THE SCREEN

We see news footage of riots in the streets -- happening
live, in their own city.

BACK TO SCENE

Dagny and the girls pass by the arched doorway behind them.

MARTA / MARTA'S FRIEND

Hola, Felix.

Felix ignores them completely. Then, uncannily, he senses
Dagny's eyes on him, although she hasn't spoken. He turns.
Their eyes meet. A teenage thunderbolt.

The girls hustle Dagny out of the room. She turns for one last glimpse of Felix.

EXT. ROMERO ESTATE, ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Dagny gazes out from the railing at the city below, where neighborhoods are burning like distant campfires.

Behind her, a half-dozen Venezuelan TEENAGERS sit in a circle, passing around a bong. A BOY strums on a guitar.

Felix comes up behind Dagny. His quiet voice startles her.

FELIX
You're safe.

She smiles, her heart skipping.

FELIX (CONT'D)
The riots never make it this far up.

DAGNY
Shouldn't they burn down the rich people's houses?

FELIX
They never do. By morning, everything will be quiet again. Trust me.

DAGNY
I do.

Felix and Dagny know each other, but barely -- electronic penpals who've only met twice, at oil summits.

Dagny's hand accidentally grazes Felix's. She blushes and pulls it away.

FELIX
I didn't think your dad would let you come. When I got your last email...

DAGNY
He hired these guys to protect me.

FELIX
Protect you from who? Me?

ROMERO (O.S.)
Felix?

The kids look up. Romero -- Felix's father -- stands in the doorway. It's hard to read him, but he clearly has something serious to say, and it's probably about Dagny.

ROMERO (IN SPANISH) (CONT'D)
*Felix, come with me please.
 Right now.*

Felix follows his father out, walking past

McGINTY,

who quickly connects the dots. Dagny is still fluttery. Felix looks backs over his shoulder at her.

McGinty smiles.

EXT. ROMERO ESTATE / DRIVEWAY - [THE NEXT] MORNING

McGinty and Vanowen approach as Nilsen and Dagny have a typically heated discussion. Romero and Gonzales wait by one of the Mercedes, ready to take Nilsen and Betty-Ann Carlson on a tour of the area.

DAGNY
 I've seen refineries! I don't want
 to see another.

NILSEN
 You want to stay here.

Actually...

DAGNY
 Marta is having her quinceañera on
 Sunday, a bunch of kids are helping
 her set up.
 (gesturing to Romero)
 Ask him.

ROMERO
 It's at a fine hotel. Very safe.
 My men will be there, and my son.

Nilsen relents.

NILSEN
 I see you at dinner, then. Behave.

DAGNY
 Thanks, Daddy.

She kisses him on the cheek, then runs back into the mansion.

VANOWEN
 (low, to McGinty)
 Rock, paper, scissors?

MCGINTY
 No way. She's all yours.

McGinty gets in the Mercedes with Nilsen.

PRELAP: A local POP SONG.

EXT. HOTEL COURTYARD - DAY

This high-end beachfront hotel's main courtyard is being set up for a lavish *quinceañera*: crepe paper, dance floor and seating for 100 guests.

At the bar, uniformed WAITERS and STAFF cluster around a TV, anxiously watching the NEWS of riots live from the capital.

Birthday girl Marta practices a choreographed dance with FOUR BOYS her age. It's lame, but charming in its innocence.

At the edge of the dance floor, Dagny watches and applauds with a dozen OTHER KIDS.

One of the boys is Felix. Their eyes connect. He smiles.

Vanowen keeps watch nearby, along with Gonzales.

GONZALES
 Beats sleeping in the jungle, huh?

One of Marta's older COUSINS approaches with her finished dress. It resembles nothing so much as a pink wedding gown. All the girls COO over it. Marta says something to Dagny, who doesn't understand.

FELIX
 She wants you to try it on.

DAGNY
 Wow, no, I... Okay.

With the other girls' help, Dagny slides the pink dress on over her clothes. She looks like a Barbie fantasy.

Felix gives her a "thumbs-up" sign. Dagny swoons.

DAGNY (CONT'D)
 I have to find a mirror.

Vanowen spots a YOUNG JANITOR watching from a walkway above. Something about him sets off Vanowen's spidey-sense.

VANOWEN
You got this?

GONZALES
I'm happy.

Vanowen heads upstairs, leaving Gonzales to watch the girls.

EXT. SECOND STORY WALKWAY - DAY

Vanowen reaches the upper walkway to find the suspicious janitor is gone.

TRANSITION TO:

INT. REFINERY - DAY

McGinty trails behind Nilsen, Romero, Betty-Ann, various Oil Execs and VENEZUELAN OFFICIALS as they tour the facility. Venezuelan SOLDIERS are everywhere, on guard and alert.

A WORKER on the floor below surreptitiously watches them as they pass. When they're above him, he starts to SHOUT --

WORKER
Chávez, murderer! This government
does not represent the people of
Venezuela!

As McGinty and the visitors turn to stare, SOLDIERS run in and hustle the man out of sight, still SHOUTING.

All turn to Romero, who just sighs.

ROMERO
I will tell you frankly, our
production still has not recovered
from the last strikes. It is not
just the labor...

NILSEN
Your equipment is out of date. You
need to upgrade.

Cutting through the bullshit...

BETTY-ANN
You need a brand new plant. That
takes capital. Whoever wins this
contract has to understand that.

McGinty's cell phone RINGS. He drops back a bit to answer.

MCGINTY

McGinty.

INTERCUT MCGINTY / VANOWEN

Vanowen is calling from the hotel upstairs walkway.

VANOWEN

Keep an eye on the low-level
workers. Security guards,
janitors.

MCGINTY

(a little offended)

Close Protection 101.

Vanowen looks down to see Dagny, still wearing the dress,
walking back out into the courtyard. The other girls are
clustered tightly around her.

VANOWEN

Just a feeling.

MCGINTY

And they say tough guys don't
have...

VANOWEN

Just keep it tight.

Vanowen hangs up. We stay on his side of the conversation,
watching the girls below.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOTEL COURTYARD - [A FEW MOMENTS] LATER

Vanowen reconnects with Gonzales.

VANOWEN

We're missing one.

GONZALES

One what?

VANOWEN

One girl.

GONZALES

You counted?

VANOWEN

You didn't?

Gonzales is about to explain, but Vanowen is already walking up to the girls. Dagny has her back to him.

VANOWEN (CONT'D)

Who left?

THE GIRLS [VARIOUS]

¿Qué? No entiendo. No inglés.

They're clearly playing it up. Vanowen reaches for Dagny's elbow, but the girls pull her away. He's not amused.

He spins Dagny around, only to discover she's

SOME OTHER GIRL.

She has Dagny's hair and basic figure, but the pink dress was the main distraction. The girls designed this ruse to let Dagny slip away.

VANOWEN

Where is she? *¿Dónde?*

The girls are GIGGLING at their joke.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF HOTEL - DAY

Dagny is nearly running as she leaves the hotel, pumping with adrenaline. She's smiling, proud of her brilliant escape.

She runs left, down a narrow alley, a mental flip-of-a-coin to decide whether to run right or left.

BACK AT THE HOTEL,

Vanowen and Gonzales emerge. Vanowen signals for Gonzales to head right, while he heads left.

EXT. HOTEL COURTYARD - DAY

The girls still think this was tremendous fun. Felix walks away, dialing a number on his cell phone.

EXT. OLD TOWN / CROWDED STREET FAIR - DAY

It's market day, and both sides of the narrow street are full of BUYERS and SELLERS. Dagny keeps checking over her shoulder to see if she's been followed.

Her cell phone RINGS. She checks the number and answers, breathless -- as much from the caller as the run.

DAGNY

Hola.

INTERCUT FELIX / DAGNY

Felix walks casually, keeping one eye out for the bodyguards.

FELIX

Where are you?

EXT. OLD TOWN - DAY

Vanowen runs down the narrow alleys of Old Town, looking for his charge.

INT./EXT. A VAN - DAY

OMINOUS P.O.V. as we look through a dusty windshield. A white van weaves its way through Old Town.

EXT. OLD TOWN SQUARE - DAY

Daggy reaches a fountain. She's still on with Felix.

DAGNY

Your town is beautiful.

EXT. OLD TOWN / CROWDED STREET FAIR - DAY

Vanowen pushes his way through vendors and customers.

EXT. OLD TOWN SQUARE - DAY

Daggy kneels down to take a flower offered by a LITTLE GIRL.

DAGNY

Thank you. *Gracias.*

The girl's MOTHER says something Daggy can't understand.

INTERCUT THE WHITE VAN,
pulling into the square.

INTERCUT VANOWEN,
getting closer.

INTERCUT DAGNY

DAGNY (CONT'D)
(to Felix on phone)
What's the word for pretty?

INTERCUT FELIX

Still walking. He's almost to the square. He can see Dagny.

FELIX
Bonita.

DAGNY
(to the girl)
Bonita.

Suddenly, brakes SQUEAL behind Dagny. She looks back as TWO MEN WITH PULLOVER MASKS jump out of the white van. They grab Dagny from behind. She SCREAMS.

THE CROWD reacts, but no one tries to stop the men as they carry Dagny off. The Mother pulls her daughter back.

VANOWEN

hears the commotion. He races for the square.

FELIX

runs, full sprint.

THE VAN

speeds off, the door sliding shut.

By the time Vanowen reaches the fountain, the kidnapers are gone. All that's left is Dagny's cell phone on the cobblestones.

Vanowen looks around, spots Felix standing stunned. The girl they were both after is gone.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. ROMERO ESTATE / PATIO - NIGHT

Through French doors, we look into the dining room, which has been converted into kidnapping command central. A small army mills about: Gonzales and guards, various Oil Execs, and the servants keeping them all fed.

McGinty and Vanowen are outside. Vanowen is furious, largely with himself. He looks like he could rip the head off a bear.

MCGINTY

She ran away. You can't protect a client who refuses to be protected.

VANOWEN

Tell that to Nilsen.

Nilsen sits off to one side in private anguish. Betty-Ann holds his hand supportively, revealing her softer side.

VANOWEN (CONT'D)

This wasn't a random grab. The kidnappers knew exactly where she'd be.

MCGINTY

An inside job.

Vanowen looks through the glass into the room full of people.

HIS POV: GONZALES.

VANOWEN

Maybe.

INT. ROMERO DINING ROOM / HALLWAY - NIGHT

McGinty strolls through the dining room. Hearing raised VOICES, he pauses to look down a hallway.

MCGINTY'S P.O.V.

Through the open doorway to the den, he sees Romero and Felix having a full-on shouting ARGUMENT in Spanish.

McGinty, intrigued, starts to approach. Romero SHUTS the door, blocking him out.

That's interesting...

Suddenly a CELL PHONE RINGS, grabbing everyone's attention.

Nilsen leans over his cell phone, which is plugged into a speakerphone system. He checks caller ID. Shakes his head.

Gonzales races over -- evidently this is his job -- but McGinty answers it first.

MCGINTY

Yes.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Mister Artur Nilsen?

MCGINTY

I'm his representative. Who's this?

THE VOICE

I am the voice of the people. The voice of Venezuela! Oil is the blood of our land, and you will not steal it from us.

GONZALES

(low)

A communist.

MCGINTY

Where is Miss Nilsen?

INT. KIDNAP SHACK - NIGHT

A corrugated-metal shack. We don't see much of it. A terrified Dagny is flanked by TWO KIDNAPPERS. Their leader (the Voice) passes the phone to Dagny.

DAGNY

Papa? Papa!

(fast stream of Norwegian)

Give them what they want, please get me out of here, I'm scared! Papa!

INT. ROMERO ESTATE - NIGHT

Dagny's plea ends in a CRY and a SLAP as the phone is wrenched from her hand. The sound of Dagny's voice has frozen everyone in the dining room, including Nilsen.

McGinty motions to Nilsen to remain calm.

THE VOICE (V.O.)
 We demand a stop to the neo-liberal, imperialist conspiracy to overthrow the democratically elected, Bolivarian government of President Chávez!

MCGINTY
 How can we get Miss Nilsen back?

THE VOICE (V.O.)
 One hundred thousand U.S., in used twenty-dollar bills.

Nilsen nearly gasps in delight. \$100,000 is nothing.

McGinty glances at Vanowen -- this feels fishy.

MCGINTY
 (to the phone)
 A hundred thousand is too much.
 The family can't pay that.

Nilsen starts up in horror. Vanowen signals to be quiet, let them handle this.

THE VOICE (V.O.)
 He will pay, or his daughter will die.

INT. KIDNAP SHACK - NIGHT

CLOSE ON Dagny, terrified.

THE VOICE
 At four a.m., his phone will ring. He will be instructed where to bring the money. If he follows the instructions exactly, the girl will be returned.

INT. ROMERO ESTATE - NIGHT

MCGINTY
 The banks are closed. There's no way it can happen tonight.

THE VOICE (V.O.)
Cabron, these are the terms! Do you accept them or do you refuse?

MCGINTY

I can't accept them, for the simple reason that --

CLICK. DIAL TONE. The caller has hung up.

NILSEN

What--? What have you done?

MCGINTY

You never accept their first offer. They'll just call it a down payment and come back with new demands.

ROMERO

Did you read this in a book, Mr. McGinty?

VANOWEN

He's right. We have to take control back from the kidnapers.

ROMERO

(to Nilsen)

These men are revolutionaries. They hate you and your daughter for what you represent. They will gladly kill her.

Betty-Ann ignores the men, draws Nilsen privately aside.

BETTY-ANN AND NILSEN

BETTY-ANN

If a hundred thousand can get your daughter back, I say do it. I can get you the cash in an hour.

MCGINTY AND VANOWEN

VANOWEN

(sotto, to McGinty)

How can they be revolutionaries if they support the government?

MCGINTY

The revolution is the government.

VANOWEN

Then, who's against the government?

MCGINTY

The opposition.

VANOWEN
That's our side.

MCGINTY
Trust me, we don't have a side.

Nilsen's made up his mind.

NILSEN
Every minute we wait, is a minute
Dagny is with those men. We do it.

VANOWEN
It's a mistake.

NILSEN
It's my decision.

Accepting that they won't win this argument...

MCGINTY
Okay. But I make the drop.

CUT TO:

EXT. WAREHOUSE ALLEY - NIGHT

The messenger bag lands in the glow of the kidnappers' headlights. [We're catching up with the earlier flash-forwards.]

NEW ANGLE

Through green-tinted night vision binoculars, we watch as McGinty lifts his shirt to show he's not armed.

VANOWEN

watches through the binoculars. He, Nilsen, Gonzales and two local bodyguards are sitting in parked cars 500 yards away, keeping tabs on the ransom drop.

VANOWEN
That's the van.

THROUGH BINOCULARS - VANOWEN'S P.O.V.

Watching the white van approach.

Suddenly, a GUNSHOT. Vanowen swivels the binoculars back to McGinty and the kidnappers. Gets his bearings just in time to see the second man go down.

VANOWEN

drops the binoculars, starts the car as the Kidnappers open fire at the rooftops.

VANOWEN (CONT'D)

Move in!

Gonzales's car blazes to life behind Vanowen's. The two cars roar down the alley.

McGinty falls to the asphalt, shot.

The white van peels out, back the way it came.

Seeing the oncoming cars, two of the kidnappers start shooting at them, while a third tries to get back in his car.

Vanowen's TIRE BLOWS OUT, sending his car into a skid. He gets it under control, turns it to a stop.

With the automatic reaction of trained soldiers, Gonzales and his men unleash FIREPOWER on the kidnappers, dropping every one of them.

VANOWEN (CONT'D)

Hold your fire!

NILSEN

Dagny!!

Nilsen watches the white van disappear in a maze of alleys.

Climbing out of the car, Vanowen runs to McGinty. For the first time, we see where McGinty's been hit: his upper thigh. His cargo pants are soaked with blood.

MCGINTY

Sniper!

He points to the rooftop, where he saw the flare. Vanowen looks up, then to Gonzales --

VANOWEN

Give me your sidearm.

GONZALES

What? There's nobody up there.
Just a ricochet.

Off Vanowen's steady stare, Gonzales hands over his Colt .45.

EXT. WAREHOUSE ROOF - NIGHT

THE SNIPER drops over the edge of the roof, climbing down a ladder. He's halfway down when he hears:

VANOWEN

STOP!

He looks over his shoulder to find Vanowen aiming at him.

VANOWEN (CONT'D)

One rung at a time.

The Sniper nods, but at the same time reaches into his vest. He draws out a small revolver.

Feinting another step down, he suddenly swings around, FIRING at Vanowen. But Vanowen has a much better shot. He hits the Sniper square in the torso.

The Sniper falls two stories to the asphalt, unquestionably dead.

Vanowen approaches, kneeling over the sniper's body. The man is Latino, 30's. Vanowen notices a tattoo on the man's left arm. Pulls up the sleeve to see it more fully.

CLOSE ON Vanowen, recognizing the symbol.

CUT TO:

INT. ROMERO ESTATE, STUDY - DAY

Romero picks up the phone on the FIRST RING.

ROMERO

Digame.

(listens, then)

Yes. Do what you have to.

He hangs up.

Betty-Ann Carlson is sitting in half-shadow, sipping whisky.

BETTY-ANN

Did they get the girl?

ROMERO

No. One of the kidnappers survived. Drove off with her.

Betty-Ann's frustration is palpable.

BETTY-ANN
So much for professionals.

ROMERO
Don't worry, my men will find the
kidnapper. He'll be dead soon.

BETTY-ANN
And the girl?

Romero only nods.

BETTY-ANN (CONT'D)
Sr. Romero, for our arrangement to
work, there need to be no
witnesses. No loose ends.

ROMERO
Yes.

Put simply...

BETTY-ANN
Kill the girl.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. KIDNAP VAN - DAY

CAREENING through the slums of Maracaibo. Dagny, bound and gagged in back, is HURLED against the side. She CRIES OUT.

The KIDNAPPER at the wheel turns around with a PISTOL. A manual-laborer type (50's), he's more terrified than she is.

KIDNAPPER
Shut up! Shut up!

Dagny SCREAMS. Not because of the gun -- because of an oncoming TRUCK. The truck's HORN BLARES; the kidnapper WRENCHES the wheel just in time to avoid a head-on collision.

The kidnapper picks up his cell phone, starts punching numbers while he drives.

CUT TO:

EXT. WAREHOUSES - DAY

POLICE from multiple state and municipal agencies are all over the crime scene. Bodies are being zipped into bags.

Gonzales' cell phone RINGS. With a glance over his shoulder to make sure he is not overheard, he answers it.

GONZALES (IN SPANISH)
Yes.

On the other end, we HEAR the Kidnapper's panicked voice jabbering a mile a minute.

GONZALES (CONT'D)
*Slow down. Take it easy. Are you
ok? Is she OK?
(listens; then)
Where are you?*

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Vanowen strides through empty corridors. It's a modern, multi-story hospital -- completely deserted. Missing ceiling panels, clouds of mosquitoes hovering in midair.

VANOWEN
Hello! McGinty!

There's no one in the emergency room, no one at the reception window.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Vanowen pokes his head in, sees a NURSE (20's) and a woman DOCTOR (50's) sewing up McGinty's leg. Blood everywhere.

She's actually doing a good job, bandaging clean and tight. McGinty sees Vanowen.

MCGINTY

Where's Nilsen?

VANOWEN

He's safe. He's back at the compound.

MCGINTY

Dagny?

Vanowen shakes his head. McGinty closes his eyes.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Vanowen supports McGinty as he hobbles painfully down the corridor, barefoot and bloodstained. Although he's trying to put on a brave front, he's obviously in a lot of pain.

MCGINTY

You never told me getting shot hurt so much.

VANOWEN

You're lucky. Two more inches, it'd be the end of the McGinty dynasty.

TWO STUDENTS pass them, one supporting his friend who's dazed and bleeding profusely from the scalp. Vanowen spots a pair of crutches leaning against a chair in the waiting room. No one's near them, so he snags them for McGinty.

MCGINTY

Where did the sniper come from? He wasn't one of ours.

VANOWEN

He was a U.S. Marine. Had a Special Forces tattoo.

Astonished, McGinty stops walking. He's sweating, winded.

VANOWEN (CONT'D)
(genuine, no sarcasm)
Want me to carry you? It'll be
quicker.

McGinty shakes his head -- he needs to understand this --

MCGINTY
The sniper was American.

VANOWEN
Yup.

MCGINTY
Who hired him?

VANOWEN
Somebody who wanted the kidnappers
dead.

MCGINTY
But how could the sniper know where
the ransom drop was gonna be?
Unless...

VANOWEN
Keep going.

MCGINTY
Say the kidnapping was an inside
job. The same person who hired the
kidnappers, hired the sniper to
kill them.

VANOWEN
Bingo. Get some local thugs to
kidnap Nilsen's daughter... and one
professional to make sure none of
'em survive the ransom drop. No
one's left to say who hired them.

MCGINTY
Which means the kidnappers weren't
really revolutionaries. All that
'blood and oil' stuff was just a
smokescreen.

McGinty starts walking again, painfully, on crutches.

VANOWEN
But why go to all that trouble?
Lot of work for a hundred thousand
dollar ransom.

MCGINTY

What if it was never about the
ransom?

Off Vanowen's look --

MCGINTY (CONT'D)

There could be a hell of a lot more
money at stake.

CUT TO:

INT. MARACAIBO POLICE STATION - DAY

People mill about in the background: COPS, CIVILIANS with
problems, Gonzales and his men.

Nilsen sits alone in a chair, pale and broken. McGinty takes
a seat next to him. Vanowen stands by, watching to make sure
they have privacy.

MCGINTY

Tell us about the deal with
Statoil.

Nilsen looks up, dazed by this seeming irrelevance.

MCGINTY (CONT'D)

(focusing him)
Statoil. How much money are we
talking?

NILSEN

One point five billion.

MCGINTY

How close is the deal to being
signed?

Nilsen looks bewildered -- he has no idea why McGinty is
asking him these questions.

MCGINTY (CONT'D)

If another bidder were to come in
now, could Romero break the deal?

In the background, Venezuelan police walk Gonzales and his
men to the door, shake hands goodbye. One big happy family.

NILSEN

Impossible. Deal is done.
Finished.

MCGINTY
No escape clause?

NILSEN
Only on Statoil side. There is concern about security. Norway is peaceful country. Stability is very important.

Nilsen catches the look between Vanowen and McGinty.

MCGINTY
Could Dagny's kidnapping be enough to tip the balance? I mean, an executive's daughter gets kidnapped, hurt, would Statoil pull out, walk away from the deal?

NILSEN
(stares)
What are you saying?

VANOWEN
We think Romero might be involved.

MCGINTY
What does Romero stand to gain if Statoil backs out?

NILSEN
He will make deal with Confederated. With Betty-Ann Carlson.

Nilsen's expression darkens. If Romero were in the room, he'd be at his throat.

NILSEN (CONT'D)
If they touch one hair of Dagny's head --

MCGINTY
Dagny's still out there. The kidnapper who has her got away. That wasn't the plan. They were --
(changes what he was going to say)
We have to assume Romero and Gonzales are in on it. Maybe even the police. We have to find Dagny before they do.

EXT. ROMERO ESTATE - DAY

The town car roars up the driveway, slams to a stop in front. Vanowen jumps out and strides toward the door. McGinty, on crutches, lags behind --

MCGINTY

Vanowen, you can't just walk up to a guy like Romero and accuse him --

VANOWEN

Watch me.

He goes in.

INT. ROMERO ESTATE, HALLWAY - DAY

McGinty tries to keep up with Vanowen.

MCGINTY

And in two weeks our bodies will wash up in Miami with no heads and no fingertips. This guy has friends. They own this country.

Vanowen sees his point. Stops walking. In helpless appeal --

VANOWEN

They're gonna kill Nilsen's daughter.

McGinty, winded from his exertions, has no answer.

In the silence, they both become aware of GUNFIRE and EXPLOSIONS from the next room. They look at each other. They've had the same thought.

INT. ROMERO ESTATE, FAMILY ROOM - DAY

Felix is playing shoot-em-up, working through levels on his PlayStation 2.

Vanowen and McGinty enter behind him. Vanowen goes straight to the TV, turns it off.

FELIX

Hey!

MCGINTY

Felix. You want to tell us what you and your dad were fighting about last night?

In the background, Vanowen closes the doors.

VANOWEN
You were there when they grabbed
Dagny. What did you see?

FELIX
Nothing.

MCGINTY
That's what you were arguing about
with your father. Nothing.

FLASHCUT TO:

INT. STUDY - NIGHT [FLASHBACK]

Felix is arguing with Romero in Spanish. Romero closes the door.

BACK TO:

INT. ROMERO ESTATE, FAMILY ROOM - DAY

McGinty sits on the coffee table. Winces -- his wound's bleeding again. He looks straight into Felix's eyes.

MCGINTY
How do you think Dagny's doing
right now? Are they beating her?
Torturing her?

FELIX
No.

MCGINTY
Raping her?

FELIX
No!

VANOWEN
He sounds pretty certain.

MCGINTY
How do you know, Felix? How do you
know she's okay?

Felix tries to get up, but Vanowen pins his shoulders to the couch.

VANOWEN

Whatever your dad told you the plan was, it's out the window. Only way Dagny's getting out of this is if you help us.

MCGINTY

What do you know?

Long pause.

FELIX

The van. I recognized it.

VANOWEN

(incredulous)

A white van.

FELIX

There was a dent in the door. I recognized it. I told my father.

MCGINTY

Who's the van belong to?

FELIX

A guy who works for my dad sometimes. Roofing, digging. Stuff like that.

VANOWEN

He have a name?

FELIX

No. I never heard it.

McGinty is disappointed -- it's not much to go on.

FELIX (CONT'D)

But I know where he lives.

CUT TO:

EXT. RURAL AREA - DAY

The town car ROCKETS through the jungle along a rutted dirt road, making no allowance for potholes.

CHILDREN

stand staring from the roadside.

CUT TO:

EXT. RURAL HOUSE - DAY

The cinderblock house sits a few yards from the road, surrounded by thick jungle.

A sturdy peasant WOMAN (40's) exits through the back door. She's carrying a steaming pot of stew up a trail into the jungle.

VANOWEN

is watching from the edge of the trees. McGinty and Felix are behind him.

VANOWEN

Stay here.

He begins to follow her, completely silent. We see the Special Forces in him coming out.

CUT TO:

INT. SHACK - DAY

Little more than corrugated steel, it's set far back into the trees -- out of earshot.

The Woman -- the kidnapper's wife -- fills bowls for Dagny and her husband. The Kidnapper tucks into his like a starving man. His pistol and Kalashnikov rifle lie on the table.

DAGNY

I don't want it.

The kidnapper's wife, wheedling, tries to spoon-feed her.

KIDNAPPER'S WIFE (IN SPANISH)

*You can't go on eating nothing.
Look at you, you're skin and bones.
Try it!*

She sees Vanowen coming through the doorway, SCREAMS and drops the bowl. The kidnapper snatches up his pistol -- too late. Vanowen forces him to the ground. Swivels the Colt to aim at the kidnapper's wife -- freezing her before she can grab the Kalashnikov.

KIDNAPPER'S WIFE (IN SPANISH) (CONT'D)

*(begging for their lives)
Please! They told us no one would
get hurt.*

VANOWEN (IN SPANISH)
Stand back. Against the wall.

The Wife obeys, terrified.

VANOWEN (CONT'D)
 (to Dagny)
 You hurt?

DAGNY
 No, I'm okay. I'm... Thank you.

She's starting to tear up. She clings onto him.

Hearing a SOUND, Vanowen suddenly pushes Dagny out of the way, whirls with drawn .45. It's Felix and McGinty, hobbling breathless toward the shack.

VANOWEN
 I told you to stay put!

MCGINTY
 We've got company.

DAGNY
 Felix!

She runs into his arms.

MCGINTY
 It's Gonzales and his men.

The Kidnapper looks up from the floor.

KIDNAPPER (IN SPANISH)
Gonzales. He hired us.

A look between McGinty and Vanowen. Even Felix knows this is bad.

DAGNY
 (confused)
 They're here to rescue me?

VANOWEN
 They're here to kill you.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

BIRDS call out from the vine-covered trees, their songs lost in the humid haze.

From here on, the soundtrack is MUSIC ONLY.

CUT TO:

BOOTS,

three pairs in all, leave footprints in the mud as they run in silent SLOW-MOTION.

CUT TO:

INT. KIDNAP SHACK - DAY

CLOSE ON Vanowen as he checks the sight on the Kidnapper's rifle.

Dagny and Felix slide under the cot. He wraps his arms around her.

McGinty motions for the wife to stay down.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Gonzales motions for his TWO MEN to spread out, flanking the little hut as they approach.

INT. KIDNAP SHACK - DAY

Vanowen starts to hand McGinty the rifle. McGinty nods over to the Kidnapper -- he's the better shot.

Vanowen hands the old man the rifle.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Gonzales gives his men a signal.

INT. KIDNAP SHACK - DAY

Brilliant shafts of sunlight burst through the corrugated metal walls of the shack. We don't hear the gunshots or the hits -- we simply watch as the holes open up.

Under the cot, Dagny is screaming, but we don't hear it -- we only see her open mouth.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Only now do we see Gonzales and his men silently firing, emptying the clips of their fully-automatic rifles.

INT. KIDNAP SHACK - DAY

Vanowen is flat on the floor, looking out through a broken board. Sweat is dripping into his eyes, but he stays rock-solid.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Gonzales signals for his men to stop. They listen. One man takes a few steps to his right.

INT. KIDNAP SHACK - DAY

Vanowen squeezes the .45 trigger. This SINGLE SHOT is deafening. (At this point, normal SOUND RESUMES.)

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

The man falls, a single shot kill. Gonzales and his remaining man open fire again.

INT. KIDNAP SHACK - DAY

Vanowen rolls to his left just as bullets rip apart his section of the wall.

INT. JUNGLE - DAY

While his man keeps shooting, Gonzales lobs a smoke canister through the shack's broken window.

INT. KIDNAP SHACK - DAY

McGinty spots it and doesn't waste a breath. As smoke begins to billow out, he dumps the wife's stew and uses the heavy pot to cover the canister.

CLOSE ON Vanowen, listening for the source of the gunfire. Sensing a rhythm we never could, he knows exactly when the shooter will pause.

At just the right moment, he pops up to the window. Squeezes off TWO SHOTS directly into Gonzales' remaining man.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Gonzales returns fire, but Vanowen is already out of harm's way.

With both men down, Gonzales weighs his options. He starts to take a few steps back towards the road.

INT. KIDNAP SHACK - DAY

VANOWEN
Just Gonzales left.

McGinty nods. We see a change in the Kidnapper. He leaps towards the door. Before McGinty can stop him...

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

The Kidnapper charges out of the house, filled with the rage of revenge and betrayal. He SPRAYS his AK-47 at Gonzales, only one bullet connecting. For his part, Gonzales fires a focused BURST of shots into the old man's chest. The Kidnapper drops.

From the shack, Vanowen lands three shots. Gonzales falls back.

Pistol still raised, Vanowen steps out of the destroyed building. McGinty follows behind, checking on the kidnapper, whose Wife is SCREAMING.

TRANSITION TO:

EXT. JUNGLE / ROAD - [HALF AN HOUR] LATER

Dagny runs to meet her father, who's just arrived. Nilsen squeezes her tight.

The Wife is being interrogated by a female PTJ detective (Venezuela's FBI). She's in shock, her husband lying nearby, not even covered with a blanket.

VENEZUELAN POLICE and MILITARY swarm over the scene, past Vanowen and McGinty, who watch as Romero embraces his son.

VANOWEN

They're calling it an 'express kidnapping gone bad.' Blaming it on Gonzales and the bodyguards.

MCGINTY

(outraged)
But that's --
(points at Romero)
He did it!

VANOWEN

Who are you, Columbo? Everyone who could link him is dead.

MCGINTY

Almost everyone.

McGinty follows Vanowen's gaze to Felix, who looks back. With just his body language, we sense he's fully back on his father's side.

McGinty looks betrayed. Vanowen understands. Consolingly --

VANOWEN

When an op goes bad, it's never guys like Romero who take the fall. That's why they hire guys like Gonzales.

MCGINTY

You mean, guys like us.

NILSEN AND DAGNY

Dagny tight in his arms. Nilsen looks up as Romero approaches.

ROMERO

Thank God our children are safe.

He places a hand on Nilsen's shoulder. Nilsen instinctively recoils, pulling Dagny away protectively.

A look passes between the two fathers. Nilsen letting Romero know he knows, making no attempt to hide his hatred.

NILSEN
 (his eyes never leaving
 Romero)
 Come, Dagny. We go home.

He marches her to the car. Vanowen opens the door for them. He and McGinty get in front with the driver.

Betty-Ann Carlson comes and stands beside Romero. Together they watch the town car drive away. A small, cold smile of triumph lights her eyes.

EXT. AIRSTRIP - DAY

Watchful red-beret SOLDIERS with machine guns stand guard. A private PLANE taxis into position to pick up its passengers.

Nilsen and Dagny, Vanowen and McGinty watch the plane. They're waiting with their luggage and two bodyguards, just outside the small building that serves as terminal.

Suddenly Vanowen's alert. A car has driven onto the airstrip and is coming toward them.

The bodyguards pick up on it. Rifles come out.

It's a Maracaibo TAXICAB. It stops fifty yards away, discharges its one passenger.

DAGNY
 Felix!

She runs toward him before anyone can stop her.

NILSEN
 Dagny! Come here!

Ignoring her father, she rushes into Felix's arms. They embrace.

Vanowen takes a step forward. McGinty, on crutches, restrains him with a gentle hand on his arm.

Dagny and Felix murmur their sweet goodbyes. Dagny hugs Felix, crying.

VANOWEN AND MCGINTY

watch from a distance.

MCGINTY
 I used to be that guy.

VANOWEN

You helped your father kidnap your girlfriend?

MCGINTY

Brooke and I got married when we were 20. We had that Romeo and Juliet thing.

VANOWEN

I read that one. Everyone dies.

NILSEN

Dagny! It's time.

Dagny kisses Felix goodbye. Runs back to join Nilsen, who's coming to get her. Vanowen moves into action, supervises the boarding of the plane.

Vanowen and McGinty are last to board. On the stairs, McGinty pauses for a last look at the Andes.

VANOWEN

You okay?

McGinty sighs, shakes his head.

MCGINTY

I can't believe Statoil's pulling out. If they'd built that plant, they'd have spent millions on security. That could have been a huge contract for us.

VANOWEN

Sucks when the bad guys win.

MCGINTY

Oh well. The good guys lived. That's something.

Vanowen agrees. As they board the plane --

NEW ANGLE / VERY LONG LENS

We're looking at McGinty and Vanowen through a telephoto lens, complete with focusing ring. The SHUTTER fires off five quick shots.

CUT TO:

EXT. BASEBALL DIAMOND - DAY

A beautiful day, not a cloud in the sky. A Little League game is in progress, young PLAYERS on the field.

TITLE OVER:

LA MIRADA, CALIFORNIA

CLOSE ON: A digital photo of McGinty and Vanowen boarding the plane, now on a PDA/cell phone display.

WOMAN'S VOICE (FILTERED)
 McGinty was an account rep at SOS.
 He and Vanowen quit last year, now
 they're on their own.

The next photo is McGinty and Vanowen in Kandahar, from the start of the episode.

MAN'S VOICE
 How much do they know?

WOMAN'S VOICE (FILTERED)
 Unclear.

A TOW-HEADED BOY steps up to bat.

THE MAN, sitting in the bleachers, glances up from his PDA. He's in his late '40's; we don't see his face.

THE MAN
 C'mon Bobby! Show 'em what you
 got!

Resuming his conversation via cell phone earpiece --

THE MAN (CONT'D)
 What's our leverage?

WOMAN'S VOICE (FILTERED)
 Vanowen has a half-sister and a ten-
 year-old nephew.

THE MAN
 Family's good.

The Man clicks through the next two photos:

- Tina, picking up Matty from school.
- Brooke and McGinty, at a political fundraiser.

WOMAN'S VOICE (FILTERED)
McGinty's wife works for Senator
Collins.

THE MAN
Small world.

The Boy makes a good hit, and runs to first base.

THE MAN (CONT'D)
Atta boy, Bobby!
(to the phone)
Put 'em on the watch list.

WOMAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
Which one? Threats or assets?

THE MAN
Both.

CUT TO BLACK.